Fate Masks of Heroism

by GilgameshKOH

Summary

Heroic Spirits. Those whose Legends have transcended mankind and earned them an eternal place in history. Now, they will be called forth once again, this time as Masks of the Soul, to help a young boy and his friends to fight against the threat looming over Inaba. Can they carve their own Legends? Or will Fate sentence them to fail and be forgotten?

Notes

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Yu Narukami opened his eyes and found himself riding in a deep-blue and velvet-themed limousine. Sitting opposite him was an elderly man with an unusually long nose and sitting next to him was an elegant lady with platinum blonde hair, pale skin and golden coloured eyes. She was dressed entirely in dark blue with matching high heel shoes and her clothing had black and golden accessories decorating it.

"What….is this place?" asked the confused boy, looking around.

"Welcome to the Velvet Room." the old man said in greeting.

"The Velvet Room?" Yu parroted "What kind of place is this?"

"Some introductions are in order first. I'm Igor and I am delighted to make your acquaintance." smiled the elderly man, introducing himself.

"Indeed. Welcome." the woman also greeted. "I will be here to accompany you on your journey. You may call me Margaret."

"Er…nice to meet you both?" dubiously said Yu, bowing slightly

"Tell me, young man, do you believe in fortune telling?" Igor suddenly asked, the smirk never leaving his face.

"I like to keep an open mind about a lot of things." calmly replied the boy.

"Good." softly chuckled the man, hands crossed under his nose. "Now, each reading is done with the same cards, yet the results are always different… Life itself follows the same principles, doesn't it?" Igor chuckled flipping over a card, from a deck of cards that had seemingly appeared out of nowhere, seven cards laying facedown through the table. "Hmm… The Tower in the upright position represents the immediate future. It seems a terrible catastrophe is imminent."

"That…doesn't sound good…" stated Yu, suddenly getting a bad feeling in the pit of his stomach.

"The card indicating the future beyond that is…. the next card was flipped, revealing it to be a moon with a sad face. "The Moon, in the upright position. This card represents hesitation and
mystery… very interesting indeed. It seems you will encounter a misfortune at your destination, and a great mystery will be imposed upon you. In the coming days, you will enter into a contract of some sort, after which you will return here. The coming year is a turning point in your destiny… If the mystery goes unsolved, your future may be forever lost."

"So if I don't solve this mystery I'm doomed?" asked the boy with incredulity. "Wow… that's morbid."

Yu thought about those words for a second. His whole life had been constantly on the move due to his parent's jobs. His father worked in Public Security Intelligence Agency and his mother worked in the Special Forces Group. He had always spent a year or so at one relative or another as such he didn't know his parents all that well. Though, on the rare occasions that he did see them, he had heard his mother and father usually talking about classified things, thus forcing him to, more often than not, be kept out of the room.

"But what kind of place is this? And why is there so much fog outside?" asked the confused boy, just noticing that the shadow of the girl and her eyes were now gone from the window.

"This is a realm that exists between mind and matter…" Igor waved his hand and the tarot card's deck slowly floated into the air. He waved his hands again and the seven cards on the table flew back to the deck, which then floated back to his hand. "It separates dreams from reality. Generally speaking, only those who have forged a contract are allowed to visit this room and perhaps, in the very near future, such a Fate may be awaiting for you as well."

"So this is a dream but not a dream?" Yu tilted his head in confusion, pondering the meaning behind those words.

"If you like." Margaret simply smiled. "Now, until our paths cross again. Farewell."

As Margaret said this, Yu's vision began to blur until the Velvet Room vanished entirely.

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Yu woke up to find himself still on the train. He watched the scenery go by as the vehicle exited a tunnel. It was pretty clear by now that he was nowhere near the big city, which made him sigh with relief.

He closed his eyes to try and get some more rest, but was jolted awake when the train began coming to a stop. He stood up and quickly grabbed his bags from the shelf above his seat and got off the wagon.

His eyes curiously looked around the fairly old-looking platform.

"Final stop: Yasoinaba." came the announcement over the PA. "Yasoinaba Station."

Yu walked away from the platform, deep in thought, but was once again jolted as he bumped into an old foreign man and was sent falling to the ground. Luckily none of his belongings came out of his bag.

"Sorry about that kid" the old man 'apologized', with what looked like the hint of a smile on his face. "Here let me help you up."

The elderly man extended a helping hand, which Yu took and pulled himself up with. When he got to his feet, however, he felt like his head was on fire and clutched it in pain. The boy suddenly heard a male voice speaking in his mind.
It sounded strong and dutiful, making him think of a knight of old.

_I am Thou…Thou Art…Open thine eyes…_

"Hey, Kid." the old man's voice got Yu's attention away from the voice. "Are you alright?"

For some reason, the silver-haired boy could almost swear that the old man was smirking slightly, but quickly dismissed it as his imagination.

"Er…yeah. Just a little dizzy I guess…"

"Well, I gotta get going now, and I bet you have too." the old man chuckled in a very strange way and began walking away. "Oh by the way, the name's Zelretch. Pleased to meet ya."

"I'm Yu. Yu Narukami" the boy introduced himself, for what he thought was the second time in less than an hour.

"Well, see you round Narukami." Zelretch chuckled again before walking away…and vanishing when he was out of sight. Yu stared at the spot where the old man had disappeared from his vision for a few seconds before leaving the station.

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Eventually Yu had gotten outside the station and into the car park. In stark contrast to the train station, which had been slightly busy, the town was practically deserted. One could mistake it for being abandoned entirely if not for the fact that some of the windows still shone with signs of life.

"Where is everybody?" asked the boy to himself. "One would think that nobody even lives here…"

"Oh, there you are!" a middle aged man said, grabbing Yu's attention as he approached to the teenager, a shy-looking little girl attached to his arm. "You look better in person than you do in that picture. You're a whole lot bigger than the last time I saw you. You were just a little runt in diapers back then."

Yu let out an awkward laugh. Truthfully, he didn't remember that far back. Even so, he was getting a slight feeling of familiarity from this man.

"I guess I can't blame you for not remembering me." sighed the man while shaking his head. "Your mom hardly ever let you out of her sight. She was always so protective that I wonder what changed to make her able to let you out of her sight…" the man shook his head again, offering Yu an awkward smile. "Ah, well my name's Ryotaro Dojima. I'm your mother's younger brother and this here is my daughter Nanako"

Seeing that the boy's attention was on her, Nanako shyly hid behind her father.

"Go on, say Hi." Dojima encouraged his daughter, trying to get her to be polite.

"…erm…hello." Nanako mumbled before quickly retreating behind her father.

"What are you so shy for?" chuckled the man as his daughter gave him an angry kick in the leg. "OW! Well then… Let's get going. My car's over there."

Yu had just started following his uncle and cousin back to the car when he was stopped by a voice.

"…Hey." confused, the silver-haired teen turned around. There was a black-haired girl bend down, picking up a piece of paper off the ground. She stood up and held out the paper to Yu. "You
dropped this."

"Oh…Thank you." nodded the boy in appreciation.

"Whatever." replied the girl, a hint of annoyance in her voice. "All I did was pick it up."

As he walked closer to the girl to receive the paper, Yu got a better look at the girl. She had grey eyes and wore a sleeveless white shirt, with a short black necktie and a checkered skirt. Along with this, she had on a black belt and a fancy, golden buckle that resembled a heart with wings. A pair of striped stockings with grey boots and choker with a lock on it completed the curious outfit.

She seemed around his age and looked rather unfriendly, but Yu had learnt long ago not to judge people by their appearance. Before he could say anything, though, the girl turned around and walked away.

Sighing, the boy followed his uncle back to his car, where he put his bags in the boot and got in the back seat while Nanako sat in the front seat with her father. They began driving into town and Yu's journey in Inaba began.

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A little while later, Dojima pulled into a gas station called Moel. The attendant, who had long, wavy gray hair, ran out to greet and assist them.

"Hi! Welcome to Moel!" the attendant greeted with an almost feminine voice, which, combined with 'his' looks, made hard to tell the worker's actual gender.

"Can you go to the bathroom by yourself?" asked Dojima while turning to Nanako, who had asked for that the moment they stopped.

"Uh-huh," the little girl answered before getting out of the car. She dubiously looked around, trying to locate the restroom.

"It's in the back, to your left." the attendant piped up helpfully, still grinning. "Do you know which way is left? The side you don't hold your chopsticks in."

"I know!" pouted Nanako with annoyed look "Geez…"

The girl looked back at her father once more before running off toward the station. Moments after, Yu opened his door and stepped out of the car.

"Are you taking a trip?" the attendant casually asked Dojima.

"No." the man shook his head and thumbed at Yu, who was silently staring at the main street. "We just went to pick him up from the train station. He just moved here from the big city."

"The city, huh…?" while saying that, the attendant looked curiously at the boy.

"Yeah…Fill up my car while you're at it." Dojima finally said. "Regular's fine."

"Right away, sir!" the attendant said cheerfully.

"Good time as any for a smoke…"

Yu watched his uncle walk off to the edge of the sidewalk. He really hadn't taken his uncle for a smoker, which was yet another reason not to judge people by their appearance.
"Are you in high school?"

Surprised, the teen turned to the gas station attendant, nodding silently in response.

"Does it surprise a city boy to see how little there is out here?" the attendant looked curiously at Yu, almost as if examining his face. "There's so little to do, so I'm sure you'll get bored fast. You'll either be hanging out with your friends or doing part-time jobs."

Yu wasn't actually paying attention to what the 'man' was saying, though. He was too busy trying to discern what the attendants' gender was.

"Hey, are you listening?" the attendant asked

"Huh?" dumbly muttered the boy, suddenly shaken out of his thoughts.

"I was just saying that we're looking for part-time help right now, here at Moel." the 'man' gently explained, raising his hand in Yu's direction. "Give it some thought, why don't you? We don't mind if you're a student."

"Sure, I'll give it some thought." replied the teen with a nod, shaking the attendants extended hand.

Nanako returned from using the restroom before Yu could think any more on why he couldn't read the attendant.

"Oh, I should get back to work!" the 'man' casually said, walking away quickly.

"Are you okay?" frowned Nanako while looking at her cousin. "Did you get carsick? You don't look too good…"

Yu swallowed as he suddenly felt extremely dizzy.

"Ngh…"

"What's wrong?" Dojima asked returning from his smoke break, frowning after taking one look at. "You okay?"

"I don't feel good…" murmured the boy while putting a hand on his forehead. "Must be the stress of the journey…"

Dojima sighed.

"Let's hurry home, then…"

While getting back into the car, Yu looked back at the gas station, he was still staring at it when they drove away.

Eventually, they arrived at the Dojima residence.

The house was a traditional, two-story one that was a deep chocolate brown in color. It seemed simple enough, but Yu didn't really mind. This was the place that would be his home for the year.

He'd heard that Dojima lived alone with his daughter after his wife died in an accident years ago, so the teen kind of expected the house to be a mess. He was shocked when he found that it was not.
'It's cleaner than I thought it would be' thought Yu while looking around in surprise. 'Uncle Dojima doesn't exactly seem like the kind of guy who can clean up after himself that well…'

After they went inside and putting his things into his new room, Yu found himself sitting at the table with sushi and soda for dinner. After a quick toast, the three started eating.

"So…your mom and dad are busy as always…" commented Dojima, looking at his nephew as if for confirmation. "They're working in the military, right?"

"Dad works with the Public Security Bureau while Mom's holds the rank Major in the Japanese Special Forces." Explained Yu to his uncle while nodding, taking a sip from his soda while doing so.

"Really? Woah, so she's a Major already, uh?" the man seemed lost in thought while slowly eating his food. "You know, it's hard to believe a woman like your mom would enter the military. She wasn't exactly what you'd call….disciplined when she was younger. She was a kind of a delinquent…to put it mildly. But then again she never did like conforming to people's expectations." Dojima sighed. "I know it's only for a year, but getting stuck in a place like this because of your parents…it's rough being a kid."

For his part, the silver-haired boy was having a difficult time picturing his mother as a delinquent. She was a strict and fair disciplinarian, sure, but she also had a soft side that showed itself every once in a while.

"Well, it's just me and Nanako here, so it'll be nice having someone like you around." said the older man with a smile. "So as long as you're here, you're part of the family. Make yourself at home."

"Thank you for your kindness." warmly smiled Yu.

At that, Dojima chuckled.

"C'mon, there's no need to be so formal. Look, you're making Nanako all tense."

Having heard her name being called, the little girl turned red at realizing the attention was all on her. She quickly glared to her father and quickly tried her best to hide her red face.

"Well, anyway…let's eat."

Before they could do that, however, they heard the sound of a phone ringing.

"Ugh…who's calling at this hour?" Dojima pulled his cell phone from his pocket and answered. "Dojima speaking…"

The man stood up and walked away from Nanako and Yu, pacing near the door as he spoke.

"Yeah? I see…So where is it?"

…

"All right, I'm on my way." Dojima finally sighed and ended the call, putting the phone back in his pocket "Looks like I made the right choice to skip the booze…"

A confused Yu turned to Nanako, noticing that she looked depressed. It wasn't hard to tell that this
was a regular thing. The girl was most likely lonely, having her Dad away on work most of the
time and her mother dead.

"Sorry, but I gotta go take care of some business." Yu's uncle said apologetically. "I don't know
until how late I'll be, so go ahead and eat without me. Nanako, you help him out, okay?"

Nanako nodded, her shoulders slumping slightly as her father walked toward the door. The sound
of rain filled the house as the door was opened.

"Nanako, it's raining out, what did you do with the laundry?" echoed Dojima's voice from the
entrance.

"I brought it in!" replied the girl in a simple tone.

"…Alright. Well, I'm off."

The door closed and after a few moments, Nanako and Yu heard a car drive away. The little girl
sighed and turned on the television.

"— with storm clouds moving in from the west, expect rain throughout the day tomorrow in most
areas."

Nanako looked back at her plate.

"Let's eat."

Out of nowhere, Yu had found himself alone with his cousin, who was looking rather
downtrodden. He decided to try and break the awkward silence with conversation.

"What does your dad do?"

"He…investigates stuff." Nanako said sounding nervous. "Like crime scenes. My dad's a
detective."

"And now for the local news. City council secretary Taro Namatame is under fire for an alleged
relationship with a female reporter, Mayumi Yamano. His wife, enka ballad sensation Misuzu
Hiiragi, revealed to this station that she will likely pursue damages. In response, Eye Television has
decided to cancel all of announcer Yamano's televised appearances. Until allegations of an affair
with Mr. Namatame are resolved, she'll remain off the air and out of the public eye."

"…This is boring." complained the little girl while making a face, quickly changing to another
channel.

"At Junes, every day is Customer Appreciation Day! Come see for yourself, and get in touch with
our products!" happily announced a cheerful voice from the Tv. "Every day's great at your Junes!"

"Every day's great at your Junes!" Nanako sung along with the advert, perking up as she did.

Yu was surprised at his cousin's sudden change of character. She became much happier quite fast.

"Aren't you going to eat?" inquired Nanako, her smile quickly vanishing.

"Yeah, sorry… I just spaced out." said the boy before beginning to eat.

Soon after he finished eating, Yu went straight up to his room. Feeling more than just tired, the boy
went straight to sleep.
Fog was all Yu could see.

It obstructed his vision so much that he could barely see the ground he was standing on. Confused, the boy decided to move forward, hoping to find a way out of whatever that place was.

"Do you seek the truth?" a genderless voice asked, echoing from no particular direction in the fog.

The abrupt question caused Yu to stop in his tracks and look around, searching for the source of the voice. The fog obscured his vision and he could sense no one else's presence around or near him.

"I guess I have no choice but to move forward..." muttered the boy, cautiously continuing his trek through the thick fog.

"If it's truth what you desire, come and find me..." the voice said once again, sounding much closer.

It sounded almost like it was challenging Yu, or taunting him. He kept walking until he bumped into a black and red wall of some kind. No. It wasn't a wall. It was a strange door, made of an unknown and red material. Suddenly, he felt a weight in his hands and looked down to see that he was holding a katana in them somehow. This was definitely not one of his usual dreams.

Then as he put his hand on the door it opened.

"So... You are the one pursuing me..."

Yu could just barely see that there was someone ahead, hidden in the fog. He could see a figure, but could not make out any features that would distinguish its gender. The voice that it spoke with seemed to be gender neutral as well. His grip on the sword tightened as he took a step forward.

"Hmhmhm... Try all you like..."

Yu glared at the figure with annoyance, something inside of him stirring to life.

Before the boy knew what was happening, he was moving forward and slashing at the figure. He was rather surprised when he struck something, albeit lightly. The figure gave out a pained grunt, although it tried to conceal it. Yu took some small pleasure in the little victory.

"Hmm... It seems you can see a little, despite the fog..." the figure said with irritation at being struck.

The silver-haired teen was acting entirely on instinct when he felt something not like himself, a very different 'feeling', quickly pulling at it with all his might. When he did a blank tarot card not unlike the ones Igor possessed floated down into his hand. He crushed it and an armoured silhouette, little more than a shadow, appeared above him and slashed at the being in the fog.

It seemed prepared for an attack however, and didn't grunt in pain this time.

"I see... Indeed, you possess an interesting quality..." the figure said. "This is some very interesting information."

Growling, Yu tried again, and the silhouette rushed forward, slashing at the being again. The attack didn't even touch it.
"But… You will not catch me so easily… If what you seek is 'Truth', then your search will be even harder…"

The figure glowed and a soft, hissing sound filled the air. The fog grew thicker and soon, everything was engulfed within the fog. The shocked boy could no longer see anything…all he could see was white fog.

"What the hell?" Yu looked around, his grip on the Japanese sword tightening.

"Everyone sees what they want to… And the fog only deepens…"

With those final words, the being was gone. And slowly, the world around the teen started to vanish…

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As Yu walked to class 2-2, which was to be his homeroom for the next school year, he could hear some conversations coming from inside the classroom and even saw a few people talking through the doors window. As it usual for any newcomer, he waited outside to be summoned by the teacher.

"Talk about bad luck… The homeroom teacher here is Morooka, isn't it?" a sitting student complained.

"Yeah, it's King Moron, alright…we get to enjoy his long-ass sermons every day for a whole year. Joy." his friend added to the complaint. A female student walked over to the two boys.

"Hey, you guys! I heard there's a transfer student from the city in this class."

"Huh? Really? A guy or a girl?" Yu decided to tune out that conversation and hone in on another one. This one involved a brown-haired girl in a green jacket and a boy with orange headphones looking worse for wear.

"…Huh? You look dead today." the green-wearing girl said almost with pity.

"Yeah, um… I don't wanna talk about it…" the headphone-wearing boy muttered, looking away from her.

"…What's with him?"

"Who knows?" another girl said.

Finally, the waiting teen saw the teacher motion for him to come in, so he opened the door and walked in, following after the man. He simply took up a piece of chalk and began writing his name in the blackboard.

"I'm Kinshiro Morooka, your homeroom teacher from today forward! First things first! Just because its spring doesn't mean you can swoon over each other like love-struck baboons! As long as I'm around, you students are going to be pure as the driven snow!" ranted the man with a very annoying voice, before turning his attention to Yu. "This kid here is our new transfer student. He got booted from our putrid down here to the boonies basically making him a fugitive. Come on, introduce yourself."

"Uh, hi, I'm Yu Naruka-"
"YOU WERE JUST OGLING THAT INNOCENT YOUNG GIRL BY THE WINDOW WEREN'T YOU?!" Morooka's sudden yell catching Yu off guard, almost making him jump in surprise. "YOUR NAME'S GOING DOWN ON MY ROTTEN LITTLE SHIT LIST! I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF FILTHY INSTITUTION YOU COME FROM BUT DON'T DO THAT HERE!"

"Sir!" the green wearing girl suddenly interrupted. "There's empty seat here. Can he sit next to me?"

She motioned to an empty seat to her left. Morooka looked a bit put out at the notion that he couldn't rant a bit more.

"Yeah, sure…" growled the teacher before glaring at Yu again. "TAKE YOUR SEAT ALREADY!"

Quickly, the silver-haired teen sat down next to the girl in green and to the left of a short girl with blue hair.

"We call him King Moron." the green girl whispered to him. "He's horrible with everyone, so don't wo-"

"HEY SHUT IT YOU TWO!" yelled the aforementioned teacher.

With that, King Moron began his rant about how society had gone to hell and how things were better back in his day. Eventually when he realized he wasn't going to learn anything useful at all, Yu tuned him out.

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[04/12 Tuesday, Yasogami High, Inaba]

Finally, school mercifully ended much to Yu's relief. He was surprised, though, when the blue haired girl to his left walked to his desk and walked up to him

"So you're the new student." she greeted with an expressionless tone.

"Yeah, I'm Yu Narukami." he greeted her.

"My name's Aika Nakamura." she gave quick polite bow. "It's nice to meet you"

"Ehm, yeah, likewise." replied the boy with a nod. "I-

"Attention students! There has been an incident inside the school district. Police officers have been dispatched around the School Zone. Please stay calm and contact your parents or guardians as soon as possible, and quickly leave the school grounds. Do not disturb the police officers. Head directly home. I repeat…"

"Incident?!" a girl yelped.

"Something actually happened?" said girl's friend questioned her.

"C'mon! Let's go check it out!" the brown-haired girl from earlier suggested.

"Sorry I've gotta go home." Aika apologized. "I've got help out with deliveries at my family's restaurant. See you tomorrow."
"See you…" acknowledged the teen, watching her walk out of the classroom and vanish from sight.

Everyone stood up to leave the campus, Yu not being the exception. He was planning to make the trek home by himself when two girls stopped him. One of them was, once again, the green jacket-wearing girl from earlier, who stopped King Moron from ranting at him.

"Hey, are you going home by yourself?" said girl asked with a smile.

Before the boy could answer, though, she quickly kept talking.

"Would you mind walking with us? This thing sounds kinda freaky!"

"Yeah, sure." agreed Yu while taking his bag. It couldn't hurt to walk home with the two, he supposed.

"Thanks! Oh, I'm Chie Satonaka, by the way!" the girl introduced herself with a smile, before gesturing over to the girl in the red sweater. "And this is my friend Yukiko Amagi."

"Nice to meet you… I'm sorry for pestering you." Yukiko said apologetically

"Yukiko! C'mon, don't apologize like that. It makes me look like I got no upbringing." complained Chie with a loud voice. "This was just a good excuse to talk to him a bit…"

"Hey what's up Chie?" the clumsy student from before school cut in, showing a nervous and clearly fake smile. "Thanks I loved it, it was way cool!" he said before thrusting a DVD-case into Chie's hands and quickly tried to make a break for the door. "Well, see ya tomorrow!"

"Hold it right there!" suddenly yelled the girl, giving chase and kicking the student in the crotch, causing him to face-plant into the ground.

Yu was still looking at the whimpering boy with pity when Chie's voice boomed through the room.

"WHAT THE HELL?! IT'S CRACKED, YOU TOOL! WHAT HAPPENED TO MY TRIAL OF THE DRAGON?!" screamed the girl, looking at the now open DVD-case and seeing the cracked disc inside.

"…I think mine's cracked too… Critical hit to the nads…"

"A-Are you alright?" Yukiko asked

"Don't be nice to this jerk. Let him suffer." Chie scoffed before walking away. "Come on we're going home!"

They both left the classroom, with Yu quickly following suit. Before that, though, he took one last look at the downed student.

"I'll just… leave him be…" he muttered to himself before closing the classroom's door.

The three exited the school's front doors and were approaching the gate when Chie decided to strike up a conversation. The fog had finally cleared up.

"So, why are you here?" she promptly asked.

This was a pretty standard question that Yu got all the time.
"My parents are too busy with work, so I'm staying here with my uncle. My mom works in the Special Forces group and my dad works for some intelligence agency." he replied nonchalantly.

"Wow, cool! Your mom's a Special Force's agent and your dad's a spy?!” Chie looked at him impressed

"Well I'm not too sure about my dad, but because my parents are always busy with work I have to stay with one relative or another." Yu continued with a resigned sigh. "I'm only here for the year."

"Even so, their jobs do sound interesting, don't you think, Chie?" Yukiko added on, attempting to join in.

"Yeah, I guess. But you're only here for a year huh?" the outgoing girl sighed with disappointment "And only because of your parent's jobs! I thought that it'd be juicier than that….

"Chie don't be rude." the red-wearing girl admonished her friend, while Yu simply shook his head.

Yukiko didn't notice a boy from a different school staring at her from the school gate.

Elsewhere, the crime scene was very busy with police officers and an ambulance, not that the ambulance was necessary or could even help at that point. The intersection was blocked off by yellow tape and officers were running around, looking for clues about what had happened earlier during the day. A stretcher with a body bag on top ran past Dojima. He motioned to stop the stretcher and slightly unzipped the bag. He checked the contents inside and nodded his head in confirmation.

A younger man, dressed in a suit with unruly black hair, also took a look at the contents before his face turned green, quickly proceeding to sprint towards a corner and regurgitate what most likely was his lunch.

"Dammit Adachi!" Dojima roared. "How long are you gonna act like a rookie? You wanna be put back on desk work?!"

The younger man stopped vomiting and looked up at his partner and superior, with an unsure smile.

"So-sorry, boss. I'm just not used to seeing- Ugh!" Adachi cut himself off again as he began heaving again. Shaking his head, the older detective looked up at a TV antenna, which was being examined by people from the crime lab. He let out a long sigh in frustration.

"What a grim sight…" he mused.

The Wizard Marshal Zelretch sat in his office back at the Clock Tower. He currently had a visitor who took the form of a glowing blue butterfly which was resting on his desk.

"Everything's prepared." said the Sorcerer with an enigmatic look. "I've reconnected the power of the Persona potentials as well as the Wild Card from the Sea of Souls to the Throne of Heroes, just as a planned. Everything's in place."

"I assume that you did the same for Nyarlathotep's chosen for this round?" the butterfly asked.
"Yup." grinned Zelretch while crossing his hands. "The Heroic Spirit in question who has taken the place of his regular Persona should be equal an equal and fair opposite to the Wild Cards main Heroic Spirit Persona. I've also set the Holy Grail up just like you asked. Ol' Nyarlathotep won't know what hit him by the time this is over."

"Very good. I knew I could rely on you old friend." the 'butterfly' said.

"So, when the one behind the fog and the Midnight Channel in Inaba is defeated, she'll become the sacrifice to power THIS Holy Grail instead of the Servants… Isn't that right, Philemon?" asked the master of the Second Magic, stroking his beard thoughtfully.

"Yes. But I must admit that I'm curious...how will you secure the co-operation of the Heroic Spirits in this endeavour?" Philemon asked fluttering his wings for a moment.

"The same way for why they co-operated for the original Grail Wars." Zelretch chuckled. "They've all been promised a wish in return for their co-operation. I'll use the Second Magic to tap into Alternate Holy Grails and everyone's happy!"

"What about those who have no wish?" Philemon asked. "I know for a fact just WHO you chose for Yu Narukami's World Arcana. Even before actually unlocking the World that Heroic Spirit's ego will overpower the boy's own, it is inevitable."

"Yeah, it's always a gamble with 'Goldie', but we're talking about fighting a God and sacrificing it to power the Grail in order to make a wish that will alter humanity." The Wizard Marshall put an unusually serious look on his face as he looked at the blue butterfly. "We need all the help we can get. Plus he's not too fond of Gods, so he might help on principle."

"For now we must hope your gamble pays off." Philemon sighed, somehow doing it even though he was in the form of a butterfly. "I will make sure Margaret points Narukami in the right direction when the time to make the wish comes…"

"Sounds like a plan." Zelretch grinned cheerfully.

"The Heroic Spirits in question are as close to the true inner selves of the potentials as possible aren't they?" Philemon asked. "After all, the Heroic Spirits will be Personas instead of Servants, and we have no Command Seals, so the possibility of some of them killing their controller is high."

"True, but unlike Servants they won't be able to linger around if they do that." Zeltrech explained. "If their controller dies they immediately go back to the Throne and lose their opportunity to get their wish. No cheats or manipulation will be allowed as long as they share the soul of those kids. The modified Grail should supply them this basic information. Are all your concerns rested now?"

"For now, they are. Do try to make sure no one interferes with this venture." Philemon said seriously before taking off. ""We don't need anyone unscrupulous finding out what we're doing in Inaba. Least of all anyone interested in the Holy Grail."

"Relax, I'll take care of that." Zelretch waved the concerns aside as the butterfly began to fly away. "I'll make sure that everyone knows that Inaba it's off limits… Oh, and you are aware of what will happen if Narukami and his friends CAN'T win this right?"

"I am quite aware." Philemon muttered darkly with a heavy heart. "In order to grant the wish that 'She' believes humanity wants… The Wild Card and his friends will become the sacrifices used to power the Holy Grail, in the absence of Servants in a regular Grail War."

"Either the Wild Card and his friends will be sacrificed, or she will." The Sorcerer seemed lost in
thought. "A dangerous gamble."

"I don't like it but we have no choice." the butterfly vanished in the sky, leaving only blue sparks on its trail. "This is only way."
Beyond

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Persona or Fate or anything in the Nasuverse, any resemblance to any other Persona 4/Fate fan fiction is coincidental and plagiarism is not intended. No flames, please, constructive criticism only. Special thanks to SaintInfernalNeos for helping me with this story and Lost Idea Alchemist who helped edit the later chapters. Just an FYI there will be no Persona evolution in this fic, but me and SaintInfernalNeos have come up with ideas that we hope compensate for this.

[04/13 Wednesday, path to Yasogami High, Inaba]

The next day, Yu Narukami was calmly walking to school, lost in thoughts about the strange dream he had last night…until he heard the screaming voice of the boy who Chie had kicked yesterday.

"Watch out!"

As if on cue, the boy sped past him, lost control and, by some twisted combination of bad luck, ended head first into the trash can.

"So-someone, help! Get me outta here!" pleaded the boy while twisting around inside the garbage can.

Unlike the day before, when had had seem the absurd scene also happen in the morning, the silver-haired boy decided help and quickly pulled him out of his smelly prison.

"Uff…thanks man, you're a lifesaver!" thankfully grinned Yosuke once he was back on his feet. "You're Yu Narukami, right?"

The boy in question simply nodded as answer.

"I'm Yosuke Hanamura!" the boy introduced himself.

"Uhm, pleased to meet you." greeted Yu with an awkward smile.

"Hey, do you know what this town's famous for?" suddenly commented the headphones-wearing boy, catching the other teen off guard. "We do some seriously good beefsteak! I know it's kinda lame, but it's fitting for this place, and since you just helped me out… how about you let me treat ya to some?"

"No thanks, I'm good…" tried to decline the boy as politely as possible.

"Come on, I insist!" continued the determined Yosuke. "You free later today? Heh, of course you are, you're new here! Hey, don't worry; I went through this once too, you know? And also…!"
"You can count me in on that action." abruptly interrupted Chie's voice, making both boys turn around to see the grinning girl, her broken 'Trial of the Dragon' DVD in her hand. "Consider it a way for you to pay me back for breaking my stuff."

Yu could easily tell by the way Yosuke seemed to deflate at the words that the other teen really didn't want to have to pay for an extra meal. Eventually, the three got to the school and Yosuke changed into a better smelling uniform during lunchtime. After King Moron's final lecture of the day, the bell rang and school ended.

Later on, at the Junes food court, one could easily notice that Chie Satonaka was not happy.

"Hey, this isn't steak!" angrily protested the kung-fu loving girl. "You stingy tightwad, this isn't beefsteak, it's just some lousy cheap meat!"

"Yeah, well, once you hopped on the freeloader train, I had to change my plans…" sighed Yosuke while trying to not look at the girl. "Now eat your food before it gets cold."

Yu was only half listened as the conversation became animated over small talk. Idly, he turned to look at one of the exposed TVs in one of the food stands, just as the news came on.

"According to the latest reports, the body found yesterday identified as our local TV reporter: Twenty-seven years old, Mayumi Yamano."

"Hey, wasn't this on the news yesterday too?" curiously asked Chie as she also turned to look at the screen.

"Yeah, its freaky how that shit happened all the way out here…” muttered Yosuke while swallowing the spicy meal he'd put into his mouth. "The murderer could live just next door!"

"Please don't go there, it creeps me out." shivered the girl with a worried frown.

"Heh, I'm just messin with ya!"

"Yeah, well, I think we need to change the subject." quickly said Chie before her face lit up with an idea. "Hey, I know what! Have you heard about that Midnight Channel thing that's got everybody talking?"

"Midnight Channel?" asked Yu with a raised eyebrow. "What's that supposed to be?"

"Oh yeah!" muttered Yosuke while scooting closer to Chie. "Aren't they saying that it only comes on at midnight on a rainy day?"

"Yeah, and they say whoever shows up on the screen is supposed to be your soulmate!" explained the girl with an excited grin. "So, I heard it's going to rain tonight… waddya say if we check it out?"

"I'm amazed that you actually can STILL fall for that ridiculous kiddy crap." sighed the brown-haired boy.

"Waddya mean kiddy crap?!!" demanded Chie, sending a death-glare at Yosuke

"You see? Now THIS is why you can't ever nab a boyfrien-"

"WHAT DID YOU SAY?!" the angry yell of the girl came accompanied by Yosuke being shaken
around like a can of soda.

After a few seconds of being shaken like an idiot, Yosuke's eyes abruptly opened and stood up, breaking free of Chie's grip as his face illuminated.

"Hey...It's Saki-sempai!"

The excited boy quickly rushed over towards a tired-looking girl with long brown hair showed up, wearing a Junes apron.

"Oh...hey there Hana-chan." she greeted

"That's Saki Konishi, a third-year in our school. I like the girl, she's cool and she's really pretty." commented Chie, the hint of a smile on her lips. "Her family runs the liquor store in the shopping district...I think she's working here part time, though."

If June's presence was having a negative effect on the shopping district like Chie said, then Saki's parents probably weren't happy that she had this job. When Yu took a good look at the older girl, he could see a hint of annoyance in her eyes as Yosuke kept speaking to her.

"Did you think she was his girlfriend or something?" Chie chuckled, as if amused by the idea. "He'd be happy if she was, but apparently they just work together here at Junes."

"You there!" the aforementioned girl suddenly called out to Yu, making the boy blink. "You're the new transfer student, right?"

"Yeah..." nodded the silver-haired boy while looking silently at her.

"This guy doesn't have a whole lot of friends." Saki thumbed at Yosuke while saying that, making the boy blanch at the comment, "I mean, he's not bad he's actually pretty nice, but if he starts bugging you just let me know."

"Er...it's not that...he just..." Yu wasn't sure of how to respond to the 'offer' without offending either of them.

"Heh, I'm just joking around, don't worry!" smiled the older girl with a chuckle, but the teen got the impression that she may not have been joking.

"Saki, that really wasn't funny at all!" complained Yosuke, rubbing the back of his head nervously.

"Oh, don't worry about it...Well, I think I'd better be taking off now, so see you later!" and after waving at them one last time, the smiling girl walked away.

"Wait, Saki-sempai, about that thing I-!"

"Oh yeah, sounds fun." even as she said that, the older girl didn't stop walking away. "We can make plans during my next break, ok?"

"BOOYAH!" joyfully screamed Yosuke, almost jumping from the excitement.

"What's got you all excited?" Chie's teasing tone seemed to bring the boy down back to Earth, but it didn't seem to affect his good mood in the slightest.

Quickly, Yosuke turned to her and showed a pair of movie tickets, wearing a big grin on his face.

"Oh, now I see where you're coming from..." chuckled the girl with teasing smile.
For his part, Yu ignored his classmates and silently stared after Saki. He could help but get the feeling that something was wrong with her…

That night, true to Chie's word, it rained. Yu had decided out of curiosity to see if this 'Midnight Channel' was legitimate or not so the TV was unplugged and the silent room was totally dark.

It was almost Midnight.

"Yeah, right. As if." dismissively muttered the teen after a few seconds of staring at the darkened screen.

Then, the clock struck 12.

The TV flashed to life and, before Yu's astonished eyes, the unclear image of a girl with long hair appeared on the screen, blurred and covered by static. The shocked boy noted she that vaguely resembled Saki Konishi, even though the image was pretty distorted.

For some reason, Yu moved toward the TV as if in a trance. He heard a strange voice in his head, which suddenly felt as though it was splitting open…

*I am thou… and thou art I… You shall open the door…*

The mesmerized boy staggered towards the TV and reached out towards it. And when he touched the screen…his hand passed through it as if the screen was a pool of water.

Out of nowhere, he felt something strong attempting to drag him in, breaking his trance and making the boy start to try and pull away. He put his foot on the TV stand and pushed with all his might, eventually freeing himself and smashing his head against the table behind him.

He was still trying to recover from the mix of pain and shock when there was a knock at the door.

"Hey, are you okay?" Nanako's voice asked from the outside.

"Ye-yeah, I just tripped and smashed my head. Sorry, I didn't mean to wake you."

Seemingly satisfied with his answer, the little girl went back to her room. Yu, for his part thought that the lie was for the best.

After all why would she believe that his hand went through the TV screen?

"What in the hell was that…?" the boy asked himself as he stared at the TV screen in total disbelief.

And outside, the heavy rain keep falling.

[04/14 Thursday, Junes Electronics Department, Inaba]

The next day, one could see that Yu Narukami was annoyed.

The reason was that Yosuke and Chie, the two people he'd met and made friends with hadn't believe him when he told them earlier, when school had ended, about how his hand got stuck inside the TV when he was seeing the Midnight Channel last night.
And now, they were in Junes, standing in front of a massive TV, and Chie and Yosuke continued to tease Yu about it, touching the screen themselves and saying how it was a solid with a laugh.

"Ah…man, I can't believe we're seriously doing this…" sighed Yosuke while shaking his head.

"Hey, why not?" asked a grinning Chie, who still seemed amused by the whole deal. "My family's wanted a new TV anyway… Maybe you can use your connections and cut me a deal!"

"Of course I can't!" denied the boy before turning towards the eyebrow-raised Yu and explaining. "You see, my dad happens to be the manager of this store. Just like you, I also transferred to this town from Tokyo. I guess almost six months ago…"

"Oh, really?" asked the boy with a curious tone.

"Junes does make life easier, but all the mom and pop shops and are pretty empty now" commented Chie while shaking her head.

"Hey, don't say that straight to my face!" protested Yosuke with annoyance.

"Would you rather prefer that I said it behind your back?" retorted the girl with an almost challenging expression.

While the two of them kept arguing, Yu looked at the news report on the TV. They were interviewing the student that found Mayumi Yamano's body. The boy's eye's widened when he realized that she resembled the girl he saw on the Midnight Channel last night.

"Oh, I guess that girl kind of look like Saki, doesn't she?" commented Chie while also looking at the screen. "Everyone in class is talking about it; they all think that Saki is the one they were interviewing there about the body."

"For real?" asked a surprised Yosuke. "That explains why she skipped school today…"

While his two friends kept talking about Saki, Yu decided to try again. Determined, he reached out towards the TV and then…his hand slipped through the screen as it rippled like water.

His hand was inside, but it wasn't trying to pull him in like before. A grin formed on his face. He wasn't crazy, after all.

And the other teens had just noticed it, too.

"Who-whoa! Yo-your hand went right in!" cried Chie.

"Du-Dude, how are you pullin this off?!" panicked Yosuke with wide eyes.

Yu's response was just a shrug of his shoulders.

"Wo-woah… that's kinda awesome…" muttered green-wearing girl while looking closer.

"I think I can go further in…" muttered the silver-haired teen while inching closer to the screen.

"OOH, this is gonna make me piss myself!" yelled Yosuke as his bladder began acting up.

"Hold it, will ya!" yelled Chie with an angry panic. "Thi-this is serious!"

And then, Yu crawled halfway INTO the TV
"...It's very spacious in here." he nonchalantly told them.

While the headphones-wearing boy kept fidgeting because of his bladder issue, the girl of the group tried to pull at him to calm him down. This, in turn, made him try to resist for a few seconds... before he gave way and made them both collide with the amazed Yu, causing that the three screaming teens fell completely into the TV.

It then stopped shimmering, as if the three of them were never there.

-The-
The three teens found themselves falling through what seemed like a white tunnel with black squares, almost like TV screens twisting in a Counter-clockwise pattern. Eventually the screens all lined up and they 'landed'.

Yosuke fell on his backside, Chie landed on her feet but rolled forward to deal with the impact and Yu managed to, somehow, land in a crouching position.

"Ugh, my head...wa-wait, where are we?" asked a confused Chie while looking around at their surroundings

"I believe... that we're inside the Television." calmly stated Yu, as if he was just talking about the weather.

Indeed, it certainly 'seemed' like they were. They appeared to be on a TV set, with lights above and concentric circles on the ground... that had outlines of bodies like what one would see in a crime scene.

"What?!" Chie's yell seemed to echo inside that eerie place. "Don't just stand there given me crazy talk, I'm being serious!"

"Aww man, this hurts too much to be re...al" whined Yosuke while clutching his pained behind. "I think I busted my ass or something..."

"Woah, I'm so surprised." Sarcastically commented the silver-haired teen while trying to see through their foggy surroundings.

"How'd we even get in here, anyway?" asked the girl of the group while looking around. "I can't see an entrance anywhere..."

"Yeah, I can't see a damn thing through this fog..." commented Yu with a confused frown.

"So... what do we do now?!" asked the panicked Yosuke while running up to Chie.

"What are you asking me for?!" retorted an equally distressed Chie. "I-I don't know all I want to do is go home, like, immediately!"

Suddenly, the sound of strange footsteps drew the panicking teen's attention, making they all turn around, to see how, standing inside the eerie fog, the shadow of some sort of bipedal creature was staring at them.

"Wha-what the hell is that?!" screamed a panicking Chie.

Instead of answering Yosuke turned and ran while screaming, with the other 2 quickly following cue. After a few minutes of running, they found themselves what seemed like a building's eerie
room. Inside, they saw something that seems like blood dripping on the floor from the walls and, to make things even creepier, several posters of a woman with her face torn off.

"Finally…it took us forever to ditch that weirdo…thing…whatever…” panted a tired Chie, apparently not having noticed their surroundings.

Almost in the centre of the room, there was also a chair, with a red scarf over it…and tied as a noose to the ceiling. When he saw this Yu couldn't keep silent any longer.

"Where…where are we?” he nervously asked, making his two friends finally notice the room.

Yosuke gasped and took a few steps back when he saw the noose.

"What the hell?!” jumped Chie with wide eyes. "God…this place is messed up!"

The silver-haired teen took a look at one of the torn posters, swearing that it looked familiar, but being unable to remember from where…

"Oh, I can't take it anymore!” cried the other boy of the group with a desperate voice.

"What?! What is it?!” asked a scared Chie while turning to face Yosuke.

"I have to go!” yelled the boy before running towards a corner of the room.

"Hey, you can't pee here, this is someone's room!” protested the girl with angry/embarrassed look. "Narukami, will you please stop him?!

"Why would I do that?"

Chie froze in confusion upon hearing that answer.

"Ugh, I can't go with you two standing there!” yelled the other boy before zipping his pants again. "Ah man. If I get a bladder infection it will be all your fault!”

"Who the hell cares?” shouted Chie while standing up "Let's just get out of this place already!"

"I'd love to… but how?” worriedly muttered Yosuke.

"Ehm, for now let's try going back to where we came in, okay?” suggested Yu with a heavy sigh. This day was turning weirder by the second.

With some small difficulties, they group made their way back to their landing spot. When they did, though, they found the strange creature from earlier standing there, waiting for them. It was a… red and blue half-clown, half-bear mascot suit.

Chie seemed ready to threaten it, now that she saw that the thing wasn't scary at all, but Yu decided on a different approach the moment it started cowering under the girl's sudden yell.

"What… is that thing?” asked Yosuke with a raised eyebrow.

"I could ask you the same thing!” answered the 'bear', one of his 'paws' pointed at the group with an expression of anger.

"It can talk?!” gasped the girl, an astonished expression on her face.

"Of course I can! I am a bear!” the creature said as if it was obvious. "Geeze, I've also lived here
"What is up with this guy?" loudly asked the brown-haired boy. "He's, like, beyond creepy!"

"Please, keep your voices down, will ya?" exclaimed the bear while covering his head in alarm. "Now go on and get out here, run along and get back to your den!"

"What are you exactly?" asked Yu while staring at the being up and down. The bear stopped and looked at the silver-haired teen with wide eyes.

"I already told you, I'm a bear! Can't you tell?" suddenly, the creature looked around, as if lost in thought, before changing the subject. "I live here by myself. I've always lived here. It doesn't have a name…"

"You…live here?" a surprised Yosuke asked.

"If I was you guys, I'd hurry back to the other side." the bear looked around, it's ears twitching. "Everything it's a big headache here now that someone has been throwing people in…"

"Throwing people in? What're you talking about?" questioned the headphone-wearing boy, a confused expression on his face.

"I dunno who's doing it! I just want them to think before they go doing things like that!" scowled the bear while angrily stomping at the ground.

"Hey, what's your problem?!" once again, Chie's yell caused the bear to cower. "What gives YOU the right to yell at us like that?!"

Yu sighed internally as the bear ran behind him, likely because he was the only one being 'nice' to him... or not being openly hostile/dismissing, at least.

"A-Anyways, you guys should hurry back." the bear said nervously, cowering behind the silver-haired boy.

"What it comes down to is that you want us to get outta here, right? Well, so do us! We just don't know how, dammit!" cursed Yosuke while crossing his arms.

"Urrrrgh! Tha-that's why I'm saying I'll let you out!" growled the strange bear, once again stomping with his foot and apparently regaining his courage.

"Like I keep saying, we don't know where the fricken' exit—wait, what?" the boy stopped and looked questioningly at the bear. "You can get us out?!"

For all answer, the bear tapped his foot at the ground, making a stack of 3 old-style TVs to appear in a puff of smoke.

"Woah! What the hell?!" shouted an amazed Chie.

"Now, get going!" exclaimed the bear before running behind the teens and starting to shove them towards the TVs with a sudden burst of strength.

"He-hey, quit shoving!" complained Yosuke before the 3 seemed to go through the mass of TVs, screaming in surprise even as the bear nodded with satisfaction.

Then, the stack of TVs vanished in another puff of smoke.
After floating through the white space and backwards through the TV screens again, the three teens found themselves flying out of the TV and back into Junes electronics department. Yu landed on his hands and knees while Chie landed on top of Yosuke.

"We made it back." stated the silver-haired boy with relief.

In response, his two friends hugged each other in overjoyed relief...before Chie came to her senses and kneed Yosuke in the stomach.

"Don't take advantage of the situation, you big perv!" yelled the girl with indignation.

Before the pained boy could retort, though, an announcement came over the PA.

"Attention, shoppers. Our daily limited-time sale will now begin at the side dish area on the first floor. Why not try the delicious, fresh products that Junes picked for you this morning as your side dish for dinner tonight? All ages are invited to take advantage of this incredible bargain!"

"Crap, it's already that late?!" panicked Yosuke.

"Looks like we were in there for quite a while..." commented Chie before noticing how their newest friend had walked a little away from them. "Hey what is it?"

For his part, Yu's attention was fixed on a poster on the wall. It was one with the face of the enka singer, Misuzu Hiiragi.

"I saw this poster back there, in that weird room..."

Chie blinked, quickly walking over to get a closer look at the poster.

"Yeah, that's Misuzu Hiiragi... isn't she the woman that's been all over the news these days?" the brow-haired girl seemed deep in thought. "They say that her hubby had an affair with that reporter who just died, Mayumi Yamano..."

"Wait, what does that even mean...?" worriedly asked Yosuke. "How could she have anything to do with that freaky room?"

"Maybe there's a connection between that place and Ms. Yamano's death?" suggested the tallest member of the group.

"Stop! Don't go there!" yelled the other boy, waving his hands around in panic. "I don't think my heart can take it...! Ah, crap this is bad; I still gotta take a leak!"

"This whole thing is starting to give me the chills..." complained Chie while rubbing her temples. "I'm feeling kind of woozy... I think I'm heading home to sleep..."

"Yeah, sure. I think that will be the best for all of us." silently nodded Yu, giving the poster one last glance before heading back home himself.

He had a lot to think about tonight.

[04/15 Friday, Yasogami High, Inaba]
"I'm just saying… I feel as if I went through hell yesterday…" complained Chie as she walked to school with Yukiko.

"What do you mean?" asked her best friend with a confused expression.

"I'll…tell you about it later." replied the kung-fu-loving girl while shaking her head. "There's a chance you won't even believe me…."

"Hey… Yukiko?" someone suddenly asked.

The voice belonged to a male student from another school. He was drenched due to having been standing out in the rain without an umbrella. Messy black hair and a mole under his left eye seemed to be what characterized him. A creepy smile was on the boy's face even as he stared at them with his black eyes.

"Huh?" both girls stopped walking, looking confusedly at the boy.

"I've been waiting all morning, Yukiko…"

The male student walked closer, blocking the two's way into school.

"Uhm… who are you?" nervously asked Yukiko, who was getting nervous under the strange boy's intimidating stare.

"C'mon… why don't you and I go hang out somewhere?" suggested the boy with an eerie tone.

"E-eh…?" the long-haired girl's eyes widened even as she took a fearful step back.

"Hey, back off, you're being a freak!" yelled an annoyed Chie, but the boy ignored her and walked closer to Yukiko.

"Come on… let's go, Yukiko!"

"What school is that creep from? Doesn't he know that Yukiko is off limits?" one of the students commented while walking into the school.

"Hey you." the strange boy froze, turning his head around to see Yu's form standing just behind him. "Stop harassing her."

"What the…?! Where did you come from?!" even as the boy shouted this, Chie and Yukiko also blinked in shocked surprise. Neither had noticed the silver-haired boy's presence either.

"I have been here for a while. Now, will you please leave my friends alone?"

The boy eerie didn't know exactly what, but there was SOMETHING in Yu's eyes that seemed to contain an unspoken threat if he refused.

"…so… are you coming or not Yukiko?" the mysterious student tried his luck one more time, turning around to not keep staring at the boy behind him.

"Sorry, but I'm not going." Spoke Yukiko with a tone of finality.

"Ugh, fine then!" growled the boy before running away. "Stupid bitch…"
"...what did that guy want from me?" muttered the red-wearing girl with confusion.

"You really don't know?" asked an exasperated Chie with a sigh. "He wanted a date!"

"What? Are you sure?" Yukiko seemed genuinely surprised by that revelation.

"You REALLY couldn't tell, right?" sighed the brown-haired girl before guiding her best friend back towards the school.

All the while, Yu never stopped staring the way the strange boy had run off to.

Later, during lunchtime, the group talked about the curious events of the morning.

"You know, you can be totally harsh sometimes." commented Yosuke, having just heard about the whole thing, while shaking his head. "You cut me down cold like that as well last year."

"I wonder why?" deadpanned Yu.

"N-no, I didn't!" denied a panicking Yukiko

"Does that mean you do want to go out with me?!" hopefully asked Yosuke.

"I'd prefer not to." instantly replied the long-haired girl, shooting him down.

"Because I suck, right?" groaned the boy before his face brightened. "Well, it doesn't matter, 'cause I already have my sights set on somebody else!"

"Let me guess, it's Saki right?" guessed Yu with the hint of a smile.

"Yep!" smirked the headphone-wearing boy. "Although... she's been blowing off every text I've sent her since yesterday...I wonder if she's sick or something like..."

The sudden sound of sirens echoing through the area caught their ears, making all the students look towards the windows.

"Oh, geeze..." groaned Yosuke.

"Another accident?" wondered Yu, even as an uneasy feeling started to claw at his chest...

Not long after Lunch ended, the staff gathered all the students into the auditorium, all of whom were very talkative most, though most of them were just gossiping. Yu paid them little mind while he looked straight at the front, the uneasy feeling of before still echoing on his mind.

"Hey, where's Yukiko?" asked Yosuke at noticing the girl's absence.

"She just sent a text. She got a call from her family." Chie explained with a sigh. "They needed her help at the inn."

"Help at the inn?"

"Oh yeah, her family owns the nicest traditional inn in town." grinned the girl, though the silver-haired boy felt something strained in her smile. "Yukiko is going to own it and run it someday!"
"Come on, text back already…” grumbled the other boy of the group while fiddling with his phone. "She still hasn't responded…"

"Hey!" King Moron suddenly bellowed, catching everyone's attention. "The principal has something to say, so shut and pay attention! Make so much as a peep and you're going down on my rotten little shit list! Consider yourselves warned."

With that, the annoying teacher walked off to the side, allowing the principal to take the centre of the stage.

Yu knew something was really wrong at noticing the elderly man's grievous expression.

"Sorry everyone, but I fear I'm the bearer of bad news." spoke the principal with a solemn tone. "One of our own students…was found dead near the school's zone. Saki Konishi from 3-B."

The moment the words left his lips, the student body broke into frightened murmurs.

"Please, remain calm." implored the elderly man. "The police is still investigating the case, so if any officer approaches you during the day, we urge you to answer truthfully to any of their questions of…"

Yu tuned the rest of the man's speech out, even as his eyes fell over the frozen form of Yosuke.

Thing had gone worse than he had thought.

[-][-][-][-][-][-][-]

After school ended, Yu and Chie found the depressed headphones-wearing boy in one of the outer hallways, looking down at the ground in sorrow.

"They say her body was hung like Ms. Yamano's, but it was a telephone pole this time…” one of the passing students whispered to another, making the boy tremble and contain a sob.

"Yosuke..." whispered the brown-haired girl while trying to get near him.

"...did you guys watch the Midnight Channel last night?" the boy's sudden question seemed to stop Chie in her tracks.

"You...wanna talk about that now?!" the girl couldn't help but growl.

"Just shut up and let me finish, will ya?!" the burning anger in Yosuke's tone silenced the shocked girl, even as Yu looked at him with serious eyes. "Something was bothering me, so I watched it again last night…and I think I saw Saki on it."

Chie's eyes widened in shock even as the silver-haired boy crossed his arms in deep thought, both of them exchanging a worried glance.

"Don't you remember?" asked the boy in an almost desperate voice. "One of our classmates claimed that Ms. Yamano was his soul mate because he said that he SAW her on the Midnight Channel too!"

"Oh yeah, I… remember that." muttered Chie with a hint of uneasiness.

"And I heard that Saki vanished just before her attack, just like Ms. Yamano… That can't be a coincidence." insisted Yosuke with determined eyes.
"Wait, you don't think that..."

"You're saying that whoever gets shown on that channel ends up dead?" deduced Yu while a cold feeling set up in his stomach once again.

"We all saw those Misuzu Hiiragi's posters when we were inside the TV!" the heir of Junes walked pass them with nervous steps. "What if those were there because Ms. Yamano WAS there before dying?"

"You think that the TV world is connected to the murders?"

"If we somehow made our way into that world maybe Saki and Ms. Yamano found a way in as well!"

By the tone of voice of his new friend, Yu could already say that things were going to get complicated. He just didn't know HOW much right he was...

"Yosuke this is crazy!" protested Chie some time later, the three friends standing in front of the same TV of Junes's Electronics Department. "You're NOT serious!"

"We've already escaped once before." the boy pointed out while preparing the 'security line' he had brought. "And if we go in from the same entrance then, maybe we'll find that freaky bear again!"

"There's no way you can know this for sure!" snapped the girl with an angry glare.

"Hold on. I'll come too" Chie turned around with shocked eyes at hearing Yu's sudden declaration

"What?!!"

"For real?" asked Yosuke, relief clear on his eyes. "Thanks man! I could really use your help."

'Who knows what will happen to him if he goes alone?' were Yu's thoughts even as he neared the boy with a sigh

"Chie, I'm leaving you in charge of this." declared the boy while handing her the end of the rope tied around his waist. "This way, we will be able to return even if we get lost!"

"Wait! Are you serious about this?!!"

"Don't worry so much." said Yosuke while waving her worries off. "So, are you ready for this?"

"Yeah. As well as anyone can be." Muttered Yu before touching the screen.

"Hey! Wait a sec" sadly; Chie's plea was ignored as the two entered into the TV.

 Barely two seconds after they entered, the rope went slack, completely cut off from the two, and the terrified girl fell to her knees, letting go of the useless thing.

"I knew it!" cried Chie before grabbing her head with both hands "I knew this was never gonna work! Now what do I do?!!"

After another journey through black outlines of TV screens, the two boys themselves back in the
TV world and back to a painful crash with the ground.
"Damn, that hurt!" complained Yosuke while Yu stood back up, looking at the familiar and eerie place with studying eyes.

"Hey, it's you two again!" the silver-haired boy's eyes trailed the familiar voice until he saw the same bear of before running at them, an angry expression on its 'face'. "Why did you come back here?!"

"It really is the same place as last time…" observed the headphones-wearing boy, ignoring the bear's question.

"Hmm…You two are bear-y suspicious!" declared the bear while pointing at them.

"Huh?"

"Lately, I can tell someone's been throwing people in here before the fog clears up…" continued the bear, walking with his hands crossed on his back.

"When does it clear?" asked Yu with a serious expression.

"Uh? Hmm, well, I know that if it's foggy on your side, the fog lifts here…." answered the talking bear with a confused expression.

"I see…" the boy turned to looks seriously at his friend. "On the day each of those incidents occurred, there was a lot of fog covering the town." Yosuke's eyes widened at that.

"Then, do you think that…?!"

"The two of you have figured out a way to come here on your own!" the bear's sudden outburst interrupted the boy's conversation, making them look at it in surprise. "So YOU must be the one's throwing people in! You two are the culprits!"

"What the hell are you saying?!" roared the headphones-wearing boy in outrage. "That's crazy!"

"Someone has been throwing people here…" mused Yu while ignoring the current argument. "Could it be…that Saki and Ms. Yamano were thrown into this world?"

"Obviously, you guys did it! Just admit it!"

"What?! Yeah, right, and how do we know that YOU didn't do it?!" demanded Yosuke before marching up to the bear and quickly start tugging at his head. "Take off that stupid costume and show us your face!"

"He-hey, stop it! My head!"

"Take…it…off!" the boy gave one last tug and the head of the 'costume' came off…which immediately caused Yosuke to leap back in fear. "Wh-What the hell?!"

"There's nothing inside." stated Yu, looking at the unnerving DARKNESS that existed inside the now headless and STILL MOVING 'bear-costume'.

"I-it's empty! What's up with that?!" demanded an almost hysterical Yosuke, even as the other boy grabbed the head from the ground and took it towards the headless body.

"Thank you bear-y much!" thanked the bear after getting its head back, smiling widely at the teen.
“…dude, does anything rattle you?” deadpanned the other boy even as Yu simply shrugged.

"Okay, I'll believe that you guys aren't the culprits…” conceded the bear.

"That was quick!” pointed a surprised Yosuke.

"But I want you to find the real guy who did all this!” pleaded the creature with a sad face. "You have to stop him!

"The culprit?” asked the silver-haired boy with a raised eyebrow.

"Yes…I just want to live here in peace, and I can't do it if people keep being thrown inside…” the bear actually looked incredibly sad when saying that.

"Is this thing for real?” sighed an annoyed Yosuke.

"Yo-you're the only ones who can do this!” once again pleaded the bear, dangerously close to the range of 'pathetically'. "D-do you promise, then?"

"Why do we have to when you…?"

"Okay.” quickly agreed Yu, cutting his surprised friend mid-word.

"What?!” Yosuke yelled "No way! You're going along with it?!"

"Well, I feel sort of sorry for the little guy…” confessed the other teen while scratching the back of his head.

"Yay!” cheered the bear, almost dancing around in happiness.

"You're being way too nice.” sighed the headphones-wearing boy while resigning himself. "Okay, fine. You better help us out then, stupid bear!"

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After some talk about the current situation, the bear lead them to what looked to be a warped version of the shopping district, introducing itself as Teddie as it did so. It had also given Yosuke and Yu a pair of special glasses to see through the fog.

Both boys were making a serious effort to not try to think from where he had gotten them.

"What the hell is this place…?” muttered Yosuke while looking at his surroundings. "It looks just like the shopping district, but the sky…what's going on here?”

"Some weird places like this have appeared here recently. Things are getting so tangled; I dunno what to do…” whimpered Teddie with a sad tone.

"…hey, Teddie, why are you standing so far from us?” the headphones-wearing boy had just noticed how far the bear was from them. Teddie was originally leading the two had somehow slowly made his way until being far behind them. "You better not be planning to high-tail it if something does come up!"

"Of course not! I mean…” the bear averted his eyes, trying to look nonchalant as a pink blush tinged his cheeks…somehow. "I can't stand too close…I'd get in your way, and that, ya know…”

"Whatever you say, Teddie…” sighed Yosuke while shaking his head and looking at the 'fake'
version of part Inaba. "Man, they really went all out on this… But out of all the places in town, why'd they replicate this one?"

Yu was also wondering the cause of that, and none of his ideas seemed to be good.

"How should I know? This is reality for the one who are here." cryptically commented the bear, making the silver-haired boy look at him in confusion.

"As usual, nothing you say makes any sense…" Yosuke turned away with another sigh before his eyes widened. "But wait… if this is our shopping district, then we're not far from Saki-sempai's…"

the boy broke into a hurried run, his companions blink in confusion before running after him.

After running a couple hundreds of meters, Yosuke stopped in front of a certain store with a rather weird vortex-like entrance instead of a door, which resembled the red and black sky that seemed to cover that world.

"I knew it! This is the liquor store that Saki-sempai's parents run!" the boy seemed deep in thought for a moment. "Does that mean that…sempai disappeared here? What could've happened…?"

"W-Wait a second…they're here!"

Both teens looked questioningly at Teddie, who was looking around, apparently panicking about something that only he knew about.

Yosuke felt the bad feeling of that morning come back at full force.

"Sha-Shadows…I had a feeling they were around! Th-they are going to attack…!"

The silver-haired boy froze when he heard something land on the ground behind him, with an audible, wet splat. Slowly, he turned around in time to see a trio of black, slime-like creatures, wearing blue masks for a face on, moving through the ground. All of them were staring directly at Yu and Yosuke seemingly uninterested in Teddie.

Both of them broke into cold sweet at feeling the HUNGER in those hollow 'eyes'.

Each pile of slime rose into the air, each turning into a spherical shape. The colour began to change until resembling some sort of pink and black striped pattern. Each of them turned around, revealing that they all had massive mouths with rows human-like teeth and a long, black, slobbering tongue.

The Shadows shot towards Yu first, who shielded his face with his arms while taking a step back, even as both Yosuke and Teddie screamed.

I am thou…and thou art I.

"What?" muttered the boy as his eyes widened.

Time seemed to stand still, even as Yu's mind went into overdrive, assaulted by a blur of images and sound.

A limousine going through the fog, a familiar girl joining the other residents in their velvet-covered abode…and then, everything changed, as if distorted by a kaleidoscope of colours.

Endless battlefields, always walking forward, never doubting his path…

The time has come…
The knight stood proudly, always wielding his blade without hesitation, always ready to fight alongside his fellow knights, always ready to give it all for the kingdom…

Always, until the bitter end, fighting for the glory of the King.

*Open thine eyes, and call forth what's BEYOND!*

Fate twisted and changed, and the entire world seemed to shake as the future was altered.

A blue spinning card floated down toward Yu's suddenly raising hand, power emanating from it and making the eerie creatures freeze in their tracks. The boy looked straight at it, as if in a trance, even more images coursing through his head as his eyes took into the card's design.

One side depicted a western knight of old, wielding a sword. His glasses reflected the dual-coloured mask design it had on the back it had on the back. Just under the knight's image, there was a single word written in English instead of Japanese, just under the knight's image, with the number zero written in front of it. A word that held a meaning of Power and ancient mysteries in it.

**SABER**

Instinctively, Yu spoke the word that suddenly came to his mind.

"Per…!"

A world the change the destiny of the world…

"…so…!"

And, this time, more than ever it had had before.

"…NA!"

The boy grinned, his eyes widening slightly as he crushed the card and was bathed in bluish-white flames, a mystic-looking summoning circle appearing under his feet.

The power that should have been called from within came instead from Beyond.

From beyond time and space.

A majestic figure emerged from the flames, a knight in white-silver armour over a black-blue bodysuit, his blonde hair shining under the eerie light of the TV world, the silver and blue sword he wielded in his hands seeming to shine with the glory of the Sun itself.

One of the shadows seemed to regain its courage and charged at the knight, who remained unfazed.

Then, his until then closed eyes OPENED.

In less than a second, the creature was dead, cut in half by a blade which moved at a speed no human could hope to follow.

The other two beasts roared in rage and charged at the knight, ready to avenge their fallen brethren.

The imposing being (For it was impossible to just call it a man) simply skewered one of the raging beasts with his sword, easily catching the other one by the tongue whit his armoured free hand, not even looking at it. Then, he simply SLAMMED the Shadow against the ground, with enough force
to turn its body into a black smear that quickly turned into nothingness.

The whole exchange hadn't taken more than 3 seconds.

Yu's confusion and absolute shock, which was shared by the stupefied forms of Yosuke and Teddie, increased by tenfold when the knight approached and knelt before him.

"Upon your summoning, I have come forth. Under the Class of Saber and the Arcana of the Fool, I will be your Sword and Shield against anything that stands before you." the knight raised his head, his aqua blue eyes seeming to see into his very soul. "I'm Gawain, knight of Camelot, and now your Persona, my king."

"I-I'm Y-Yu Na-Narukami" stuttered the boy as a greeting/introduction unsure of what else to say to the clearly otherworldly being.

"The Contract is sealed, then. I will serve you to the best of my abilities, Yu Narukami" vowed Gawain with a solemn look. "Merely call and I shall come to your aid, my king."

With that, the imposing knight vanished, fading away in a flurry of blue flames. Even so, the silver-haired boy could still feel its presence, silently watching and lingering in the back of his mind, as if waiting for his call before even talking or moving.

Finally, the 'spell' that had immobilized the other two members of the group seemed to break, shown by how Yosuke quickly ran towards Yu's side with an excitement-filled face.

"Wh-what the freaking hell was that?! How did you do it?!" asked the boy with absolute shock. "Di-Did I hear you say 'Persona'?! What was it-I mean, what did you even do?! And…did that guy call himself 'Gawain'?!"

"Ye-yeah, he did." muttered the silver-haired boy while looking at his hands with equal, if not more, shock than his friend.

It was to be expected, because, even though it wasn't a Japanese one, the legend from where that name came from was something that almost everyone in the world had heard at one point or another.

Gawain of Camelot, one of the Knights of the Round Table. One of the greatest warriors of the legendary King Arthur.

"Did you really somehow summoning a knight from myth?!!" it was clear that the other boy was more astonished by the idea than her let on. "Hey, how do you think that…?!!"

"Calm down, Yosuke! You're troubling Sensei!" suddenly interrupted Teddie while pushing the aforementioned boy aside.

"He-hey, I wasn't…! Wait, did you just call him 'Sensei'?" the boy's tone was full of incredulity as he watched the bear run at Yu's side.

"Gosh almighty, you're amazing Sensei! I'm one impressed bear!" excitedly exclaimed Teddie, all the while making exaggerated gestures to express his amazement. "I can't believe you were hiding such an amazing power! No wonder the Shadows were scared of you!" another realization seemed to hit the beat. "Don't tell me…are you the one who's able to bring people into this world?"

The boy nodded dumbly, unable to think of what to say as he kept staring into his hands. Whatever the hell he had done to call that 'Gawain' was making him feel a strange strain in his inside, as if a
headache was forming into the bad of his mind.

"Hah! That's what I thought! This is really something impressing!" declared the bear before addressing the last member of their group with a totally normal tone. "Don't you think so, Yosuke?"

"Dude, you call him Sensei and then don't show me any respect?!” growled said boy before making Teddie fall over his back, only for the bear to immediately spring back to his feet.

"So-sorry..."

"Well, anyways let's move on." sighed Yosuke with annoyance before walking forward. "If we keep this up then I think we'll be fine from here on out...so, let's get back to the investigation!"

With that Yosuke strolled in through the portal door to the liquor store. Sighing and trying to ignore the strange feeling inside of himself, Yu quickly followed the other boy inside, hoping that they didn't get into any more troubles. Teddie also followed them, once again from a safe distance.

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The interior of the store was dark, with various stacks of alcohol reaching the ceiling. Shelves were lined with bottles of various types of alcohol and brand. And, much like outside, there were whispering voices inside...only this time it was just one voice, and it was male.

"Saki, how many times do I have to tell you?!"

"Wa-wait, isn't that...Sempai's dad...?" murmured Yosuke with confusion, eve as Yu glanced around with a frown.

"You know what the neighbours say about you, right! Aren't you ashamed of yourself? You're the eldest daughter of a family who has owned this store for generations! Is it the money? Or did you meet some guy there?! Just tell me why you have to work THERE, of all places!"

"I...I can't believe this...She seemed like she had fun at work... She never said anything like this to me..." the boy trembled in confusion as he waked forward "You're telling me THIS was what Sempai had to put up with every day?!"

Suddenly, Yosuke walked over to the counter, having seen something that caught his eye. There, lying on the table, were many cut up photos. What got to Yosuke the most, but, was that all the photos...were of him and Saki. He picked one up and looking it over with confusion.

"It's... the photo we took the other day with the other part-timers at Junes...Wh-Why's it cut up like this...?"

Yu gave his friend a sympathetic look as he walked over to him; even as the boy picked another thing up, letting the boy see that it was a ripped-up movie ticket.

"Runway...Heart?" read the boy with a raising eyebrow, idly adjusting his glasses to mask his growing headache.

"I...gave Sempai that the other day..." Yosuke choked out with a pained and confused expression.

Yu turned to the boy and frowned once again, but before he could say anything, an eerily familiar voice echoed through the store, making him freeze in his tracks.

"I...never had the chance to say it..."
"Is that…Sempai's voice?!!" cried the brown-haired boy while looking around

"I always wanted to tell Hana-chan…"

"Huh…? M-me…?" stuttered Yosuke with hope in his eyes. Was this the confession he has been hoping for…?

"…that he was a real pain in the ass."

Yosuke's arms went slack and the picture in his hands fell onto the floor, the light disappearing from his eyes.

"Wha…?"

"I was nice to him just because he was the manager's son, that's all!"

"P-Pain in the ass…?" Yu cringed upon hearing the pain in his friend's voice.

"Who cares about Junes, anyway? Because of that store, our business is ruined, my parents hate me, and the neighbours' talk behind my back!" there was something…dark and twisted in the words that Saki's voice was speaking, something that made the new presence inside Yu shift in place. "I wish that everyone…would just DIE…"

"I-It's a lie…" muttered Yosuke in shocked disbelief. "This… can't be…Saki-sempai was not like that…!"

Everything the boy thought he knew about Saki was just shattered within the past few moments, and it was clear that it was deeply affecting him. Yu wished he could do something to help his friend, but he didn't know how…he didn't understand Yosuke that well yet. Still, that didn't mean he couldn't try to…

"It's so sad…" a distorted yet familiar voice mocked, making the three freeze in their tracks. "I feel so sorry for myself… Boo hoo!"

Yu, Yosuke and Teddie slowly turned around, their eyes widening at seeing something that shocked them to the core.

Standing in the corner of the room, half-hidden by the shadows…was another Yosuke, except that he had yellow-golden eyes and a dark and sinister aura emanating from his body. A twisted grin was on his face even as 'he' looked at the incredulous teens in amusement.

"Actually, I'M the one who thinks everything's a pain in the ass!" he said scornfully before letting out an ominous laugh.

"H-Huh?!" Teddie's pupils shrank in shock. "Two Yosukes…?!"

Said boy scowled, throwing all caution to the wind and running over to confront the other him.

"Hey who are you?!"

"Me? I'm you, of course!" laughed the doppelgänger while walking around the teen, who glared at him but didn't do anything else. "Which means that I know everything about you." the cruel smile on the copy's face widened. "You made everyone believe that you came here looking for Saki, right? Hah, what a fat load of crap! Truth is, you ONLY came here because you were looking for some fun, weren't ya? What else is there for you to do in this backwards shithole
Yu really didn't like where this was going, and the new soul inside of him agreed with him. This other 'Yosuke' seemed to be purposely trying to provoke his friend for some reason.

"Yo-you are wrong, tha-that isn't true at all!" strongly denied the boy, but his lookalike ignored him and kept going.

"You thought there was a chance you'd get lucky and become a hero! The death of your beloved Saki was just the excuse you needed to make the trip! Ahahaha!"

The brown-haired boy was starting to lose it, and the headache in Yu's head was getting worse by the moment.

"Stop spouting this crap!" angrily demanded Yosuke while shaking his doppelganger. "Just who the hell are you?!

"I already told you: I am YOU." the smile in the thing's face became feral. "I'm your Shadow. All that's hidden within yourself."

"Screw that! I don't know you!" Yosuke clenched his teeth, even as Yu's headache arrived to its peak. "You…!"

"My king, stop him! It's a trickery of that foul abomination!" echoed Gawain's voice inside his head, making his eyes widen.

"Yosuke, wai…!

"…you can't be me, you son of a bitch!" finished the frustrated boy, his friend's warning arriving too late, and then…

The Shadow started laughing. It started off as a quiet, dark chuckle, but soon it turned into a loud, maniacal laughter. His eyes shone brightly, almost menacingly.

"That's right! Say it again!"

A small bead of sweat rolled down the side of Yosuke's face as he stared at his Shadow, Yu being too busy grabbing his pained head to repeat the warning. "You…you're not me…! Yo-You're nothing like me!"

"Hmph." Yosuke's Shadow smirked. "Yeah, that's right…I am ME now. I'm not you anymore…see?!"

The boy stared at his Shadow, horrified when he noticed the dark aura emanating from it beginning to grow much darker. The aura soon engulfed him as blinding beams of light spewed dark waves of energy, several smaller bursts of darkness gathering over it.

"I-it's absorbing the smaller shadows in the area!" cried a terrified Teddie while running for cover. "The-they're fusing with him!"

Even as his warning ended, the display of light and darkness waned, and in the place of Yosuke's Shadow was now a large humanoid with spears for arms, one of a sickly golden and the other of a bloody crimson. His body seemed to be some sort of armoured bodysuit, with spiked boots and a spike-covered head, where a dark 'point' glowed in its right side
"I am a Shadow of your true inner self!" roared the abomination in which Shadow Yosuke had become, glaring down at his frozen 'original'. "And I'll crush everything that bores me... Starting with you!"

The humanoid monster lumbered over towards Yosuke, getting ready to use its deformed arms to impale him, the shocked and terrified boy seeming unable to even move. In that moment, Yu's headache seemed to recede, the boy gritting his teeth before raising his hand again.

"PERSONA!" once again, the card was crushed and the sound of shattering glass marked Gawain's appearance, the knight shooting forward at impressive speeds.

Gawain blocked the lance-arms of the creature and deflected them, forcing the Shadow off balance. Surprisingly, though, the being regained its balance with uncanny speed and tried to attack the Persona, who dodged the attack before engaging the abomination again.

"You won't touch my king's friend, abomination!" declared the knight while his sword clashed with the Shadow's arms.

'As I thought...this strange summoning has made my abilities to be severely limited.' darkly thought the Persona before pushing the enemy away with apparent ease, though once again being unable to do anything more than scratching it. 'Usually, I would have no problems with a demon of this level!'

"Out of my...way, pretty boy!" growled the creature before spinning through the air and forcing the Persona to take a step back, even as he used his peerless skill to stop BOTH arm-lances with the flat of his blade. "DAMN IT!"

"That jerk...he isn't me...!" denied the trembling Yosuke while shaking his head, even as the battle of otherworld existences kept going. "We're nothing alike...nothing!"

"That jerk you speak of comes from a place inside your heart, Yosuke." reasoned Teddie, trying to make the boy see the truth even as Yu stood protectively in front of them, never taking his eyes off the fight. "It's a part of you!"

"No, it's not!" growled Yosuke in utter denial.

"You put on a good show of pretending to be all carefree and happy-go-lucky but you're really terrified of being alone!" taunted the Shadow while ducking under a slash from Gawain, batting the knight away with his right spear-arm, but the Persona didn't even seem to feel pain while turning in the air and engaging in battle once again. "You would do ANYTHING just to gain some attention, even becoming the clown of their lives!"

"No...that isn't me!" once again denied the boy, unable to accept the dark reality.

Gawain, meanwhile, wasn't having an easy time. The shadow tried to skewer him by rapidly firing its lances in and out at the knight, which seemed almost to extent just to try and hit him. The Persona avoided them by running along the wall with impressive agility, trying to find an opening to exploit and cursing once again the restrictions placed upon him by the strange summoning.

"You're not me at all!" Yosuke screamed once again, Teddie shifting nervously in front of him, not knowing what to do.

The boy suddenly tried to run away, but his Shadow suddenly disengaged Gawain and landed in front of him, batting him against the surprised Yu, who in turn fell into Teddie. Just then, the
scared bear finally noticed ooze starting to form in corners and other places over the room.

"Oh no, he's attracting even more Shadows!" Teddie panicked as the dark beings slowly tried to find their way into the room. "Sensei, if we don't stop it soon, this'll get grizzly real fast!"

"I know everything about you!" the Shadow once again deflected Gawain's sword, the knight landing on a nearby beam before jumping once again at the abomination, only to be deflected once more, the surprised Persona noticing how the monster seemed to be getting STRONGER. "I know how pathetic you really are!"

As if summoned by the being's words, a pair of female Junes' workers appeared on the screens that were above them.

"Let's ask Yosuke for some help!" one of them said snidely.

"The prince of Junes?" the other asked, equally snide.

"He thinks everyone depends on him because he's the manager's son." the first one sneered

"What a loser!" the other laughed.

"You see that?! Everyone just barely tolerates you, and yet you still try to pretend that everyone's your friend!" taunted Shadow Yosuke, his dark aura growing even stronger.

"Shut the hell up!" demanded the boy while clutching his head

The Shadow leapt into the air once again, gaining an impressive amount of height and repeating the same attack of before, aiming to skewer Yosuke from above. The mad charge, but, was stopped at the last second by Gawain, who deflected the attack again with his sword, forcing the abomination to roll away before straightening itself, it's speed having grown noticeably.

"Your battle is with, me monster." growled the knight before engaging in a duel of assault and deflection with the Shadow, both his blade and the spear-arms of the creature moving so fast that they seemed to blur through the air, sparks flying everywhere.

"Here it comes!" declared a Yosuke that appeared in one of the screens. "Booyah!"

"But he took it the wrong way and now he thinks I like him…What an idiot." Saki's sneering voice declared.

"Living in the boonies bored you, so you decided to ask her out!" mocked Shadow Yosuke as he leapt away and tried to impale Gawain again, who dodged and weaved through all the attacks with unparalleled skill, but was still unable to strike a decent blow into the creature. "All you wanted was some cheap thrills!"

"You're wrong!" denied Yosuke yet again while trying to cover his ears. "You're wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong…!"

"You're better off dead!" the shadow made another attempt at Yosuke, but was stopped a third time by the shining figure of the Persona, even as Yu suddenly moved in front of his trembling friend. In unison, the knight and the boy reared back their fists, Gawain's armoured crashing hard against the Shadow's, sending it flying at one of the remaining beams, while Yu's once punched Yosuke in the same spot, having a similar effect that his Persona's.
"Oops. Wrong guy." said the silver-haired boy with an unrepentant tone, Teddie snickering because of it.

"Du-dude whaddya mean wrong guy?!" screamed a pained Yosuke while trying to get up. "Yo-you almost broke my jaw, dam…!"

"You loved her, didn't you?" Yu's sudden question seemed to freeze the other boy in his tracks. "Saki."

"Yeah..." admitted Yosuke while looking down in shame. "I…truly loved her."

"Then…isn't that enough?" questioned the boy while offering his friend a hand.

"I guess…you're right." muttered the brown-haired teen while accepting the offer.

"But she dumped ya!" smirked Teddie, making the boy glare at him.

"Shut up!" finally screamed Yosuke, his words seeming to echo through the TV world. "I knew it wasn't lying, but I was so ashamed that I didn't want to admit it." at the boy's words, his Shadow seemed to freeze mid-swing, Gawain don't even stopping to wonder why and taking advantage of the opening to cut a deep gash on the creature's chest, sending it flying back with a pained howl.

"To get along with others, I had to change the way I acted. Yeah, even I think I'm a pain in the ass sometimes…But my feelings for her were real. That thing's a part of me, right?" the boy sadly shook his head, even as Yu smiled at him and the zone around them seemed to shimmer, the silver-haired boy's Persona being covered in a bluish aura. "When you get down to it, all of this…is me."

"NO! AAAGGGHHHHH! YOU'RE SO FREAKING ANNOYING!" yelled Shadow Yosuke while getting up, blue static dancing about its body, which seemed to flicker in and out of existence, before glaring directly at Gawain's figure. "I'll kill you, dammed tin canned bastard!"

The arm-spears of the Shadow extended towards the knight with the speed of bullets, in a last ditch attempt to kill him.

The Persona didn't even move.

"Not today, monster." stated Gawain while letting out a deep breath.

The knight waited until both spears were close enough and then surprised the shadow by using his sword to make a large opening in between the two spears, dashing into the gap towards the now vulnerable Shadow.

"N-no stay back!" screamed the shadow, trying to withdraw its spears to defend itself.

It wasn't fast enough.

"You struggle in vain, monster! Begone!" roared Gawain as he closed the final gap between him and the Shadow.

The Knight of the Sun finally arrived before the monster's form and, before it could even scream again, cut off its right arm, quickly followed by its left, causing both spear-arms to clatter to the ground before vanishing away, black 'blood' shooting out of the pained monster's body. Before the shadow could even let out another scream of pain, however Gawain spun around and cleaved it in two, his blade shining with a yellow-orange radiance for a second.

The former lance-wielding shadow shrank away, reverting into a simple copy of Yosuke once
again.

The knight never stopped pointing it's sword at him.

Calmly, Yosuke walked over to his shadow and knelt down by its side, pushing his hand on each of his shoulders, causing it to look up at him.

"You are me." accepted the boy with a tired smile. "And I guess that I'm you, too."

Yosuke's Shadow smiled and nodded before being enveloped in a blue glow. It rose into the air before it burst into a wave of blue flames that surrounded Yosuke, making the boy grunt in pain as he felt SOMETHING connecting itself to his very soul.

A summoning circle formed itself around him and, before Teddie's and Yu's surprised eyes, a new form rose.

It was a man of spiky black hair, dressed in a tight-fitting and green armour-bodysuit. In his hands, there were two spears, which shined with a glow beyond human comprehension, much the same as Gawain's sword. The longer of the two was a bright crimson red and the other was dark-golden in appearance. The other and most notorious trait he had was a tiny beauty spot under his right eye.

The knight opened his orange eyes and knelt before the surprised Yosuke.

"My lord, I am Diarmuid Ua Duibhne, Knight of Fianna." stated the otherworldly being with a tone full of utmost respect. "Under the Arcana of the Magician and the Lancer Class, I will serve from now on as your Persona."

With that said, Diarmuid vanished and in his place appeared another card like the one that Yu had summoned before, the figure of a spearman of past times, with the number one shining just next to the word LANCER. The card floated down over Yosuke's body and disappeared into a gentle light, which settled inside his chest.

"He's my..."

"...Persona." Yu finished for him.

"Narukami. You really saved my ass. Thanks, dude." muttered Yosuke with a grateful nod, even as he felt as a strain had just been placed inside his body.

"Till next time, my king. Call me if you need me." bowed Gawain before vanishing, the silver-haired boy feeling the knight returning to the back of his mind. He also felt relief surge through his body for some reason, as if a great weight had been lifted from it.

The headache pounding at his head didn't stop, though.

After the whole ordeal with Yosuke's shadow, he and Yu decided to use Teddies' exit and return home, but not before promising the bear that they would come back, of course.

Quickly falling out of the TV, Yu landed again on one knee while Yosuke fell flat on his ass once more.

"Ow! My ass..." groaned the boy while rubbing his rear, trying to ignore the rising headache he was feeling.
"You guys came back!" cried Chie while bursting into tears, surprising both boys who, honestly, had almost forgotten about their friend thanks to everything that had happened.

"Uh…what's wrong with you?" asked Yosuke with confusion even as Yu shook his head.

"Don't act like you don't know!" growled the girl before throwing the cut rope at Yosuke. "The damn rope snapped off as soon as you guys left and I've been worried sick this whole time! You jerks; I can't believe you guys put me through this! You guys suck!"

"I'm so-sorry, Chie." Yosuke said apologetically while laughing nervously.

"Me too." nodded Yu while massaging his pained head. "We didn't mean to worry you, I swear."

"…Y-you owe me ten beefsteaks." Mumbled Chie while crossing his arms and looking at Yu.

"That was a quick recovery." thought Yu with sweatdrop.

"I want ten orders of beefsteak!" repeated the girl in a louder voice. "And you CAN'T say no, get it?!"

"Ye-yeah of course, that's cool!" quickly agreed Yosuke, trying to get Chie to stop crying. "That's a great way to say we're sorry! Right, Narukami?!!"

"Me too?" asked the other boy with confusion.

"He's getting me nikudon." said the brown-haired girl while wiping her eyes on her sleeves.

"Sure…you got it." agreed Yu with a soft nod, even as he took off Teddie glasses, doing his best to ignore the strange headache.

"Okay then…I forgive you." smiled Chie while both boys sighed.

At least things seemed to have calmed down.

Later, Yosuke and Yu were walking home through the Samegawa Flood Plain using their umbrellas to shield themselves from the rainy weather.

"Man, I'm beat…" groaned the brown-haired teen while shaking his head.

"Same here." agreed the other boy, the weird headache refusing to go away.

"…Saki and Ms. Yamano were thrown into that dangerous place, uh?"

Yu thought back to what Teddie had said to them before they came back to their own world.

"You wanna know what I think? I think that maybe the people who came in here were attacked by their Shadows, just like what happened with Yosuke!"

"If someone really is forcing people into the TV then we can't just ignore it." Declared Yosuke with an unusual determination. "We gotta figure who is doing it and make them stop!"

"Indeed. We made a promise, after all." stated the silver-haired boy, smiling softly as he did so.
"Well, you did anyway." sighed the other teen before grinning at him. "Hey...I think that, with you, I can really find the culprit and solve the case." Yosuke then held out his hand towards him. "I'll be counting on you, partner."

Yu only hesitated for a moment before shaking his hand, smiling at his new friend.

"Same here, Yosuke."

And behind both of them, the spectral figures of two knights, incredibly different and yet very similar, watched over their Masters with proud looks, waiting for the moment when they would be needed again.

And in the back of Yu Narukami's mind, a flame with the number 'One' burned to life and, slowly, another soul started to connect to it from Beyond…
Yu found himself glaring at the 'man' in front of him, this traitor who had killed his brothers.

'Brothers? But I don't have any brothers!'

"Stop this, Gawain." The man implored. "Please just stop."

"No, for Gareth and Gaheris... I will kill you... Lancelot." He growled at the black-armored knight opposite him.

'Lancelot? As in Sir Lancelot of the round table?'

Yu felt himself lunging at Lancelot, who met his sword with his own in a defensive posture.

"Gawain, I do not want to fight you!" Lancelot implored.

"Enough talk, I will have your head... for my brothers."

'Are these….Gawain's memories?' Yu wondered in confusion.

"Hoh, you think that the life of that Mongrel is something worth mentioning?" An arrogant voice asked.

Suddenly Yu found himself not watching from Gawain's perspective but as though it were a movie on a screen. He tried to look around and find the source of the voice but saw no one in the starry darkness around him, he was alone save for the memory of Gawain's that played in front of him.

"Don't bother; I see no reason to reveal myself to someone of your station, half-breed."

With that proclamation everything began to fall away and Yu felt himself awakening.

[04/16 Saturday, Yasogami High, Inaba]

When they arrived at school, Yosuke and Yu were talking about what they had seen on the Midnight Channel last night. Although Yu's thoughts were on the dream he had last night, he decided not to question Gawain on his memories because he felt it might be an invasion of his privacy, but Yu had asked if Gawain was alone within Yu's consciousness.

'I am not alone, my king, there is another. A Caster if I'm not mistaken, under the Magician
"Arcana, but he is dormant and silent for now, almost as if he is a statue waiting for life." Was the reply his Persona had given him.

"Did you see it?" Yosuke asked.

"Yeah, I did." Yu confirmed with a nod.

Their conversation stopped when Chie ran into the classroom out of breath as though she'd been running, she had a worried expression on her face.

"Chie, what's wrong?" The Junes boy questioned.

"Is Yukiko here?" Chie asked, concern for her friend coloring her voice.

"Sorry, she hasn't shown up yet." Yosuke replied.

"Crap! What should I do?" Chie asked worriedly.

"Did something happen?" Yu asked.

"I was watching the Midnight Channel last night..."

"Yeah, we were just talking about it." Yosuke interrupted her.

"I think I saw Yukiko on it." Chie said anxiously. "I've seen her in that kimono before. She wore it during that one interview. I've sent her a ton of texts but she hasn't responded."

"Tried calling?" Yu asked.

"It just goes straight to voice-mail."

"You don't think Yukiko..." Yosuke trailed off.

"Don't go there!" Chie yelled, earning her stares from the students who had arrived in class.

"Sorry. She's okay. She's probably just busy. Or she could've lost her cell."

"Well, do you think she could be helping her family out around the inn?" Yu asked.

"Yeah! That's gotta be it! I'll swing by there right now!" Chie said, walking towards the door to leave

"You're leaving? But schools about to start." Yosuke pointed out.

Chie stopped short of the door when her phone rang, she answered it quickly.

"Yes?" Chie said to her caller. "Yukiko! Thank God!"

"You're there!"

"Yeah, yeah! Okay."

"Oh, it's nothing. I'll text you later."

"What a relief!" Chie sighed as the call ended. "She's been busy 'cause a huge group came in without reservations."
"But if it wasn't Yukiko..."

"Then who was that on the Midnight Channel?"

Later school ended and the bell signaling home time rang. Yu and Yosuke were following Chie down the stairs; she had an open notebook in her hands and seemed to be reading it.

"What's that?" Yu asked.

"Whoa, your handwriting really sucks." Yosuke commented with slight surprise earning him a kick to stomach from Chie, which in turn got the attention of a short black haired girl who was putting up a poster for the music club.

"I took notes for Yukiko." Chie explained more to Yu than Yosuke.

"T-they look g-great..." Yosuke groaned, changing his tune as he collapsed.

"Careful on the way down." Yu said to Yosuke as he walked past him and looked at a poster for the basketball club.

"Hey! You the transfer student?" a voice asked.

Yu turned around and saw a boy with dark blue hair and gray eyes, wearing the standard Yasogami High school uniform. Next to him was a student with short brown hair, brown eyes and a brown Band-Aid on his nose. He was wearing the navy blue PE uniform instead of the standard uniform.

"That's right." Yu said.

"Have you played much basketball?" he asked.

"No, not really."

"Hey!" Chie called "Let's go!" Yu nodded and walked off to follow Chie.

"Tough luck, Ichijo" Yosuke said, quickly recovering and patting Ichijo's shoulder before running off too.

"Well let me know if you change your mind, new guy!" Ichijo called after Yu. "Even inexperienced sophomores are welcome!"

The trio walked into the electronics department at Junes and began looking at the TV. The only problem was that there far too many people around in the electronics department today. Because of this they couldn't go through the TV without being seen.

"It's really crowded today." Chie sighed.

"Hey, try sticking your hand in and see if you can get Teddie's attention." Yosuke whispered.

Yu gave one final glance around to see that no one was watching and stuck his hand inside the TV.
"Yeowch" Yu felt something bite his hand and immediately withdrew it.

"Dude, what happened?" Yosuke asked anxiously.

"Something bit me." Yu replied.

'It would appear that Teddie is certainly there.' Gawain commented 'Perhaps something has agitated him?'

"I-It left bite marks! Are you okay?" Chie asked, ignoring both of the Personas and seeing that there indeed teeth marks on Yu's hand.

"I think I'm dying." Yu deadpanned.

"No, you're not." Chie sweat dropped.

"Is that Chie I hear?" Teddie's voice asked. "What's up? Is this a new game?"

"Teddie, does it feel like anyone's in there?" Yosuke asked the bear.

"Who's anyone? I'm a lonely little bear like always." Teddie replied "This land feels so bear-ren."

"I get it!" Chie snapped impatiently. "So you're sure no one's there?"

"I-I'm not lying! My nose is running as good as ever!" Teddie replied quickly.

"Alright, no one is over there but yesterday we saw someone on Midnight Channel." Chie said "What's up with that?"

"Let's check it out again tonight." Yu replied, curious as to what was going on.

Later on that night Yu had decided to busy himself by making paper cranes and glanced at his clock and watched as it struck midnight. His room was dark and he was alone, plus it was a rainy night.

Then the Midnight Channel came on and Yu was shocked at what he saw. There clearly on the screen was Yukiko except she was wearing a pink ball gown which was decorated with roses. She was also wearing matching pink arm-length gloves with a golden tiara sitting atop her head. She was holding a microphone as she was hosting a TV show. She appeared to be standing near the entrance of a castle of some sort. Yu noted that the door was a black and red portal similar to the liquor store.

"Hi there, my name is Yukiko Amagi!" She exclaimed excitedly. "And tonight I'm gonna score myself a hot stud!"

Yu was shocked enough to drop the origami crane that he was currently working on.

"It's Princess Yukiko's Hunt for Her Prince Charming!" As she said this a sign appeared above her which said 'Princess Yukiko's Hunt for Her Prince on a White Horse.'

"And I came prepared! My lacy unmentionables are ready to go!" She said, patting the lower part of her dress. "And so is my heart!"

Yu felt his jaw drop and ignored Gawain who appeared behind him.
"It is her shadow, my king." Gawain stated as he manifested. 'That is not the Yukiko you know but her shadow, her true inner feelings.'

"Yeah." Yu agreed and continued watching.

"You see, I'm out to tame me a whole pack of the best studs there are." Yukiko's shadow clenched its fist as it kept talking. "Well, here I go!"

With the show over Yukiko's Shadow ran off into the castle, the camera panned upwards before the Midnight Channel ended. Yu remained silent, not quite sure what to say at what he'd seen, his silence was interrupted by his phone ringing.

"H-Hey, did you see that?!" Yosuke asked apparently just as stunned as Yu was judging from his tone.

"I kind of wish that I'd taped it." Yu replied looking at the dead screen.

[04/17 Sunday, Dojima Residence, Inaba]

After getting dressed, Yu walked downstairs and found Nanako up and watching the TV surprisingly early.

"Oh, good morning!" She greeted him.

"Good morning." Yu replied, still awkward around his cousin. "Where's your dad?"

"He left already." Nanako replied. "He said he's gonna be late. Are you going somewhere?"

"Yeah, I was going to hang out with my friends." Yu replied, although he was having second thoughts about leaving Nanako alone.

"Don't worry about me. I can hold down the fort." Nanako said as if she'd read his mind.

Yu stayed for a couple of seconds, watching the little girl change the TV to the weather channel.

"High pressure is moving in, so we should have clear skies all day. Let's see what to expect for the —"

"It's gonna be sunny. I should do some laundry." Nanako said standing up and going to start the laundry. "See you tonight."

"See you later then." Yu replied leaving the house.

[04/17 Sunday, Dojima Residence, Inaba]

"My lord, if I may. This is a bad idea.' Diarmuid said, appearing in spirit form. 'Those weapons will get you into trouble if you continue to wave them around in public.'"
"It'll be fine" Yosuke said, attempting to reassure his Persona. "We just need to wait for Chie to come and we'll be gone before anyone notices I have these."

"Notices you have what?" Yu asked curious as to what could have Diarmuid concerned.

"I found some stuff we can use in my closet, check these out." Yosuke grinned, pulling out what looked like a machete and katana.

'You should go to the counter and order a drink, Sir Narukami.' Diarmuid suggested in a serious tone. 'I do not believe that you wish to be here in a few seconds.'

'I agree, if my knowledge of this country's laws from what I've seen in your mind is correct then we should distance ourselves from Yosuke for now.' Gawain suggested, agreeing with the knight of Fianna.

Deciding not to question it Yu just went along with what Diarmuid had suggested and went to get another drink seeing as his had run out anyway.

"Why'd you do that, Diarmuid?" Yosuke demanded of his Persona.

'Because of this.' Diarmuid sighed as a police offer appeared.

"Suspicious young teenage boy found armed with multiple weapons." The officer said into his radio.

"Hey, wait! This isn't what it looks like!" Yosuke protested.

"You're coming with me, kid." The officer said, forcing Yosuke to drop the weapons and cuffing him.

"Wait I wasn't doing anything! I was just messing around!" Yosuke protested. "You see me and-"

"Save it for the station."

"Aw man..." Yosuke groaned as more Police officers arrived and took him away to a car to be taken down to the station.

After getting his new milkshake Yu could only watch as Yosuke was taken away.

'Was he unaware of Japanese law concerning weaponry in public?' Gawain asked.

"No, I'm pretty sure he was just being an idiot." Yu replied bluntly.

'I should go with him and make sure he does not get himself into more trouble.' Diarmuid bowed, waved, and vanished presumably back to Yosuke's mind.

Yu spotted Chie moving through the crowd and called after Yosuke after watching him be taken away by the police in the squad car.

"What's going on here?" Chie asked herself "Yukiko's..."

"It's alright." Yu said, putting his hand on her shoulder and surprising her.

"Narukami, you weren't arrested with Yosuke?" she asked.

"No, I left him alone to get a drink on the advice of his Persona." Yu explained. "Next thing I
know he's being arrested. Probably because of those fake weapons he was waving around."

"Aggh, that idiot!" Chie growled. "Let's go to the police station and see if we can't clear this up or something. He'd better hope the cops arrest him cause if they don't he's going to be getting another 'critical hit to the nads'."

[04/16 Saturday, Police Department, Inaba]

When they arrived at the station, Chie was frustrated even further to find that Yosuke was going to be held for another two hours to be questioned and warned about the consequences of waving fake weapons out in public. So they waited in the lobby for nearly two hours waiting for Yosuke to be released. Chie had told him how Yukiko had gone missing and Yu suspected that she was in the TV.

Yu decided to keep himself occupied by teaching Chie to make origami cranes like he could; she wasn't very good to say the least. How she managed to make a crane look like a cross between a giraffe and pig was a total mystery to him. Luckily they had time, so he patiently kept guiding her through the steps until she managed to make something that at least looked like a bird.

"Man, I hope you've learned your lesson." Came the voice of Adachi, his uncle Dojima's partner. "If you weren't the friend of Dojima's nephew and it wasn't your first offense with fake weapons to boot then you wouldn't have gotten off so lightly."

"I'm sorry." Yosuke said apologetically.

"Yosuke!" Chie called out to him.

"Huh, Chie and Narukami?"

"It's Yukiko, she's gone missing!" Chie exclaimed. "She was definitely home last night, but no one's seen her since then, oh and…"

Chie kicked Yosuke in the balls again, causing him to fall to his knees.

"Aw critical hit to the nads, what was that for?" the boy groaned as he tried to recover from the blow.

"For wasting time you dumbass" Chie growled at Yosuke.

"We already know about this, Yukiko's family has asked us to start looking for her." Adachi intervened in the situation. "Are you her friends?"

"Yes..."

"Can you remember something unusual happening lately?" Adachi asked, taking out his notebook
"Did she seem troubled by anything?"

"Like what?" Yosuke asked standing up finally recovering from the kick.

"The murder at the inn, that's were Ms. Yamano was staying before the incident." Adachi elaborated. "It seems she was such a high maintenance guest that Yukiko's mom collapsed from the stress of trying to keep her happy, not to mention she had some harsh words for her as well."

"See, some of the guys have a theory." Adachi paused and looked around to see that no one else
was eavesdropping. "The rumor here is that Yukiko's hiding out because she did something to get back at Ms. Yamano to avenge her mother."

"Oh come on?" Chie yelled angrily. "You think Yukiko's the murderer?!

"Relax, it's just a theory floating around-" Adachi attempted to calm her down.

"Like hell it is!" Chie attempted to charge at Adachi, only for Yu and Yosuke to restrain her.

"Chie!" Yu grabbed onto her left side to restrain her.

"Calm down!" Yosuke said grabbing onto her right side.

"I-I'm not saying." Adachi stuttered.

"Hey, what's going on here?!" Dojima shouted as he and a lot of other officers came to see what the commotion was about.

"Let's go." Yu said commandingly.

"Come on, Chie."

"Yukiko..." Chie's strength appeared to drain away as her concern for her friend overwhelmed her and tears flowed from her eyes. "Yukiko would never....."

"What did you tell her?" Dojima demanded, glaring at Adachi.

"I just... nothing, really." Adachi's protest died in his mouth as he let out a long suffering sigh.

When the trio had left the station, Chie turned around to face the boys with a determined look on her face.

"Listen, guys, we've gotta save her."

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"Didn't we... see this place on the Midnight Channel last night?" Chie asked, staring up at the castle which had been featured on the Midnight Channel's broadcast of Princess Yukiko.

"I think you might wanna wait out here, Chie." Yu suggested to the meat loving girl.

"Nope, I'm going in here!"

"Once her mind's set there's no changing it." Yosuke sighed before looking at the bear. "Teddie, is Yukiko in there for real?"

"There is no doubt about it! My snout has even locked onto her scent!" Teddie puffed up with certainty.

With that final affirmation Chie charged headfirst into the castle.

"Hey, don't go running off on your own!" Yosuke yelled as Chie ran out of sight and into the castle. "Damn it!"

The two boys quickly pursued her into the castle, as did Teddie who did not want to be left alone.
"Don't leave me behind!"

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"Yukiko! Yukiko!" Chie called out to her friend hoping she'd answer, however all her calling out did was attract some sort of twin shadows.

"She's totally blind without her own pair of glasses." Yosuke sighed.

"Yosuke, let's go." Yu summoned his Arcana and crushed it. "Persona!"

"Let's rumble, Persona!" Yosuke leapt up and punched his Arcana, summoning Diarmuid.

The White Knight of the Sun appeared and leapt into battle, swiftly destroying three shadows with ease, Yu noticed that his headache returned and rubbed his head in pain.

"Nicely done, Sensei!" Teddie complimented.

Diarmuid twirled Gae Dearg in his hand before charging into the fray. The Knight of Fianna attempted to summon his other spear Gae Buidhe but was shocked when it did not heed his call; as such he was smashed out of the way by the Trance Twins which flew at Gawain who quickly sliced them in two.

"Yosuke, you've got a lot to learn." Teddie admonished.

"Man, all I get is crap from you."

"Strange, my Gae Buidhe refused to materialize." The knight of Fianna commented, destroying a shadow that got close with a quick stab.

"I believe it may be this strange method of summoning." Gawain stated, landing next to him. "For some reason our greater powers and Noble Phantasms are restricted."

"For what reason?"

"I know not, I have a theory but cannot be certain without more information."

Before the two could speculate more they were interrupted by Yu.

"Let's go!" Yu commanded, running ahead. "Gawain, you take point."

"Very well." Gawain nodded and readied his blade, destroying any shadows in the way with his superhuman prowess.

"Diarmuid, guard us from the back so they don't hit us from behind" Yosuke called out to his persona.

"Very well, my lord."

The Lancer acknowledged the command and turned around, using Gae Dearg to destroy a number of Trance Twin shadows who were attempting to be sneaky. Attempting, being the key word.

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After managing to get to the second floor, the four males and Teddie destroyed shadow after shadow trying desperate to find Chie who had run off into the castle. They inspected room after
room until they finally saw an open door and heard voices coming from it.

"Yukiko's hot, sweet, and her skin is like totally perfect. Guys can't leave her alone." A distorted version of Chie's voice said. "But when I heard that Yukiko is actually jealous of me... Man, did I get a charge out of that."

"Oh crap, is that what I think it is?" Yosuke groaned.

"It must be her shadow." Diarmuid said after destroying another shadow. "My lord, we should hurry, she is in trouble."

"Right."

The boys all ran towards the door, the voices never stopping their 'discussion'.

"See, truth is if I wasn't around, Yukiko couldn't do anything, she's nothing without me." The shadow kept going. "Because I am the one... who's truly the top dog around here!"

"Shut up! That's now how I feel!" Chie denied. "You're a liar!"

Suddenly Yu, Yosuke, Teddie and the Personas all burst into the room.

"Hey Chie, you alright?" Yosuke called out to the girl who was facing down herself.

"Hey, that's..."

"...her shadow." Gawain finished for his master, readying his sword.

"I get the feeling this will end badly." Diarmuid said readying his own weapon.

"No, just stay there, don't come near me!" Chie demanded from the boys. "It's lies, it's all lies!"

"You're not safe!" Yu yelled, running at her with Yosuke.

"You idiot!"

Yu and Yosuke were cut off from Chie by seven Lying Hablerie shadows which had a black and white striped pattern. A large number of Trance Twins descended from the ceiling, forcing Gawain and Diarmuid back to back.

"Damn it! There are so many of them!"

"This is not looking good." Gawain sighed. "If only I could access my Noble Phantasm, taking out this many monsters would be child's play."

"Indeed, knight of the sun." Diarmuid agreed, readying for battle alongside his counterpart.

"If we are not careful our quest will fail right here."

"No, you're wrong..." Chie fell onto her hands and knees trying to keep tears out of her eyes.

"Are you really just gonna continue to ignore me?" The shadow asked smugly. "Pretend that I don't exist?"

"Shut up! You aren't real, you aren't real." Chie yelled, trying to block her shadow out.
"You've gotta be strong!" Yu yelled, trying to encourage the girl.

"She's a liar!" Chie insisted, covering her ears. "That isn't me!"

Shadow Chie began cackling as she began merging with the shadows that had gathered and was enveloped in a dark aura. When it cleared there stood some sort of hundred-handed creature that was wearing Chinese looking armor.

"I am a Shadow...of your true inner self..."

"Chie!" Yosuke yelled the girl's name as she screamed at the sight of her shadow's new more monstrous form. Diarmuid leapt into action, destroying the minor shadows that remained in order to clear the way.

As Chie's shadow made to bring one of its fists down on her Yosuke suddenly ran at her, grabbing her and rolling with her out of the way of the attack.

"Don't get in my way!"

The created then sent four fists to crush the two; Diarmuid was too occupied with destroying the minor shadows to help them. The boy and girl closed their eyes and waited for their doom, only it did not come. When they opened their eyes they saw Gawain standing into front of them and watched as the four arms simply disintegrated, having been sliced to ribbons by Gawain's sword.

"So you're gonna annoy me too?" The Shadow stated with irritation. "Then I'd better teach you a little lesson."

"You may try, monster." Gawain growled at the shadow.

The shadow sent a fist to attack Gawain; it was larger than the others and was intended to crush the knight. However the Saber class Persona was able to destroy the attack but was left breathing heavily as his master's headache began to grow.

"Beariffic, sensei!" Teddie complimented.

Shadow Chie sent more fists at Gawain only for Diarmuid to appear in front of him, the Lancer tried to use his spear to block the attack and did catch a few of the fists, until the shadow sent more of them with greater force which destroyed Diarmuid's guard sending him as well as his master flying backwards, releasing Chie from his protective grip.

The Lancer suddenly found himself caught in the shadow's grip as multiple massive hands grabbed him and began squeezing him.

"You're still there? I wish you'd die already." Shadow Chie commented as if only now noticing that her counterpart was still alive "I promise to treat Yukiko very well....as my personal punching bag that is!"

"Let her... be..."

"I'm the one who can't do anything on my own. I'm the one who's pathetic." the shadow continued its taunting. "But Yukiko truly needs me, that's the only reason I keep her around. I can't lose her."

"Chie... be smart... don't let her trick you!" Yosuke said as he weakly struggled to stand up.
"Silence!"

"Yosuke!" Chie yelled worriedly as another hand from her shadow wrapped around the boy's neck, stopping him from speaking.

"Release him and fight, demon!" Diarmuid demanded, struggling to break free.

"Shut up!" The shadow responded by squeezing the Lancer tighter.

"Gawain!"

The knight of the sun acknowledged his master's call and rushed to free Yosuke only to be blindsided by Chie's Shadow. The multi-armed creature sent more of its many arms to assault the knight. Luckily Gawain destroyed one arm that was coming from behind, however he failed to see another fist which smashed into him from the right. This left him open to more attacks, which smacked into him one after the other relentlessly until the shadow finally tossed him aside.

'This is bad, I've taken too much damage and my master cannot sustain me forever.' Gawain thought to himself as he stood up and noticed that his body was flickering with blue static. 'I should retreat; my master would be in an even worse position should he have no prana at all to work with.'

"Apologies, my king, I can aid you no further." Gawain apologized as he dematerialized.

"Damn it" Yu cursed as he felt the persona return to his mind.

"Oh, and for your information I'm not trying to trick her." The shadow spoke to Yosuke "These are my true colors, like it or NOT!"

The shadow smashed the ground with one of its fists and suddenly all of them were surrounded by darkness. Yu, Yosuke and Diarmuid could hear the voices of Chie and her shadow throughout the darkness.

"Yukiko is so pretty."

"The boys go crazy over her."

"This... This is me?" Chie's voice asked in the dark as they heard the Shadow chuckle.

"Yes... these are the voices of the feelings you have. The words that you keep bottled up... deep down inside."

"Without me around, Yukiko would be nothing."

"She can't do anything."

"If it weren't for me, she'd be nothing."

"No... no, it's not..." Chie's shame and regret were plainly audible as she was now unable to deny anything that was being said. "This... is...this is how I really feel? Oh..."

"So what if it is true? Who cares?" Yosuke shouted from the darkness, stopping Chie from speaking.

"You're still her friend, aren't you?" Yu asked the girl.
The girl let out a small gasp as she heard them, from wherever she was. Memories of all the good times she had with Yukiko began flashing before her eyes as warmth returned to her.

"Yukiko... look, they might be right but still... you and me... we'll always be friends!" Chie then glared up at where her Shadow last was, as she spoke the darkness around them dispersed, revealing the room they were fighting in. "Listen... you're a part of me that's true... you're a voice I pretend that doesn't exist." The girl slowly began to stand up as her courage began to build. "You're the pathetic part of me... but... that's still a part of me! Isn't that right?"

The Shadow shuddered and let out a pained groan as blue static rippled through her body and her fists all began clenching and trembling in pain.

"That's it!" Yosuke encouraged, causing the shadow to increase its grip on his throat.

"Ooooh... cut the crap! Are you seriously going to acknowledge my existence and just accept me?" the shadow demanded angrily as it sent a fist at her.

Chie flinched but was spared the attack when Yu jumped in front of her and was carried back by the attack and sent rolling across the ground.

"Narukami!" Chie yelled, worried for the boy who taken a blow for her.

"Alright, that's it." Yosuke said glaring at Chie's shadow which glared back while flickering and lifted him in the air by his neck with a shadowy hand.

"I'm gonna rip you to pieces." The shadow growled angrily, using her multiple hands to try and crush Yosuke.

"Curse you!" Diarmuid tried desperately to break free and save his master but could not muster up enough force to destroy the hand that was gripping him.

"Yosuke!" Chie cried as he was lifted higher and his neck squeezed tighter.

"Oh no, oh no!" Teddie panicked. "Yosuke's a goner"

Yu heard Margret's voice in his head.

"My guest, there is something that may help you, you may borrow the weapons and abilities of your Persona for a short time, to do this you simply need to focus on the Persona in question and say 'Include':"

"Borrow?" Yu felt something. "Ok! Include: Gawain!" As he said this Excalibur Galatine materialized in his hands. The sword felt surprisingly light and glimmered like sunlight.

"A sword?" Yosuke questioned even as the hand from Chie's shadow grasped his throat.

"Wow, how'd you do that, Sensei?" Teddie asked in awe.

'My king, this Include method appears to have lent you Galatine.' Gawain said. 'It appears to use less Prana than summoning me completely does, but it most likely comes with its own risks; please allow me to guide you.'

'Alright, just tell me what to do.' Yu thought back to his Persona as he began charging at the shadow.

'Go left.'
Yu dodged to the left, deftly avoiding a fist that attempted to strike him.

"Back!"

The boy jumped back and narrowly avoided a fist that smashed in front of him, he quickly ran around it zigzagging around the fists the shadow was using to try and crush him, listening to every instruction that Gawain was giving him.

Within moments he closed in and destroyed the arm that was holding Yosuke.

"Thanks bro, I owe ya." Yosuke coughed as his partner gave him thumbs up before charging towards Diarmuid and freeing him as well.

"My thanks."

"Don't think you've won!" the shadow yelled sending a large fist at the two which was dodged.

'Now my king, leap on it and run along the arm!' Gawain yelled. 'Strike now while it is vulnerable!'

Yu nodded and leapt upon the fist and began running along it towards the shadow.

"Not so fast!" The shadow sent multiple fists to try and intercept Yu.

"Diarmuid, cover him." Yosuke ordered his persona who nodded.

"At once." The Lancer leapt and landed alongside Yu, destroying any of the fists that got close.

The shadow tried to stop Yu by sending fists form every direction; unfortunately Diarmuid was quick enough to destroy each one as they came.

"GET LOST!" The shadow screamed and flung Yu into the air using the arm that he was running along.

In the few seconds that he was in the air Yu realized that that the shadow was still vulnerable in its panic to regain its composure.

"I will assist you." Diarmuid said leaping up to save Yu from his fall.

"No, throw me towards it." Yu ordered much to the Heroic Spirit's shock. "If you throw your spear at the same time to destroy anything it sends at me as well as hit it directly, then I can finish it off while it's off balance."

Diarmuid considered the plan and realizing that they had no time assented to the plan and with all the force he could muster grabbed onto Yu's shirt and tossed him towards the shadow.

"I have you now!" the shadow yelled sending a pair of fists at the boy with the intent of crushing him from both sides.

"No, we have you." The shadow was surprised as Diarmuid threw Gae Dearg with all of his strength. The red spear flew and destroyed the left arm which was in the way of its flight path, it kept going and impacted straight where the abomination's heart should have been, cracking its armor.

Yu meanwhile surfed along the remaining arm and as he closed in drove Galatine into the shadow's head and pulled it downwards with his momentum, finishing it off once and for all.
As it fell apart Chie's Shadow returned to her original for as a doppelganger of the girl whom she represented.

"It's true." Chie admitted looking at her shadow. "You're me and I'm you."

The shadow smiled and nodded before bursting into a wave of blue flames that surrounded Chie, the girl gasped in surprised and flinched as she felt something connecting itself to her very soul.

A summoning circle formed itself around her and a new form rose. In it appeared a man with long tied back red hair. He also wore traditional Chinese clothing that looked like flames.

"Girl, I am Li Shuwen, the demon fist master" The Persona declared giving off an intimidating aura. "Under the Arcana of the Chariot and the Assassin Class, I now am your Persona. My fists shall crush any who dare stand in your way."

With that declaration, Li Shuwen vanished and in his place appeared a card, on it was a black robed figured wielding a pair of daggers, the figure of an assassin, with the roman numerals for the number seven shining just next to the word ASSASSIN.

"What's this?" The girl asked as the card floated down to Chie's palms and rotated just above them.

"It's a Persona." Yu informed her as Galatine vanished from his hands.

"So this is my..."

"That's right." Yosuke said as Diarmuid propped him up.

"I have….a persona." The card then disappeared into a gentle light, which settled inside of her.

A little later the group had retreated to the exit near the stack of TVs that lead to the real world. The Personas all stood nearby in spirit form watching over their masters along with Teddie.

"I…..I'm feeling even worse than the last time I came in here." Chie complained, rubbing her eyes and squinting. "My head feels like it's gonna split open... are you guys okay?"

"It's thanks to these." Yu motioned to his glasses.

"That's right, you're not wearing the glasses." Yosuke realized.

"Oh yeah... what's with those glasses? Did your eyesight go bad?"

"Man, you didn't notice until now? How panicked were you?"

"Tum de dummm! I got a pair ready for Chie too. Here you go!" Teddie handed the kung-fu girl a pair of yellow glasses which she took and put on.

"Whoa! What the-!? This is awesome, it's like the fog doesn't exist!"

"Why didn't you whip those out earlier if you had them?"

"I made them right now! You didn't tell me she was coming! It was all so sadden! I mean, sudden!"

"Huh...so that's the trick. I was wondering how you guys could see where you were going. Hey, is it alright if I keep these?"
"Fo' sho!" Teddie confirmed with a grin.

"We'll have to stop here today. But I'll be back with these puppies!" Chie grinned. "You guys better not come here without me, got it?"

"Yeah, let's all promise each other: Nobody goes in alone. It's way too dangerous." Yosuke suggested. "If we don't work together, we won't be able to solve the case or save Yukiko, right?"

"You're right." Yu agreed with a nod.

"Yeah, I agree. I promise too."

"Alright, so from tomorrow on, we'll try and come here as much as we can after school, and that includes days off. Hey... would you mind being our leader? You were the first to get this power, and you're way better in a fight than either of us. I think it's best for all of us if you set the pace of the investigation, and we follow your lead. I'm cool playing second banana."

"Sure, no problem."

"I had a feeling you'd say that. I mean, I'm more the advisor type, you know? An idea man, not an executive."

"I'm with Yosuke. If you're the one calling the shots, I'd feel a lot more comfortable about this."

"I'm with Yosuke too. If you're the one calling the shots, my pillow will be a lot more comfortable at night."

"Teddie, would you please stop talking? I'm really on edge right now..."

At the back of his mind Yu felt something connect to him, while Gawain felt a bit of his power return to him, it wasn't much but it was certainly better than nothing.

"Ok, let's get some rest for today so we're ready for tomorrow." Yosuke suggested. "And don't forget to check the weather forecast. It gets foggy after a lot of rain, so let's keep an eye out."

"Hold on." Yu interrupted. "Before we leave there's one more thing we need to take care of."

"Uh, sure. What is it?" The summoner of Lancer asked.

"You remember what I did in the fight with Chie's shadow, how I borrowed Gawain's sword?" Yu asked the two.

"Yeah what did you call it? Include?"

"That's it; I'm going to teach the both of you how to do it." Yu stated "It's riskier because we can't take as much damage as our Personas can but it saves our energy for the bigger fights. We might have had an easier time if we'd saved our energy for Chie's shadow. If we keep our Personas out too long we get a headache and eventually they'll vanish and we'll be in a tight spot."

"I get it, so if we fight by borrowing our Personas weapons we can save the big guns for major fights. Like Yukiko's shadow, something tells me that we'll be fighting it whether we want to or not." Yosuke commented.

"Alright, first things first, summon your Arcana but don't crush them." Yu instructed the boy and girl who did so. The Cards appeared above their hands, awaiting command. "Now focus on your Personas, then say 'Include' and their name."
"Ok, here goes" Chie took a deep breath "Include... Li Shuwen."

The card in her hand dissolved into blue sparkles which enveloped her body.

"Whoa, I can feel it." Chie gasped, looking at her hands. "It's like I've been doing this all my life!"

"Alright, my turn. Include: Diarmuid!" In Yosuke's hands appeared not one but two spears, one red and the other yellow.

"Fascinating, it seems Gae Buidhe answered my master's call when it would not for me." Diarmuid noted. "I wonder why..."

"I find myself unable to use my technique 'No Second Strike'." Li Shuwen commented. "That girl can't either, she has my knowledge of martial arts but my more powerful techniques are sealed. Perhaps it is different in your case because neither of your spears require invocation for their abilities to be used?"

"You could be right about that." Diarmuid conceded. "But that does not explain why I could not even summon the spear."

"Well, I get the feeling that we'll find out on this journey one way or another." Li Shuwen smirked. "Either way I sense many strong opponents await us, personally I find myself excited at the prospect of being able to fight again."

"I believe that this Grail War will reveal all in time." Gawain put in. "There is much we do not know, something else besides this war is afoot."

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After teaching Chie and Yosuke the Include ability the trio left the TV World and decided to rest at the food court.

Yu stared at Chie as she slumped in her seat; they both sat in silence in the food court. The Saber summoner glanced over to where Yosuke was standing. The boy was currently busy with customers after his father had spotted him and asked him to start helping out.

"He looks kinda busy right now..." Yu said as he tried to start a conversation with Chie.

The short-haired girl didn't say anything for a moment; Yu was about to try and say something else until Chie spoke up.

"I'm so pathetic..." Yu gave Chie a confused look. "The next time it gets foggy over here...it's possible Yukiko will die..." Chie held her drink tightly in her hands, fingers pressing against the thick paper container with enough strength to make dents form. "And... and I won't be able to do anything... useless..."

"You're far from useless, Chie." Yu said, reaching out to the girl.

"When we go back to save Yukiko... we need your help to do it. You're not useless at all." Chie stared at him, her eyes wide; the glassy look in them began to fade as she weakly smiled.

"Thanks." She chuckled and Yu watched as the girl put her hand into her pocket. "You know... in exchange for that, I gotta show you something..."

"What is it?"
"My dog." Chie giggled a bit as she opened her phone and showed it to the boy. "He's a real porker, huh? He stinks like nobody's business too." The picture Chie showed him was of herself and a large dog. The dog's fur was brown and white, and his tongue was hanging out from his mouth as he gave a goofy grin towards the camera. "But if it wasn't for this guy... I may have never met Yukiko. He's the one who made our friendship possible."
[04/18 Monday, Velvet Room, Inaba]

School had been cancelled today for some reason that the staff remained tight lipped about. As such Yu Narukami decided to go the Velvet Room and see if Marie wanted to go outside. Sure enough the unfriendly looking girl was surprised to see him at all.

"Huh…? You came. I'm surprised, I didn't think you were interested" The mysterious girl said "Look, I'm sure you already know, but I want you to take me somewhere. It's small, dark and The Nose never says anything. I'm really not supposed to leave the room, but Margaret said it'd be okay if I went with you. I, uh...Well, never mind. So, will you take me somewhere?"

His hunch was correct it seemed that Marie did indeed want to go out. He had agreed to go to rescue Yukiko later this afternoon so he had plenty of time to show Marie around.

"So…..will you take me somewhere?"

"Sure" Yu nodded.

"Really?" her eyes widened apparently she expected him to just ignore her and leave her here, but he was genuinely interested in the girl and wished to know her better. "...Don't you think you're giving in too easily? Well whatever let's get going already."

After exiting the Velvet Room and returning to the real world in the shopping district, Yu decided to begin the tour by going for a stroll through the district and ended up stopping in front of Souzai Daigaku a small store that sold freshly cooked food such as Skewers and croquets.

"Phew. I can finally breath now, it's stuffy in that car" Marie let out a breath of relief "You know there's a lot of stuff that I've never noticed before….. a Steak Skewer?...Hey, lady I want one of those skewer things."

" Oh, hello. That'll be 320 yen, please." The lady's tone was very polite despite Marie's slightly demanding tone.

"Thwee hunnert twin...Bleh. That's hard to say. You can't eat without money?" Marie asked perplexed.

"Don't worry I can pay for it" Yu suppressed a chuckle at Marie's difficulty saying numbers.

"You have money!?...That's awesome. You're awesome." Marie looks surprised, although Yu was not sure whether it was because he had money or at the concept of money.
All of a sudden Yosuke showed up coming from the south shopping district.

"Yo Narukami, getting your on huh?" Yosuke greeted cheerfully as Diarmuid appeared in his transparent form.

'Sir Gawain' Diarmuid greeted the other knight.

'Sir Diarmuid' Gawain returned the greeting 'It would seem that my master experiences the dream cycle as if we were master and servant in a Grail War Yet there are no Command Seals and I sense no connection to the Holy Grail almost as if it is not there. Also he asked whether I was alone inside his mind, I feel the presence of another heroic spirit but for all intents and purposes it remains dormant like a statue or someone waiting to be awoken. Nothing I do even stirs the spirit.'

'Unusual indeed, if this is a Holy Grail War then why do we lack a connection to it and why restrict us so? Usually we would do battle but these circumstances have us ally with each other. The Grail is necessary for us to maintain our existence along with a prana supply from our master yet we need only the latter to become physical in that other world. The drawback is that we require a steady supply of prana maintain our forms and the longer we do battle more of our masters prana we drain.'

'If we are not careful we could leave our masters in a bad situation without the ability to aid them.' Gawain nodded 'but did you notice? After the battle with Chie's shadow? The supply of prana within our master's seemed to grow, if I had to wager a guess I'd say it probably means that we can remain longer, in addition I felt the technique I call Blade of the Devoted return to me, almost as if it had remained out of reach until now.'

'Yes I understand what you mean; I felt my skill 'Eye of the Mind' return to me after that battle as well. It would seem that as we defeat these larger shadows our abilities and skills are unlocked. Perhaps at some point even our ultimate Noble Phantasms may return.'

'Yes I believe your theory to be sound, but the question is why put us through such a restriction in the first place?' Gawain pondered 'Would it not be easier if we could fight with all our strength.'

'It is indeed a mystery, perhaps to it is do with our master's prana supply being very small at the moment' Diarmuid sugested watching his master as Gawain nodded thoughtfully.

"Hey, don't worry! I got a little extra in my last pay check." Yosuke said with a wink as he chose to stand instead of taking a seat at the table "Three steak skewers! One for each of us."

"Oh my, business is booming!" the Lady at the store grinned "Just a moment, please."

The lady turned her back on the trio, within a few moments she turned back around with three freshly cooked steak skewers and handed them to the three. The three ate their steak skewers together, though for some reason Yosuke chose to remain standing as he ate.

"Whew" Yosuke let out a breath after finishing his skewer "Is that a bellyful or what! This place always has huge portions."

After a few moments of letting his stomach settle after the meal, the boy turned his attention to Marie.

"So, Marie-chan, what do you think of the local specialty?"

"It's really weird. It's tough, hard to bite into, and it got cold while I was still eating it. But it was delicious."
"Oh, uh...That's good...Didn't sound like you liked it at the beginning there." Yosuke said uncomfortably. "But, all's well that ends well!"

"Hey, why's it called steak anyway" Marie asked turning her attention to Yu "Is it short for something?"

"It's short for Beefsteak" the boy replied to the cap wearing girl.

"Beefsteak?...Huh." Marie got lost in thought for a few moments "But if you the word beef from it, you don't get any sense of what it's made of. It should be, like...Fsteak."

"That's, uh, not much better..." Yosuke said looking unsure "Marie-chan's a strange kid, huh? Well, that makes her cute...I guess?"

"You eat this every day? No fair. I should've come earlier..." Marie complained.

Yu noted that it seemed as though Marie had taken a liking to Steak Skewers, he made a mental note to bring her here again.

"Hey I've been meaning to ask, whose are those guys next you?" Marie asked spontaneously as she pointed to Diarmuid and Gawain the former of whom had a surprised look on his face. Gawain was less surprised as he was aware of the girl's origins in the Velvet Room and the fact that they could see him.

"Wha......I mean no there's no one there" Yosuke yelled with panic in a poor attempt to hide.

"Yes I can see them, they look ghostly but they're there."

'I am Diarmuid Ua Duibhne, knight of Fianna at your service' said with uncertainty the knight of the spears was still shocked that he was seen by someone who had not entered the TV World.

'And I am Gawain, Knight of the Round Table'

"Gawain and Diarmuid" Marie spoke the names as if tasting a new food.

'I may, how is you are able to see us?' Diarmuid queried

"I don't know I just can" Marie shrugged "I think, I'll ask Margaret about it later"

"Margaret is that your sister?" Yosuke asked before beginning to panic as he patted his pocket "Ah crap, I left my key back in my locker at work. I've gotta go back to Junes! See you later, Narukami! You too, Marie-chan!"

'Farewell to both of you' Diarmuid said giving a slight bow, fading from sight as his master ran off in a panic.

"....Your partner is a funny person" Marie said after a few moments of silence

"That he is." Yu agreed with a nod.

"Hm...But he bought me meat. That makes him a good person. That is a fact." Marie closed her eyes and appeared to keep pondering on Yosuke "Hey, let's go somewhere else. Somewhere with a nice view."

Yu knew exactly where to take her. The pair began walking away from the shopping district and after several times in which he lost Marie the moment he took his eyes off her, Yu managed to
bring her to the hill overlooking town.

"Hmmm…..It's really green here." Marie observed

"Green and...green. And some brown and...Darker green? Leaves of green fly away, Farewell to you, clouds of the sky...I fly as well, lost as the day. Farewell to you, moon of the night." Yu could hear Marie murmuring something to herself that seemed to rhyme….a poem perhaps? He even asked if it was.

"N-No! I-I-I wasn't making up a poem! It's just some words that I was thinking! That's all! Yeah!" Marie instantly began blushing and denying everything "ShutupIhateyouyoustupidjerk! D-Don't snoop on me!"

Marie and Yu walked over to a part of the hill that was clear of trees and gave a view of entire town.

"Wow, it's pretty big...." Marie was clearly breath taken by the sight. "I don't know why...but I feel good about this place. It reminds me of something. Are there any other places we can go? I want to see more."

"I'll show you around if you want." Yu offered the girl.

"Please do." Marie replied with a slight smile "I notice a lot of things when I'm with you. It's pretty fun."

Yu could sense that Marie expected something of him. He felt that he understood Marie a bit more now. In the back of his mind the number twenty burned to life as yet another soul connected to him from beyond.

"All right, next! Where to now?"

[04/18 Monday, TV World, Inaba]

After going to the TV world and returning to Yukiko's castle the team

"Include Li Shuwen" Chie called out as the Chariot Arcana shattered into streams of blue flame that sunk into the girl's flesh.

"Let's go!" Several Lying Hablerie shadows zoomed towards the girl.

She leapt into the air and destroyed one in the centre of the group with a single kick. The remaining three charge at her but she destroyed them by catching one on her leg and slamming it into the other two, destroying all of them simultaneously.

"Sweet moving on" Chie began charging ahead into the castle, the two boys and one bear all ran to keep up with her.

"Chie's really on fire isn't she!" Teddie commented from behind Yosuke.

"Chie, you're just starting to gain your strength! So don't over do it"

"Come on, where are you Yukiko!" Chie tells him as they round a corner and stopped before she took off running again.
"She just blew me off"

"Chie he's right don't overdo it" Yu yelled to the girl following after her.

"I'm fine this is nothing compared to what I usually do!"

"Ah man there's nothing I hate more than getting blown off by a girl" Yosuke complained as Teddie snickered behind him.

"Zip it bear!"

'My lord perhaps we should focus on our quest and ensure that Ms Chie does not get into trouble again.' Diarmuid suggested

"Yeah you're right of course" Yosuke sighed as he followed Yu and Chie down the corridor and up some stairs "I did some research on you, they say that any girl who looked at your face instantly fell in love with you. Man I wish I had an ability like that."

The Knight of the Spears stopped for a second, his beautiful features twisting into ones of sadness and bitterness. Feeling his sudden mood shift through their bond, Yosuke was so surprised that he almost tripped as he turned to look at his Persona.

"You wouldn't say that if you had lived my life, my lord." as he said those words, the Lancer passed one of his hands over his infamous Love Spot, a dark look on his eyes. "This supposed blessing...is nothing but a curse. One that I will bear for eternity," releasing a bitter chuckle, the Hero walked past the still silent Yosuke. "You would maybe get any woman you want if you had this, my lord...but you would never be happy." he glanced back at him, his eyes filled with sadness once again. "Believe me. I know."

Yosuke's fell silent, he felt like a complete ass. He'd only been interested in what Diarmuid could do and had skipped a lot of details. The boy realised that he had no idea what the knight's life had actually been like.

"Yosuke!" Yosuke was shocked out his brooding by Chie's angry voice "Move your ass before I kick it!"

This got Yosuke moving again as he continued climbing up the stairs catching up to to Teddie who'd gotten ahead of him. Eventually Chie and Yu reached near the end of the flight stairs and suddenly the lights turned off, startling all of them to stop just shy of the landing.

"It's darker than black!" Teddie screamed as he began flailing his arms and panicking.

"You mean "pitch black." Yosuke corrected the bear as he and the others all looked around in confusion.

'At the top of the stairs someone is there’ Li Shuwen pointed out.

The teens all looked and could make out a black shape.

"Who is it?" Yosuke squinted trying to see through the darkness to get a better look.

'Most likely it is…' Diarmuid trailed off

'-her shadow' Gawain finished narrowing his eyes at the figure.

A pair of spotlights suddenly appeared behind Teddie, a drumroll echoed throughout the area as
the lights as they travelled towards the top of the stairs. The drumroll stops as the team found itself staring at someone's turned back. The person has long black hair and was dressed in a pink ball gown.

"Yukiko!"

"It's not who you think it is," Chie looked at the summoner of Saber in confusion.

The Yukiko look-alike suddenly giggles as a recording of some weird song begins to play as she starts to speak. She holds the mic in her hands as she stares intently on all of them,

"What's this? Surprise guests?" She giggled again and curtsied to them, "Now this is a party"

The other Yukiko again stared them all before laughing again as she took the mic in one hand and extended her hand out. "I think it's time. For. Our. Next. Segment!"

Coloured words suddenly appeared out of thin air after the shadow finished speaking.

IT'S NOT SCRIPTED! Princess Yukiko's Hunt for Her Prince on a White Horse

"Uh...What's that for?" Teddie asked as sound of a cheering audience played in the background.

"Looks like a title screen," Yosuke answered.

"Yeah it does"

"Alright that's it who are you?!" Chie demanded

'We're you not paying attention?' Li Shuwen admonished 'she is Yukiko's other self'

"Sorry" Chie mumbled to her Persona apologetically, one of the first things he'd taught her while in the real world was to always pay attention to her surroundings.

"How could you ask that? Such a silly question!" the princess replied with a giggle while speaking into the microphone "I am Yukiko and Yukiko is me."

"NO!" Chie's denied loudly her yell echoing through the room "You're not her...I want the real Yukiko, NOW!"

Yukiko's shadow ignored Chie's outburst before giggling again.

"Alright, well it's time for me to resume my stud hunt! Princey boy…ready or not here I come!" The shadow made a gun sign with her hand and a gunshot sounded from somewhere as she span around giggling loudly as she ran off into the darkness which causing Chie to immediately give chase.

"Move outta of our way!" Chie yells as more Shadows began to swarm around them as they climbed the stairs and reached the landing where Yukiko’s other self formerly stood.

The meat loving girl leapt into battle destroying Hablerie while Yu and Yosuke followed suit and included their own Persona's focusing on the Black Raven shadows which were flying around.

After destroying them all they gave chase to Yukiko's other self and found themselves ascending a very long set of stairs, fending off shadows that descended from above. Thankfully for some reason the Persona users were capable of less impressive but equally super human feats that their
Persona's were such as being able to jump long distances.

"So that princess we saw before was…” Yosuke's voice rings out as Yu skips up a few steps to try and keep up with Chie as Teddie gives a noise of confirmation,

"Like Gawain and Diarmuid said it was definitely that girls other self for sure!" The bear confirmed as Yu and Yosuke leapt up to meet the Hablerie shadows in mid air and destroyed them rapidly as the came before landing higher up on the stairs.

"I knew it! There was something off about her when she was on the Midnight Channel!" he exclaims as Yu ran along a wall and jumped off it slashing a shadow in mid air and landing on the higher stairs opposite "Yukiko would never say she was doing something like 'stud hunting.'"

"Wait, 'stud hunting?' Why would she wanna hunt horses for?" Yosuke shook his head.

"I'll explain later!"

'I cannot help but wonder what form her shadow will take when it goes berserk' Li Shuwen said aloud

"Whaddy mean when?"

"Yosuke I think it's pretty much a given that she'll deny it, like you and Chie did"

"Gah…good point" the spear wielding boy was forced to concede.

"Guys! I can sense two people behind that door and one of them is that girls shadow." Teddie yells as they spot a large door as they finally reached the top.

The team all immediately burst through the door, they saw that they were in the apparent throne room of the castle, and sure enough standing in front of the throne at the top of long staircase leading up by a red carpet, was Shadow Yukiko, and at the bottom wearing her pink kimono with a birdcage at her feet, was Yukiko. The one they had come to save.

"Yukiko!" Chie calls for her friend as she looks from her other self to the team. "Chie!"

"My, my" the voice of Shadow Yukiko cuts off both of the girls before they begin to speak, "Five prince's showed up and a knight in shining armour too! It must be my lucky day...Whatever shall I do?"

'So even shadows can perceive us in spirit form! Diarmuid noted

'Unsurprising,

"I'm...feeling some serious tension in the air here..." Yosuke shuddered as the shadow's gaze fell on him.

"Hey I wanna go somewhere, somewhere far away. Where nobody knows me!" Shadow Yukiko clapsed her hands together and stared at them, her gold eyes half closed and a smile playing on her lips. It tried to appear bashful but the high pitched voice didn't fit the face. "Please Prince Charming take me away. What are you waiting for?"

"Hold on...You said 'five princes,' does that include me?"

"It's beary clear I'm the fifth prince!" Teddie said rebuking Chie.
"Oh please. Keep dreamin' bear!" Yosuke scoffed.

Chie come you are obviously my prince!" the shadow replied a wide grin on her face, "You always lead the way, you make a brave and magnificent prince...At least, you did."

"I did?" Chie's questioned as the smile fell off the Shadows face.

"See I'm through with you now"

Suddenly the chandelier began falling from the ceiling, it was too fast and Chie was frozen in place seemingly unable to move. Yu ran for her hoping to push her out of the way when Margaret's voice echoed in his head once again.

"You have established new bonds and obtained new Arcana. You possess the power to wield multiple Persona. It is the Wild Card, O Chosen One."

"Chosen one? Ok, Persona" Yu felt his bond with Chie calling out to him, so he reached for it "Cu Chulainn" He crushed the card and out a swirl of blue flames appeared a tall, red-eyed, with man with dark blue hair pulled back into a ponytail, wearing blue body suit.

"In a bit of trouble lassie?" Cu Chulainn chuckled leaping next to Chie and catching the chandelier with his spear and holding it for a few moments "Here I think is YOURS!"

The Hound of Ulster manoeuvred his spear until it was at an angle and then using all his might he sent the chandelier flying back at the princess, it crashed just a few steps shy of her throne.

"Thanks for the save"

"No problem lassie, but you might wanna start focusing." The blue spearman chuckled "I doubt she's gonna go easy on us, which is just fine by me, I love a good fight."

"Chie let me down" the shadow continued as the chandelier raised itself out of the stairs and into the air again. "She won't take me away, she won't save me!"

"Stop it already!" Yukiko yells again, "That's enough!" The raven-haired girl let out a gasp as the chandelier swung past her again.

Diarmuid who Yosuke has summoned jumped from the ground and grabbed hold of the chandelier and trying to stop it only to get pinned into the wall. The Knight struggled against the metal but was unable to break free.

"Go help him"

"Right" the Lancer jumped over to the Chandelier and landed on it looking down at Diarmuid with a cheeky smile "You look like you're in a tight spot, need a hand?"

"Just be silent and help me" Diarmuid glared at the other Lancer who simply chuckled as he began using Gae Bolg as a lever to try and pry the chandelier off of the knight of Fianna.

Yukiko froze in place, her hands clasped in front of her as her eyes are closed as she whimpers in shame.

"Historical inn? Inn keeper training?!" The Shadow's words finally get a reaction out of Yukiko. "I'm absolutely sick of being stuck there!"
" Damn it all" Chie yelled and kicked her Arcana summoning Li Shuwen "Persona"

Her Persona leapt up towards the shadow only to get caught by the dark red carpet along with Chie and Teddie.

"Ahhhh!"

"Grizzly!"

"I never asked to be born here, where everything has been decided for me until I die" the Shadow began raising her voice getting more and more agitated "I don't want it! I DON'T WANT ANY OF IT!"

"We gotta help her," Yu and Yosuke begin to get up from the floor. They both grunted as heat washed over them and they turn to see the flames of the candles in the chandelier grow. Yu could see Cú Chulainn still trying to free Diarmuid as the other Lancer Persona begins to struggle harder.

The wax of the thick hot wax preventing them from moving.

"Damnit! What is this crap?!" Yosuke yelled struggling to break free from the wax

In front of them Chie was struggling against the red carpet as Li Shuwen was doing the same, however it seemed that the carpet was sturdier than he gave it credit for as it resisted his attempts at removing it by cushioning the blows.

"Yukiko! " Her pleas fall on deaf ears as Yukiko continues to stare up at her Shadow which was making its way down the stairs despite some of them being trashed, finally the princess stopped at the bottom of the stairs

"None of this is true" Yukiko said weakly as she fell to her knees

The Shadow smirked and held her hands together as she stared up at the ceiling.

"I just wanna go far away" she sighs, "I want to go anywhere, but here. I want someone to whisk me away. I can't leave on my own..."

The Shadow's voice gets higher in pitch, her words and movements resemble that of a typical princess that desperately want to be rescued.

"Stop it, please stop it" Yu tugged at his legs, trying to break free as Yukiko shook her head in denial

"But I lack hope if I stay and I the courage to leave...That's why I've been waiting." Shadow Yukiko continues to taunt as her eyes open and she gazes down at Yukiko, "Someday my Prince will come. He'll come and take me some place far away from here!"

"I'm begging, stop." Yukiko's voice trembled as her Shadow began speaking out loud more o her deepest private thoughts.

"An old tradition? The pride of the town? SCREW IT ALL!"

Yukiko gasped and snapped her head to meet the shadows eyes.

"How dare you say that!" Yukiko slowly got to her feet as her Shadow chuckled.
"But that's how I feel. It's what we both feel, isn't that right...other me?"

"No...it isn't! You are not..." Yukiko shook her head in denial, her anger beginning to build.

"Yukiko"

"Don't say it." Chie yelled as she struggled to break free from the carpet that bound her.

Yu struggled even harder as he tried to break out of the wax only which cooled and became solid.

"You're a liar!" Yukiko points to her other self, "You're not me!"

There is a pause and soon a faint light of red and black begin to form at the bottom of Shadow Yukiko's ball gown as she lifts her arms up with a smile growing wider on her face.

"Oh my, my. Ah...And the power starts to surge," she giggles as she laughs louder as the light grew, "Now if things continue at this pace then...Ah ha ha ha ha!"

A car sized ship with some parts of the deck engulfed in flames along with burning sails descended from the ceiling; the figurehead looked like princess Yukiko except it was covered by chains.

"I am a shadow...of your true inner self" the shadow's sails seemed to flare like a bird flaring its wings threateningly.

Yukiko began taking slow steps as she backed away from her shadow in fear, however before she could run the bird cage that lay on the floor began hover and expanded to entrap the girl. A rope suddenly hooked around the top of the cage and lifted into the air dangling near the burning mast, hot enough to make Yukiko very uncomfortable but not enough to kill her.

"Yukiko!" Chie called out to her trapped friend "Let me GO!"

Li Shuwen closed his in concentration for a moment before tearing apart the cloth that bound him and his master.

"Man....this is....really.....IN THERE!" Cu Chulainn growled as he finally got the chandelier out of the wall sending it crashing off to the side freeing Diarmuid.

"I gotcha Yukiko, whatever she throws out I can take in more" Chie stated confidently.

"Oh really?" the shadow asked as the flames on its mast began flaring causing Yukiko to cough at the smoke that it caused "Then I'll just have to hit you WITH EVERYTHING I'VE GOT!"

A roaring wave of flames was sent at the team Chie cover her face as the heat fo the flames got closer, Li Shuwen managed to separate the flames apart, thus preventing them from incinerating his master.

Both the hound of Ulster and Knight of Fianna used their respective spears to block the majority of the flames that came at their masters; however a stray shot scorched Yosuke's trouser leg causing him to jump up and down clutching the afflicted area.

"Yeow...that burns, easy on the fiery burny stuff Yukiko." Yosuke yelled

"Yosuke lets go" Yu ordered kicking himself free of the wax that once held him.

"Get her Diarmuid"
"At once" the knight leapt at the ship like shadow along with Cu Chulainn.

Diarmuid dug Gae Dearg in and slashed the deck as hard he could making a large gash in it.

"What?" the knight was shocked as the pieces of wood that he shattered to make the hole simply stopped in mid air and flew back to the gash sealing it up. "It can regenerate? But how?"

"Whats the matter Diarmuid having performance issues?" the hound teased "Don't worry happens to everybody, well not me of course but-"

"Will you just shut up?" Diarmuid snapped loosing his composure for second before regaining it. "I'd like to see you do better."

"Watch and learn" the hound grinned and using his spear to remove a large chunk of the ships starboard side making a hole the size of a car wheel. "See easy as…"

His victory was short lived however as the chunk that was removed returned to its place and the cracks made vanished, once again the ship looked undamaged by the assault. "Son of a-

"Now who's having performance issues?"

"Shaddap"

"My turn!" the two watched Li Shuwen land on the deck and began rapidly punching holes in the deck speeding along it from stem to stern. Within seconds pretty every plank had a fist sized hole in it.

However neither the speed nor power of the attacks stopped the holes from regenerating.

"Hmmm….that will get very annoying very quickly." Li Shuwen noted.

"I think you have other problems to worry about right now" the shadow said as the sound of wooden panels and the movement of heavy metal was heard.

"Oh shit she has cannons!" Cu Chulainn shouted and jumping off the deck and dashing back to his master, with the other two personas following suit.

The cannons erupted and fired at the three humans, thankfully their personas made it just in time to deflect the cannon fire. The two Lancers deflected the cannonballs easily albeit the Hound of Ulster had an easier time thanks to his Protection From Arrows skill. Li was able to deflect the as swiftly as they came.

"Yukiko! I'm on my way!" Chie yelled running towards the caged girl when the cannon fire stopped, but she was smacked away by the anchor sending her flying away from Yukiko.

"Too bad, I though Chie would save me but... Chie didn't save me. She wasn't my prince at all! I've waited for so very...very, long!" The sound of anger was present and she fired all of her cannons squarely at Chie.

It was clear that Li Shuwen would not be able to stop them all so Yu motioned towards Chie at his Persona who the message and leapt to aid the assassin. Together the two of them were easily able to save the meat loving girl from the bombardment.

"Thank you for the aid normally I would relish a strong opponent like this but these restrictions are annoying."
"No problem, I'm running on a limited prana supply so I know how ya feel."

"You right maybe Chie isn't your prince, is it really all that important!?" Chie turned to Yu, seeing it was him who spoke up.

"What?"

"Chie came here and risked her life to save Yukiko. I think that's pretty good proof that she really does care. What more could she have done!?"

"Narukami…"

"I... I've heard enough!" The flames got even stronger Chie stood up and walked slowly towards Yukiko.

"Yukiko, I have to tell you something and it's very important." The fire around her intensified but she stood her ground.

"This isn't easy; see the truth is, I've always been jealous of you. You had everything Yukiko and I had nothing. That's why I loved how you depended on me. You actually needed something that I had. I liked that the way that I needed to be there to protect you. It gave me a purpose."

"Exactly, I can do anything on my own, I'm helpless!"

"That's not true! Yukiko, you are one of the strongest people that I know. You want to escape then do it! Leave and go wherever you want! I know you can do this."

"You're wrong Chie I can't." Yukiko closed her tear filled eyes and dipped her head in shame. "I'm far too weak to leave."

The shadow wasn't even attacking them as it listened to the conversation between Yukiko and Chie even as Diarmuid, Cu Chulainn and Li Shuwen smashed at its main wooden body which regenerated in seconds. In fit of frustration Cu Chulainn swung his spear trying to damage the ship more and as he swung he put a noticeable cut in the figurehead, this caused the shadow to grunt and regenerate the wound quicker than any of the other damage done to it. Yuu narrowed his eyes and the cogs in his mind began to turn.

"I'm not strong enough...I am weak and pathetic; I'm such a horrible coward, I waited on someone else to set me free"

"So what!? You were scared!" Chie started coughing as she fell to her knees. "There are parts of me, that I'm not really proud of either. Horrible things that I'm really ashamed of, they don't matter! Listen, I'll always be there for you. That's a promise!"

"Chie..."

"Stop it!" the flames on the shadow flared in response to its angry yell "I SAID STOP!"

Yukiko got up and clutched on to the bars of the cage and broke through, Chie caught her as she fell through and was caught by Chie, the two of them hugged like nothing else existed in that moment.

"Thank you..."

"NO!" the shadow bellowed in rage as blue static danced across its body as the flames began to
"The shadow's growing weak now" Teddie yelled.

"Alright, Diarmuid let' g-" 

"Wait!" Yu ordered stopping Yosuke "Li Shuwen, Cu Chulainn, Diarmuid come over here I have an idea."

The persona's all looked at each other before shrugging and leaping over to Yu along with Yosuke who jogged over.

"Dude what's this idea you've got?" he asked "Do you know how to destroy it?"

"I do" Yu nodded getting a couple of raised eyebrows

"And how do you propose we do it?" Diarmuid asked politely "None of the damage we do lasts because it's cursed ability to regenerate. If only I had access to Gae Buidhe I could inhibit such an ability."

"It's simple do you remember when you were attack the shadow before Yukiko broke free from the cage? You got frustrated and swung your spear around to make a large hole in the deck right?"

"Yeah but the damn thing just healed it like before." The hound of ulster replied.

"Yes but as you were swinging your spear, you cut the figurehead and when you did that shadow grunted like you'd hurt it and that cut healed faster than the other damage you'd done which it never responded to, almost as if it couldn't feel the damage there."

"Wait do you mean, that figurehead is the weak spot?" Diarmuid yelled turning around to look at the ship which sent some flames to incinerate Chie and Yukiko which he quickly leapt over and deflected.

"Yes and I think I know how to beat it now." YU raised his voice so Diarmuid could hear him "Diarmuid get onto the deck and do as much damage as you can as quickly as you can. Smash the cannons especially."

"Very well" Diarmuid looked to Yosuke who nodded in consent and the knight set to work relentlessly assaulting the ship, smashing the mast and putt many holes in the deck and crumpling the cannons.

"Li Shuwen, you get up to the figurehead, tear right off and throw it as far away from the ship as you can, then help Diarmuid in damaging the body."

"I like this idea" Li Shuwen jumped to the ship and began setting to work, he got behind the figurehead and began pulling, the wood began creaking as if bone was being bent and snapped.

"GET OFF!" the shadow screamed in protest as cracks began appearing where its body was attached to the ship. "IT HURTS LET GO OF ME YOU BASTARD LET GO LET GO LET GOOOO!" The screaming only seemed to encourage the martial artist who began pulling harder causing the shadows screams to get louder.

"Alright Cu Chulainn when that figure is in the air use your spear and strike it in the heart" Yu ordered.
"I get it, most of its energy has to be stored in that big body and that takes longer to regenerate because the figurehead is its heart." The spearman grinned as he heard the shadow scream again and looked to see Li Shuwen had torn the figurehead off, it seemed even be bleeding and a misty trail followed it as it was tossed into the air. "Well that's my cue."

The blue spearman of the wind leapt into the air with inhuman ability and twirled his spear in anticipation as he closed in on the figurehead which panicked upon seeing him approaching.

"NO STAY BACK!" it screamed in panic "GET AWAY FROM ME!"

"Oh quit your whining it'll be over in a sec" the hound grinned "GAE BOLG!"

Destiny was rewritten, it was changed from 'the spear struck so the heart was pierced' to 'the heart is pierced, so the spear must have struck'. But it wasn't over, even with his spear in the shadows heart the Hound decided he wasn't finished just yet.

"Alright Lassie, it's time to go back where ya came from."

The shadow screamed as the spearman pushed his weight into the spear and slammed the shadow into the wall. With great speed and landed on it and began running up it, dragging the shadow's figurehead along wall causing it scream in protest as it seemed to be coming apart, unable to heal all of the damage done it.

Meanwhile down below Li Shuwen grinned and got an idea he grabbed the mast and turned it upside down and impaled it through the deck of the ship and chopped at the break so it was sharpened. He whistled up to the Hound of Ulster and motioned to the makeshift pike he had made and received a vicious grin in return.

Finally Cu Chulainn had made it to the ceiling and was now directly above the ship.

"Alright lass our times up, but I sincerely hope that you've learned your lesson and that you're sharp enough for this point to be driven home." The blue spearman quipped before letting himself fall and spun in the air before tossing the shadow off his spear and down towards the ship. "Look out below!" The two personas below leapt off the deck just in time for the figurehead which was screaming all the while to impale itself face first on the sharpened mast before the force of its impact destroyed the ship completely.

There was a flash of blue light and when the smoke cleared princess Yukiko had reappeared.

"Was that overly violent display necessary?" Diarmuid asked of his fellow Lancer when he landed.

"No, it was fun though." Cu Chulainn replied unrepentantly sharing a grin with Li Shuwen who returned it.

"I think we shall get along famously Hound of Ulster" Li Shuwen laughed.

"Chie" Yukiko called out to her friend who was looking down in shame.

"I'm so sorry Yukiko, I was so wrapped up in my own stuff, that I didn't even notice all the stuff that was bothering you, and I really should have."

"I didn't notice the things that were bothering you either, I just wanted to escape. You see, that's why I created you." Yukiko looked towards her shadow and grabbed its hands with her own.
"You're right, I did just want to leave and escape. I'm sorry I didn't acknowledge your voice before. It's true; it's how I felt deep inside." She then pulled her shadow into a hug. "You are a part of me."
Her shadow nodded before bursting into a wave of blue flames that surrounded Yukiko, she flinched as she felt something connecting itself to her very soul.

A summoning circle formed itself around her and a new form rose. In it appeared a female pirate captain with long wavy crimson pink hair, blue eyes and scar across her face. She wears brown choker collar almost attach to her dark pink captain vest that shows her breasts, white pants, and long dark brown boots.

"So you're the lassie who summoned me eh?" the woman looked at Yukiko who only nodded wordlessly "The name's Francis Drake, Pirate Mercenary at your service." The woman persona gave off a rather relaxed aura, also she had the scent of the ocean as well as alcohol "Under the Arcana of the Priestess and in the Rider Class, I'm your Persona."

"Persona" Yukiko turned the word over in her mouth as if tasting something.

"Heh, don't worry pretty lass! With me at your side, you will know what fun and freedom truly mean in this world" These words seemed cause Yukiko to brighten up, to be free was what she truly wanted. It wasn't the Inn that was the problem it was the fact that it had been decided for her that she would take over the inn.

'And we have a mangy alcoholic sea dog join the ranks' the familiar voice sneered haughtily 'Truly you are desperate if your recruitment bar is this low.'

'Gawain did you hear that?' Yu asked his persona by thought.

'My King I am afraid I heard nothing other than the others out there talking' Gawain replied

"Hey do I smell booze?" the Hound of Ulster asked without shame.

"Why do you ask?" Francis Drake asked with a smirk "Got a problem with a girl who drink most men under the table?"

"Is that a challenge?"

"If you think you can hold yer liquor"

"Oh it is on" Cu Chulainn clenched his fist in determination "We're so having a contest and I'll win lassie you can bet on that."

"Haha this I cannot wait to see." Drake laughed "Well then I look forward to it, till later hound dog."

With one final laugh Francis Drake vanished leaving an Arcana Card in her place which drifted to Yukiko who held it close to her where it sunk into her very being.

"Yukiko!" Chie ran to Yukiko caught her just before she collapsed.

"Are you alright?" Yu asked as he and Yosuke ran up to Yukiko.

"Yes, I'm just a little tired…You all came to rescue me…?"

"Of course!"

"Thank you…" Yukiko smiled at the group.

"So…whose the grizzly that dumped you here in the first place?" Teddie asked as he walked up to
"Who are you?...what are you?" Yukiko asked in confusion

"I'm beary much a bear!" Teddie chirped.

"I'm, sorry I'm not sure I'm following"

"See that everything you do causes confusion." Yosuke berated the bear as Diarmuid returned to spirit form along with Cu Chulainn and Li Shuwen. "So just zip it would ya."

"Your oppression is unbearable" Teddie yelled at Yosuke angrily.

"Anyways!" Chie interrupted. "Let's hurry back home, Yukiko looks exhausted."

"Yeah you're right let's go"

"WWWHAAT!" Teddie exclaimed. "You guys are just gonna abandon me?!"


"Well…yeah, but…" Teddie frowned.

"I'm sorry, Teddie…" Yukiko said apologetically as she walked over to Teddie. She placed her hand on his head and started petting his soft, blue fur. "I promise to come again… So be a good boy and wait here until then…"

"R-Raaaawr!" Teddie closed his eyes and smiled.

"Let's just get out of here…" Yosuke sighed. "I'm dead on my feet here."

"Yeah see a next time Teddie" Yu called to the bear as everyone made their way to the exit and back home.

As they left Teddie behind and prepared to escort Yukiko home in the back of his mind Yu felt the number two burn to life as another soul connected to him from beyond.
Would you love me?

Disclaimer: I do not own Persona or Fate or anything in the nasuverse, any resemblance to any other Persona 4/Fate fan fiction is coincidental and plagiarism is not intended. No flames please, constructive criticism only.

AN: Shout out and big thanks to SaintinfernalNeos who did the Margaret Slink scene and helped out with the Adachi Scene.

Meat and wine adorned the table between rows of brilliant and shining candlesticks. In the large Midcuart banquet hall, the Erin nobles were gathered. Now is the climax. On this day, the boasting and drinking contests of ruffians were strictly forbidden. This evening, the uncultured warriors were drunk solely with the fragrance of a graceful flower.

This was a feast for loving the flower. Grainne, the daughter of the High King of Ireland, Cormac mac Airt.

"Fionn mac Cumhaill hero of Ireland, leader of the knights of Fianna and my daughter Grainne are pleased to announce their engagement." The High King announced loudly "Everyone, this night I want you to celebrate!"

Her betrothed was to be Cumhaill's son, Fionn mac Cumhaill, the great warrior who controlled the healing water. Unmatched under the heavens, he was the head of Fianna, a group of knights. The warrior's strength and fame rivalled the High King's. There was no marriage engagement as joyful as this.

Or so it would seem, Fionn old enough to be Grainne's grandfather could see the loveless look and lack of joy in her eyes. Grainne's eyes were fixed on another; Fionn followed her vision to a particular man and jealousy burned in his heart, his wife to be was clearly infatuated.

'That striking man with the mole beneath his eye, what is his name?' She wondered to herself 'He is a knight of Fianna, Diarmuid Ua Dubhine'

"Diarmuid" she muttered under her breath.

For a time it seemed as if she was trapped in her loveless soon to be marriage until she could take it no longer and approached the man that captivated her so.

"In exchange for my love, accept the Geis. My dear, by any possible means, annul this abominable marriage. Please take me away … to the ends of the earth!"

Appealing to him in tears, the eyes of the maiden flared earnestly with love. They could become the flames of Purgatory, burning him to ashes …

The hero understood. Yet, he did not refuse. The weight of a Geis, which tested his honour, and the path of a loyal subject, which he followed—he wondered which was more precious? No questioning or self-struggling yielded an answer. The thing which finally spurred him, a reason without any relation whatever, with his pride.

Upon his acceptance of the Geis the princess kissed the hero in sight of all the knights of Fianna,
including the aging captain Fionn, who was enraged.

"Traitor, you shall suffer for this Diarmuid" he declared

"Take me with you" Grainne pleaded "We must run away"

Hero and princess, together they held hands and turned from their brilliant futures, running from the castle together. Even as the Knights of Fianna pursued them and attempted to slay Diarmuid who struck them all down, regret staining every blow he made against his former friends.

Eventually after years in hiding Diarmuid entered the room of their hiding place with news for his wife.

"Rejoice Grainne, Fionn has recognised our marriage." Diarmuid proclaimed causing his wife to smile with joy.

Diarmuid and Grainne lived in peace at Ceis Chorainn for several years. They had five children: four sons and a daughter. Diarmuid had a fort built, which they called Rath Grainia. However, they went for years without visiting Grainne's father Cormac Mac Art and Diarmuid's former comrades. So Grainne persuaded Diarmuid to invite them to a feast, including Fionn and the Fianna.

One night, Fionn invited Diarmuid on a boar hunt on the heath of Benn Gulbain, Diarmuid only took his short sword Begallta and his yellow spear, Gae Buidhe, not his best weapons: his long sword Móralltach and red spear, Gae Dearg. He was badly gored by a giant boar. The boar had already killed a number of warriors and hounds. Water drunk from Fionn's hands had the power of healing, but when Fionn gathered water he would deliberately let it run through his fingers before he could bring it to Diarmuid.

"Did you believe that I'd forgotten what happened with Grainne?" he sneered as Diarmuid passed away from his wound; his last thoughts were cursing the Love Spot which was the cause of all this ruin.

[04/19 Tuesday, Class 2-2, Yasogami High School, Inaba]

As he was experiencing these strange dreams of a life that was not his own, a loud voice interrupted Yosuke's pre-lunch nap.

"HANAMURA!" Morooka bellowed down the sleeping boy's ear causing him to wake.

"NO, DAMN YOU CAPTAIN BASTARD!" Yosuke shouted as startled awake causing a deadly silence to befall the class, several students and even King Moron was stunned for few moments before he became enraged.

"YOU ARE ON MY SHIT LIST AGAIN HANAMURA!" Morooka yelled with fury.

"Crap, sir I can explain-" Yosuke flinched when he realised where he was and how much trouble he was in after saying what he'd said out loud.

"NO EXCUSES YOU'RE-" However before Morooka could finish berating the boy the bell rang signalling the start of lunch.

"Grr….saved by the bell but don't think this is over Hanamura, detention after school boy. GOT THAT?!"
"Yes sir" Yosuke groaned slumping onto his desk as King Moron stormed off to get lunch, the whole class continued to stare at Yosuke for what felt like an eternity before slowly trickling out to lunch, all murmuring about Yosuke the subject being whether he was really brave or really stupid for yelling at King Moron like that.

"Should we?" Chie looked at Yu for guidance.

"Let's just leave him be." Yu said standing up and heading to the roof to share his homemade burgers with Chie.

"Aw man" Yosuke groaned unable to process what just happened.

One second he dreaming about Diarmuid's life then he was getting chewed out by King Moron. He took out some sandwiches and started eating them as he thought with depression about what happened waving off Diarmuid who worriedly asked if he was alright.

It wasn't so much that he got detention, as it was that he now knew what Diarmuid had gone through. He was a loyal knight who was basically forced to choose between his loyalty and his honour. He was doomed no matter what happened and ultimately chose his honour which in Diarmuid's time meant everything as an honourless knight was basically trash.

Seeing it through Diarmuid's own eyes Yosuke could see that his Persona's life was one tragedy and misfortune after another and his ultimate death caused by his own captain allowing him to die happened because the Love Spot had enchanted Grainne and caused her to cast Geis (which was like an unbreakable oath or something) on him in the first place.

This was the cause of Yosuke's current self loathing state; he'd selfishly envied Diarmuid's ability to woo any woman he wanted without even thinking the spear wielding Persona himself felt. Now he had seen Diarmuid's life or parts of it anyway he felt like a complete asshole, so deep in his self loathing and tiredness was he that he barely noticed when the bell rang signalling the end of lunch as students began filing back in for class.

"Man Narukami you are a master chef, those burgers were delicious they so juicy. Where'd you learn to cook like that?" Chie asked excitedly as she came in with Yu.

"Well I spent a lot of time on my own when I was young so I had to learn to cook for myself and microwave meals weren't always appetising." Yu replied as he took his seat.

"Oh by the way I talked to Yukiko and she's still run down because of everything that happened so she'll taking a few days off before coming be back to school," Chie explained.

"That's good to hear." Yu said.

"I feel so much better now that Yukiko's safe, it's like we can finally get back to a normal routine again," Chie said.

'I would not rest on your laurels if I were you.' Li Shuwen admonished as he appeared in spirit form beside her. 'There is still the matter of who threw Yukiko into the TV World in the first place and who their next victim will be.'

"Plus you are way too perky right now." Yosuke whined secretly wishing to take his mind off his self loathing "Narukami and me have been running ourselves ragged for what seems like forever. Haven't we bro?"

"No I feel pretty good."
"WHAT?!"

"Wow, you held up pretty well through all this. Do you play a lot of sports?" Chie asked Yu.

"No not really" Yu denied as Yosuke complained in the background.

"Well if you haven't signed up for a club or a team I could really use your help with something."
Chie requested

"Sure why not." Yu agreed seeing no reason to refuse his friends request.

[04/19 Monday, Gym, Yasogami High School, Inaba]

After school, Chie had led Yu to the gym. In there were boys playing basketball. Yu recognised
Ichijou, as Yosuke had called him, who had asked him about joining the basketball team not long
ago was dribbling the ball, being guarded by another boy with a Band-Aid across the bridge of his
nose and wearing soccer uniform underneath the basketball practice jersey.

"Ichijo, hey!" Chie called out the boy dribbling turned around and saw Yu with Chie. He passed
the ball to another player and told them to take five before running over to Yu and Chie.

"Oh hey Chie the boy greeted her with what Yu observed to be a bit more enthusiasm than normal.
" So what brings you here did you need something?

"I came here to bring you a new teammate." Chie answered motioning a hand at Yu who was a
little surprised.

"Hey you're that new guy aren't you?" Ichijo remembered with a smile "You did show up."

"Only because Chie asked me" Yu explained but realised that Ichijo didn't seem to be listening "I'm
just here to watch..."

"My name's Kou Ichijo" he introduced himself

"Hey I'm with the soccer team, my name's Nagase Daisuke." The soccer boy said coming over and
introducing himself "I came here to ditch practice and Ichijo and I go way back."

"I thought you weren't ditching practice but helping these guys out since they're short on
members?" Chie asked raising an eyebrow at Daisuke who nodded sheepishly.

"Yeah see they're about to shut our team down since we're way low on players." Ichijou explained
"So we'd love to have a new recruit dude."

"I don't know joining sports teams hasn't gone well for me in the past." Yu said thinking back on
several incidents where in previous schools when he joined sports teams the others tended to play
cruel pranks on him for being a 'loner'. It had gotten so bad that he just avoided sports teams
altogether.

"Please, we really need your help man even I swear whatever it was like in the past it won't be like
that here." Kou pleaded holding his hands out in a begging position. "I'm begging you even if it's
only for a little while."

'It doesn't feel like the guys got any ulterior motive' Cu Chulainn said appearing in spirit form 'And
the rest of these goons look like they'd wet themselves at the sight of an angry cat I think your safe
"I guess I can play for a bit." Yu finally relented with a sigh but not before silently vowing to pay Chie back for pressuring him into this.

"Yes! Thanks you won't regret this I swear" Ichijo excitedly ran and gathered up the team as well as the girl sitting to the side.

"We've got a new temp team member" Kou announced with Yu standing beside him "His name's Narukami be good to him." Ichijo elbowed Yu encouraging him to speak up.

"Happy to help out…” Yu said without enthusiasm, even if he agreed to help out he still didn't want to be here. His past experiences had made him averse to sports teams but, if the Hound of Ulster thought there was no ulterior motive he could give it another chance.

"Thanks man." They all chanted back equally as unenthusiastic as he was. Yu got the impression they weren't here because they entirely wanted to be either.

"Where did everybody else go?" Ichijo asked with dismay at releasing that several other players were missing.

"They all bailed dude" One player said.

"We wanted to work on rebounds but they said they were all tired and left." Another explained.

"Again?" Kou groaned hanging his head before realising that he forgot something. "Oh sorry I almost forgot this is our manager Ai Ebihara." Ichijo motioned to the girl with long, wavy blonde hair who gave Yu and look that told him she thought of him as just another typical guy.

"Typically I'm not even here, so don't go asking for any favours ok?" she stated making it evident that she could care less about the team.

"Hmph! I'm done for today." Ebihara stated heading for the door.

"Hey but we still have to clean up the place." Kou objected.

"Not my problem." She called back as she left.

Seeing this, the other players left as well each giving their own excuses not to have a reason to hang around, despite Kou's imploring them to stay he was left feeling very dejected.

[-][-][-][-][-][-][-]

[04/19 Monday, Velvet Room, Inaba]

After helping Kou clean up Yu left and decided to head to the Velvet Room before going home.

When he entered the boy's eyes wandered through the inside of the strange limousine with surprise. It was the first time that he had come and the slightly sinister but reliable figure of Igor WASN'T there, neither Marie's usual disinterested/annoyed look.

But the third, and perhaps most mysterious, occupant of the room was still in there, reading silently the strange book that he knew recorded the stats and the info of his Personas' abilities.

With a polite smile, Margaret raised her gaze towards his, nodding towards the boy with slight surprise.
"Welcome to the Velvet Room. Sadly, my Master isn't here at the moment, and Marie is busy with a minor task..." the woman slowly closed her book, her smile turning more mysterious. "But...is it said that Fate always has a reason for doing this. Seeing as this room is tied to yours, it's only natural to think that there is a reason for you and me meeting like this."

"You...really think so?" muttered Yu with a raised eyebrow, the usual whispers of his Personas' voices having disappeared from his mind, something very unusual.

"Indeed." nodded the woman while tilting her head. "Tell me...could you perhaps share some of your knowledge with me?" at Yu's confused stare, Margaret decided to elaborate. "I have been reading your Compendium since your journey began, and I have to say I'm fascinated. The abilities and way in which your Personas are recorded in it is totally different at the ones my siblings have worked with before. Even so, I find myself intrigued, because the powers of these...'Heroes' of yours, lack a tale. I can see their prowess and abilities, even partial information of their legendary marks and weapons, but I have not heard their stories. I think it's something that I would really like to hear." the silver-blonde woman once again sent a polite smile at the silver-haired boy. "Would you share one of them with me?"

After thinking it over for a moment, the boy slowly nodded, even as his mind recalled the first and most vivid of the tragic tales he had witnessed, and the only one that he knew in full at the moment. He'd seen flashes of Cu Chulainn but nothing in full just yet.

"Once upon a time, there were a great King and the Knights who served him..."

And as the tale slowly unfolded itself and the gaze of Margaret grew more excited and curious that he could ever remember seeing, Yu could feel how another burning flame formed in his mind as a small link formed between himself and the mysterious woman, this one with the simple character of 'III'.

[04/19 Junes Entrance, Inaba]

After finishing tell the story of Gawain to Margaret and leaving the Velvet Room Yu remembered that he had been asked to go Junes in order to buy some groceries.

"Huh? Oh, it's you." Adachi said as he looked surprised to see Yu "What's the matter? Can I help you?"

"What are you doing?" Yu asked the detective who was clearly slacking off.

"What's its look like? I'm working here." Adachi lied; it was a lie so transparent that Yu was sure Adachi knew that he knew it was a lie "It's easy to investigate here with all the people around. It's cool in the summer, and warm in the winter. It's a pretty good place to...Yeah; I think I've said enough!'

'Yup he's slacking alright' Cu Chulainn commented with a chuckle.

Yu wasn't sure whether to reprimand him for be lazy or commend him for his bravery in risking Dojima's wrath by slacking off while on duty.

'I say commend him, it take's serious balls to slack off when your partner is a guy like Dojima.' The Hound of Ulster commented.

Looking down at his shopping Yu saw that none of it needed to go into the fridge immediately so
he had time before had to go home with it all.

"I'll hang out with you too."

"Oh? That's a little strange." The detective commented.

'Stranger than you? Ha!' Cu Chulainn laughed appearing in spirit form on Yu's left.

'Quite dog, do not distract our king when he is talking.' Gawain reprimanded appearing spirit form on Yu's other side.

"DON'T CALL ME A DOG DAMN IT!" the Lancer yelled angrily.

"So what are you doing here? Killing time?" Adachi asked "Tough to do out here in the sticks, isn't it? There's nothing here. It's not like the city at all."

"You can say that again." Yu agreed, there was no need to tell Adachi that he'd found some excitement in the form of the TV World after all.

"I knew you'd understand. You're from the city too, right?" Yu nodded at Adachi's question. "Get this—my first assignment here was tracking down a cat. My suit got so dirty...and they wouldn't let me expense the dry cleaning bill! Next, I played peacemaker in a spat some married couple was having. I can't believe they've got the police doing that stuff."

"He seems rather dissatisfied with country life." Gawain observed.

"Gee ya think?" Cu Chulainn remarked sarcastically.

"But it's been more dangerous lately, so I can't kick back. There's that one case, you know? It's still not solved yet. The higher-ups don't know what to do. They keep changing procedure on the fly...Oops! I hope I'm not making you nervous." Adachi rubbed the back of his head nervously before clearing his throat "You guys have nothing to worry about, you know. Us police are on the job!"

Yu sense that truly Adachi cared for you. As Yu felt that he could understand Adachi a bit more he felt another burning flame formed in his mind as another link formed between himself and the slacking detective, this one strangely with number '0'. This time he didn't feel another soul from the beyond connect to his own.

"Well time for me to get back to wo-Crap." Adachi exclaimed quietly preventing Yu from thinking any further on it. The detective suddenly hid behind Yu and tried to make himself as small as possible.

A few seconds later an old lady wearing a grey cardigan walked by. She stopped and gave a questioning glance in Yu's direction before continuing on out of Junes.

"Phew that was close." Adachi sigh with relief as he came out hiding.

"A cop scared of an old lady?" Cu Chulainn said sceptically. "She's definitely not extraordinary, not in a way I can sense anyway. Are we sure he's actually cop?"

Adachi didn't seem to want to see that old woman for some reason. Yu considered questioning the detective about but ultimately decided to leave it be.

"I'd better go. You hurry on home, too. Don't tell Dojima I was in Junes, okay?" Adachi pleaded.
Yu nodded before picking up his groceries and exited Junes leaving Adachi alone.

"I'm getting restless when can I fight?" a shadowy figure asked appearing behind Adachi.

"Just relax will ya?" Adachi mumbled to the impatient shadow.

"How can I relax? one the those who stands in the way of my attaining the grail is right there and you won't let me do anything." the shadow growled impatiently "I will not be denied, I WANT that wish!"

"Stop being such a whiner and relax you'll get it anyway if these idiots get themselves killed in the other world saving people and when that happens to all of them it's game over and you'll get your damn wish anyway so what does it matter?"

" It matters because you are underestimating their competence." the figure replied "They are getting stronger with each battle. They may not be able to use their Ultimate Noble Phantasms yet but it is only a matter of time, I do not look forward to fight them all at once unless you have a plan in mind to deal with them."

" Are you really that worried? I find it funny, really. Those kids are trying so hard to be Heroes and save the poor losers that end up inside that world, even though they CAN SEE first hand how a Hero's life always ends. In the end, they will make a mistake, be overwhelmed by the pressure, miss one important detail...and they will fail." a twisted smile appeared on the man's face even as the armoured figure hovered sinisterly behind him. "And when that happens...I will be there to remind them how pitifully pathetic they were."

"I hope you are right Adachi because fighting eight heroes at once is not good odds. So this plan better work or else." With that last warning the shadow vanished back into the depths of Adachi's mind.

[-][-][-][-][-][-][-]

[04/20 Stairwell, Yasogami High, Inaba]

The next day Yu was preparing to head to his next class. After he finished telling the story of Gawain to Margaret and obtaining another bond he returned home and found Adachi had come to eat dinner with them. His uncle had stated that he might get Golden Week off and promised to take the two of them out for a picnic and it had become Yu's job to make the food for said picnic.

He stopped when he approached the stairs; there was the girl from yesterday in the gym, her purse at her side coming down.

"Well if it isn't the new recruit." She observed with a bored tone and she continued down the stairs.

"Your name is Ebi isn't it?" Yu asked trying to remember the girl's full name which escaped him at this moment.

"To some people, to you it's Ai Ebihara." She corrected him before stopping at the bottom of the stairs, passing as she'd thought of something. "Hey whaddya say you ditch class with me this morning?"

"Hmm?" Yu felt reluctant, the last thing eh wanted to do was get another lecture from King Moron.

"The team asked me to go get a few things for them you see and I could really use another hand." She explained trying to push a bit harder. "You ARE a team player right?"
Yu sighed, he really wanted to just get this basketball thing over and done with so he decided to just role with it and agreed to Ai's request.

[04/20 High Street, Okina City, Inaba]

Yu found himself dragged by Ebihara from store to store, most of the time was spent in Croco fur shopping for female clothing.

"The basketball team sure needs some strange things." Yu commented carrying three bags full of shopping as they walked out of the store even though he knew why the things they requested were strange.

"That was obviously a lie!" Ai commented with a smirk.

"Obviously." Yu sighed.

"I really hope there's more to this girl than this, I don't want our time to be wasted ditching class." The Hound of Ulster commented.

Ai eventually lead led them to Atzrbucks where they sat down for drinks to Yu's private relief.

"It feels so good to be out." Ai sighed as she stretched arms to relax them "Everybody else is stuck in school with their stupid studies, that's what makes it so much fun."

"It is a nice change." Yu replied as he continued folding a napkin into the shape he desired.

"Wow you really get it and here I thought you were a boring square." Ai said bluntly.

"I've never ditched class before." Yu explained and he worked at the napkin.

"Oh you don't say." Ebihara said sarcastically before focusing on the napkin. "Just what are you making over there?"

Yu revealed the crane that he had shaped the napkin as and set it on the table.

"You're different than the other guys at school." the brunette gleefully stated, admiring his table napkin crane. "I may actually like you. You and me should get together again but next time it should really be after school 'kay?"

"Oh by the way I-" Ai suddenly paused and closed her mouth.

Yu then noticed that her eye was twitching and her fist crushed her macchiato. Despite the hot liquid going over her hand she seemed to ignore it completely despite how very hot it should have been.

"Are you ok?" Yu dared to ask.

"I'm fine. Just dandy." Ebihara said in a low tone that sounded like she was anything but ok, in fact she looked more than angry she seemed downright pissed. Her lips were curled into a smile, it was a kind of scary smile that promised pain and suffering on some unfortunate soul, he had seen it his mother's face when his dad did something especially stupid sometimes. "I'll be right back."

Ai immediately stood up and left the table treading surprisingly lightly for some reason as she walked away. Yu began to work on another napkin to pass the time but was distracted instead of
going to get something to clean herself off Ai was circling around another table and headed back to
the table. He looked at her questioningly only to receive a gesture demanding that he look away,
the boy shrugged and obliged her looking downwards as he did so.

Yu was surprised when he saw hidden on the ground just out of view was a mouse. But this was no
ordinary mouse, it was not moving from its position nor was it nibbling at food or searching for it,
the creature was looking at Yu intently almost as if it was watching him, he briefly wondering if he
was just being paranoid.

The fool raised an eyebrow at the mouse which seemed to widen its eyes, it began scurrying away
but didn't make it very far before a pinkish-white high heel smashed the rodent killing it instantly.
Looking up the heel in question belonged to Ai whose smile had changed from scary to one of
genuine happiness.

"Much better." she sighed sitting back down and scraping the remains of the mouse off on the table
leg. "I hate all rodents especially mice and rats I'll gladly crush any that dare enter my presence."

"A woman who destroys that which displeases her, she'd be interesting to have in my court at least.
But she's a bit too needy that would need to be crushed out of her before she was worthy of being
near me." Yu recognised the arrogant voice making the comment and made to question it but felt
the presence vanish before he ask anything.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

[04/21 Gym, Yasogami High, Inaba]

After School the next day the team was practicing basketball passes in the gym. Unfortunately,
there was not much in the way of practice going on. The other players, minus Kou and Yu, had
gotten bored and decided to start talking about various subjects.

"What no team manager?" one guy lamented about Ai not being present.

"She's the only reason I come to practice." The guy to his left said.

"Me too, she's probably flirting with a bunch of guys right now that girl's super easy."

"I hear she's got a sugar daddy," another glasses wearing guy said looking at Yu and snickered.

"Dude with that face, that body, that ass, of course she's gonna have…." "Enough! Stop saying those things about her." Yu's voice echoed with an otherworldly power, the
players tried but found themselves unable to object.

"He's right it's not cool to be making up a bunch of crap about her." Ichijo agreed with Yu when he
shook himself out of the daze Yu's words had put him into.

While this was occurring a mouse that was concealed near the door widened its eye's as if surprised
at what it was seeing. So focused was it on the scene that it did not notice a shadow fall over it. In
less than a second a black combat boot stomped the rodent into oblivion with only a loud crunch to
signal it was there at all.

The sound of the stomp and the subsequent crunch caused everyone to turn to see what he was
looking at, it was Ai and she was not happy. She turned around to leave without saying a word.

"Dumbasses what do they expect talking crap about her in place she's supposed to be?" Cu
Chulainn sighed.

"Hey, uh…." Kou tried to stop her only to get a rather fierce glare, which froze him on the spot.

Yu ran after her, Kou looked guilty while the other three simply laughed off what they said feeling no guilt at all.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

Yu finally caught up to Ai near the bike rack, he knew what it felt like to have sports teams talk about you spitefully like that and wanted to make sure that Ai was alright.

"Wait up are you okay?" he asked when he finally caught up to her.

"I'm fine they're always like that, really it's no big deal." Ai replied waving his concern off "To be honest I kind a think it's awesome, I love it! I find it flattering. You see I totally got the hots...for Ichijo he's so cool." A love struck look crossed Ai's face and Yu could tell that this wasn't an act she was serious about her feelings for Ichijo.

"Yes he is." Yu agreed with her, frankly he did think Ichijo was cool, the boy was nothing like the other captains of sports team's he'd met.

"He's always cheerful and kind, he even stood up and defended from those guys back there!" Ai continued drifting off into her own little world "Hey do you think he's got eye's for anyone else?"

"Don't know." Yu replied honestly not liking where this was going.

"Please you gotta help me here!" Ebihara pleaded grasping Yu's hand "Find out whether he like's anybody or not."

"What a sec, why me?" Yu asked as his feeling was confirmed.

"Cause you have too!" Ai said insistently "You're the only one I can count on o do this for me!"

"Aren't I the lucky one." Yu sighed.

"Yeesh and I thought I had crap luck." Cu Chulainn chuckled.

"This might a case of your luck contaminating our King's own and if so I will have to tighten your leash dog!" Gawain stated with the smallest hint of a smirk.

"DON'T CALL ME A DOG!" the Hound of Ulster yelled irately.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

Later on Yu and Ichijo were in the gym storage room putting away the equipment before locking up. As he helped the captain push the cart full of basketballs into the storage room asked whether Ichijo liked anyone.

"Do I like anybody?" Kou was apparently caught off guard by the question as he blushing slightly "Well what brought that on?"

"So you don't?" Yu asked dodging the question.

"Come on….oh perfect your not gonna let this one go are ya?" Ichijo sighed reluctantly "Promise you won't tell a soul."
"No problem, I swear." Yu swore giving a slight glance to the vaulting horse which Kou luckily did not see.

"I-I like Chie, ok?" Kou confessed after a few seconds.

Yu immediately pretended to cough in order to cover up his amusement, of the all the girls Chie was the last person he excepted Kou to have a crush on. Not because there was anything wrong with the girl, it was just a surprise. He genuinely expected Kou to have feelings for Ai judging by the way he stood up for her earlier.

"Hey what are you acting like that for?" Kou demanded "But man, I'm so jealous that you get to sit next to her every day it blows!" the boy then put his arm around Yu's shoulder pulling him close "Now that you know, you've put in a good word. Thanks man."

With that Ichijo left Yu alone, well almost alone. He was speechless when he took the lid off the vaulting horse revealing Ai who had been listening in. She looked very depressed after hearing that Ichijo had eyes for someone else.

[04/21 Rooftop, Yasogami High, Inaba]

After hearing whom it was Ichijo had feelings for Ai had bolted off, Yu having a bad feeling gave chase. As it turned out his instincts were correct as Ebihara was now sitting atop the fence that surrounded the school rooftop and trying to clamber to the meagre bit of rooftop on the other side of it.

"I'm gonna kill myself!" Ebihara cried as she tried to climb down only to be held back by Yu.

"Take it easy!"

"I know Chie! She's that frumpy looking girl." Ai screeched "I'm a hundred times better looking than she'll ever be!"

"You've gotta calm down!" Yu insisted continuing to try and pull Ai down carefully.

"Don't touch me!" She promptly slapped his hand away but remained balanced on the top of the fence "Get any closer and I'll jump for sure!"

"Think how your parents would feel." Yu said as gently as he could, he knew that when trying to calm someone down your tone was as important as your words

"So he doesn't even notice me?" Ebihara asked gloomily. "But I'm so cute now… I worked really hard to look like this." Tears began flowing down Ai's face "But if he doesn't love me what's the point?"

Yu climbed up and took a seat on the fence; he was just far enough from her to Ai keep her comfortable. She's was very fragile right now and simply yanking her down could cause her to become even more emotionally unstable.

Yu calmly watched her cry her eyes out for good five minutes as he patiently waited for her to calm down, eventually she did so and began to open up about herself.

"See I used to be the ugly fat girl and everyone teased me; all of my classmate's would gang up on me and call me gross girl and piggy-hara." Ai paused and sniffed before continuing "So I starved
myself until I lost a tone of weight. I read magazine's looking for tips on how to be cute and popular."

"I get it, you worked hard for this."

"Yeah but it wasn't enough, I became cute but still…no one loves me." Ai burst into tears once again "Why don't they love me?"

Yu let out a breath before continuing to talk.

"Look you worked really hard to be where you are. I'm sure your going to find a guy who like's you for who you are soon."

"You're…really nice." Ai sniffed wiping the tears form her eyes "I wish I'd fallen for someone like y-yo-woah-waah!" Suddenly the wind began picking up, Yu managed to steady himself sadly the same was not true for Ai as the once gentle breeze became a powerful gust that blew her backwards off the fence sending her plummeting towards the ground below.

"AAAAAAAAAGGGHHHHH!"

As he heard her scream of terror Yu shut everything else out and stood onto the fence.

"My king what are you-?" Gawain was cut off as the Fool following instincts that seemed to rise within him, dove after the falling girl.

The wind roared in Yu's ears as he fell, made his body as thin as possible to limit air resistance and speed up his descent. It worked and he quickly caught up to Ai and held her in a bridle style embrace.

Yu looked down at the ground which was rushing up to meet him, his mind told him to land in a roll to try and reduce at least some of the impact. However his instincts still whispered to him, so instead of preparing to roll he positioned his body to he would land on his feet, despite common sense screaming at him that his legs would be shattered at best from such a feat.

As his feet hit the ground he heard a loud crack, however it was not the sound of bone but concrete, indeed the concrete where he landed cracked and crumbled making a huge crater

".Fuck?" the Hound of Ulster's voice stated with disbelief.

Yu leapt up into the air again soaring higher than humanly possible until finally he was over the fence and safely on the rooftop.

Looking at his passenger he saw that Ai had at some point fallen unconscious. He gently set her down on the ground and stood up to look around. Luckily it seemed that no one had seen his superhuman feat which was good because it would be awkward enough explaining this to Ai alone never mind a bunch of other people.

"ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND?! WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU THINKING?!!" Cu Chulainn yelled at his the boy.

"Agreed, while that was brave it was also extremely reckless you could have been killed." Gawain admonished siding with the Hound of Ulster.

"I'm sorry." Yu didn't know what else to say. "I wanted to save her and I couldn't think of anything else, it was like instinct."
"Yeah well try to be less hasty in the future." Cu Chulainn sighed "If you die we disappear too, and believe me it is in fact, a pain in the ass. I get the feeling that your going to be unlocking more Heroic Spirits in the future and not all of them will be as nice about this kind of crap as us so be more careful ok?"

Yu said nothing but mentally agreed to his Persona as he sat down near Ai's head and let out a sigh, hearing a squeak he looked at saw a mouse nearby.

"How am I gonna explain this to her?" Yu asked of the mouse which only tilted its head. "Figures….hey I wouldn't stay there if I were you." Yu told the rodent which seemed to look at him questioningly. Despite feeling slightly odd talking to a mouse he felt the rodent deserved a fair warning, alas it was too late as the unconscious Ai's boot clad foot lashed out sending the mouse into the wall with a splat. "Tried to warn you." Yu deadpanned with a sweat drop, it seemed even unconsciousness wouldn't impede Ai's declaration of war on rodents.

With that the Fool stared down at the rodent hating girl and while thinking about what he was going to say to her he also silently prayed that if he should die exploring the TV world that he not be reincarnated as a rodent anywhere near Ai Ebihara, because his new life would be very short indeed.

Nearly ten minutes passed before Ai's eye's fluttered open and she sat up from her prone position. Yu had managed to find a spare receipt in his pocket and had spent the time folding it into a crane.

"Your awake, I'm glad." Yu said giving her a smile.

"I'm lying down. Did cry myself to sleep?" Ai asked wiping the remaining tears away from her eyes "But that dream seemed so real though….

"Can I ask what your dream was about?" Yu inquired praying that she take the excuse she'd inadvertently given him.

"Y-yeah I was telling you that you were a nice guy and then the wind blew me off the fence and I was falling, but then you dove after me and saved me." She quickly grabbed his hands causing him to drop the paper crane. "That dreams got to be a sign I know it, you can help me. Please you've gotta act like you love me until I find a guy I really want!"

Yu was rendered speechless and had no idea what to say or do.

"Better run with it." Cu Chulainn said "Unless you want her to get suspicious about her dream being more than a dream."

Seeing no way out of the situation, Yu reluctantly agreed and had a feeling that hardship for both himself and his wallet lay in his immediate future.

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[04/22 road to Yasogami High, Inaba]

"Yo, Narukami!" Hanamura called Yu with a waving Chie next to him.

"Yu!" The Fool felt a chill go up his spine as he heard a familiar voice calling to him, sure enough there was Ai running up to him. "Hey Yu! Let's skip school today and hang out with each other."

Yu sighed internally at the loss of his near perfect attendance record and reluctantly allowed Ai to drag him away again.
"When did they hook up?" Yosuke pondered, whispers from other students drifted through the air as Yu had a feeling what the next piece of juicy gossip at Yasogami High would be.

[04/22 Café Chagall, Okina City Inaba]

"Come on" Ebihara whined "I said I wanted caramel sauce!"

"Oh, sorry." Yu apologised having gotten Ai's drink order wrong.

"Your not forgiven until you say you love me," she stated. Yu stammered unsure of what to say. "I'm waiting….say it come on." Ebihara got impatient fast.

"I… I can't."

Luckily for Yu, Ai relented and instead dragged him off to a clothing store nearby surprisingly it wasn't Croco Fur but that was probably because Croco Fur didn't have the photo booth that Ebihara had dragged Yu into.

"Hey let's make out" Ai proposed very into this date.

"What?" Yu choked surprised at her forwardness.

"Come on, its ok no one is watching and we are going out after all." Ai insisted.

"No, I can't! I can-" Yu was cut off as Ai quickly stole a kiss and held it as the booth began taking the photos. Yu was too surprised by her boldness and slightly afraid of the consequences too push Ai away so he let it happen.

[04/23 Class 2-2, Yasogami High, Inaba]

The next day in class Yu sat in his seat, depressed over the brow beating he got from King Moron earlier for skipping school with Ebihara yesterday. She didn't seem bothered by it as she had heard it all before but it was the first time Yu had been chewed out for skipping class, usually he just attended and kept his head down.

"Hey Narukami, we're meeting up at the Junes' food court after school," Yosuke informed him standing in front of the silver haired boy's desk during lunch.

"We need to sit down and review those cases." Chie said.

"Yeah…right….we need to do that…" Yu agreed only half listening.

The normally arguing pair both gave Yu looks of concern however before Yu could say anything a ring tone programmed for a specific caller came from his pocket causing Yu to straighten up and gain a disturbed expression on his face.

"Not gonna get that?" Yosuke asked raising an eyebrow at Yu's disturbed expression.

"Right."

"Too slow! I'm your girlfriend and it took you three rings!" Ai screeched down the phone nearly destroying Yu's eardrums causing him to hang up instinctively.
'That probably wasn't a smart idea.' Cu Chulainn sighed.

"What's that about?" Yosuke asked curiously.

"Oh nothing much." Yu lied 'I should call her back if don't then she's really gonna lay into me.' Yu thought to himself as he took out his phone and walked out the classroom to call Ai back.

[---]

[04/23 Food Court, Junes, Inaba]

Later on that day it wound up just being Yosuke and Chie meeting up at the food court with no sign of of their leader.

"What's your take on them?" Chie asked sharply clearly unimpressed with his absence.

"On who?" Yosuke asked.

"On Narukami and Ebihara." she elaborated irritably.


"Like hell they do!" And Satonaka, with all the energy channelled perfectly due to her kung-fu practice with Li Shuwen, kicked the table making Yosuke a spit his soda out. "They're all playing hooky, and crawling all over each other! That's not like Narukami at all!" she yelled.

"Perhaps this Ai Ebihara is the problem." Li Shuwen said appearing in Spirit Form.

"I can see that!" Chie interrupted her Persona. "She got him to prioritize a date over reviewing the cases today!"

"Calm yourself my student." The assassin chided "This Ebihara from what I have been able to observe has a strong personality and is not the most emotionally stable of individuals. Combine this with the fact that your leader has most likely never been approached by a girl in this manner due to his constant moving about and you have a recipe for this kind of situation."

"….I guess you have a point." Chie mumbled still unhappy.

"Why are you getting yourself so worked up over all this?" Yosuke asked "Whoa. Wait a sec do you?...Now I get it." Yosuke smirked and squinted his eyes.

"Huh?"

"He's a super cool dude and he can use a bunch of Personas." Yosuke's smirk became a full blown grin.

"My lord I don't think..." Diarmuid trailed off when it became apparent that Yosuke was not paying attention.

"What?" Chie had no idea what Yosuke was talking about causing

"I believe he means that green is an interesting colour on you my master." Li Shuwen sniggered confusing Chie further.

"Huh?"
"It's ok I gotcha." Yosuke said confidently giving her a thumbs you. "You may think your up the creek with a paddle but I'm gonna bail ya out kay?"

"I am so lost." Chie said with no idea what Yosuke or her Persona were talking about.

[04/26, Gym, Yasogami High, Inaba]

The following Tuesday Ichijo had gathered the entire team together for an announcement of some sort.

"Guys listen up, I've put out team down to play in a practice game this weekend." Ichijo announced getting groans for a large amount of the team, save for Yu and a couple of others. Yu felt no sympathy for them at all, he knew what true hardship was and its name was Ai Ebihara. "We haven't done this forever so, so let's get out there and kick some ass!" Ichijo sounded very cheerful.

"Sure." The team echoed their collective voices devoid of enthusiasm.

"Yo! Got a second?" Yosuke's voice came from the gym entrance.

"Oh, Yosuke." the captain acknowledged, then blushed when he saw Chie.

"What are you two doing here?" Yu asked bluntly.

"So I've been talking to Chie here and she wants to become your team manager," Hanamura said with a grin lacing his expression, even as Chie's jaw dropped. "Can she give it a shot?"

"Yeah!" Ichijo said a bit too enthusiastically "That would be great."

"Wait is that why you dragged me here?" Chie whispered angrily to Yosuke.

"I'm telling you, you've got to level the playing field a bit if you want to try and beat Ebihara." Yosuke whispered to Chie conspiratorially.

"Dude what?" Chie remained confused by what Yosuke was saying to her and tried to ignore her Persona sniggering at her.

"Life sure is hard for a girl in love." The prince of Junes whispered to Chie with a nod.

"I so do not get you." Chie said causing her Persona's sniggers to become full blown laughter.

"Thanks a lot man this is awesome we could really use the help with the upcoming game." Ichijo stated.

"Well I guess I could help out for one game." Chie relented seeing no problem only to sweat drop upon seeing Ai giving her a death glare. "It think someone's giving me the stink eye." She mumbled to herself

"Woah, it's a knock down drag battle for love has!" Yosuke exclaimed snickering with excitement.

"What are you trying to do?" Yu asked to the snickering Yosuke.

[04/26, changing rooms, Yasogami High, Inaba]
The other team member had changing quickly and gone home leaving only Yu and Ichijo to change after putting the equipment away.

"Hey Narukami," Ichijo started as he pulled off his shirt putting it lazily into his gym bag. "After this next game, I'm afraid I'm gonna have to quit the team."

"What for?" Yu asked as he continued changing back into his regular clothes.

"You see my parents never really approved of the whole basketball thing team. I'm from a big family and I'm first in line to run things so..." Ichijo began taking his socks off and putting them away. "It sucks....I've only ever talked about this with Nagase but I figured that I could trust you with it too." Ichijo gave Yu a trusting sad yet trusting smile. "This last game I really want to win it. Could you help me out? I know you don't have such good experiences with sports teams but..."

"No problem, I can put that aside for a friend in need." Yu interrupted Ichijo and gave him a smile.

"Awesome!" Ichijo exclaimed as he stood from the bench. "Thanks a lot man and if we win I'm gonna tell Chie how I really feel about her!"

"Huh?" Yu let out a noise of surprise.

"That's not good." The Hound of Ulster commented "If he does that then Ebihara really will go over the edge, no matter if she says you're her boyfriend she still has feelings for Ichijo that's for sure."

"But we cannot break our word to Ichijo." Gawain pointed out "Perhaps we can make sure the game ends on a tie instead?"

"That's it, that's how we'll pull this off." Yu muttered to his Persona so Ichijo would not hear.

[04/29, Gym, Yasogami High, Inaba]

"I just came to cheer you guys on." Yosuke explained pulling at the uniform he was wearing. "So how did I end up wearing a uniform?"

"But some guys were no shows so we're short on players." Ichijo explained.

"Happens all the time, just do your best." Daisuke said walking past Yosuke.

"Yosuke." Yu came up to the boy.

"Hey there's something I've been meaning to tell you, these past few days I've been feeling weird, like I'm faster, stronger stuff like that. What about you do you feel any different?"

"Yeah I know what you mean." Yu nodded "We can use that to our advantage, try to be fast but not so fast that it looks weird. I want to make sure this game ends on tie, can you help me?"

"Yeah...uh...no problem." Yosuke agreed shakily. "But why a tie?"

"Because something...might happen if we win and I don't want to disappoint Ichijo by losing." Yu replied.

"Ok gotcha."
Chie meanwhile was setting up the video camera to get footage of the game when her view was blocked by Ai Ebihara.

"I don't care if you're here for just one game you are not welcome here." Ai said venomously to the meat loving girl.

"Why do you care what happens? I hear you hardly show up for practice anyway." Chie shot back hitting a nerve.

Yosuke watched the two bicker back and forth before looking at Yu who had been passed a ball for practice before the game.

"It's hard being a ladies man right Narukami?" Yosuke smirked.

"What?" Yu had no idea what Yosuke meant.

A few minutes later the teams were assembled and the referee blew his whistle to signify the start of the match.

"Let's play fair." Both teams said at once before the ball was released.

Ichijo jumped for it but the other captain managed to steal it and began dribbling it down the court. Yu saw this and nodded at Yosuke who gave him a grin. The silver haired boy ran mindful of his speed and quickly stole the ball from the opposing captain, dribbling it up court quickly managing to score the first shot of the match. With Yosuke's help Yu was able to easily steal the ball and score while also allowing the other team to keep up without it looking suspicious.

Meanwhile at the bench Chie and Ai were both recording data on the match, neither was happy to be in the others presence.

"Seeing you up close piss's me off even more," Ebihara muttered, loud enough for Chie to hear in a venomous tone. "I can't believe that I lost to a frumpy looking dog like you."

"Frumpy? What the hell are you talking about?"

"Don't act like you don't know, I'm going through hell because of you!" Ai seethed, gritting her teeth bare restrained anger.

"Well as long as we're sharing I've got something to tell you." Chie said snapped back. "I've seen the way you're pushing Narukami around, it's horrible!"

"Huh?" Ai raised an eyebrow and smirked "You've got the hots for Narukami haven't you?"

"I'm his friend!" Ai's expression dropped and she clenched her fists in anger.

"Great, you're loved and you have a bunch of friends to boot." she mumbled sadly. "You've got everything, you bitch!" she promptly stood up, crushed a mouse that was watching the game and slapped Chie across the face.

"What the hell!!" Chie hissed, standing up. "All I'm saying is that if you're going to be Narukami's girlfriend, then treat him better!"

Chie slapped Ai back, which in turn caused her to retaliate. It went on like this until it became a full on cat fight between the two. With Chie admirably holding back due to the serious damage she could do to Ebihara.
"Hey cut it out you two!" Yu yelled at the two Gawain's Charisma skill seeping into his words causing the girls to release each and sit down as if on instinct. "This might be Ichijo's last game!" Those words caused Ebihara to flinch. "So just sit down and watch him!"

"Less than a minute left!" Ichijo called cause Yu to look at the scoreboard and see that he needed one more score to get a tie. He promptly grabbed Yosuke and ran off to continue his plan.

"What the hell…was that?" Chie mumbled so Ai could not hear.

"That young grasshopper was your leader undoubtedly drawing on Gawain's Charisma skill." Li Shuwen explained appearing in spirit form and watching the game. "Even if it is E Ranked, Gawain is a Natural Knight against whom it is very difficult to object, especially for ordinary people such as yourself, you have along way to go yet my student."

Chie pondered her Persona's words loosing herself deep in thought as failed to notice the game ending.

[-][-][-][-][-][-][-]

[04/29, Aiya, Shopping District, Inaba]

The Game ended had ended and Ichijo, Daisuke, Ai, Chie, Yosuke and Yu were all at Aika's although the mood was a bit more cheerful than most would think it would be. Apparently Ichijo was still happy that they hadn't lost. A tie was a first for the Yasogami basketball team in a long time.

"We did our best!" everyone cheered clinking their glasses together before drinking.

"Thanks for waiting. One beef over rice." Aika announced as she came towards them with a hot bowl of nikudon.

"Ah. Here!" Ichijo said excitedly, gazing at the hot bowl with gusto. "I'm digging in!"

Dig in he did, Ichijo began eating the nikudon with delight on his face.

"Ichijo, I'm sorry man…" Nagase said looking down.

Ichijo looked up and stopped inhaling his food for moment looking questioningly.

"Huh?" he made a questioning sound.

"I've let you down…" Nagase continued glumly. He totally knew. It doesn't take a psychic or some fluffy bear's nose to sense that.

"It was your last game too, we're sorry we could bag a win." Yu finished feeling bad for lying, he could have easily bagged a win, but Yu didn't want to risk Ai becoming unstable again should Ichijo actually confess to Chie.

"Oh," Ichijo gulped his food. " I changed my mind about that."

Everyone collectively looked at the boy questioningly.

"That game made me realize something important." Ichijo spoke calmly before smiling and looking like he was in high spirits. "I really love playing basketball."

He toyed with his chopsticks and gazed at the remainder of his drink with a pensive look on his
"I really hate losing and even though we got a tie this time, I can't end it like this, we were only able to compete with those guys 'coz you joined and we tied thanks to your skills." he continued, speaking jovially. "I seriously owe you one, Narukami. Thanks, man."

"No problem" Yu replied

"And someday when our team actually does win a game I'll tell her how I feel." Ichijo whispered excitedly.

"Yeah."

"So what do you say? Are you gonna stick team and help us win some games?" he asked.

"I'll come along if you can get another real match going." Yu replied.

Satonaka then chimed in while Hanamura rested his elbows at the counter, waiting for his food.

"I'd love to stick around but I can't, it seems that I don't seem to mix well with a certain someone." Chie chimed in crossing her arms and pouting.

"Hey Ichijo?" Ai got the attention of the captain. "Do you mind if…" she started, blushing lightly "I stick around the basketball team?"

"Of course not!" Ichijo said excitedly.

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[04/29, Shopping District, Inaba]

The rain had long since let up when they walking home together through the shopping district.

"Man. That last shot I made? You saw it right? It was so awesome!" Ichijo bragged to Daisuke.

"Of course I did. I would have covered for you if you missed." Daisuke replied.

"Oh yeah like that would ever happen!"

"Hey, Yu." Ai ran up to Yu "I'll be okay on my own now."

Whoa. Breaking up huh? I'm a little surprised since I heard that relationship endings should be done in private, plus it's a little bit rushed, but of course, I already know the reason why.

It's Ichijo, right?

"Your really nice and I wanted you around to spoil me, at least until I got over being rejected." Ebihara explained softly watching the object of her affection getting his head bashed by the taller soccer team captain. "For a second there, I thought there was a chance that I might end up falling for you."

She promptly held up the photo's that had been taken a few days ago in the photo booth.

"Here I want you to have this as a memento" Ebihara continued. "It's a major pain in the ass but I'm gonna try to act like a good manager from now on. You helped me come to that decision and its time that I followed through, thanks so much for all that you've done."

So she winked and ran to catch up with Ichijo, she slowed to walk alongside him and began talking
to him. Yu smiled at the two as he felt the strength of the bonds he'd established with them. Deep within, two more souls connected to him from Beyond, with the numbers XI and XVIII representing Ichijo and Ai respectively.

"God damn!" Cu Chulainn exclaimed appeared in spirit form walking beside him. "It's starting to get crowded in there, there's now five stiffs in that noggin or yours would it kill ya to make more room?"

Yu simply smirked at the Persona as they walked along the path.

"I do wonder though, on the rooftop how did I do that?" Yu wondered aloud yet quietly enough so only Cu Chulainn could hear.

"Beats me" the Hound of Ulster shrugged "I've never heard of situation like this before."

Yu fell silent as he continued walking home.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

[Wizard Marshal Zelretch's office, Clock Tower, London]

Wizard Marshal Zelretch currently sat in his office, for once not making someone else's life hectic for his own amusement. It had only been a short time since Narukami had awakened the new modified Persona ability and already he had a hang of the Wild Card's power. The bond's he created had given him more connections to souls in the Throne of Heroes. Everything was going according to plan and by the end of this mess Nyarlathotep would be tearing his non existent hair out having lost again.

Just as Zelretch was about to take reach for his drink the door slammed open reveal a very angry looking Waver Velvet a.k.a Lord El Melloi II.

"You" he pointed at Zelretch "You're behind this, admit it!"

"Alright I'll bite what have I done now?" Zelretch asked with an infuriating smirk.

"Don't play stupid with me, you know what I'm talking about. That Ebihara girl." Waver yelled angrily.

"What about her?"

"In just nine day's she's managed to kill sixty five of my familiars, which are supposed to be watching Narukami and his group. A loss of one or two is something I can take but sixty five! I KNOW THAT YOU'RE BEHIND THIS!" Lord El Melloi bellowed.

"Sorry Waver, but I can say with complete honesty that I have nothing to do with this." Zelretch answered with an amused grin.

"If not you then how does she keep finding my familiars?" Waver growled at the Wizard Marshal.

"Mystic Eye's of Rodent Detection?" Zelretch suggested getting an infuriated growl from Lord El Melloi.

"THERE'S NO SUCH THING AND YOU KNOW IT!" Waver yelled infuriated.

"Relax, it's not like they're that hard to replace." Zelretch replied casually waving him off.

"Anyway, anything important to report?"
"Yes" Waver stated calming down and clearing his throat "From what my familiars have observed it would seem the attributes of Heroic Spirits are somehow leaking out into the hosts, I have yet to determine why or how but I suspect it may linked to the nature of Persona's."

"Hmmmm…..keep watching them, we might need to step in if this starts getting attention." Zelretch ordered receiving a nod of confirmation from Waver who wandered off to carry out his orders.

After that, a new smile crossed the face of the Old Man of the Jewels. It seemed that things would certainly get interesting in the future.
Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Persona or Fate or anything in the nasuverse, any resemblance to any other Persona 4/Fate fan fiction is coincidental and plagiarism is not intended. No flames please constructive criticism only.

AN: Just an FYI I decided to skip Level 2 of Marie's Slink. So I wrote out Level three instead. In that event Marie never showed her ability to see Heroic Spirits hence the surprise.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

[05/01, Parking Lot, North Shopping district, Inaba]

It was late into the night and the sun had long since set, however this did nothing to discourage the young man known as Kanji Tatsumi who was surrounded by a biker gang that kept returning after he crushed them the last time. There were about a forty of them, but their numbers didn't scare him. His problem was that they kept revving up their damn bikes which stopped his mother from getting any sleep, hence why he'd been crushing Biker gangs in the area for a few years now.

Predictably they had come to the parking lot and Kanji had been waiting for them. He was already into the fray; beating down the morons who rushed him one after another sometimes even flipping them around and throwing them into their buddies. He ignored the camera crew that was recording the whole thing like a TV show. He couldn't think about them, right now he had to take down these assholes.

It was while Kanji was distracted fighting off two others, that a biker with a wooden sword rushed him intending to take him down from behind.

"Behind you villain!" a voice called from the shadows.

"What in the hell is tha-OOF" the sword wielding biker was cut off as a shadow leapt from atop a roof and landed by planting his foot into the biker's head sending him to the ground knocking him unconscious.

The figure was wearing a gentlemen's tuxedo, a blond wig on covering his hair and a silver mask adorning his face with a comical smile on it. His appearance caused Kanji and the Biker's to pause in their fight. The intruder stepped off of the biker he had been standing on and picked up a wooden sword.

"Who the hell are you supposed to be?" The apparent leader of the gang demanded angrily.

"I'm glad you asked delinquent scum." the silver masked figure said deliberately with a clearly fake deep and heroic voice. "I have heard the cries of the people living in this area forced to suffer the intolerable noise you thugs make night after night, yet even as this brave young man" the masked figure motioned to Kanji "crushes you time and again like a rash on the towns backside you
continue to flare up, well rapscallions no more for I am this towns rash soothing cream, prepare to taste the fury of..." the figure struck a pose so his body was shaped like a capital Y " Space Samurai...Y!"

Kanji and the camera crew who were watching the exchange sweat dropped when the masked figure finished his speech and struck his pose. A few seconds passed and the biker's all burst into laughter.

"Who the hell is this guy?"

" Is he for real?"

" What does he think this is a cartoon?"

" Get lost, this ain't Featherman pal."

"Wait did he just call us an ass rash?"

"Underestimate me at your own peril ne'er-do-wells." Space Samurai Y held up the wooden sword in a ready stance which amused the bikers.

"I'll take care of this loser." one of the bikers wearing a tattered jacket said cracking his knuckles "Say goodnight hero."

The thug charged at the samurai, however quicker than any of the witnesses could think the charging biker had his feet swiped from under him and was sent to the ground hard as the wooden sword slammed into his exposed back.

"What the hell? Who in the fuck are you?" the leader of the biker's demanded angrily.

"I have already told you I am Space Samurai Y, a passing ally of justice here to punish you hoodlums." the Samurai stated before looking at Kanji "Young man, let's teach these rapscallions a lesson they won't soon forget, what say you?"

"Huh...er yeah I'm ready damn it." Kanji yelled clenching his fists as he prepared to fight again.

"Very well!" The samurai leapt into the air and landed so he was standing next to Kanji. "I'll take the twenty on the right you take the twenty on the left."

"Screw that I'll take twenty one" Kanji yelled pumped up.

"That's the spirit." the Samurai stated preparing to fight.

"W-what the hell are you all waiting for an engraved invitation?" the Leader yelled at his men "Kill these morons."

After a second of hesitation the gang rushed the two hoping to take them down quickly.

"Very well, all at once it is, have at thee rapscallions." the Samurai cried leaping into battle.

"I'LL BEAT YOU ALL DOWN DAMN IT!" Kanji yelled as his fists flew into the faces of bikers. Battle cries echoed into the night as the 'fight' resumed. It could hardly be called a fight though, one sided beat down was more accurate as Kanji the Space Samurai beat the delinquents down left and right. In the beginning of the fight the samurai was doing more damage to the gang members he struck down, with some loosing teeth and having broken noses and even broken arms as they
were sent to the ground by the wooden sword.

However as the fight dragged on his swings which seemed to be slightly wild became more focused, any master of the sword who was watching the fight could tell that he was quickly going from displaying the skill of a rookie to that of a novice to an amateur, to an expert and finally a professional with the skill of years all within seconds.

Such rapid improvement especially in a street brawl like this was unheard of and the few weapon practitioners who continued preserving their art that were watching the fight on the news would have their interest piqued when they would watch the masked man in action.

It was long before the fight began to wind down with less than ten bikers left conscious. They charged over their comrades to try and take the two down only to meet the same fate as their comrades.

"STAY DOWN! ASSHOLES!" Kanji yelled as he smashed together the heads of two bikers together.

One who had engaged the Samurai kept trying to grab the masked man only for him to toy with him by dancing out of the way.

"Stay. Still. Bas. tard." The biker growled grabbing at the masked intruder with every syllable.

It was when the delinquent grabbed at his wig that the Space Samurai had enough and smashed him on the head knocking him to the ground.

"Don't grab there that wig was expensi-I mean that's my hair you fiend." The Samurai yelled correcting himself quickly.

As the masked fighter knocked down the hair grabbing biker he dropped the wooden sword and dusted off his gloved hands watching as Kanji finished the fighter by smashing the leaders head into his own bike sending him to dreamland with the rest of his crew.

"Now stay away from this place damn it, go bike or whatever somewhere else." Kanji yelled shaking the unconscious gang leader before dropping him and turning to the masked man who had helped him fight. "Hey…er thanks for the help man."

"No thanks necessary citizen" The Samurai said still putting using his deep heroic voice "Now I must be off duty calls" the samurai leapt off "till next ti-YEOW SON OF A-" or tried to when he was suddenly sent back to earth due to smashing his head by leaping up into a streetlight "Who moved that damned streetlight?" he suddenly stiffened and flinched when he saw that Kanji and the news crew were still staring at him, the samurai sweat dropped, cleared his throat and stood up.

"As I was saying, 'till next time citizens. Space Samurai Y AWAY!"

The masked man leapt up onto the roof in an incredible display of acrobatics and ran across it fading into the night, looking like a cool superhero….or he did look cool until he could be heard tripping and falling off of the rooftop and crash landed into some trash cans on the other side.

"WAAAAHH-OOOF, why are these rooftops so damned small and what is in these cans?" the sound of sniffing could be heard "Oh good lord it's tuna, this'll take forever to wash out."

Kanji was so distracted by spectacle that he almost forgot to give the news crew a piece of his mind, all of them sweat dropped at the goofy masked man's antics as he ran off.
The next morning the students all gossiped in awe and fear as one Kanji Tatsumi stormed by ignoring them all.

"Hey, did you hear about the new freshman student?" one student asked another in a not so quiet tone.

"I did but, is it legit? Did he really beat up an entire biker gang?" his friend asked curiously.

"They say it's true. It was him and some guy in a mask versus a hundred and the two of them kicked the crap out of those bikers!"

"When they finished, the freshman became their boss and the masked guy became his right hand man. Apparently he even got interviewed by some TV station."

"nah, man that's not what I heard."

"What did you hear?"

"I heard the masked guy was pissed that Kanji became the biker's boss and yelled that he would destroy all evil and then the two had an epic clash that ended with the two beating each other senseless."

"That's bullshit I heard the masked guy just ran off after the fight."

"Whatever, what do you think a thug like that's doin' in our school?"

"I dunno but he should crawl back to whatever gutter he came from." The other remarked snidely.

They laughed until the boy in question began walking towards them, hands in his pockets. When they spotted him they immediately gained nervous looks and skulked off, his gaze followed them before he growled and made to keep walking. He stopped when all of a sudden someone tapped on his shoulder.

"Is this yours?" He whipped around, and there stood Yu, holding a fluffy pink bunny keychain. Face becoming red; he snatched it out of the other boy's hand.

"G-gimme that!"

With that Kanji immediately pocketed the keychain and began storming off a little bit faster.

Lunchtime finally rolled around, a surprising number of people had chosen to stay in their classrooms or the halls for lunch today, no one felt like going outside which was perfect for Yu who had need to have the rooftop all to himself for what he wanted to do.

"I looked around in spirit form, we're alone, no one the see what we're doing up here." The Hound of Ulster reported. "But are you sure this'll work?"

" It can't hurt to try." Yu replied coolly. "The worst that can happen is that I look like an idiot with no one around to see It."
"Alright, but let's just hope this ain't too flashy or we're gonna have a hard time explaining this." Cu Chulainn sighed.

Yu took a deep breath before extending his hand outwards and reaching within to his bond with Marie.

"I call to the power of the bonds within, you who align yourself with The Aeon Arcana" a short ways away from Yu there appeared a large circle that glowed blue with a mask in the centre that was half light half dark underneath. Floating above it in the air was a tarot card with the image of an Egyptian deity holding a staff on it, when it rotated around its image changed to that of an armoured man driving a Chariot with word the Roman numeral XX next to the word Rider. It changed back and forth from this image as it slowly spun in the air. "I call to you under this bond and ask that you appear to me now, come forth Rider of the Aeon."

Yu clenched his fist and the Arcana shattered and blue flame's swirled around the circle. After a few seconds they dissipated and revealed a woman dressed in black and dark purple attire which left little to the imagination. The toga like dress she wore displayed a generous amount of her impressive cleavage and hugged her body tightly, ending in a short skirt. Her arms were covered in sleeves disconnected from her toga that began at her biceps with bands keeping them in place and ended in handcuffs around her wrists. Her legs were donned similarly with black leggings that went up to her thighs and black boots underneath.

Her eyes were covered by a purple headband that matched colours to the choker she wore. Completing her physical appearance was her absurdly long purple hair a few strands of which brushed against the ground; a red marking of some sort adorned her forehead.

A few seconds passed and Cu Chulainn let out an appreciative whistle.

"Woah babe alert, you sure know how to summon 'em." the Hound of Ulster commented with a grin.

"So you're the Aeon Arcana Persona right?" Yu asked

"Correct." she answered stoically staring at him through her blindfold.

"So who are you?"

"I am Medusa." She answered shortly; apparently she wasn't one for giving out long answers.

"So we can be summoned this world too, not just the TV World." Gawain said appearing in spirit form. "That is good to know in case of an emergency. You are of the Rider Class if I am not mistaken, correct?" Medusa nodded at the knight in silent confirmation.

"Yeah, but it's a bit harder here, like it take's more energy maintain." Yu stated trying to catch his breath.

In response to her masters situation Medusa took spirit form becoming invisible to all expect Persona users thus relieving him of the burden.

"Thank you." Yu expressed his gratitude towards the Persona for relieving him of the burden.

"It is no trouble....Space Samurai Y." Medusa replied while trying to fight down a smirk.

A pause and the sound of flesh hitting flesh echoed. Gawains face had become firmly buried in his hands apparently mortified at being reminded about last night.
"My King, even if your actions were for a noble cause, couldn't you have protected your identity in a less...unsightly way?" The Knight of the Sun pleaded while Cu Chulainn began laughing his ass off at the memory of last nights...escapade.

"People consider me a calm, collected and serious person." Yu replied to his Persona while still looking at Medusa whose smirk had quickly disappeared from her face; however the Wild Card could feel an aura of humour pouring off of the Persona. "By acting that way no one will ever suspect that it's me."

"Why do I have the feeling this is not the last time we will be doing this?" Gawain asked mortified.

"I need the practice." Yu stated feeling no shame. "Even with just a wooden sword against some thugs, it's good practice for real opponents like the shadows."

Gawain had no words and settled for shaking his head trying not the think about anymore excursion like the one last night. Cu Chulainn had finally stopped laughing and began hitting on Medusa who was giving him the cold shoulder.

[05/02, Dojima residence, Inaba]

It was the evening and night had fallen. Both Yu and Nanako sat eating dinner together.

"Isn't this fried chicken good?" Nanako asked.

"Yeah, it is." Yu looked at the TV.

The phone rang, and Nanako perked up.

"Maybe it's Dad!"

Yu watched the girl pop up to answer, but quickly turned his attention back to the TV.

"Hello?" Nanako chirped. "Uh-huh? Oh..." Her face fell. "Okay. I see." She turned to Yu. ""Daddy wants to talk to you."

Yu took the phone getting a sinking feeling in his stomach. "Hello?"

"Hey there, I'm sorry, but I'm gonna be working late tonight" Dojima sighed and flipped some paperwork. "Feel free to lock the door and hit he sack if you want."

"Yeah sure, no problem." Yu said to his uncle.

"Why do I get the feeling this isn't all he has to say?" Cu Chulainn sighed shaking his head.

"Oh and about us taking off on the fourth and the fifth... one of our rookies got pretty sick and it doesn't look like the case he was working on will wait until he gets back, so I'm stuck filling in."

"Nanako will be crushed when she finds out." Yu whispered into the phone.

"I-I know...I know...I'm sorry... can you to watch over Nanako for me?" Dojima requested apologetically.

"Alright." Yu conceded with a disappointed sigh.
"Thanks." Dojima hung up leaving Yu to put the phone back in its cradle.

[05/03, Dojima residence, Inaba]

The next morning the doorbell rang. Yu opened it up and was surprised to see Chie cheerfully standing outside the door.

"Good morning!" Chie saluted as soon as the front door slid open.

"Chie?" Yu blinked.

He hadn't expected anyone to come over, he wasn't really used to people coming over to ask him to hang out. This was mainly due to having no friends because of how he moved constantly.

"So, are you free today?" Chie asked enthusiastically "Because if you are, you wanna hang with us? Yukiko will be there," her voice became less enthusiastic as she rolled her eyes. "And if we have to, we can invite Yosuke, too."

"Sorry, but I can't today." Yu said with a sigh.

It would be wrong of him to just take off with his friends when his little cousin had been eagerly anticipating Golden Week only for it to be cancelled at the last minute.

The sound of small feet padding against the floor drew Chie's attention. She peered past her friend to see a little girl wearing a white turtleneck under a sleeveless dress in pink and two shades of red, white socks and pink shoes.

"Hm? Oh," she smiled and leaned down to be more at his eye level. "You must be Nanako, Whadaya say, you wanna join us?"

Nanako gave off a squeak and didn't say anything instead opting to look at her cousin who had an assuring smile on his face that seemed to put her at ease at ease.

"Come on, it'll be fun." Yu encouraged her with a friendly tone.

"You sure it's ok?" she ventured still a bit nervous.

"Course it is!" Chie's smile remained. "And you'll have a great time."

"Can we go now?"

Yu hurried to put on his shoes as Nanako went upstairs to get dressed, and left holding his cousin's hand all the way.

[05/03, Junes, Food Court Inaba]

"Tada!" Yosuke slapped a plate of meat onto the round metal table in front of the little girl. "One giant steak!"

The cut was bigger than Nanako's head, and smelled delicious. "Wow! It looks yummy!"

Chie swiped the cutlery from Yosuke's hand with a growl.
"My god, you're slow!" She offered it to their small guest, with a large smile. "Here. Dig in, Nanako. Eat it all up."

Nanako thanked her politely.

"You may have to chew it a lot." Yukiko stated. "They don't have the best quality steak here."

"Aw, come on. At least don't say that stuff while I'm standing right here." Yosuke balked. He flopped down into one of the chairs at the table and sloppily pulled his the apron.

"Are you through with work now?" Yu asked, taking a bite of her own steak.

"Nah, I'm just on a break," He sighed and glanced around the busy rooftop. "But dude, what are you guys doing wasting your whole Golden Week hanging out here at the Junes food court?"

"There's nowhere else to go." Chie snapped at him.

"But what about Nanako?" Yosuke frowned. "You bring her here? Of all the places you could take her?"

"Yeah," Yukiko said with a sad sigh. "I feel so bad for her."

"You know, there are worse places on earth." Yosuke said defensively changing his tune.

All of sudden Nanako perked up when the Junes jingle played over the loudspeakers.

"Every day's great at your Junes!" She sang along to the jingle, rocking in her seat. "I love Junes!"

Nanako giggled.

"And I love Nanako!" Yosuke exclaimed, his heart soaring at having someone on his side.

"The only thing missing is the picnic. We're supposed to have a picnic basket today." Nanako popped another piece of steak in her mouth and began chewing it.

"A picnic?" Yukiko leaned in. "Were you going to make the picnic?"

Nanako shook his head and turned a knowing smile to his older cousin.

Yu froze midway through a bite of steak when everyone's eyes turned to him.

"So," Yosuke sat up, impressed that the new, cute, transfer student had made such lofty plans. "You were going to make a mean picnic basket, huh?"

"Yeah, Just for fun." Yu replied nonchalantly.

Chie leaned on one hand, grinning.

"Really? That's cool you were going to make a picnic for the whole family." Her smile widened and her tone became a teasing one. "Big bro."

Nanako looked up at Yu from her plate of steak and blinked.

"Big bro?"

"Seriously," Yosuke added light heartedly. "I think the fact that you were going to do that is totally impressive. It means you've already got better cooking skills than Chie."
"Wait a sec!" Chie brandished her fork and knife threateningly. "What the hell makes you think I don't know how to cook, huh?!

"Wait." Yukiko looked genuinely confused now. "So you can?"

Nanako joined her shock, pausing through a cut of meat. "You can cook?"

"Ok, it's a cook off between you and me!" Chie shouted unamused as she pointed accusingly at Yosuke.

"Ok, bring it on." He said meeting her challenge with a smug grin.

Chie froze; she hadn't expected him to call her bluff. Now she couldn't back down. Worse, she knew for a fact that she couldn't cook home meals that well.

"We'll need an impartial person to be our judge." He grinned at the little girl slurping down a soft drink clutched in both hands. "That's you, Nanako."

"Huh?" She looked up, confused.

"Am I competing to?" Yukiko asked.

"I'm pretty good," Yosuke bragged. "I might even whip up something better than your own mom's cooking," He added a laugh trying to keep the mood light.

Nanako's hand froze. She glanced up from her food, locking her eyes on Yu before looking at her soda again.

"Probably, I don't have a mom." she said it like with a neutral tone. "She died in an accident." She sipped more of her drink.

Everyone's mood crashed. Chie suddenly felt something tap her leg from the side. She looked to see Yu still sitting at the table smiling up at her, another tap this time slightly harder, Yu's eyes quickly motioned towards Yosuke and back a couple of times. Another tap to her leg and she got the message.

"Idiot!"

"AUGH!" Yosuke exclaimed as he received a powerful kick to the leg from Chie.

"S-sorry." Yosuke groaned, regretfully both of the fact that he had something so ignorant and the fact that he couldn't complain about Chie kicking him this time, because he did kind of deserve it. "I didn't know. Um...sorry"

"Why?" The little girl set the cup down and smiled slightly. "I do just fine. I don't have a mommy, but I still have my daddy around and..." she blushed slightly. "I have a big brother."

Yu looked at his cousin with surprise; he hadn't expected to be so important to her.

Nanako wrapped her hands around the cup. "Plus, I got to visit Junes today." She looked up, a broad smile adorning her face. "And it's really fun!"

The metal chair legs screech along the cement as Yosuke and Chie burst up from their seats.

"Anytime you want someone to play with you, Nanako, just let us know! We'll be there!" Chie offered joyfully.
"Yeah, just ask us," Yukiko chimed in.

"Ok, thanks." Nanako nodded going back to slurping her soda.

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[05/04, Okina city, Inaba]

Yesterday after spending the day with Nanako Yu took Marie back to Junes where they saw Chie who as per usual wanted more steak. They had joined her for lunch and Chie had run off to get drinks after Marie pointed out that if she ate so fast she would get fat. Marie had then admitted that she didn't know her real name and Marie was name that Margaret had given her.

Today Yu decided to take Marie to Okina City. He had brought Marie by train to satisfy her curiosity about the big city.

"Yu and oh, Marie!" Chie's voice exclaimed.

They turned around to see both Chie and Yukiko approaching.

"Hello. Um…Is she your friend, Narukami?" Yukiko asked.

"Oh right…you haven't met her before, huh?" Chie realised. "This is Marie; I had lunch with her and Yu yesterday in the afternoon. This is Yukiko Amagi, She's our friend."

"…Friend," Marie echoed…as if she was tasting a new kind of food for the first time.

"If she's someone you know, then she must not be from around here, right?" Yukiko asked.

"She does travel a lot…" Yu said. It was technically true; the Velvet Room took the form a car and was always on the move.

"Did she come from the big city?" Yukiko inquired.

"Oh, so THAT must be why she's in Okina then…" Chie said with realisation. "There's diddly-squat to do around where we live right? Yeah I know that feeling."

Marie looked at Yu, "…and a red one today. What are Green and Red doing here?"

"Green and… red?" Yukiko echoed with surprise ignoring Francis Drake's snickers as the pirate appeared in spirit form. "…green and red?!"

"Ah… Haha… I was wearing green last time I saw you, wasn't I?" Chie realised with a wince as Li Shuwen laughed at her.

"I didn't say it was bad. You look good in those colours." Marie stated.

"Oh, uh… Th-Thanks….I didn't think it was a compliment." Chie chuckled.

"She's a nice girl. There's no doubt about that."

"But Red Girl's all red. Does Green Girl always wear the same thing all the time?" Marie asked causing Yu to sweat drop.

"To the point as ever…” Chie mumbled.
"But she's right," Yukiko realised, looking downcast.

"No, that's not what I meant," Marie clarified. "It's just…It's a waste. Humans can change their clothes, right? You should try wearing other clothes."

"I-Is that so…?" Yukiko said nervously. "I don't always pick out my own outfits…I usually get opinions."

"I know!" Chie said. "We were just on our way to get some new clothes. Why don't you come with us, Yu? And you too Marie."

"Chie they already have plans of their own, don't just assume that they can come at a moments notice." Yukiko admonished her friend.

"I don't mind," Yu said, and then looked at Marie to see what she thought.

"Huh? I…don't mind…" She said echoing Yu.

Yukiko and Chie looked Happy and then each took Marie by the arm, she looked rather looked uncomfortable as they began pulling her along to the clothing store.

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[05/04, Croco Fur, Okina city, Inaba]

"Hey, how's this shirt? Don't you think it's a good colour?" Chie said holding up a green shirt.

"I don't know…" Yu said tactfully attempting to hurt no ones feelings.

"It's green." Marie pointed out bluntly.

"Whoa! You're right!" Chie exclaimed looking surprised. "Why do I keep buying myself green clothes?!" Then she smiled. "Marie, what's your favourite colour? Don't tell me…blue, right?"

"Er, I don't really have one…" Marie answered looking uncomfortable.

Chie sweat dropped at that, and kept looking through the clothes.

Yukiko who had been looking at clothes on a different rack turned around "What do you think of this skirt? Is it too mature for me?" She asked holding up a crimson skirt.

"It is an eye catching colour." Yu stated carefully.

"It is...eye-catchingly red." Marie pointed out causing Francis Drake and Li Shuwen to burst into another fit of laughter. "And you look like someone lit your head on fire." She said looking at Li Shuwen causing him to choke and Francis Drake to snort with laughter. "You look like a pirate but you don't have a hat."

"Oh yeah I left it at ho-you see us?" the pirate stated as the realisation finally hit her.

"Woah she can see them?" Chie exclaimed.

"Oh yeah, sorry I forgot she can see our Persona's in Spirit Form like we can." Yu explained.

"Wait how?" Yukiko asked only to receive a shrug in return from both Marie and Yu.
"Oh man this is weird. You attract all sorts don't you Narukami?" Chie commented going back to rummaging through a clothes rack before pulling out a green jacket. "What about this? Does this say 'me'?"

"Green again?"

"How about this one? Away with simplicity!" Yukiko said pulling out a multi-coloured dress.

"There are too many colours with that one. I'm getting dizzy" Marie commented.

"I'm with the blue capped lass on this." Francis Drake said agreeing with Marie.

"I forgot how much I like this girl." Cu Chulainn chuckled "She's as blunt as you are."

"This skirt's cute! It would go well with… How's this?" Chie said displaying a yellow shirt and a blue skirt.

"At least it's not green…" Marie said.

"Wait… But, Yellow and blue… make green, right?" Yukiko pointed out.

"Indeed it does." Li Shuwen said with a smirk.

Everybody but Yukiko, Li Shuwen and Francis Drake sweat dropped.

"Oh, Aahahaha, you're right. Maybe it's some kind of instinct…?" Chie said, embarrassed.

"You instinctively seek out the colour green; perhaps I can work that into your training regimen." Li Shuwen pondered stroking his chin thoughtfully.

"You're not doing it on purpose…?" Marie asked stunned.

Eventually Yukiko and Chie finished their shopping and returned to the train station with Yu and Marie.

"Ugh…" Chie said with visible disappointment, "Why was everything in my size out?"

"It can't be helped. Let's go back sometime later. They might have some new inventory by then. " Yukiko said with a smile.

"Yeah…Let's go together…all of us…” Chie said.

"Huh…? Me, too? Why?" Marie asked, stunned.

"Because we're friends…that's why!" Chie said with surprise.

"…Friends? We are? Since when?" Marie said.

"Wait…you didn't have fun?" Chie asked, looking hurt. "W-Was I bothering you today? …And last time, too…?"

"Huh? No, you weren't bothering me. I was just asking why you said 'friends'," Marie replied.

"What does it mean to become friends?"

Chie recovered from her apparent hurt and said, "Well…I don't really know. The meaning of friendship…? Hmmmm…"
"There's meaning." Yu said plainly.

"Yes, I believe there is meaning..." Yukiko said "There are things you can't do by yourself that you can do together with others..."

Marie looked like she was getting the meaning...

"Like today. We had you to help us choose our clothes." Yukiko continued.

"...I don't get it. After all..." Marie said sounding sad as she trailed off.

"I almost forgot! There's a DVD I wanted!" Chie broke in ruining the mood.

Everyone looked at her with disbelief.

"Let's hurry! It'll sell out!" Chie exclaimed.

"It's a kung fu movie right? I doubt it will sell out." Yukiko sighed.

"Enough talk! Come on, Everybody! Hustle!" Chie yelled ignoring Yukiko and running off with Yukiko in pursuit, this left Yu was with Marie.

"Huh? Me too?" Marie asked.

"Let's hurry." Yu said.

"I don't get it. It's not like I don't wanna go, though."

"That's the spirit..." Yu smiled at the girl.

Marie was lost in thought for a second.

"Hey, and those other two are Persona-users, right? They're 'chasing after the truth' with you, huh...?" Marie paused and gained a thoughtful look on her face. "You can't do that on your own, but you can do it together? Because you're friends...?"

Marie fell silent, thinking deeply about what Yukiko had said to her about friendship.

"Hey! Pick it up, you two! Move, move, move!" Chie yelled.

Marie nodded once and then started walking, Yu naturally followed her, after a but longer exploring the city Yu decided to escort Marie back to the Velvet Room.

[05/05, Dojima Residence, Inaba]

"I'm home," Dojima called carrying two bags. One with food, the other with something else.

"How many days is he gonna call in sick?" Dojima sighed as he shuffled in "These rookies sure are..."

"Welcome back!" Nanako said excitedly.

"Nanako... I'm sorry I broke my promise again..." Dojima apologised looking very disheartened.

"OH! Um, my big bro and his friends played with me instead."
"I see… thanks." Dojima said

"Nothing to it." Yu said.

"Oh, what's in the Junes bag?" Nanako asked excitedly.

"Good eye. Well, today is the 5th of May, isn't it? That means it's Children's Day…"

He then took out a T-shirt from the bag, and gave it to Nanako.

"Ohhh, a T-shirt! And it has a funny picture on it." Nanako exclaimed happily.

"I'm not saying you're a kid or anything but to keep things fair..." Dojima then pulled out a pair of swimming trunks from the bag; they were light purple, with green and yellow stripes with green arrows bordering a yellow box and a heart with a cupid's arrow through it.

"Well, all right. Good. Glad you like them!" Dojima said gladly.

"Dad, Big Bro, let's all eat together, OK?" Nanako suggested with a smile.

"That's a great idea. It's been ages since we ate together." Dojima agreed.

"Yeah, way too long, we need to dig in before the steak gets cold." Nanako said.

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[05/06, Junes Food Court, Inaba]

The next day the group had gathered for a study session before exams began. However Yosuke was passed out over his book.

"Yosuke insisted on us cramming together and now he's passed out on us." Chie complained looking at the boy who was snoring.

"Hey you know what; there hasn't been a single incident in Golden Week." Yukiko pointed out. "It's odd."

"That's what I was thinking!" Yosuke exclaimed suddenly sitting back up as if hadn't been sound asleep at all. "It's something we need to discuss."

"Sheesh it's like he just came back from the dead!" Chie said with an annoyed tone.

"He looks good for dead…" Yu commented seriously.

"Don't I though?" Yosuke grinned pulling out a notebook "Now that you've brought it up I've put a lot of thought into this and here's what I've come up with. The first victim was Ms Yamano after her it was Saki and then Yukiko here was the third. I don't think the victims were picked at random."

"The criminal had a motive? I think you've cracked the case." A regal feminine voice commented sarcastically.

In Spirit Form next to Yu appeared a slender woman who could be described as a peerlessly beautiful woman, wrapped in a dress that was as dark as midnight, who seemed to emanate a pleasing aroma.
"W-who are you?" Chie asked.

"Under class of Assassin in the Arcana of the Magician, I am Semiramis the Wise Queen of Assyria." The Persona introduced herself.

"Oh I think I've heard of you, I think I read that you were responsible for the first recorded murder by poisoning." Yukiko stated.

"Very good." Semiramis said with a smirk. "There is always a motive for murder. Murderers who have no motive are more often than not simple butchers who will rarely try to hide their identities."

"Besides there's no link between them Yosuke." Chie pointed out.

"Actually that's not true." Yosuke replied "It's nothing concrete but all three victims are linked. Saki is linked to Ms Yamano because she's the one who first found her corpse, and Ms Yamano is linked to you Yukiko because she stayed at your inn right?"

"Yes that's right." The Amagi Girl confirmed.

"But you have a problem." Semiramis interjected "There is no link between Saki and Yukiko and further you have yet to explain the motive. All you have to go on is the fact that females associated with Mayumi Yamano are being targeted and even that is shaky at best. "

"…Admittedly I don't have the answers to those questions." Yosuke confessed looking downcast "But if we don't start fitting together the few pieces we do have then we might not get anywhere."

"Wait a sec." Yukiko put a finger on her chin thoughtfully. "I remember the doorbell ringing and someone calling my name but what I can't remember is who it was, sorry." Yukiko also looked depressed.

"That's not your fault; you got no reason to apologise." Chie said to her friend reassuringly.

"We need to factor in what we see on the Midnight Channel as well." Yu put in.

"That's true." Yosuke said looking to the side. "You know thinking back it may have been trying to warn us as to who the next victim would be."

"A warning…..well if that's the case then we should check the Midnight Channel every night it rains." Yukiko suggested.

"If it helps prevent another murder then we should definitely do that." Yu agreed.

"Alrighty then" Yosuke stood up and put his bag on his shoulder. "Now that we're eon the same page you are all dismissed for the day."

"Yosuke!" Yu said the name of the Magician slowly yet dangerously causing him to freeze. "Did you just try to use the case to get out studying for our mid terms in two days?"

"W-Hey you jerk!" Chie growled "You wasted my valuable studying time cause you don't want to study?!"

"N-no it's not like that I mean….er..."

"Yosuke. Sit. Down." Yosuke immediately complied with Yu's command. "Now Study."

"Yes Sir" Yosuke found himself unable to object to Yu's serious tone and opened the text book in
front of him. Three days later on the ninth of May the exams began.

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[05/12, Class 2-2, Yasogami High, Inaba]

The remaining three days passed like lightning and soon it was Monday and Mid Terms began. Yu had managed to force Yosuke to study and thus himself. Throughout the four days of the exams his pencil seemed to move on its own as he had paid attention in class. Before he knew it Thursdays exams had come and gone, although Yosuke was mysteriously absent from the final test.

Yukiko and Yu were sitting in class putting their books away while Chie stared off into space completely wiped out.

"Phew, free at last." Yosuke said with a sigh as he walked into the classroom.

"Yeah it's all over." Chie said with relief.

"So where have you been?" Yu asked him.

"Well I was pretty sure it didn't matter if I showed up or not, I would still get the same grade." Yosuke explained in an easy-going tone.

"Man I wish I was so easy going about things." Chie sighed in an envying tone.

"So do you think you did pretty well on the test?" Yukiko turned around and asked Yu.

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[05/12, Dojima Residence, Inaba]

"Not too bad." Yu said to his Uncle later on during dinner when he asked him the same question that Yukiko had earlier.

"That answer's kind of vague." Dojima chuckled as he put some more food in his mouth.

"Tonight; we have some special footage for you." The TV Anchor said "A masked vigilante identified himself as Space Samurai Y helped a young man in defeating an apparent rival biker gang. After helping the young man, Space Samurai Y fled the scene."

On the TV it showed Space Samurai Y and Kanji's battle against the bikers. They even showed the pose he made when he landed on the first biker and took his wooden sword.

"Who the hell are you supposed to be?" gang leader on TV demanded.

"I'm glad you asked delinquent scum." Came the deep and heroic voice of the masked man. "I have heard the cries of the people living in this area forced to suffer the intolerable noise you thugs make night after night, yet even as this brave young man crushes you time and again like a rash on the towns backside you continue to flare up, well rapscallions no more for I am this towns rash soothing cream, prepare to taste the fury of..." he struck a pose like a capital Y "Space Samurai...Y!"

"That never gets old!" Cu Chulainn laughed loudly at the footage, while Semiramis and Medusa stuck to refined giggling, Gawain however remained silent.

The footage then became one of the ensuing battles, the Samurai and Kanji watched each others
backs and dominated the battle sending bikers flying with fists and sword blows.

"Great, I'm not surprised that Tatsumi is pulling that crap, but now a masked lunatic too?" Dojima let out a long suffering sigh. "I can see the mountain of paperwork this guy is gonna cause already, and I just bet the chief is gonna want him caught."

"Who're they?" Nanako asked.

"The blond is Kanji Tatsumi, a troubled teen who loves to fight." Dojima said letting out another sigh. "I've never heard of this Space Samurai Y guy though."

"That's so cool; he's like a real live superhero!" Nanako exclaimed joyfully as the Samurai on TV leapt away onto the roof with an inhuman jump.

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[05/15, Dojima Residence, Inaba]

Two days passed and later the night on the fifteenth Yu was in his room, he looked out the window and sure enough, it was raining, he swept the curtains shut.

The clock clicked down to midnight, and like clockwork the television turned itself on. On the screen Yu could make out a human figure…the jacket he could make out was unmistakable…it was Kanji Tatsumi he was next.

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[05/16, Junes Food Court, Junes, Inaba]

"Now that we are all gathered I hereby begin a meeting of the Special Investigation Unit for the Inaba Serial Murders and Kidnappings." Yosuke declared proudly.

"That's long." Chie grumbled.

"So this is our secret headquarters?" Yukiko asked.

"That's right! Yukiko is on top of it!" Yosuke grinned proud that someone was thinking like he was.

"Moving on…the guy that was on the Midnight Channel…" Yu cleared his throat. "I think it was Kanji Tatsumi."

"Yeah, seeing him totally blows my female victims theory out of the water." Yosuke groaned "And he had no connection to Ms Yamano either."

"Kanji Tatsumi?" Yukiko asked. "He wasn't like this when he was little…"

"Yukiko, you know that psychopath?" Chie asked stunned that her friend would know such a person.

"Yes, his family owns a textile store, our the Inn has sold their stuff in our shop for ages. But I haven't talked to Kanji for a super long time."

"Well that sure does make things easy!" Yosuke grinned "I say we swing by and pay a little visit to this textile shop." Yosuke stood up.
Yukiko nodded. "Your right… If people we see on the Midnight Channel are being pushed into their Televisions…"

"…Then Kanji is next." Yu finished.

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[05/16, Tatsumi Textiles, North Shopping district, Inaba]

When they entered the textile shop, they found that an old lady that Yu assumed to be Mrs Tatsumi was talking to a boy wearing blue detective clothing. Even the boy's eyes and messy, short hair were blue.

"Ah, Yuki! Come on in!" Mrs Tatsumi greeted.

"I think I will be taking my leave." The boy said after studying the group for a few seconds.

"I'm sorry I couldn't have been of more help." Mrs. Tatsumi apologized.

"Not at all, you've given me a lot to think about." With that the boy walked out, giving Yu a cold look for a few seconds as their gazes met.

"What was that all about?" Yosuke wondered looking after the boy.

"Yuki! You're as beautiful as ever!"

"Oh, thank you. You're too nice." Yukiko smiled. "Uh, is Kanji here?"

"No I'm afraid he's still not back yet."

While they continued to talk, Yu spotted something on one of the racks. It was a pink scarf with snowflake pattern embroidered on it. "I've seen this scarf somewhere before." He said walking over to it.

"Yeah, I think I have, too." Chie tapped her chin before coming to a realisation. "Oh I know wasn't it in that creepy room we saw?"

"So it was Ms Yamano's scarf?"

"Yes," Mrs Tatsumi confirmed "Were you friends with Mrs. Yamano?"

"I wouldn't say friends." Yosuke scratched the back of his head.

"Mrs. Yamano had that scarf custom made for her."

"Excuse me delivery!" A voice knocked at the back door.

"Oh Coming!" Mrs. Tatsumi stood up. "I'm sorry but I really must attend to this."

"No it's okay. We really should be going now anyway." Yukiko nodded.

As they came out into the street, Yosuke signalled for them to stop.

"Shit! It's Kanji! Hide!" At Yosuke's prompting everyone hid behind a mailbox.

"You wanna have a talk with me?" Kanji asked the blue haired boy.
"That's right." the blue haired boy replied "I find you incredibly intriguing."

"Uh, well I guess that's cool…" Kanji said glancing away from the boy.

"I'm glad to hear it, I'll be waiting for after school tomorrow." The boy said before walking away.

"He finds me intriguing?" Kanji blushed. "He's a dude that finds another dude intriguing. But does that mean he's…"

Kanji stopped as something caught his attention.

"Hey! Whaddaya you looking at?" Kanji screamed at the group

Everyone got up and ran; he waved his fists at them. Kanji glared after them. "Tch… What's their problem?"

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

[05/17 School Gate, Yasogami, Inaba]

The next day the Investigation Team were near the gate of Yasogami High, watching Kanji and waiting the boy he'd spoken to yesterday to arrive.

"Look, there he is!" Chie whispered.

"I'm sorry, were you waiting long?" The blue-garbed teenager asked walking up to Kanji and glancing around the school.

"No, It's cool… I just got here myself." Kanji replied.

The boy walked off, and Kanji followed after him.

"Something about them just doesn't add up." Chie said suspiciously.

"Really why do you think that?" Yosuke asked.

"Well I don't know maybe my imagination is just running wild." Chie replied rubbing her chin thoughtfully.

"Or it's your instincts trying to tell you something." Li Shuwen suggested.

"Really ya think?" Chie asked.

"Indeed, you are progressing well in your training for a beginner." Li Shuwen replied nodding his head "Instinct is a useful tool in battle, hone and learn to trust them."

"Whatever!" Yosuke said. "Chie and I will keep an eye on Kanji."

"What?" Chie asked.

"Why don't you and Yukiko keep an eye on the Textile shop?" Yosuke suggested.

"Let's go!" Yosuke ran after the two boys.

"W-wait!" Chie ran after him.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]
As they were waiting at Tatsuhime Shrine, keeping an eye on Tatsumi Textiles, Yukiko came to Yu with two bottles of Soda in her hands.

"Sorry about the wait... This one's for you." She said handing Yu a soda.

"Everything seems fine at the shop. I hope it stays that way." Yukiko said "Do you think the culprit will come?"

"No worries, I'll protect you if he does."

"Huh...? O-Okay...Thanks." Yukiko blushed "...I'm counting on you. It would be scary if the culprit did show up..." Yukiko looked troubled. "But if they do, I'll do what I can to help you catch them." Yukiko fidgeted nervously. "You all saved my life... I don't want to be the only one doing nothing. I mean... I'm sure there's something I can do... Oh...Sorry. I went on and on without realizing... I-I guess I'm a little nervous."

Yukiko then looked away shyly and began to blush. "I've never chatted with a boy my own age like this before... Chie, of course, has no problem getting along with guys because of her personality. But I think she's had more fun hanging out with you, and Yosuke, lately. The same is true for me."

"Say I was wondering have you noticed anything different about yourself lately?" Yu asked "Physically I mean."

"Physically? Well I have noticed that I'm faster, more agile than I was." Yukiko replied thoughtfully "Like the other day I was going taking a drink to serve to a guest at the Inn and I tripped. The cup was already falling and the drink was spilling but I managed to catch it and the drink itself back in the cup. It happened so fast that I thought I was seeing things. I tried to forget it until Chie told me that while she was training in the woods with Li Shuwen one of her kicks toppled a whole tree. I know it sounds crazy but..."

"Don't worry I've noticed it too." Yu reassured the Amagi girl "I've noticed that I'm stronger and faster too, it's kind of how I did so well in the Basketball game a few weeks back."

"I wonder how this is possible." Yukiko wondered. "I tried asking Rider about it, but she said that she has no idea. That it would be best to ask someone adept at magic and stuff."

"I tried asking my own Persona's but none of them were ever fully devoted to magic so they didn't have any answers either." Yu told her "But maybe I'll get a Persona that will be able to explain what's happening to us."

"Thanks, its not that I don't want these powers, I know we'll need them for the investigation if anymore people get thrown into the TV. I'm just afraid...what if I slip up and hurt someone by mistake?"

"That won't happen; I think it's just a matter of learning control, maybe Li Shuwen would be willing to help if you're afraid?" Yu suggested.

"Oh yeah, being a Martial Artist means knowing how to control your strength so he'd definitely know how to help me. Thank you!" Yukiko said with a smile.

"By the way can I have your cell phone number?" Yu asked suddenly changing the subject.
"Huh? O-okay if you want." Yukiko was blushing again caught off guard by Yu's sudden request. "I can't always answer, since I help out around. But feel free to call anytime."

"Thanks." Yu said exchanging numbers with Yukiko.

"Umm…I wonder how Chie and Yosuke are doing."

[05/17 Samegawa Flood Plain, Inaba]

Kanji was just walking along with the boy who wanted to meet with him.

"Tell me." Kanji jumped, blushing at the smaller boy's sudden talking.

"Do you mind if I cut to the chase and ask you some questions?" The boy in blue asked.

"Oh, yeah… Sure."

Yosuke hid behind a telephone pole and put his phone up to his ear. "Yosuke to Chie… Yosuke to Chie… Do you copy? Over."

"I hear ya. The target is conversing two hundred meters in front of me. Over."

"So do you mind telling me why we're using our phones?" Yosuke asked looking to see that Chie was about five feet away from him, crouching behind a mailbox.

"Because if he saw us together, it'd be too obvious. Over. Dork."

"Over is supposed to be the last thing you say."

"Listen I just think we need to have a little space between us. Dork. Over."

"Then this stakeout is a total bust then. He could easily nab us at anytime. Over."

"Enough of this. I'm getting the munchies. Over."

"Like I care! If you're so hungry then why don't you just call delivery or something?"

"Delivery?" Chie blinked. "But we're standing on a corner."

"Don't you know Aiya says her place delivers anywhere." Yosuke explained "You just gotta call her up and ask."

"What for real?" She ended the call and punched in a new number. "Hello? I'd like to order delivery two orders of nikudon, please!"

"I don't ask for anything!" Yosuke said angrily at her.

"Who said I was getting anything for you? I placed both those orders for me!" Chie snapped glaring at him.

"Well of course you did."

"Well actually… I'm at the corner of…" A shadow fell over the arguing duo.

"Just whaddaya think your doing?" Kanji towered over them, a suspicious look on his face.
Both of them froze up. Yosuke was the first to speak.

"We're just an everyday loving couple passing by!" Yosuke lied nervously.

"Yeah right!" Chie screamed.

"Don't work against me stupid… this is working!" Yosuke whispered.

"You couldn't come up with something else!" Chie persisted.

While this was happening the boy in blue walked away.

"Hey, didn't I seen you yesterday?" Kanji asked pausing to think for a second.

"We're not trying to follow you or anything!" Chie said rapidly in a panic "Nor do we think you might be gay but if you are that's totally cool too."

"Did you say gay?" Kanji blushed heavily.

"Chie you moron you just couldn't keep your mouth shut!" Yosuke griped at Chie. "Run for it!" He sprinted off.

"What a sec? Yosuke-don't leave me standing here!" Chie dashed after him.

"Hey! Get back here!" Kanji screamed giving chase to the duo. "I know what it looks like but your wrong, it's not like that!"

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

[05/17 Tatsuhime Shrine, North Shopping District, Inaba]

Yu and Yukiko heard a familiar screaming pair of voices getting closer.

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHH!" Chie and Yosuke came even using some of their enhanced speed to do so.

"Sorry we brought trouble." Yosuke yelled running past Yu and Yukiko.

"I'll beat you and beat you good!" Kanji howled after them. "There ain't gonna be nothing left of you!"

"He's behind them?" Yukiko said watching Chie and Yosuke run.

"We should run." Yu dashed down the steps, with Yukiko following him.

"Great." Yosuke panted. "He's gonna get us all at this rate!" They were high-tailing it down the streets on Inaba at a faster speed than most students their age could run. It was actually pretty impressive that Kanji was able to keep up with them.

"You're so dead! You're so freaking dead!" Kanji screamed angrily as he continued to chase them

"Hey, Chie time for you to shake him off our tail!" Yosuke turned to the girl running beside him.

"Huh why me?!"

"You know that line in the movies… 'You keeping going and I'll handle this guy'… Well now's your chance to say it!"
"I have always wanted to say that…" Chie said seriously considering it.

"Chie don't let him trick you!" Yukiko cried.

"I said to stop running from me you- Huh? What the hell?" A motorcycle sped past Kanji.

Aika drove a small delivery motorcycle and matched the speed of the running teenagers.

"I've got your order here, two bowls of Nikudon." Aika said dutifully. "The total is sixteen hundred yen."

"This is just weird" Yosuke cried sparing a glance at Aika who held out a tray with two bowls on it.

"Sorry, do you have any change?" Chie asked rummaging into her pockets.

"Here's 100 yen, Chie!" Yukiko pulled a coin out of her purse.

"Save it for later!" Yosuke yelled.

"Thanks." Chie paid the Aika and took the tray.

"When you're done just leave the bowls." Aika said.

"WHERE THE HELL DO WE DO THAT?!" Yosuke screamed as the girl accelerated and drove off.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

A little while later the team had finally managed to ditch Yosuke and were catching their breath under a bridge.

"We finally ditched that guy." Yosuke gasped leaning against a wall.

"Chie… Is it good?" Yukiko turned to look at her friend. The martial artist had sat down and begun digging into her meal.

"Yeah it is." Chie sighed happily. "It's delicious!"

"Man this sucks we totally failed on our first mission. We might as well give up." Yosuke threw his hands up and began walking away.

"But what will happen to Kanji?" Yukiko queried.

"That guys gonna be fine on his own." Yosuke sighed pausing to answer Yukiko. "He won't let anyone take him down without a fight."

"Lets still keep an eye on him just a bit longer." Yu suggested.

"Alright sure, but we are done for today." Yosuke sighed waving as he walked off.

"Hey guys?" Chie called out holding two empty bowls. "Where do you think I should leave the bowls?"

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

[Wizard Marshal Zelretchs office, Clock Tower, London]
Waver Velvet a.k.a Lord El Melloi II entered Zelretchs office with a few pieces of paper in hand. When he approached the desk of the Old Man of the Jewels whose chair was face away from the door he cleared his throat to gain the old vampires attention.

"I was just wondering about you Waver." Zelretch said trying to get comfortable in his chair.

"Wondering what exactly?" Waver asked in a no nonsense tone.

"Why you've stopped replacing your familiars in Inaba." Zelretch snickered knowingly.

"Because I became sick of that girl find and destroying them all the time." Waver snapped before coughing and regaining his composure. "Anyway I sent a notice to the Nakamura family; they'll take over monitoring the situation for us as well as do damage control just in case."

"It was a good a idea to have them placed there in advance, Grail Wars have a tendency to get….messy." Zelretch commented.

"The group has begun investigating one Kanji Tatsumi another candidate that you selected." Waver informed him. "According to the Nakamura's he appeared on the Midnight Channel."

"That explains it. It looks like things are starting move into high gear." Zelretch commented taking a sip of some wine he had in a glass nearby.

"There are a couple of things that concern me." Waver continued reading off the papers he had in his hand. "Yosuke Hanamuras communication with his Persona, Diarmuid Ua Dubhine has dropped to an all time low. Do you think we should be concerned?"

"Nah, Command Seals or no Diarmuid would never rebel against his master." Zelretch waved him off "Not this time. So what was your other concern?"

"Apparently the Church intends to have an someone in Inaba report to them about the situation." Waver explained "They never said why nor do I know why they even bothered to tell me in the first place."

"Perhaps I touched a sensitive spot somehow?"

"This is becoming one big mess." Waver sighed. "This could get dangerous with the Church involved."

"If it helps you sleep at night Lord El-Melloi the second, I'll do my best to smooth things over with the Church." Zelretch gave Waver a mocking smile and took victory when saw a vein bulging on Waver's forehead. "Did they mention who the agent was?"

"No they didn't." Waver replied shaking his head.

"This can only get more interesting." Zelretch said leaning back in his chair and taking a sip of his wine.

"That is what I am afraid of." Waver said with a long suffering sigh.

Chapter End Notes
AN: That's right everyone the Church has an agent in Inaba. A cyber cookie to anyone who can successfully guess who it is.
Disclaimer: I do not own Persona or Fate or anything in the nasuverse, any resemblance to any other Persona 4/Fate fan fiction is coincidental and plagiarism is not intended. No flames please, constructive criticism only.

[05/18 Dojima Residence, Inaba]
A little while later after finally losing Kanji and a day of not being able to catch the killer in hopes of spotting him trying to abduct Kanji the team had parted ways and gone home. However, when midnight rolled around, it was raining outside and sure enough the Midnight Channel came on clearly this time, as expected the shadow of one Kanji Tatsumi, who was naked save for a towel around his private areas.

"Helloooo…dear viewers it's time for Bad, Bad Bathhouse!" The shadow displayed its muscles. "Tonight, I'll introduce a superb site for those searching for sublime love that surpasses the separation of the sexes! "

Yu's mind went blank as he watched Kanji's shadow flaunting itself half-naked.

"I'm your host, Kanji Tatsumi, serving you this scandalously special sneak-in report! Goodness gracious, just imagine the things that might happen to me there! Ooooh! Well then, let's get this show on the road! Tootaloo!" Shadow Kanji turned around and ran towards the bathhouse entrance before the screen went black.

Yu looked stunned for a second before feeling something his phone vibrate. He withdrew it from his pocket and saw Chie's number on the screen.

"Hello?" he greeted her after taking a second regain his composure.

"Yu?"

"Yes?"

"What the hell was that?" Chie asked in a low voice clearly stunned.

"That was Kanji's shadow alright." The grey-haired boy sat back on his sofa. "It must be acting out because of whatever he's trying to repress."

"Right… So, um… We are still going into the Midnight Channel, right?" Chie asked uncertainly.

"Of course we are." Yu stated "It was uncomfortable to watch but we can't let something like that stop us.

"Um… Well… I-I wasn't sure! Watching that really weirded me out…"
There was silence for a moment.

"Chie?"

"Yeah?"

"Do you want a copy?"

"What? NO!" Chie yelled flustered at Yu's question.

Yu chuckled as she hung up on him and causing him to put his phone away.

[58x775]The next day the team all gathered at Junes and entered into the TV World in hopes of finding kanji quickly.

"Amazing…" Yukiko gasped looking at the environment around her "We actually inside the Television."

"Oh, yeah this is the sort of the first time you been here." Chie realised "At least of your own free will."

"What?...are you really saying that you really have no idea where Kanji Tatsumi is?" Yosuke asked Teddie who was grumbling and holding his head nervously

"No" Teddie answered "I can smell that somebody new is here… but for the like of me I can't figure out where!"

"Why not?" Yosuke pressed.

"It must be because I have so much on my mind." Teddie replied "Like who am I? Where do I come from? These questions are tearing me up inside."

"Weird since your insides are filled with nothing but air." Yosuke commented.

"So what now? If Teddie can't find him then we're totally screwed." Chie sighed.

"Well I don't know what else to do. Maybe we should just call it quits this time?" Yosuke suggested.

"Quiting is not an option!" Chie yelled at Yosuke angrily.

"Wait I know, maybe I could find him if you gave me a hint." Teddie suggested perking up. Do you guys have any possession that might have his scent on it? I could sniff him out with something like that."

"Let's go look around town and see if we can find something like that." Yu said after a few moments. "It should be too hard to find something."

"But what if we can't?" Yukiko asked.

"Then Yosuke will just have to sneak into Kanji’s bedroom and steal some underwear or something."
"Sounds like a plan."

"Sounds good to me."

"Hey wait why me?!" Yosuke demanded as they departed the TV World.

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[05/18 Tatsumi Textiles]

The team headed straight for Tatsumi textiles to ask Kanji's mother about him. Hoping to gain some sort of clue about Kanji to help Teddie track him down.

"I'm sorry." Mrs. Tatsumi frowned. "But he hasn't been back since yesterday. I told the police about it, I've been concerned since it's been so dangerous lately."

"I understand why you're worried." Yukiko said, giving a polite bow.

"Thank you." The old lady looked at the floor worry etched on her face. "It's normal for to leave without saying a word, but he's always come home before."

Chie tapped her chin in thought. "That's surprising. I'd think he'd be out fighting until dawn."

"Chie!" Yukiko scolded Chie.

"It's alright. I'll be admit that he's a little rough around the edges at times. A little while ago, he got in a fight with some biker kids."

"Yeah I heard about that." Yosuke stated "He and some masked guy called 'Space Samurai Y' or something took on an entire biker gang and destroyed 'em."

"It's partly my fault you see, I hadn't slept for days The noise was keeping me up at night… so he heard he got angry and fought them." Mrs Tatsumi explained sadly "To be honest, I was relieved when that Samurai fellow appeared to help him. I was worried that he might get hurt, but knowing that man was there to watch his back brought me some relief.

"Now that's one aggressively devoted son." Yosuke commented.

'I wonder what he wants.' Cu Chulainn said causing Yu to turn around and see a little boy standing outside the shop looking nervously at it.

"Excuse me?" the boy spoke up as Yu went out to him.

"What do you need?" Yu asked.

"Is that big guy here today?" The boy asked clearly wishing to speak with Kanji.

"You mean the guy who lives in this place?" Yu asked wishing to be sure that he was indeed talking about Kanji.

"He helped me with this." He held up a small pink bunny charm attached to a cell phone strap.

"Wait a sec…" Yu suddenly remembered it as the same one that Kanji had dropped at school.

"I was borrowing Sana's phone strap with a pink bunny on it. But then the little bunny fell off and I couldn't find it anywhere. So then…"
"Shut up! Crying isn't gonna bring back what you lost kid... Argh." Kanji got frustrated and crouched to speak to the boy. "What's it look like?"

"Wh-What?" the boy had stopped crying and looked at Kanji.

"I can't make an exact copy but I can make something that looks pretty close."

"Really?" The boy's eyes lit up with hope.

"I can, now when you give to her I want you ask her to forgive you and say that your sorry. I'll go with you to back you up."

"He even made me one too so I could match with Sana's bunny."

"Are you saying that Kanji Tatsumi made a cute little bunny charm for you from scratch?" Yosuke asked stepping forward.

The boy nodded.

"May I take a look at it?" Yukiko asked. The boy nodded and gave the charm to her. She held it up and studied it. "Amazing you'd have no idea this was handmade."

"It-It's super cute..." Chie stated. "I don't know process the idea of Kanji making this thing."

"Yeah. It totally destroyed the image I have of him." Yosuke muttered.

"Everyone's got their thing." Yu said to Yosuke who sweat dropped.

"Hey can we borrow this for a bit?" Yukiko asked requested.

"Only of you promise that you won't lose it."

"We promise."

The team began headed away to Junes unaware that a detective with a penchant for slacking was watching them.

[05/18 Junes entrance, Junes, Inaba]

"If Kanji made this then his scent should be on it." Yu stated holding the bunny charm in his hand as he and the others walking into Junes.

"Hey." Chie tapped Yosuke on the shoulder. "Did we see that kid yesterday? The one that was talking to Kanji?"

Just a she said the boy in blue who had been talking to Kanji stood by the Junes elevators. He turned around and looked at the group curiously. "So our paths cross again. Just so you know, my name is Naoto."

"Yeah. What a coincidence." Yosuke said.

"Did you hear?" the boy asked "It seems Kanji Tatsumi is hiding out somewhere."

"By the way what is it you two were talking about before?" Yosuke asked causing the rest fo the
team to sweatdrop from his apparent nosiness.

"Why do you need to know?" the boy asked with a curious look on his face.

"Just curious is all."

"Fair enough. When we met up all I did was say hi and asked him what he'd been up to lately."

"Really, it was just small talk?" Chie questioned.

"Yup pretty much." The boy confirmed "He seemed to be acting pretty strange and not quite like himself."

"He was?" Yu asked.

"Yeah so I called him out on it. Then it got awkward and the colour drained from his face."

"That is weird, he doesn't seem like the type to care what people think about him."

"You can't judge a book by its cover." Naoto sighed. "It's possible that Kanji is suffering from some issues that we don't know about."

After leaving Naoto the team finally made it back to the TV World.

"I wonder what issues Kanji has." Yukiko pondered while Teddie sniffed the phone strap.

"Man that bear acts like some sort of freaky talking dog." Yosuke commented.

"Got it!" Everyone jumped at Teddie's outburst. "I've got the scent down!" He began to sniff the air rapidly. "This way, everyone!"

Teddie led them to a bathhouse with steam pouring out of it.

**BATH-HOUSE**

**MEN ONLY**

"Are you sure this is the right place?" Yosuke asked stepped back.

"Abso-lutely!" Teddie confirmed

Jazz music emanated from the inside. It certainly wasn't a regular bath-house.

"Um… I don't think that's safe for men to enter." Yosuke gulped "I could see things I can't unsee."

"Well, you're just gonna have to suck it up." Chie said insistantly.

Diarmuid looked between the entrance and his master.

'This strange place gives me shivers, but I can enter this place with no problem and crush any foe within.' Diarmuid thought silently 'However if it is my masters wish not to enter then I must respect that…. however, leaving someone to die leaves bitter taste in my mouth.'

"We cannot back out now." Gawain stated appearing next to Yu. "So let's –HEY WHAT ARE DOING UNHAND ME DOG!" Gawain began yelled as the Hound of Ulster suddenly grabbed the
knight and held him in a full nelson.

"Sorry, but you'll thank me for this later." Cu Chulainn said as he began dragging Gawain.

"This is childish, I will not..." Gawain was cut off and Cu Chulainn vanished along with him, dragging them both somewhere deep within Yu's soul.

"...What was that?" Chie asked after having watched the spectacle.

"Did they chicken out?" Yukiko asked sweat dropping at the sight.

"There is nothing to fear." Li Shuwen sighed. "You cannot let petty things like this distract us from our goal."

"Cowardly crewmates already." Francis Drake sighed taking a swig from a bottle of rum.

Yu stayed silent for a moment as Semiramis, Atalanta and Medusa appeared in spirit form at his sides.

"Men." Atalanta shook her head.

"We'll do it then." Semiramis sighed.

"Look I'm really not comfortable going in there." Yosuke griped. "And neither is Narukami."

Yu said nothing, he was still working up the courage to enter before Medusa whispered something in his ear.

"Include: Atalanta." Atalanta's bow materialised in his hand and Yu began walking inside. "Caution to the wind people let's go!"

Yu vanished into the entrance of the bathhouse, it took a few seconds for the others to all include and follow.

"Did anyone catch what she said to him?" Chie asked.

"I didn't catch all of it but I believe she said something along the lines of 'reincarnated as a mouse'." Li Shuwen answered.

"Why would being reincarnated as a mouse scare him?" Yukiko wondered. "Is he afraid of mice?"

"I doubt it." Yosuke said trailing behind the girls. "it's probably something we're not privy too."

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

As they made their way inside the bathhouse with Yu taking the lead, his bow at the ready Yosuke was still complaining.

"It's hot this sucks. I can't believe that we're doing this!" Yosuke voiced his complaints to Yu "Hey I know, we should split up, Chie and Yukiko go ahead and charge in with full force, then we can go back outside and guard the entrance!"

"Denied" Yu answered quickly.

"What why?" Yosuke asked with a whiney tone "Come this place has to creep you out too right?"
"Yes it does, but I will not let that stop me and cause me to be reincarnated into a mouse, just because you can't man up." Yu replied sternly.

"Are you afraid of mice Narukami?" Yukiko asked as Francis Drake appeared in Spirit Form and looked at him with interest in the answer.

"Of course not." He replied firmly before reducing his voice to a fearful mumble "I'm afraid of what happens to them."

Medusa appeared walking alongside him in Spirit Form causing him to walk faster. The team all looked and saw the tiny smirk on her face as she looked after the boy who summoned her.

"I think Narukami might have issues about this mouse thing." Yosuke commented.

"Let's not get involved." Chie suggested as Francis Drake began snickering.

After entering a large room on the first floor of the bathhouse. They spotted Kanji's Shadow, which was flexing while still wearing only that loincloth.

"OOOHHH-LA-LA! MY! MY! Thank you for NOTICING ME!"

Unfortunately, that just made Yosuke, Chie, and Yukiko uncomfortable. Yu however had other things on his mind and was able to ignore the spectacle.

"I am KANJI!" Then the Shadow sexily winked.

Yosuke included Diarmuid and pointed his spear at the shadow while Yu prepared to shoot it with arrows.

"All right, all right! Just hold up a sec!" Chie sacried trying to stop the two boys from acting rashly.

"Screw that! I say we just get this over with, I'm not sure I can take another second in this freaky place."

"Well, well, well! We're airing LIVE from the Tropical Paradise Suspicious. All this steam is making my blood start to PUMP!"

"Chie! Not you, too!" Chie immediately included Li Shuwen and took a stance, leaving Yukiko and Teddie to try and hold the three back.

"I'm sorry but this guy bugs!" Chie replied.

"I think I can get him with a headshot." Yu stated preparing his arrow and taking aim.

"All right, SWEETIES! Since everyone is so HOT and BOTHERED, let's move on to our next segment!"

Then a neon sign came down and it read:

No girls allowed!

Take the plunge?!
"This could get a little awkward…in more ways than one!" Yu said.

"Oh man, when we tried to rescue Yukiko it was this bad too," Chie said.

"No it wasn't! It wasn't ANYTHING like this!" Yukiko said. Then she retreated into her own small world of depression. "I swear it wasn't like this, I'm not the type of girl to do this, I couldn't really think of this, could I?"

"I really like to get my GROOOOVE on…But I must continue my search for the BUMP and GRIIIINDDDDD!" Shadow Kanji had thrust his hips again with those final words, and left running deeper into the bath house. "Follow me if you DAAAARRRRREEEEE!!"

"Hey wait!" Yosuke said before there were some shadows, that looked like very fat police officers flying towards them, their stomachs were carved out as if they were part-donut with a key inside the gaps

"This is what it was like with my Shadow self...?" Yukiko asked, not to anyone in particular. "That...That really…TICKS ME OFF!" She screamed in anger including Francis Drake acquiring her pistols and immediately opened fire taking out one of the shadows leaving two.

Chie was quick to follow suit attacking the fuzz shadow with a flying kick. Unfortunately, it was surprisingly nimble for something of its size and dodged at the last second.

"I'm not done yet!" Chie cried as she kicked off the opposite wall that she'd landed on and jumped high above the shadow aiming a flying kick at the back of its head. "I've got ya this time." The meat loving girl was confident of her aim, however the shadow was far from stupid and moved aside again. "Ah crap!" Chie cried when she saw where she was going to crash and prepared to right herself.

Yosuke was holding back, preparing to include and fight…. he was just working up his courage. For now, he was content with watching Yukiko and Yu try to take out the other remaining shadow.

Yukiko was rapidly trying to shoot it but the shadow kept ducking and weaving the air as well as firing shots back, several of which hit near Yosuke's feet forcing him to dance to avoid getting shot in the foot unfortunately a single misstep sent him falling backwards.

As he was trying to regain his balance he felt an unimaginable pain as Chie with the force of her kick sunk her foot into his crotch, she corrected herself by planting her other foot firmly near the other and used to momentum and Yosuke's crown jewels as a springboard to leap at the shadow.

"AAAAAHHHHH WHAT WAS THAT FOR?!" Yosuke cried as he went down holding his crotch painfully.

"Sorry!" Chie called as she destroyed the shadow with an angry punch while sounding anything but sorry.

"Yukiko drive it to the left." Yu commanded preparing his arrow.

"On it." Yukiko replied and began rapidly firing at the shadows right side, predictably it veered left and received an arrow in its forehead, destroying it.

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"Where the hell am I?" Kanji asked looking around at his surroundings.

He heard voices murmuring something.

"If someone's there come out already!"

"Tatsumi Kanji's nothing but a knuckle-dragging delinquent bum." A disembodied voice said.

"What was THAT?!" Kanji said, raising his fist to the roof.

"He takes out a biker gang, becomes their boss with some masked guy as his right hand man, and now he thinks he's king of the mountain?" A second voice asked.

"You don't know a freakin' thing! I didn't become their boss and that masked guy isn't my right hand man. That's CRAP!"

"Aren't you the one who steals the other kids' pocket money?" A third voice asked.

"NO, I don't steal things. And don't just assume it's me!" Kanji yelled.

"We all know Kanji did it. He's just that kind of guy."

"Shut the hell up, and don't go around spreading lies. Now come out so I can kill your ASS!"

"And that's why you put on this scary delinquent act. 'Come out so I can kill your ass.' Such a façade." A voice laughed derisively

"Who the hell's talking to me now?" Kanji asked a little calmer, but no less angry.

Kanji heard the sound of wet bare feet padding slowly across the floor.

"Kanji, the THREATENING thug. So TOUGH and MANLY! That's how you want people to see you, isn't it?"

Kanji could make out a figure heading towards him through the steam.

"But that's not who you ARRRREEEEE!" The voice said getting closer.

Kanji was stunned to see a himself emerge from the steam, wearing only a towel and with golden eyes.

"You're ME?!"

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"Kanji's right here! I know it!" Teddie jumped up and down. "He's right behind this bear-ry door!"

"Alright, then..." Yu looked at the other Investigation Team members. They weren't so enthusiastic. "Let's go, team!"

No response.

"Right?"

"Welcome to Tropical Paradise," The sign on the door said.
Unfortunately, Yu, Yosuke, and Chie were sweatdropping, and obviously didn't want to be welcomed.

As it was, though… the Shadows had not been that difficult on the lower floors.

"He's in here, isn't he?" Yu said with discomfort.

"Yeah, he's gotta be." Yosuke said.

"Okay, let's go in there and take this guy!" Chie said.

"Yeah! But, Keep your cool!" Yukiko said.

"You…may want to take your own advice!" Yosuke replied.

"Look, guys, no matter what happens in there we gotta stay focused on the mission! First, we gotta rescue Kanji, then once we've rescued him, then we gotta save him!" Chie said with determination.

"Snrk! Both of those objectives were the same thing, Chie!"

"Ummm, that was intentional…" Chie replied blandly.

"Are you sure?" Yukiko asked.

"Yeah! Obviously!" Yosuke said. "You know Yukiko, I don't get you sometimes."

Teddie got back up and then everyone was facing the door. About to make the move to open the door.

Any moment now they'd open that door and go inside…

"Umm…why aren't you guys opening the door?" Teddie asked after a few seconds went past of no one doing anything.

"Well, you see… we're just…" Chie trailed off.

"Do we really have to?" Yosuke whined. "I mean sometimes you can see things and they can be seared into your brain forever and ever and ever…"

"He does have a point," Yukiko said. "What do you think, Narukami?"

Before Yu could answer however Medusa appeared again leaning against wall looking at Yu.

"Mouse." Was the only word she spoke and the only one she needed too.

Yu went rigid for a moment and then suddenly raised his foot with all his might kicked the doors with such force that they flew off their hinges and fell inwards to the ground.

However when the team walked, they saw Kanji on top of his shadow threateningly.

"I SAID, CUT IT OUT!"

"Oh, wow! You're so GENTLE! It's so SUBLIME! I LOVE IT!" the two paused when they heard the door clatter to the ground.

"This is REALLY awkward," Yu, Yukiko, Yosuke, and Chie said.
"Huh? What are you guys doing here?" Kanji asked.

"Well, we came here..." Yosuke started.

"To save you..." Yu finished.

"Well, you sure as hell don't sound all that motivated!" Kanji yelled angrily.

"Oopsy-daisy!" The Shadow said pushing Kanji off of him, standing up and flexing its muscles, "I won't let you INTERFERE!" It said.

Then he did a forward flex and several coloured rose petals exploded outward and a liquid began flowing out from the baths.

"What the heck is this? Is this supposed to slow us down... uuh-uhhh?" Chie started to slip, Yukiko grabbed Chie by her left hand trying to keep her steady "CHIE!" unfortunately Yukiko was taken down with Chie as fell into the slippery substances.

"Are you OK?" Yu asked.

"Why are you two crawling on the floor?"

"This stuff is slimy!" Chie said. Both girls were trying to get up.

"Narukami! You wouldn't happen to have a video camera, would you?" Yosuke said excitedly.

"No I don't." Yu said clenching his fist with a regretful tone.

"That isn't funny-kie!" Chie started to say before slipping again.

"You bastard!" Kanji said to his Shadow.

"Honey, why don't you just drop the charade?"

"Huh?"

"Isn't it about time you tell people how you really feel I'm everything that you wish you could be."

"YOU LIAR!" Kanji yelled.

"Don't listen to him! Go Diarmui-yuhhhh!" Yosuke said before he started to slip.

"YOSUKE!" Yu said, grabbing Yosuke before they both hit the ground.

"I'll help you, Sensei! Leave it to meeeeeeeraaa!" Teddie said before he slipped and was pushed back to the door.

"I really hate girls!" Shadow Kanji said. "They look at me and say, 'You like to sew?' or if I paint a pretty picture, they laugh at it and say wow that's really weird for a guy!"

"You prick! If you don't shut your mouth...!" Kanji was kneeling down, attempting to stand up but couldn't find the strength.

"You should be strong! You should be tough! You should be manly! What does that even mean? Girls are so scary!"
"GIRLS. Aren't. Scary!" Kanji said gritting his teeth.

"Guys are much better! They never say those awful things! That's why I LIKE MEN!"

"That's not TRUE!"

"Oh, but it is…see, you're me and I am so you!"

"Like hell you are!" Kanji growled.

"No, Kanji!" Yu said. "Don't say it!"

"There's no freakin' way, you're a part of ME!"

"I'm sorry, but I am YOU!"

Then Flower petals had blown around the room.

Kanji’s Shadow had changed. He was now embedded in a bed of cacti like spines attached to a large statuesque black body gripping a large stone axe like sword.

There were also two large Shadows which had half chalk-white faces and half black skinned faces.

"I am a Shadow…of your TRUE Inner Self."

"I have heard enough of this BULLSHIT you're slinging!"

"Ha-Ha-Ha…Don't INTEREFERE!" Kanji's Shadow used the axe to slash wildly at Kanji, aiming for the body, luckily the attack only nicked Kanji with the edge but even that was enough to hurt the boy and send him to the ground.

"Are you Ok?!" Chie asked.

"Hang in there, Man!" Yosuke said.

"I just wanna be honest with myself! And I'll get rid of anyone who tries to stop ME!" The Shadow said.

"I can't believe this is the way Kanji-kun feels…" Yukiko commented.

"It's not! It's just that his emotions have gone haywire!" Yosuke stated.

"Get him!" Yu said.

All four of them called their Personas, with Yu calling Nursery Rhyme, a Caster of the Priestess Arcana who took the form a little girl wearing a black and purple Victorian era dress with a mass of frills and a looped skirt. She looked like a child's doll come to life due to her porcelain-white skin.

"Bring it!" One of the two side Shadows said as Diarmuid, Li Shuwen and Francis Drake rushed them head on.

"Hey, Now…Come on, Baby!" The Tough Guy Shadow commented as Li Shuwen delivered a kick to its backside which barely had any affect.

"What the hell is THAT?!" Chie cried.
Francis Drake attacked with her pistols on the other big Shadow…

"OHHH! That feels GOOD!"

"OH NO!" Yukiko cried at the sight.

"This seems to get weirder!" Yu said.

"Hey Teddie! What the heck's going on?! We've got some major creeper's here!"

"I'm willing to bet that they're a part of Kanji's Shadow…" Teddie stated before Diarmuid was caught by Tough Guy.

"Nice… You're a stud!" Tough Guy said as Diarmuid struggled ot break his grip.

Suddenly Nice Guy dropped in behind the group.

"Heh-eh-eh-eh, you look YUMMY!" Nice Guy said as he squeezed Yu's butt. "You too!" He said as he did the same to Yosuke.

"I'm out…" Yosuke said, falling to the ground disheartened.

"That monster's toxic. He totally broke Yosuke's spirit in half!" Teddie said.

"I will not be reincarnated INTO A MOUSE!" Yu yelled abruptly as Nursery Rhyme suddenly summoned a huge red human looked beast with wing like appendages on its back and blue lines covering its skin except for the face which had soul-less yellow-white eyes.

It abruptly grabbed Nice Guy's wrist and tossed him into Tough Guy breaking his grip on Diarmuid. The giant creature promptly charged and began throwing punches at the two shadows trying to hold them at bay.

"You know she can't actually reincarnate you into a mouse right?" Nursery Rhyme asked with an innocent and child-like as she raised an eyebrow at Yu.

"Not taking the chance, Chie, Yukiko go now!" Yu ordered his reply causing Nursery Rhyme to giggle at him.

"Right." Both girls said in unison

Li Shuwen ran at Shadow Kanji dodging a wild swing of the axe-sword as he began punching at his body. However, his hail of fists did nothing to the giant, almost as if it were invincible but this did not deter the martial artist from trying.

"Alright, ready, aim…." Shadow Kanji looked up to see Drake materialise pair cannons out square shaped gaps in the air. "FIRE CULVERIN CANNONS!"

The ship cannons fired, peppering Shadow Kanji with cannon shots. Li Shuwen moved away just in time for them to impact the shadow. However, when the smoke cleared the shadow was clearly injured.

"Ok, I knew girls were the worst!" Shadow Kanji commented angrily swiping at Shuwen who moved out of range.

"How come Drake can hurt him but Li Shuwen can't?!" Chie cried annoyed by the unfairness of
"Again!" Yukiko ordered.

"Aye aye." Drake bombarded the shadow with another volley however this time the shadow was unaffected. "What the? Alright again!" The pirate fired more cannonballs at the shadow but it was still unaffected.

"Sorry but I won't fall for the same trick twi-YEEEOOWWW!" Shadow Kanji screamed in pain as the master of the demon fist dug his fingers into the shadow's chest and made a large gash in it wounding the shadow.

"You let your guard down abomination!" The Master of the Demon Fist yelled with a smirk.

"You are annoying!" Shadow Kanji yelled managing to catch Li Shuwen with the sword in mid-air, sending him crashing into Francis Drake.

Watching the scene Yu had a theory.

"Change Medea!" Yu called out changing Nursery Rhyme for the Princess of Colchis.

As the little girl and Jabberwocky vanished a woman wearing a hooded bluish-purple robe took her place.

"Chie go help out Yosuke, I'll help Yukiko."

"Ok, whatever you say. Let's go." Chie turned her Persona's assault to aiding Diarmuid with Tough Guy and Nice Guy who took the opportunity to beat down on him until Li Shuwen was able aid him and even the odds again.

"Ok Yukiko I have an idea, but I need you to attack first." Yu told the Amagi girl "Keep the attack up for as long as you can, I think I know how his weakness but you have to keep attacking no matter what until we're ready."

"Got it." Yukiko nodded "Go!"

The pirate mercenary nodded and began bombarding Shadow Kanji with cannon shots, as predicted they did no damage at all.

"How ridiculous." Medea commented surveying at the battle going on around her "How does such a bizarre situation becomes a fight for our lives."

"Will you help us?" Yu asked the Persona who gave him a strange look while Shadow Kanji attempting to attack again however he was stopped by Yukiko having her Persona bombard him with cannon shots to the face making him reflexively cover it with his arms.

"I can help you." Medea stated "But summoning me, you surely know my story and what I did, knowing this why would you trust an infamous betrayer like myself? How do you know I won't simply stab you in the back and leave?"

"I don't." Yu answered bluntly "I read your story, I know what happened to you."

"And?"

"And I don't see a woman who vilely betrayed her family and country. I see a victim who was
taken advantage of for her skills and abandoned when she was no longer useful." Yu told her "I can't turn back time to right the wrong that was done you, and I know this Era isn't as impressive as the one you're from, but we do have something going for us that you might like. Here in this time the Gods cannot touch you, they and their Age is where it belongs….in the dustbin of history!"

As he finished his proclamation Medea noticed for just a moment Yu's eyes flashed crimson, only briefly before returning to normal.

Taken aback by the strange boy and his willingness to have faith in her, Medea felt a strange feeling bloom inside her, it wasn't love nor affection….no it was happiness.

"Αερο" she chanted waving her hand in the direction of Shadow Kanji, a part of his chest suddenly exploded, looking like it had been minced almost as if it were sent through an enormous fan, as this happened Drake stopped her bombardment.

"I see, so that's his trick eh?" the pirate said observing the shadow.

"So you wanted me to attack in order to confirm his ability." Medea observed analysing the situation. "By having her continuously bombard him with one type of attack which he became immune too he wouldn't be able to defend against a different type of attack when used at the same time."

"Yeah, I figured that magic was the best way to go if I wanted to hurt him." Yu replied. "I noticed the weakness when Yukiko hit him while Li Shuwen was attacking. The punches did nothing but the cannonballs hurt him."

"A decent observation." Medea said "I did like muscle-bound idiots maybe it won't so bad working with you after all…. we'll see I guess."

"Thank you for your trust."

"I don't trust you quite yet." Medea corrected him. "But I am willing to give you chance."

"That's all I ask."

"You are all so annoying!" The shadow yelled with annoyance as it began marching forward before spotting Kanji and heading for him "And you are an EYESORE!"

"It's going for Kanji!" Yukiko yelled "Stop him Drake!"

"Roger that lassie!" Drake gave a salute to the Amagi girl and began bombarding the shadow with cannon shots again.

"OK, do you have something that can finish him?" Yu asked the Caster.

"We'll see." Caster levitated and around her appeared several magic circles. "Fire!" The circles unleashed a rain of light directly at the shadow bombarding it relentlessly, it was having an effect if the screams of pain coming out the cloud of dust kicked up by the assault were anything to go by.

"Did we do it?" Yukiko asked as Medea and Drake ceased their respective assaults.

"That certainly hurt a lot." Shadow Kanji's voice stated gasping for breath as it stepped out of the cloud "But I'm not done yet."
"Oh come on, what does it take to kill this thing?!" Yukiko cried with frustration upon seeing Shadow Kanji trudge out with gaping wounds in his giant body, he was definitely highly damaged and was slower but it still hadn't stopped him.

"Come here you." Nice Guy said as the master of Demon Fist ducked under his grasp.

"No thank you, but here have this as a consolation prize!" Li Shuwen promptly drove his fingers into Nice Guy's right Eye and with a quick motion destroyed it, blinding the shadow.

"AAAAGHHH! Alright that's it eat this!" Nice guy threw a punch but the Martial Arts master easily dodged it, instead it hit Tough Guy in the stomach who doubled over.

"What are you hitting me for moron?!" Tough Guy demanded punching his counterpart in the face.

"You wanna go?"

"Have some of this."

The two shadows forgot their opponents and began fighting each other, a foolish mistake as Diarmuid and Li Shuwen nodded at each other and rushed to finish the battle.

"Never take your eyes off your opponent monster!" Diarmuid growled as he drove Gae Derge through Tough Guy's skull through the back of his head.

"Indeed, it is a fatal mistake!" Shuwen agreed as he drove his hand into Nice Guy's chest and crushed his heart.

"Man they're finally gone." Yosuke sighed as the two shadows vanished.

"Yeah I'm glad that's over." Chie agreed equally out of breath. "Should we help Yukiko and Narukami now?"

"I would but…." Yosuek sank to his knees and Diarmuid suddenly vanished "I'm spent I don't think I have any more power left."

"Yeah me either." Chie agreed as Li Shuwen also vanished.

Shadow Kanji continued his advance stopping short of Yu who was standing in front of Kanji himself. It raised the axe-sword and brought it down, only for it bounce of a shield erected by Medea, even then she flinched at the strike.

"Darlings…. It's our last time to GET. OUR. GROOVE. ON!" The shadow struck the barrier again and again and again its wild strikes starting to pick up the pace, each strike mad Medea flinch more and more noticeably.

"I hope you have a plan." Medea gritted out barely managing to hang on as the Prana available to her began to run out.

Yu felt the drain and fell to his knees, the bunny charm he had used to track Kanji down earlier falling out of his pocket.

"Wait, isn't that…?" Kanji spotted the familiar charm.

"You made it right?" Yu said.
"So! You gotta problem with it? I can make it and still be tough..." Kanji said looking up at Yu.

"I know... I think it's cute."

"Huh?" Kanji looked surprised.

"I said it's cute," Yu said with a smile.

"CUTE?" Kanji Felt happy.

"You think it's cute? HELLO! it's super-duper cute!" Shadow Kanji bellowed as his strikes got stronger and faster, Medea was barely hanging on. "I LOVE EVERYTHING CUTE!"

Kanji picked up the charm, closing his fist around it. And then started walking towards his Shadow. Yu moved slightly out of the way to allow Kanji to pass.

"You're so persistent!" The Shadow stated pausing in its assault to look at Kanji, causing Medea to drop her barrier and sigh in relief.

"Yep, there's no denyin' it."

"Come again?!" the shadow said raising the Axe-sword to strike.

"I can't help it!" Kanji said picking up the charm and breaking into a run."I love stupid cute SHIT!"

He then punched his Shadow square in a large wound on its gut sending it onto the ground.

"Just accept me!" the shadow yelled as its large body disintegrated.

"I think he just beat his own Shadow!" Chie exclaimed panting in exhaustion.

Kanji looked at Yu, blushing. "Look, it made me happy when you called what I made cute.' You didn't make fun of me for it."

"He's back for more...This guy really is un-bear-able." Teddie yelled seeing that Shadow Kanji had returned to normal.

"Someone...anyone...PLEASE JUST ACCEPT ME!" The Shadow said running towards the team as if he needed a hug.

"I SAID... CUT THAT CRAP OUT!" Kanji yelled causing his shadow to stop.

"I hate that this guy's inside me," Kanji said in a low voice. "You have no freakin' idea how embarrassing it is."

"Kanji..."

"It's not about men or women. I'm just scared shitless about being made fun of! I'm nothin' but a big old coward who spends most his time pushing people away!" Kanji pressed on glaring at the shadow. "I already knew you existed...You're me and I'm you. That isn't some major revelation! Freakin' Moron!"

Kanji's Shadow chuckled and a summoning circle formed itself around him and from it appeared a large form not dissimilar from its monstrous form, except it was a complete body with a head and
glowing red eyes staring down at them.

"That must be Kanji's Persona." Yukiko said dismissing Francis Drake.

"That's definitely one macho dude." Chie chuckled.

"Boy, in the Under the Arcana of the Emperor and in the Class of Berserker, I Hercules am now your Persona." The large being told him a rumbling voice before vanishing.

In his place floated a card with the image of a mad warrior wielding a huge sword. It the number four shining next to the word BERSEKER. The card turned into a blue light which settled within Kanji.

"Persona." Kanji mumbled the word before falling to his knees and staring at the charm in his hand.

[06/01 Samegawa Flood Plain, Inaba]

Nearly two weeks had passed since the battle with Kanji's shadow and his subsequent rescue. Yu was sitting under the pagoda waiting for Yosuke who had called him out here. It was currently overcast but with a chance of heavy rain so the flood plain was entirely deserted.

"Narukami!" Yu looked to see Yosuke dressed in a fancy white shirt, the kind one would wear for an important event, he ran up and standing under the Pagoda with Yu.

"So what did you call me out here for Yosuke?" Yu asked not eager to get wet when it could rain.

"I need something but first. Diarmuid." The persona appeared in spirit form dutifully in response to Yosuke's call.

"Yes my lord?"

"Look there's something I have to do, but I need you to not listen in and only come when I call you." Yosuke said "Can you do that? This is important it's something I have to do."

"As you order I will comply." With a respectful bow Diarmuid vanished going deep into Yosuke's soul. When he was sure his Persona was not listening Yosuke address Yu again. "Narukami can you call out Medea again? I need to ask her something. Please this is a big deal to me."

"Alright." Yu accepted his friend request and with no small amount of confusion called out the Princess of Colchis.

"What is it you want?" Medea asked as she was materialised into physical form. "I hope this isn't just a foolish waste of my time.

"No its not I swear." Yosuke said swallowing his nervousness "I wanted to ask you favour. I've read up on you and I know how powerful you are with magic….so can you remove Diarmuid's love spot?"

"What you are asking is not small favour." Medea told him "This is a large request; so say I was able to treat it how would you go about repaying me? Doing something for him…" she pointed at Yu "And doing something for me are not one and the same understand? I would expect your repayment when asked."
"I'll do whatever you want." Yosuke answered quickly and seriously "No matter what, no price is too much. I screwed up and you're only chance I have to make things right with him. So can you get rid of it?"

"No, I'm afraid not." Medea replied "If it were merely a spell or curse it would simple to break. But this is not the work of a Magus, it is the work of a spirit of some sort, and without the spirit itself removing the Love Spot is impossible even for one like me."

Yosuke looked down disheartened.

"However." The Hanamura boy looked at Medea hopefully "Because this is the work of Spirit and not a god." Medea spat the word out like it was a curse "I can create something like an amulet that could negate the Love Spot entirely so long as Diarmuid wears it, but If he removes it or if it is destroyed then the Love Spot's effects will return."

Yosuke looked thoughtful for a second before untucking his shirt and grabbing hold of the bottommost part of it. Before Yu could what he was doing Yosuke tore a strip of cloth out of the shirt. When it was made he removed the part containing the button and button hole leaving only a makeshift bandana.

"Here will this work?" Yosuke asked holding out the strip of cloth to the Magus.

"Yes that will do nicely." She said taking it from Yosuke and mumbling some words that Yu could not hear. The green cloth gave off a soft blue glow before it settled down. "Done, now remember I will expect payment for this."

"I understand and I'll do whatever you ask, thank you." Yosuke bowed to Medea as she dematerialised and returned to Yu's soul. "Diarmuid."

The Knight of Fianna dutifully answered the call in physical form this time. However, Yu could definitely see the sweat dripping down Yosuke's brow. He was having difficulty materialising Diarmuid and keeping him here outside of the TV World. Unlike himself and Chie who he knew had been trying to keep her Persona/ Sensei physical as part of her martial arts training regimen, Yosuke had not practicing materialisation, he hadn't even been speaking to Diarmuid since they rescued Yukiko so he was having a much harder time of it, and yet he was determined to do it even ignoring the concern plainly written on Diarmuid's face. "You called my lord?"

"Look, I'm not so good with words but" Yosuke paused before continuing "After seeing what happened to you in that dream, because of that Love Spot I realised just how much of an insensitive jackass I was towards you. It was wrong of me to be jealous of something that ruined your life like that so here I want you take this..." Yosuke held out the bandana to Diarmuid who looked confused.

"What is this?"

"This is a bandana it's like a symbol of courage." Yosuke explained "I got Medea to make it so that it could negate the power of the Love Spot as long as you wear it."

"...Truly?" Diarmuid was stunned this was almost too good to be true.

"Here." Yosuke quickly got behind Diarmuid and tied the bandana tightly around the Knight's forehead, it gave a soft glow as it took effect. "Ok time to test it out, if it doesn't work then we'll just book it. See that girl walking over there go say hi and see what happens."

Diarmuid looked towards a young woman walking past with an umbrella prepared for rain. At
Yosuke's encouragement he walked up to the woman and took a deep breath.

"G-good day." Diarmuid greeted reluctantly, bracing for the inevitable reaction to his Love Spot.

"W-what do you want you weirdo?" The woman demanded nervously "Look I don't have time for cosplayers, I have to go." With that the woman walked right past Diarmuid even after looking upon his face.

"It worked!" Yosuke exclaimed running up to Diarmuid when the woman was gone.

Yu smiled as he watched the two celebrate Diarmuid's freedom from the Love Spot.

"I'm telling you, guys and girls would totally flip out if they knew you made this thing." Yosuke was holding a small stuffed bunny. "It's crazy!"

"Drop it!" Kanji yelled quickly snatching the bunny out of Yosuke's hand "I don't really care about that crap anymore!"

"That's good to hear." Yu said calmly acting as though nothing had happened at all.

"I owe you guys though." Kanji's voice softened up.

"You're being awfully polite to us." Chie commented looking at him from her usual spot by the school's air vents.

"Well you guys are the seniors here." Kanji replied before getting serious again "Look all, I really wanna know is who that jackass was that threw me in the TV in the first place!"

"We don't know," Yukiko spoke up from her spot next to Chie. "But that's what we're trying to find out too."

"You're looking for this bastard?" Kanji asked "You guys mind if I tag along and help you with that? I owe this guy a major ass-kicking and then some."

"For real!? That's great! Our team could use some brawn!" Yosuke exclaimed excitedly.

"Sweet! What do you think Narukami?" Chie asked causing everyone to turn to their appointed leader.

"Yeah of course."

"Well kickass!" Kanji pumped his fists clearly ready to fight. "And if push comes to shove, I'm willing to lie my life down for you guys!"

Watching the scene, Yu felt Kanji's resolve and the new bond that had been forged. Deep within the felt another soul connect to him from Beyond, with the number IV representing Kanji.

"It is good that he knows his place. " The haughty voice had returned "But laying his life down for his king is to be expected."

[Wizard Marshal Zelretch's office, Clock Tower, London]
"Pretty good show would you say?" the Wizard Marshal asked Waver who had watched the affair with him.

"I'm glad that Hanamura and Diarmuid have resolved their issue's but I am concerned."

"About what exactly?"

"The Heroic Spirit you chose for the one called 'Teddie'" Waver said "Are you sure it was wise to choose that one for endeavour? What if it ends up causing a disaster? If Izanami wins this Grail War then we're done for, there will be no second chances!"

"Relax Waver you're underestimating the Wild Card and his friends." Zelretch replied nonchalantly. "Just have a little faith for once and get a haircut while you're at it you look like a little girl."

A vein began throbbing in the forehead of Waver's rapidly reddening face.

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Outside the office both Rin Tohsaka and Luvia Edelfelt suddenly stopped their entrance into the office when heard a loud voice.

"THAT'S IT EAT THIS YOU OLD VAMPIRE!" the voice Lord El Melloi the second yelled.

"Turn that magecraft off before you hurt yourself princess." Came the Wizard Marshals mocking voice.

The whole section suddenly shook as a loud explosion rocked the door nearly off its hinges.

"Maybe we should come back later." Luvia suggested to her rival.

"Yeah, I'm sure we don't need to get involved in this." Rin agreed before dashing away from the increasingly loud noises coming out of the office of the Wizard Marshal.
[06/13 Rooftop, Yasogami High, Inaba]

Yu, Yosuke, Chie and Yukiko were on the roof. The warm part of the year had begun and as such it was boiling hot, but not unbearably so.

"When it's boiling hot outside a big bowl of steaming noodles is the absolute best." Chie cheered eating her noodles.

"It is nice and sultry…" Yukiko commented.

"Hey bro, this like totally rocks right?" Yosuke asked with a grin.

"Yeah… definitely." Yu agreed.

"Wait, what does?" Chie asked looking up from her conversation with Yukiko and shooting Yosuke a look.

"Summer clothes…!" Yosuke answered with a cheerful tone.

Yukiko sweat dropped while Chie looked annoyed.

"You've got a weird pervy look in your eyes." Chie stated.

"And that sounded kinda creepy," Yukiko said agreeing with Chie.

The girls were wearing their white summer "sailor" uniforms, each accentuating it with their own flourish. Yukiko wore a red light open jacket over. Meanwhile Chie had chosen to tie her track sweater around her waist. While Yu and Yosuke were wearing their uniform shirts.

"Hey come on he agreed with me, why am I always the one getting all the crap?" Yosuke demanded.

"Well, to change the subject…" Yukiko decided to steer the conversation in a different direction.

"Don't You DARE!" Yosuke yelled.

"When the rainy season hits, we should start checking the TV every night," Yukiko continued as if Yosuke hadn't spoken, causing the boy to sweatdrop and hang his head in resignation.
"Right for the Midnight Channel?" Yu stated nodding his head.

"They say we're gonna get tons of rain this year. Chie said, looking up at the sky.

"Well I hope the weather clears up a little bit for this weekend," Yosuke sighed.

"Why is that?" Yu asked.

"The school camping trip!" Yosuke informed him with a grin.

[06/16 Grocery Department, Junes, Inaba]

Three days later the gang minus Kanji had gone to Junes in order to do some shopping in preparation for the camping trip.

"Hey guys This is your first camping trip, isn't it?" Chie asked.

"Yeah and from what I've heard each team has to prepare their own meals." Yosuke explained with a smug smirk.

"So then what should we make?" Yu asked.

"I've been debating over Ramen or Curry…" Yukiko said, apparently she hadn't decided what she wanted to cook just yet

"Personally I'd go with curry." Yu suggested.

"Cool, then curry it is." Chie agreed apparently liking the idea.

"Ooh! Ooh! I wanna put in my two cents… Curry is a must for camping…" Yosuke said excitedly.

"Thank you for that, so helpful!" Chie growled, gritting her teeth.

They proceeded to head towards the produce department.

"Let's see… Carrots… Potatoes…" Yukiko listed off vegetables while looking over some of the produce.

"So what do you guys do on the camping trip…?" Yu asked with curiosity.

"In the afternoons we usually pick up trash." Chie replied.

"Bleh, seriously? No one ever told me that." Yosuke grumbled.

"Chill there's other fun stuff to do too… we get to sleep in tents and cook all the meals outside." Chie explained.

"The four of us make one complete team right?" Yosuke asked. "So does that mean we're all sharing a tent? Huh?"

"No guys and girls sleep separately!" Chie yelled

"Oh man, that blows" Yosuke groaned as Chie quickly killed his pervy line of thought.

"Hey now that I think about it, didn't we swim at the riverbank after we were done last time? "
Yukiko asked noticing Yosuke straighten up and a smirk cover his face.

"Yeah, we did." Chie responded. "And it was way fun."

"This river can you swim in it?" Yu asked.

"Yeah…I don't see why not; people have done it in the past. " Chie stated.

"Uhh… I'm sorry, I just remembered something, I've gotta get going!" Yosuke said hiding his smirk as he turned to go.

"Wait, what about shopping?" Chie asked. But it was too late Yosuke was already running off, leaving the other three stare after him. "What just crawled up his butt?"

After Yosuke ran off Yu stayed with the girls to continue shopping for ingredient for the curry.

"What do you put in Curry again?" Chie asked causing Yu to get a bad feeling.

"Carrots, Onions, Potatoes… Mushrooms, Green Peppers, and… Radish's?" Yukiko said.

"Are radishes the same as Turnips?" Chie asked

"Hmm… Hey Chie do you use Potato starch for Curry?" Yukiko asked.

"Uh, of course you do," Chie said.

"Of course, otherwise the sauce wouldn't thicken." Yukiko stated. "Then we need potato starch and flour too."

"Th-There are different types of Flour, which one do we use?" Chie asked.

"Uh… the whole wheat sounds healthy, maybe that one?" Yukiko said. "Oh and we should get some of these Chili Peppers too, it isn't curry if it isn't spicy."

As they continued to talk about cooking this curry the bad feeling that Yu had from earlier began to grow.

"Ah… there's so much to get, let's just get everything that seems right. We should get some Kimchi and some Black Peppers too," Chie suggested.

"They have black and white kinds though, which one do we get?" Yukiko pointed out.

"Whoa! Way to go, Yukiko...The Amagi family sure knows their stuff!" Chie cheered "Let's get both, just in case."

"Oh yeah...We'll need some special ingredients, too, to spice things up." Yukiko stated.

"How about mint chocolate!? I love that stuff! I don't like coffee that much, though...Oh, I can drink mocha, so let's get that." Chie said excitedly.

"How about some seafood? That should make the sauce taste better." Yukiko suggested.

"I have a bad feeling about this meal." Cu Chulainn commented.

"So do I." Drake said taking a swig of her rum. "I've watched her cook at home and let's just say, the lass shouldn't go into the restaurant business anytime soon."
The next day the team all went to the camping ground and spent the whole of Friday morning picking up trash that had been left in the area. Eventually much to everyone's relief the afternoon rolled along, and much to Yosuke's excitement time to eat the meal Yukiko and Chie had cooked.

"Ugh, picking up all that trash was murder on my back." Yosuke complained as he ad Yu sat at a bench waiting for the girls to bring the curry they had cooked. "I can't believe someone threw away an entire bike. Dammit, litterers should have to deal with their own garbage." Yosuke let out a groan of frustration before perking up again. "Anyways, time for dinner! Man, I'm starvin'. Dude, the girls cooked just for us! Not that I expect much outta Chie, but Yukiko's got the full tradition of the Amagi Inn behind her food! You know it's gonna be out of this world!"

"You shouldn't eat it." Yu warned Yosuke having heard half of the ingredients that the girls used and knowing for a fact that nothing edible could be made with all of them.

"Ohh, no way. I'm not falling for that. You just want it all for yourself, huh? I can't wait to dig in!"

"It's his funeral." Cu Chulainn sighed shaking his head while leaning against a pole in spirit form nearby.

'Please go hunt a wild boar.' Yu begged the Lancer telepathically as he materialised him. 'I can cook it and make a meal that won't give us food poisoning.'

Thankfully there were very few people around and none of them saw Lancer materialise out of thin air and as such none of them paid attention when he ran into the forest at high speed.

Yu had spent more time than the others had at privately materialising his Persona's and trying to hold them here in the real world. It was taxing certainly but it got easier the more he did it. As such the strain of holding Lancer in the real world was not as taxing as it would have otherwise been.

"Oh man, here it comes." Yosuke whispered excitedly as Yukiko and Chie came up the table each holding a plate of curry.

"Uhhh, sorry for the wait. Um...We...put a lot of love into it..." Chie stammered as she tried to be confident in her creation.

"Whoa, really? That's kinda clichéd, but still awesome!" Luckily for Chie Yosuke seemed to not notice her lack of confidence. "Okay then, chow time!"

The moment Yosuke put a spoonful of curry in his mouth he immediately collapsed and began gagging.

"Yosuke what's wrong?" Yu asked even though he had a good idea of why Yosuke looked like he was dying and silently prayed for Lancer to be faster.

"mu...no...ea..." Yosuke gagged unable to form the words properly.

"Mosquitos?" Yu guessed hoping to drag the situation out as long as possibly before the girls tried to get him to eat it.

"Wa...."
"Worms?"

"Mosquitos and worms?" Yukiko repeatedly aloud.

"I didn't put any of that in the curry." Chie cried defensively.

"Here drink this." Yu put a glass of water up to Yosuke mouth and poured it in "Is the curry too spicy?" Yu wondered while silently begging Lancer to hurry.

"You were going to make the curry mild right Chie?" Yukiko asked her friend.

"Er.....yeah but if you guys don't trust me then you can taste it yourselves." Chie said with a nervous expression.

"Good idea, why don't you take a bite." Yukiko suggested to Yu who froze up for moment.

'That poor fool.' Drake sighed from nearby.

'Indeed, to be forced to eat such a thing, truly he is to be pitied.' Li Shuwen agreed.

Diarmuid could only look over his master silently with a look of concern.

Yu gulped and realised that he was at the end of the line. His nervousness was not helped by his Persona's giving him their condolences and offering to pray to their deities for him. He held a spoonful of the 'curry' in front of his face and looked at the girl's hopeful expressions.

"Well here goes."

Before Yu could put the spoon in his mouth however he felt another drain on his prana as a flash of blue light came from beneath the table. A red blur came from beneath the table and snatched the spoon from his hand.

"BLEGH disgusting how can you two call this food?" The owner of the voice (and Yu's saviour) demanded, she was a girl who was wearing a military-styled red dress with a translucent portion in the front of the lower skirt.

"W-who are you?" Chie asked incredulously.

"Fool, I am Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus." Nero proclaimed introducing herself dramatically. "Perhaps almost as importantly, how dare you call this travesty food. Were you chefs of mine I would have crucified you both personally and set you on fire."

"You look kind of short to be an emperor." Chie commented.

"Ha! only a fool would judge a book by its cover." Nero laughed "Your 'food' looked like something my many dogs vomited up and did I not try it regardless? Yet it despite the fact that your friend here helps run an inn, it still tastes like something I would not attempt to poison my most hated enemies with."

Chie and Yukiko stood there stunned as Yosuke recovered from his serving. Nero put her index finger and thumb into her mouth and let out a whistle as though summoning a dog.

"Lancer, here boy!" Nero called out looking at the forest, suddenly Yu felt the burden on his Prana lessen.

All of a sudden a large and very dead boar fell out of the sky on to the table.
"I AM NOT A DOG DAMN IT!" Lancer yelled angrily at Nero as he ran up now in spirit form. The Emperor looked over the boar ignoring Lancer's yells before nodding approvingly.

"Good boy." She praised Lancer patting his head like a dog.

"DID YOU EVEN HEAR ME?" Lancer yelled as Nero kept patting his head. "Damn it, forget this, I'm outta here."

Cu Chullain promptly returned to his place inside Yu's soul far too angry to continue arguing with Nero.

"Now come Praetor." Nero called as she lifted the boar up and took it over to an empty yet solid table. "We must prepare this beast and for a proper feast." Yu silently relieved stood up and walked over to help. "You two!" Nero pointed a knife at Chie and Yukiko who stood up straight.

"Us?" Chie pointed to herself and Yukiko.

"Do you see any other terrible cooks?" Nero demanded "You two will watch and see how a proper meal is made. Praetor, take the jester to a healer and settle his stomach for the feast that is to come!"

As Yu carried Yosuke over to the medical tent he looked and saw a boy wearing one of the schools camping trip uniforms, he had wavy, slicked-back light brown hair, grey eyes, and a sharp nose.

"Excuse me do you have anything for him?" Yu asked the boy "He ate something bad."

"My stomach is in major revolt, you've gotta help me dude. "Yosuke pleaded before pausing in recognition of the boy.

He picked up a bottle and offered it to the Fool, but he held onto it as Yu tried to take it.

"Hold on…I'm Naoki Konishi."

Yu gasped as he realised just who this person was.

"And just so you know I hate you. AND YOSUKE." Naoki declared glaring darkly.

Then he let go of the bottle, Yu quickly left with Yosuke managed to find a secluded area.

"That kid, he's Saki little brother," Yosuke explained after having taken the medicine.

"Oh I get it now." Yu stated.

'I suppose that would explain his dislike of you.' Diarmuid commented appearing in Spirit Form.

"We talked a couple of times when I was hanging out with Saki." Yosuke continued "I heard that since the murder he's basically withdrawn."

"I see." Yu sighed.

"Guys, hey guys!" The two looked up to see Kanji further down the path calling them. "Guys, Over here!"

They followed Kanji to a shady clearing where Nero was almost done cooking the boar. While Yosuke went over to sit down Yu decided to help Nero out.
"Ah Praetor, you are finished healing the jester I see." Nero smiled as continued cooking the boar along with some vegetables that Yukiko and Chie had not used. "I am almost done with our meal; it will be a meal even greater than those held on Olympus…..gah!" Nero clutched her head as a pain shot through it.

"Are you alright?" Yu asked his Persona with concern.

"It is nothing, merely a passing head pain." Nero said waving off his concern. "Now go and sit I shall serve up the portions."

Yu gave Nero a look of concern before he reluctantly joined the others, apparently the subject was about Naoki.

"Kanji, do you knew Naoki Konishi?" Yosuke asked Kanji.

"Yeah, he and I go way back." The delinquent answered as Nero suddenly gave out bowls with portions of Boar stew to everyone before giving Yu a wink as she dematerialised and returned to Yu's soul.

"Say, wasn't his sister…?" Chie trailed off.

"Naoki is Saki's little brother." Yukiko confirmed.

"Yeah, the two of use hung out a lot in elementary school." Kanji explained. "Lately, it seems like we've drifted apart."

"You have classes with him don't you?" Yosuke asked "Is it true his classmates are ignoring him?"

"Hmmm… don't know." Kanji answered taking a bite of the boar.

"Whatty'a mean you don't know?" Yosuke asked

"I don't know because we don't have any classes together." Kanji stated.

"You're no help at all," Yosuke groaned.

"I don't gotta take this crap from you guys" Kanji started to get up.

"He's just joking." Chie called after Kanji.

"There's still more food here." Yukiko said as Kanji left.

After a few minutes Kanji returned holding Naoki.

"What the hell, let me go!" Naoki yelled at Kanji as he set the boy down.

"If you wanna learn more about him then just ask him those questions yourself." Kanji pushing Naoko towards them

"So just what do you guys want with me?" Naoki demanded caught off guard.

"Are people in class?" Yu asked bluntly getting straight to the point.

The bluntness caused everyone save Kanji and Yu to freeze in surprise.

"Dude, a little subtlety..." Yosuke stressed.
"That's the first time anyone's had the nerve to ask me that straight to my face" Naoki said with surprise although it seemed more like a pleasant kind. "It's actually kind of a nice change."

Naoki smiled and looked at all of them.

"It's true." Naoki confessed "I do feel like I'm being left out, it's like nobody knows what to say so they stare at me from a distance. I'm tired of being coddled."

"So have you been skipping school because of this?" Yu asked.

"Yeah I have." Naoki answered cheering up a bit. "And not just because of that, I'm helping my family fend off the press all the time."

"I understand that." Yukiko said sympathetically. "I had to do the same thing at our inn."

"Lately our neighbours have been taking shifts and coming together to help out with the press. See they tell me to live my life because that's what my sister would want and then they just start crying. It's really depressing."

"Here." Yu held out a plate of the roasted boar that he had cooked. "It's all yours if you want. It's not professional cooking like Aiya's but it's the best I could do with a lack of quality ingredients."

Naoki took the plate and tried some of the pork. When it went into his mouth his expression instantly brightened into a wide smile.

"Wow, you made this? This is amazing." Naoki exclaimed

"Hey! Those are my seconds there!" Kanji yelled angrily as Chie and Yukiko held him back.

"Suck it up and deal Kanji." Chie chided him

"Be nice!" Yukiko insisted.

"You owe me for this punk!" Kanji yelled.

Behind some trees nearby the giant claws of the unnatural being moved as it stared with curiosity at the scene. It saw the kindness that grey haired boy showed the other boy even offering him food. The watcher couldn't help but feel a sense of longing, it wanted that kindness for itself. It didn't linger long before it darted away from sight.

Another shadow caught only the movement of the watcher but did not follow, it clutched a crucifix for a few moments before concealing it again and walking away.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

After they finished eating and clearing up the group all walked back to the tent area along with Naoki who stopped.

"Hey guys I know I said I hate you when I don't even know you, I'm sorry about that." Naoki apologised bowing to Yu and Yosuke slightly. "I think that I actually had fun today, maybe we can all hang out again sometime."

"Sounds good." Yu nodded.

"Just say the word." Yosuke agreed.
"Cool thanks." Naoki smiled and walked away.

As he watched Naoki run off Yu felt that a new bond that had been forged. Deep within he felt another soul connect to him from Beyond, with the number XII representing Naoki.

[-][-][-][-][-][-][-]

Night had finally fallen and the boys had gone their tent to sleep for the night, Kanji had joined them after he got tired of the silence in the first year's tent. Currently Yu and Yosuke were facing the sides of the tent and Kanji was in between them, scowling upwards. Yu was attempting to sleep but Yosuke and Kanji were making that difficult.

"Hey, not that I care… but do you really swing that way?" Yosuke asked Kanji.

"Huh? What way?" Kanji asked.

"I mean, I'm not judging or anything. It's cool. But since we're sharing a tent and all I just…" Yosuke continued.

"Wha-? I have had about enough crap out of you guys for that! Let it go already!" Kanji protested getting annoyed.

Yu held his head, he could feel it pounding after the stress of holding two of his Persona's in the real world, when combined with his prana exhaustion he was finding it very difficult to keep his annoyance at not being able to just sleep in check.

"Then why are you so touchy about it?" Yosuke asked defensively "That's just more suspicious!"

"Then STOP Grillin' ME ABOUT IT!" Kanji said. "And besides, who'd want your ugly mug!"

Yu felt his annoyance at the two's bickering growing.

"Hey, you know what they say…all good friendships are based on honesty, right?" Yosuke said.

"C'mon! I like cute things so what!" Kanji growled. "I'm telling you that I have no problem being around girls now!"

"Can you prove it?" Yosuke asked causing

"FINE! IN THAT CASE" Kanji yelled standing up and getting angry. "I'M GONNA WALK OVER AND SLEEP IN THE GIRLS' TENT! THEY'VE GOT MORE BALLS THAN YO…"

Kanji suddenly trailed off as a he and Yosuke felt something grip the back of the heads, it was like steel and the third person in the tent was giving off a dangerous aura.

"Go. To. Sleep!" he growled and that was all they knew as their heads were banged together and they were sent forcefully into Morpheus's embrace.

Yu fell backwards onto his pillow and felt relief at the silence. As he fell to sleep he swore he heard what sounded like prayer.

Meanwhile in the girls tent when Chie finally did get some sleep (which was made difficult by Hanako) she was tossing and turning eat the images she saw.

Another day had come and once again fools rushed to challenge her. Some out for glory, others for revenge.
Chie saw in front of her several men armed with swords and spears, with fierce scowls on their faces.

"Today you die Li Shuwen!" one of them yelled waving his weapon threateningly.

"Just like all who have challenged me, for you fools a second strike will be unnecessary." Chie boasted unconcerned by the fact that they were armed.

"Arrogant fool!" The first charged and his friends followed, they were fast but not fast enough.

In the blink of an eye it was over, Chie was standing behind them and continued walking down the path as she heard their bodies drop to the ground.

"Will I ever find a worthy challenge?" Chie mumbled to herself "These assassination contracts get so boring when none of those I kill are able to take more than a single blow."

Chie Satonaka promptly woke up with a start gasping for breath. Ignoring Hanako's snoring she wondered what the hell she just saw.

[06/18 Camping Trip Grounds, Inaba]

The next morning the entire team had gathered at a clifftop near a waterfall in the river.

"Looks like we're the only ones here!" Yosuke loudly exclaimed as he looked over the sight before him.

"What's wrong?" Yosuke looked questioningly at Kanji. "Got a stomach ache?"

"No, it's just…I don't remember anything after getting pissed off. Whenever I try my head hurts."

"Yeah mine too, by the way, I would like to apologize for what I said last night." Yosuke coughed into his hand. "ANYWAYS…let's go swimming!"

"Are you seriously taking a swim?" Kanji frowned. "I'll pass…I'm still all stiff."

"What're you looking at us for…?" Chie snapped when she noticed Yosuke was staring at her and Yukiko who were both extremely tired due to getting little sleep last night. "If you guys wanna swim, go right ahead."

"You know, you two still owe us," Yosuke remarked.

"Huh?" Chie blinked. "Whoa whoa whoa we're not going in there. I mean, we do owe you, but…Oh yeah, we don't have swimsuits with us! Man, of all the luck!"

"Y-Yeah, it really is unfortunate."

"Tadaaaa! I've got you covered!" Yosuke pulled out two female swimsuits. "They're Junes-brand originals, from our brand-new line of swimwear that just came in for the summer. I had a clerk friend of mine choose 'em for me. Pretty swanky, huh?"

"Dude, that's just wrong…" Chie remarked.

"Did you have those this whole time…?" Yukiko asked rubbing her tired eyes.
"C'mon, let's all go swimming!" Yosuke insisted.

"What should we do…?" Chie asked her friend.

"You owe us remember, Or I could call the favour in by having you payback all those steaks you've put on my tab." Yosuke suggested rubbing his chin thoughtfully.

"Urgh…" Chie groaned.

"Y'know, we really were looking forward to dinner." Yosuke began. "We got lucky Yu and Nero had us covered…"

"Ngh…" The girls flinched at the thought of the botched curry.

"I wonder what would've happened if we didn't help you guys last night…" Yosuke continued.

"We get it already!" Chie snapped. "Sheesh, you just never let things go!"

"Alright! That's more like it!" Yosuke said with a grin.

Sometime later, Yu and Yosuke were waiting with Kanji for Yukiko and Chie to come back from changing into their swimsuits. Yosuke was wearing a pair of red swim trunks with a floral pattern on it. Yu was wearing the swim trunks Dojima had gotten him for Children's Day.

"Ugh, how far off did those two go to get changed…?" Yosuke remarked.

"C'mon, let's get in." Chie's voice said as she and Yukiko returned.

"O-Okay…" Yukiko squeaked out.

The two were now wearing the swimsuits Yosuke had given them. Yukiko wore a two-piece swimsuit that was mostly light pink in coloration and had a skirt-like bottom. Chie also wore a two-piece, but unlike Yukiko's swimsuit, hers had a sportier appearance, had shorts for bottoms, and was a mix between yellow and light blue.

"Whoa…Man…" Yosuke was impressed with what he was seeing.

Kanji's face turned red as he saw Chie and Yukiko. "…"

"S-Stop staring like that!" Chie demanded nervously as she blushed.

"H-Hey…" Yukiko's face was just as red as Chie's.

"You two look cute…" Yu stared wide-eyed at the two girls.

"Wh-Where did that come from?!" Chie sputtered.

Chie and Yukiko's faces were even redder than before. They seemed rather embarrassed.

"Man, this is going even better than I expected," Yosuke remarked. "Kinda makes up for having to eat that Mystery Food X last night. And c'mon, you guys gotta admit I chose some good suits. Those girls might be childish on the inside, but I bet they're gonna turn into some fine-looking women before too long! Don't you think so, Yu?"

"Yeah, definitely." Yu agreed.
Yukiko and Chie were no longer amused.

"You guys crossed the line…" Chie glared at Yu and Yosuke as she placed her hands on her hips.

"...Definitely." Yukiko nodded to her friend.

In sync the two made to push Yu and Yosuke off the cliff, sadly tired as they were due to being kept all night by Hanako's snoring they stumbled into each other and missed their targets, they began plummeting off the cliff, however unfortunately for Yosuke his E ranked luck kicked in and Chie's foot caught his trunks pulling him off the cliff with her.

There was a loud splash as the three landed in the river below. Kanji and Yu saw all three of them shivering.

"D-damn it, this r-river is f-f-freezing!" Chie yelled.

"Why the hell did you take me with you Chie!" Yosuke yelled.

"You shoulda stayed still!" Chie argued.

"And let you push me? Where's the sense in that?"

"Hey do you guys hear something?" Yukiko asked causing the duo to pause in their arguing.

As they listened they heard a familiar voice heaving upstream.

"Hey isn't that King Moron?" Kanji asked.

Sure enough upstream near the top of the waterfall was King Moron, heaving into the river and complaining about drinking too much.

"Good thing we never went in huh Kanji?" Yu asked the other boy.

"Yup."

"This is all your fault Chie." Yosuke groaned.

The Kung Fu girl had nothing to counter the argument and instead opted to get out of the river as fast as possible.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

After having dried themselves off Yukiko, Yosuke and Chie headed back to the campsite to pack up and go home. Yukiko and Yosuke were talking with Yu and Kanji while Chie hung back. The path was deserted so no one would be around to see her. When the others were far enough ahead she walked over to a tree and lent against a tree, her fringe shadowing her eyes.

"Shuwen, show yourself." She commanded her voice shaking.

"Is something matter student?" The assassin asked appearing nearby in spirit form.

"You killed those people." Chie stammered out accusingly.

"I assume you've seen some portions of my life through the Dream Cycle." Li Shuwen sighed looking otherwise unconcerned at the accusation "But I'm afraid you'll have to be more specific than that, after as many have fallen to your fists as they have mine you eventually just stop
counting."

"But, you didn't have to kill them! You could have just let them go...so Why?!!" Chie demanded angrily.

"Girl, throughout our time together can you ever recall when I said that I was a good person?" Shuwen asked casually.

Chie froze, she realised that throughout this whole time she had been so excited with have a proper martial arts master that she had never questioned him about things like morality, she had simply assumed that because he was her Persona that they shared the same morality.

"I am a killer, and I will not deny that." Lu Shuwen confessed with a shrug "Killing is something I was good at and none could stop me. Good, evil they mean nothing to me. Weak or strong I will crush any who oppose me until someone stronger comes along and defeats me. The strong devouring the weak is simply the way of the world the sooner you learn to accept that the better off you will be."

"Never!" Chie growled.

"Hmmm?"

"I'll never accept that!" Chie yelled "I'll learn everything you have to teach, and then I'll use that skill to protect the weak! Even if it takes all my life I'll keep protecting those who are weaker than me and, one day, I'll become a Heroic Spirit too! And then I'll use all my skill to CRUSH you!"

"HAHAHAHAHAHAHA" Li Shuwen burst into a hysterical laughter.

"Why are you laughing?" Chie demanded fiercely. "I'm serious!"

"I accept your challenge." The assassin said after he got his laughter under control. "Chie Satonaka I will teach you everything I know; no move or technique will be kept secret from you. Then when that day comes when you ascend to the Throne of Heroes know that your teacher will be waiting for you. Be warned that if you cannot live up to your words and crush me, then I will spend all of eternity torturing you until you see the world my way."

"You don't scare me." Chie growled. "I will crush you no matter what it takes."

With that declaration, the day ended and the students were taken back to the school so they could make their way home. One girl I particular had a fierce new determination burning inside of her. [-][-][-][-][-][-] [06/18 Location Unknown]

Lord El Melloi the second and Zelretch had arrived in the realm that represented Yu Narukami's soul. Waver had allowed himself to be dragged here after the Wizard Marshal refused to leave him alone.

"So why are we here?" Waver asked with a sigh.

"We're here because A, I wanted to see what it was like in here and B, you could use a laugh and this is just the place for it." Zelretch replied smugly.

In front of them was a large blueish purple three story building with a neon sign above the doors
saying Velvet Club.

"It looks like a nightclub." Waver observed "What is it doing here?"

"Well Narukami's Persona's need somewhere to hang out when they're not on the clock right?" Zelretch said with a smirk.

"I swear being with you is more a headache than its worth." Waver groaned massaging his temples to stave the oncoming migraine.

The two approached the front door, near it was a greyed out little girl a sleeveless jacket with a belt going across it just below her small chest. On her legs were thigh high stockings and on her feet were shoes. Bandages were wrapped around hands; belts were on her arms as well tied just above the bandages.

They opened the door and peaked inside. Nothing could have prepared Waver for what he saw.

Inside Gawain sat the bar with Lancelot drinking a mug of beer watching the scene nearby.

Nursery Rhyme with Semiramis stood wearing crowns while looking at Lancer who was dressed as an Ace of Clubs Card Soldier. He was forcefully knelt down by Medusa and Atalanta, while Medea stood snickering at his predicament. Unnoticed by all of them a golden armoured man watched the scene with amusement.

"Hello my adoring audience and welcome to the Velvet Club." Nero spoke to the club while standing onstage using her sword as if it was a microphone. "I your generous emperor have granted you the privilege of being your lovely host from this night onwards, are you not honoured?"

Everyone in the club save a certain golden armoured person on the second floor clapped. Although whether it was because they liked Nero or the fact that the spotlights allowed them a better view of the transparent portion of her dress none could say. Though Waver was struck speechless while the Old Man of Jewels chuckled at the scene.

"At the Velvet Club, we have drinks, we have games, we have prizes for some of the games." Nero announced theatrically while making motions with her free hand. "But now, we some special entertainment lined up for you tonight, it would seem everyone's favourite dog's E Ranked Luck has struck again. Give a round of applause for our own Lancer and see what he's put his foot in this time!"

Cheers erupted from the audience as the spotlight focused on Cu Challain and his current predicament.

"What the hell are you doing?" Lancer yelled angrily, he was currently dressed as a card soldier. "Why the hell am I dressed like this and why am I kneeling?"

"SILENCE!" Semiramis yelled at the top of her voice. "You have committed a high crime now you will be judged for it."


"You painted the roses red." Nursery Rhyme stated in a cold tone.

"What roses?"
Atalanta simply pointed to planted pot of white roses that had been sloppily painted red sitting the middle of the room.

"I've never even seen those before and besides you have no proof that I painted them." Lancer objected loudly.

"You've been caught red handed." Nursery Rhyme contradicted him pointing to his hands one of which had a freshly used paintbrush in it both hands were dripping with red paint.

"What the hell?! You assholes are setting me up!" Lancer yelled getting angrier, but was unable to break free of the grip that held him.

"It is quite lucky for you that I am merciful Queen." Semiramis said "I have decided your punishment shall be a light one..."

It was then a certain king of heroes began getting bored. None of the idiots below could see him, and none of them bothered to look up when he spoke, almost as though he was invisible to them. However, they did hear him and he could still get more amusement out of this and so doing his best impression of Semiramis voice he prepared to cause more chaos.

"OFF WITH HIS HEAD!" Gilgamesh yelled his voice sounding very much like Semiramis own, so much so that none of the others objected.

Medusa and Atalanta promptly forced Lancer into a position so he was facing the ground. He managed to look up and saw the Jabberwocky wielding a large Warhammer that was bigger than half of Lancer's body.

His screams of panic went unheard as nearly all the Persona's burst into a small song.

"He's going to lose his head, for painting the roses red, it serves him right, he planted white, the roses should be red." The Jabberwocky raised the Warhammer. "Oh, he's going to lose his head..."

Lancer screamed as the Warhammer crashed down on him creating a Lancer shaped hole in the floor. After the dust settled Atalanta peered down into the hole.

"Lancer died." Atalanta reported using her Archer class vision to see his partly crushed body.

"They're not human." Waver griped unsure what to make of the scene, seeing Gawain and Lancelot snicker at Lancer's fate.

Chapter End Notes

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AN: So for those of you who are wondering, here are the Arcana and their corresponding Heroic Spirits that Yu has unlocked. Also for the Velvet Club, I've been watching Carnival Phantasm and was inspired, also I got sick of coming up with segments for Waver and Zelretch I decided to do those instead. I hope you enjoy them. Also for the scene between Li Shuwen and Chie give some thanks to SaintInfernalNeos for contributing to that scene.
0. The Fool Arcana: Gawain. Class: Saber
I. The Magician Arcana: Semiramis. Class: Assassin
II. The Priestess Arcana: Nursery Rhyme. Class: Caster
III. The Empress Arcana: Atalanta. Class: Archer
IV. The Emperor Arcana: Nero. Class: Saber
VII. The Chariot Arcana: Cú Chulainn. Class: Lancer
VIII. Strength Arcana: Lancelot. Class: Berserker
XVIII. The Moon Arcana: Medea. Class: Caster
XX. The Aeon Arcana: Medusa. Class: Rider
Spending time with the Tyrant of Rome

Chapter Notes

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[06/19 Velvet Room]

After waking up from returning home from the school camping trip Yu planned to try and get to know Nero a bit better. He knew she was loved art and so arranged to go visit the Okina City Museum with her later on. Before that, he decided to visit the Velvet Room again. Once again the voices of his Persona's went silent and strangely neither Igor nor Marie were present, only Margaret who looked to be in deep thought.

"Oh my, you're here." Margaret stated noticing Yu's presence yet remaining seemingly unsurprised. "I have pondering on the story of Sir Gawain that you told me."

'So that's what she's thinking about.' Yu thought to himself 'She spends all her time here, if I had her job I'd ponder about the outside world and what I've been told about it as well.'

"I would like to ask if all the Heroes' stories are as bitter as that and much darker than how modern humans think they are?" Margaret asked.

Yu fell silent for a moment thinking carefully about to answer. For some reason he felt compelled to speak about Cu Chulainn. He could embellish the story, omit certain truths to make it seem happier, but Yu didn't think that was what Margaret wanted. Even if the otherworldly woman accepted what was said to her, the way her golden eyes seemed to peer into his very soul told him that she would see through any lie or omission instantly. So gathering his courage Yu began to speak another tale, drawing from the Chariot Arcana and the Persona who represented it.

"This story begins when a flock of birds descended on Emain Macha and ate all the grass, the Ulstermen who lived there were furious decided to hunt them, and they set off after them in their chariots..."

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[06/19 Junes Entrance, Junes, Inaba]

After finishing up in the Velvet Room, Yu found himself wandering around town for a little while. His Persona's bantered in the back of his mind with Medusa remaining stoic as usual while Gawain and Lancelot had a surprisingly civil interaction with one another. Yu was afraid that a fight would break out when he awakened Lancelot but to his surprise neither seemed to wish to continue holding a grudge against one another, despite the animosity between them in the legend.

"What are you doing here?" Yu looked up at the familiar voice to see Adachi slacking off again in Junes.
"I arranged to take a friend out but that's not until later." Yu told Adachi vaguely "So I thought I'd kill some time by getting some groceries for dinner."

"Shopping for dinner? I'm impressed." Adachi said. "I live alone, so taking care of dinner can be pretty tedious."

"You don't eat?" Yu asked

"Sure I eat, but I just get so tired after work so I make some cup ramen or something." The cop shrugged.

"This person does not eat very well; Praetor you should invite him over to sample some of your own cooking." Nero declared appearing in Spirit Form.

For moment Yu felt a shiver go down his spine, like someone or something was angry with him, he looked around confused before shrugging it off when none of his Persona's spoke up.

"I could make dinner if you want." Yu offered seeing no problem with Nero's suggestion.

"Like... you'd come over to my house? Ha-ha, that would be interesting. But I'd prefer a girl to come over." Adachi began smiling softly. "Cute girls are the best. Though I go for the real knockouts, myself. The most important thing is that they should be good cooks. Everything else, I can take or leave…"

Adachi suddenly stopped talking and cringed as an old woman approached them.

"Tohru! Is that you?" she asked walking closer.

"Shit... She found me." Adachi mumbled causing Cu Chulainn to laugh as he appeared in spirit form.

"Are you off work?" The old woman asked "I hope you're not doing anything dangerous!"

"Oh... No, I'm still on the clock. I was just on my way back to the station." Adachi said quickly coming up with an excuse.

"I'm so happy to see you working hard. I brag about you to my neighbours all the time!" The Old lady said proudly "I'll bring you some nimono, okay? You have to take care of yourself! By the way, I saw this detective show on TV the other day..."

"Um... I need to get back…" Adachi said clearly wishing to end the conversation with the woman quickly.

Oh, is it that time already? I hope your day goes well, then." The old lady said as she left through the doors.

"Finally..." Adachi let out a relieved sigh. "I guess her son has the same name as me. That's probably why she's been hanging around me ever since she found out my name. I don't know. She always brings huge heaps of that nimono to the station and she'll talk your ear off if you let her... It's so annoying."

"That does sound annoying." Yu stated thinking back to when he constantly moved about. Eventually he had resigned himself to just not opening up to anybody, that way he didn't have to feel the pain that came with 'friends' breaking their promises to contact him or stay friends no
matter what. That part of him was still surprised that he was giving Yosuke and the others a chance for this friendship thing, then again if not for the TV World and the murders, truthfully he would have blown Yosuke off by now.

"Doesn't it? She's like that practically every day." Adachi sighed with annoyance "She's the exact opposite of my parents, so I can't relate to people like that. She's lonely, I guess. I don't think she has any relatives, then again I can't just ignore her, either cause its part of my job. The police have been busy lately, so I'm the only one who can deal with her."

Despite his griping, Yu could see that Adachi looked happy he felt like he's seen a new side of to the police officer.

"Though I wish I shared a name with her grandson instead! I'm still only twenty-seven, after all."

Adachi said "Well, I should head back, or Dojima will really chew me out, apparently the brass really wants to catch this Space Samurai guy, see ya."

"Bye." Yu waved slightly as Adachi made his way out of Junes and quickly walked down a back road with few people. "Hey did any of you feel anything 'strange' just now?"

"What do you mean?" Cu Chulainn asked.

"Did you feel something?" Semiramis asked

"No, I'm probably just imagining things." Yu denied after a few seconds.

"To be fair you haven't had time to truly relax, it's unsurprising that you would be stressed." Atlanta pointed out.

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"What the hell was that about?" Adachi asked when he was sure no one could see or overhear him. "If I hadn't shoved your presence down you could gotten us busted."

"It was a slip when I saw that heroic spirit, it won't happen again." The shaded figure stated emerging from the depths of Adachi's soul.

"I hope not; I don't feel like having suspicion thrown on me because you couldn't keep it in your pants." Adachi griped as he continued on his way back to the police station.

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[06/19 Okina Museum of Art, Okina City, Inaba]

Eventually the time for the museum trip came and Yu rode the train to Okina city with a rucksack on his bag containing his Space Samurai costume just in case. Once he was near the museum he ducked into an alley and materialised Nero.

"Praetor, I knew you would summon me it is only natural, after all who could resist my gazing upon my greatness?" Nero declared haughtily as she materialised.

"The museum here in Okina City is hosting art exhibits from around the world." Yu told her unfazed by the emperor's haughty attitude. "You seemed interested in art so I thought you might want to come and see it with me."

"Really?!" Nero's face of joy quickly changed to one of haughtiness as she caught herself and
cleared her throat. "I mean…. naturally you would choose me to visit such a place with you, after all my presence is a wonder to behold, you have surely recognised that it would be a crime to keep such glory away from the adoring masses."

"The exhibition should be open now, let's go."

As the boy lead the persona out of the alley neither of them noticed a shadowy figure watching the two. The figure had watched the boy in the forest the other day, it felt jealous at seeing him so close with another but upon sensing that the other was just a part of the boy's soul the figure calmed and decided to continue following the object of its affection.

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Going through the entrance to the museum with Nero, Yu stopped at the front desk first in order to pay for admission.

"Admission is one thousand yen per person." The clerk stated with a perky tone.

"Just the two of us, here you go." Yu withdrew two one thousand yen notes from his wallet and handed them over to the clerk who pressed a button which opened the electronic gate allowing them into the museum proper.

"There are so many exhibits where should we go first?" Nero asked excitedly as they passed through the gate.

Yu personally thought she was barely restraining herself from jumping up and down like an eager child. "I would love to see the works my own country, but there's an ancient Greek exhibit, oh, oh, ancient Egypt over there!"

Nero's excited manner was attracting attention from people, causing them to look at her. Some of the men began leering when they realised they could see through her dress while women and mother's gave her glares and scandalised looks respectively before dragging their husbands, boyfriends and children away from her.

Looking over the various signs and banners which advertised different exhibits Yu and Nero eventually settled on the ancient Greek exhibit. Shrugging the rucksack into a more comfortable position Yu found Nero quick to agree with his choice. While the pair were walking down the corridor towards the exhibit none in the museum noticed the concealed presence which had easily slipped through the entrance. Security cameras and other modern devices of detection were of no concern, careful to keep its presence concealed it followed the object of its affection, make sure to stick to the shadows just in case.

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Going through the Greek exhibit was a bit challenging, Yu and Nero had to slip over the artwork depicting the gods, especially Aphrodite and Athena, mostly due to the annoyance and discomfort from Medea and Medusa due to their experiences with said deities.

The Fool honestly couldn't blame them, like so many others of legend the fates dealt to them by gods who felt it was their right to do whatever they wished to whomever they wished, were unfair.

"The Gods and their wretched era is long over. Humanity does not need gods they only need their king." The arrogant voice spoke up once more with a sneer, clearly unhappy at the subject of the gods as Yu felt the presence surge within him somehow unnoticed by his Persona's. "What are gods anyway but safety blankets for mongrels with a primitive fear of the moon?"
Feeling the presence recede again Yu focused his attention back on Nero who was currently examining a statue of Hercules. It rather different from the Heroic Spirit which was now Kanji's persona. For one the statue was smaller and its muscles were far smaller.

His flared when he saw the Persona grab her head in pain.

"You've been having those headaches sporadically for a while now." Yu pointed out, concern for the Persona in his tone. "Are you sure you're ok?"

"I am fine Praetor." Nero waved him off reassuringly. "These headaches are nothing to be concerned about."

"I understand if you don't want talk about it because it's personal." Yu told her "But I promise no matter what, I won't judge you, I don't care what other people have said about you. I want to know about the real Nero, her life from her own mouth not from the pages of a history book."

"...." The historical tyrant let out a sigh of annoyance before taking a seat upon the soft material bench that was nearby, Yu took a seat next to her. "You are a persistent one, but if it is a tale about your emperor you wish to hear then I shall indulge you, the story of my migraine's begins with my mother."

Julia Agrippina also known as Agrippina the Younger if Yu recalled his history correctly. She was twice widowed and exiled in 39 AD for taking part in a conspiracy against Gaius Caesar Germanicus also known as Emperor Caligula. Her exile was lifted by her uncle Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus better known as Emperor Claudius.

Later she married her uncle in order to make sure that Nero was the next in line for the throne. While history was unclear on the matter Nero confirmed that her mother took extreme measures and murdered Claudius by poisoning him after he started to regret marrying Agrippina and adopting Nero.

With his death Nero ascended to the throne and became ruler of the Roman Empire. She apparently had no lost love for family members who resented her illegitimate birth right. She loved the nameless citizens of her empire more than any of her famous noble relatives.

"My mother was always power hungry." Nero stated matter-of-factly "Ever since I was young she planned to install me on the throne so that she may rule the empire. Murdering relatives or anyone who stood in the way was nothing to her. Eventually in fifty-nine AD I had enough of her and the way she made various policies in self-interest. I hired an assassin to deal with her, however he failed and I was forced to cut her down publically."

Nero paused for a moment and gazed at a tapestry depicting a battle between Hercules and the Nemean lion.

"It was about that time that I became afflicted with headaches. As it turned out my mother had been poisoning me since I was a child, so as not to defy her I was given the antidote in tandem, so when the witch took the antidote with her to the grave, after that delirium set in and well.... I'm sure you know of what happened next."

He certainly did, Nero was eventually driven out of her position during a revolt in 68 AD lead by Vindex in Gallia. At first, she ignored the situation, perhaps she still trusted Vindex, the inciter of the rebellion. From what he knew it was more likely that Nero she was suffering from despair and simply wished for the situation to go away. Two years later, Vindex would incite another rebellion and by then the senate had enough with Nero. The senate was so displeased with her mishandling
of the revolt that they called her a traitor and she was forced to escape from Rome.

Nero was convinced that her popular policies and her popularity with the people would protect her from being forced to abdicate the throne. However, the public was silent and did nothing to protect her. The Roman people had abandoned her, even after she had devoted so much for them. So in a villa outside of Rome Nero hesitated several times but eventually worked up the courage to commit suicide.

One would think hearing this that Nero would have hated her people, but it was quite the opposite. She loved her people with all her heart but she couldn't understand the kind of love that they embraced and thus she couldn't understand their hearts and in turn they couldn't understand her.

"W-what are doing?!" Nero demanded her face flushing red as Yu pulled her into a comforting hug.

"It's ok you know." The tyrant of Rome let out a surprised gasp. "Human beings stumble and make mistakes every day in pursuit of our dream which wait in an ever distant utopia that is always just out of reach, maybe we humans are stubborn, or perhaps we're just too stupid to know when to give up chasing it, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. Sometimes the road does get hard and we trip up and feel like we can't go on, that's why forge bonds with others and make friends, so that with the strength they lend us and we which we lend them we can pave the path to tomorrow and keep moving forward."

Nero's face was no longer flushed red, she appeared entranced by the words Yu spoke to her. He honestly didn't know where it was coming from but kept talking.

"You did your best as an Emperor and as a human being, maybe your life wasn't perfect but not even the greatest of heroes can claim to have had a perfect life. When I look at you I don't see a cruel Tyrant or an Emperor." The Persona of the Emperor Arcana gave the Fool a confused look. "What I see before me right now is a girl, who has spent her life trying desperately not to cry despite all the pain she was made to endure throughout it. Emperor Nero, it is ok to cry; A poet once said 'tears are the heart's petals' so if you need to don't be afraid to show the petals of your heart there is no shame in letting beauty be seen by others."

Nero was silent for a few moments before her eyes began to water and she pressed her face into Yu's jacket as she let her heart's petals show.

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In a part of the exhibit adjacent to the one where Yu and Nero were situated the being that followed them had been listening through the thin museum walls. It heard the words of comfort that the one it had feelings for speak to that Persona, and although it was only a fragment of the beloved's self the jealousy felt grew several times.

Concentration broke and one of its hands began a great metallic claw which trembled as the being's feelings began to overwhelm it. Jealousy gave way to rage and with a swipe the claw dug into wall making a huge crash as it creating large gashes in the wall destroying a tapestry and a security camera before tearing the claw out with a huge crash.

All the noise quickly caused an alarm to begin blaring throughout the museum. The stalker was quickly brought back to reality by the noise, it could not be exposed, not yet. So shrinking its hand to normal size the being looking around and spotted freedom in the form of a TV screen. Quickly running at it and diving through as if it was water, the security guards came and found the damage but not perpetrator in sight.
Entering his room after returning from the daytrip Yu flopped back onto his bed and reflected back on the day. Telling the story of Cu Chulainn to the mysterious Margaret had been interesting, as had hanging out with Adachi who apparently had a penchant for slacking off.

The museum trip had been a success; he'd gotten to know Nero better as he had wanted. She enjoyed herself thoroughly and let true self shine through even if it was during a few moments of tears.

They'd both been questioned by security after the alarm had gone off along with others. Apparently a tapestry and part of a wall in the adjacent exhibit had been destroyed and there no witnesses which is what triggered the alarm. It was at that point that Yu decided to call it day and went home.

'Maybe Medea can do something about Nero's Migraines.' Yu thought to himself 'It's not a curse from a god or a spirit, so with her magecraft she should easily be able to counter a migraine caused by poison.'
Space Samurai Y gets a Cape (Also Rise)

Chapter Notes

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See the end of the chapter for more notes

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[06/20 Monday, Junes Food Department, Junes, Inaba]

Rise Kujikawa was going incognito at Junes in order to buy some groceries for her grandmother who had been kind enough to let her stay in Inaba with her while she tried to figure out what she was going to do with herself during this hiatus.

'Oh crap, have I been discovered?' she wondered as she heard a commotion nearby.

Looking to her right she saw a crowd of people all looking at something, before she could get a good look however the crowd suddenly parted and a loud and clearly fake deep heroic voice yelled "FLYING KICK!"

Accompanying the yell was a black haired man wearing a bulky stretched out jumper, he flew backwards after being punched square in the face by another person. The other person was wearing a gentlemen's tuxedo with a magician's cape attached to it, a blond wig on covering his hair and a silver mask adorning his face with a comical smile on it.

"Ah you broke by dose!" The man on the ground cried holding his now bleed face.

"I broke more than that criminal." The masked man stated "I also broke your crime spree."

He then approached the man and kicked his jumper causing items of food, video games and electronic s to pour out causing the thief to panic. A pair of security guards closed in on the thief and desperately looked around hoping for a distraction before his eyes fell on Rise.

Seeing the way his eyes shone Rise gulped as he took a deep breath.

"DOOK IT'S BISETTE!" The man yelled pointing at her sending the crowd into an excited frenzy. However, before the thief could make a break for it the security guards grabbed him by both arms and hauled him to his feet, his broken nose bleeding more and more.

Rise became more nervous as the crowd more and more worked up asking for autographs and pictures when suddenly a loud shout stopped everyone.

"ENOUGH!" Rise looked to see a blue haired young man standing next to a police officer along with store security who was cuffing the criminal. "Everyone go back to your business this show is over get moving."

Reluctantly the crowd dispersed some snapping pictures of Rise or dialling numbers on their
"Hold it you!" Rise froze as the young man in the blue hat yelled, she turned around only to see him pointing at the masked man who attempting to sneak away in an exaggerated cartoonish manner. "Space Samurai Y, I'm Naoto Shirogane a Private Detective and you are under arrest."

"And I'm Tohru Adachi Inaba police department." The police offer stated holding out his badge.

"Hmmm…..there is a problem with that tiny detective!" Space Samurai Y stated rubbing his chin thoughtfully.

"And what is that?" Naoto asked glaring at the masked man.

"It's THAT YOU'LL NEVER TAKE ME ALIVE COPPERS!" with that declaration the masked vigilante took off running through the store.

What happened next made Rise swear she was in an American cartoon. She watched as the masked man ran through the aisle's with Adachi and Naoto quickly in pursuit in a cartoonish manner. Occasionally the detectives and the vigilante would pop out of different aisles, sometimes she would see the detectives running from one aisle to another while the vigilante would go in the opposite direction in a closer or distant aisle, in one instance she had to stop herself from giggling as the vigilante even started chasing them.

Eventually the two got tired of being made fools of and tried grabbing the vigilante by getting him from both sides. However, as they closed he leapt upwards in an almost superhuman manner and scrambled into a vent on the ceiling, making his escape.

"Ah man, Dojima's gonna chew me out for this." Adachi complained as the young detective next to him pulled his hat down over his face.

Having left the commotion behind Rise Kujikawa was now in the elevator heading down to the entrance so she could get home. As the elevator descended she sighed and reached to her the pocket of her purse to call her grandmother, to explain why she was late.

However, when her hand grasped nothing she looked down and saw that her phone was gone.

"Oh no, crap where did it go?" Rise grumbled rooting through her purse to see if the phone had fallen deeper inside "Don't tell me some creep from the crowd snatched it from me."

"Here you go are you looking for this?" a familiar voice asked holding out her cell phone to her.

"Oh thank you very much." Rise said gratefully accepting the phone back.

"Your welcome." It took only a couple of seconds for Rise's brain to catch up.

"AHHH!" she screamed upon realising she wasn't alone in the elevator, indeed standing next to her was Space Samurai Y, the vigilante from earlier. "W-where did you come from??!

"From there." The masked man stated pointing up at the open hatch atop the elevator.

"W-what do you want?" Rise stammered nervously.

"To get to the ground floor quickly, why else would I take an elevator?" The vigilante answered with a shrug. "I am a superhero; I have things to do that don't include harassing idols." Eventually
the elevator stopped and opened its doors. "They on the other hand probably have nothing better to do with their time."

When she stepped off the elevator and stood at the vigilante's side Rise groaned upon seeing a large crowd of fans calling her name and taking photos with their cell phone cameras' outside the store entrance.

"Oh man, now how am I supposed to get home without all these people following me?" The idol groaned

"Hmm…..your last name is Kujikawa yes?" Space Samurai Y asked still using that fake heroic voice "Any relation to old lady Kujikawa who runs Marukyu Tofu?"

"Yes she's my grandma, but what difference does that make now?"

"Worry not my dear, I simply needed to know where I was going." The vigilante answered "Now I can get you home without any of these vultures following but I need you to do two things."

"What are they?" Rise asked hoping the masked man didn't want anything weird as he lead her out the door causing the crowd to get louder.

"First I need you to trust me."

"…ok, I don't really have anything to lose." Rise sighed.

"Second, hang on tight."

"Hang on what are you…WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!" Rise screamed at the top of her lungs as the vigilante suddenly grabbed her into a bridal carry and jumped with superhuman ability far above the crowd and lending on the wire fence on the opposite side of the car park.

She screamed again as he jumped even higher and going even further as they quickly left Junes behind.

Suddenly running out of the store were Adachi and Naoto, both of whom gaped at the sight of the vigilante jumping away with the screaming idol in his arms.

"T-that…that's impossible." Naoto cried losing his cool over the superhuman display.

"That was so freakin cool, how did he do that?" Adachi asked supressing a smirk at the look of frustration on Naoto's face as the vigilante quickly vanished from sight.

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It didn't take long for Space Samurai Y and Rise to reach the shopping district, now his leaps had become short as he landed on a rooftop, ran to its edge and jumped again. On the plus side it appeared Rise had stopped screaming but the masked hero got the feeling she was far from pleased.

Leaping over the street to the rooftops opposite, not seeing a certain delivery girl on her scooter looking up at him, he eventually came to a stop outside Marukyu Tofu.

"Here you are, safe and sound." The hero said setting Rise down, somehow she had managed not to drop the groceries she had bought throughout all that jumping, running and leaping.

Rise began taking deep breaths and bent over gasping for breath as she tried to calm down from sudden shock of being carried in such a manner.
"W-WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?! ARE YOU CRAZY!" Rise screeched at the masked man as she patting her chest trying to slow her racing heart.

The hero stood unfazed and merely waited as the idol took a few more deep breaths before calming down.

"But, you did get me away from that crowd so they couldn't follow me. So thanks I guess." Rise said after she calmed down.

"It was no problem; a superhero should always help those in need." Space Samurai Y declared before turning around. "Farewell."

With that he made another superhuman jump and leapt away leaving a stunned idol behind who walked into the tofu shop after a few seconds of looking in the direction the masked man gone.

She had been unaware that across the street a blue haired girl on a scooter had been watching her. A few seconds after the idol went inside she turned around drove off, headed for the north shopping district.

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Later that afternoon at the Dojima residence Yu had returned home and was eating dinner with Dojima and Nanako.

"That concludes Rise Kujikawa's statement on her leave of absence from the entertainment industry." The agency spokesman on TV said "We're short on time, so if anyone has any remaining questions, we ask that you keep them brief."

"I'm Ishioka from Lady's Views" a magazine reporter introduced herself "It says here that you'll be recuperating – are you facing physical problems?"

"No" Rise denied "My health isn't an issue"

"Psychological problems then" the reporter jumped in clearly trying to get something juicy.

"Wha-?" Rise was clearly caught off guard.

"Rumour has it you'll be staying with your relatives, but isn't that in Inaba where the murders are taking place!?!"  

"Huh? Um…" Rise was clearly not on top of her game, the reporter was clearly managing to dig into her.

"Is it true that they run a traditional tofu shop" The reporter kept going with no regard for Rise at all " Will you be helping out with the family business!?!"

"No more questions" the agency spokesman's said finally stepping in "This press conference is over! Clear the way please."

The press conference erupted into chaos as Rise vanished from the screen along with the Agency spokesman.

"Is Rise-chan quitting her job on TV?" Nanako asked

"Who knows" Dojima said "But if this is her hometown we'll have to deal with everyone who's trying to get a glimpse. The one good thing about this town was that it had nothing of note, and
now we get all of the buzz and on top of that a masked loon running around…What's going on?"

Yu didn't visibly react when Cu Chulainn burst out laughing along with Nero, their translucent spirit forms supporting each other as they laughed, while Gawain visibly face palmed in embarrassment. The other persona's all had their reactions varying from amusement to small smirks and embarrassment.

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[06/21 Tuesday, Junes Food Department, Junes, Inaba]

The next day the team gathered at the food court where they continued discussing the murder case.

"Are you serious Yukiko?" Yosuke asked the Amagi girl "You know Rise's family?"

"Well the news mentioned a traditional tofu shop" Yukiko explained "And I'm pretty sure that its Marukyu we have their Tofu at the inn."

"Oh, that place, so if we go and buy some tofu then I could meet Rise." Yosuke realised "Wait, does that mean I can meet Rise if I go to her tofu shop!?"

"Settle down, this isn't the time for stupid games." Chie growled causing Yosuke to chuckle nervously and raise his hands in a gesture of surrender.

"Yeah but if all the cases so far have been people on TV then she could be next." Yu pointed out.

"Yeah but she's been on TV alot, why would now be any different?" Yosuke asked

"Well I did a little research, it turns out that Rise and Ms Yamano have crossed paths before." Yukiko told them. "They've been guests on the same talk show."

"But with all this fuss about her taking a sudden hiatus she's the talk of the town right now." Chie said "And because she's moved here it'll just get worse."

"Good point, if our theory is correct then she fits the criteria perfectly. Which means…" Yosuke trailed off thoughtfully.

"Which means what?" Kanji asked confusion.

"If whoever's behind the killings does go after Rise then we're right the killer is targeting people from here who end up on the news." Yosuke explained.

"It'll also mean that he's not targeting people connected to Ms Yamano's murder." Yu put in.

"Ohhh… Yeah, I get." Kanji nodded in understanding.

"Hey by the way Yosuke I heard that Space Samurai guy was here yesterday and that he ran off with Rise Kujikawa, is it true?" Yukiko asked.

"Oh yeah, he stopped some shoplifter by breaking his nose." Yosuke answered "The guy apparently spotting Rise dressed incognito and tried to expose her and make a getaway in the confusion. Thankfully security nabbed the guy before he could run off."

"And what about him running off with Rise?" Chie asked.

"Oh apparently he led a detective and that Naoto kid on a chase through the store." Yosuke
explained with a smirk "Some of the other employee's said it was hilarious watching them run back
d and for, eventually the guy just jumped straight into a vent on the ceiling, he probably used that to
get into the elevator through the lift shaft. After that he just waited for the elevator to stop then he
icked her up and jumped off with her."

"From what I heard from some guests who were at the shopping district yesterday, he took her
back to Marukyu later, apparently she's safe and sound." Yukiko stated.

"Getting back on topic we still have no idea what the killers motive is on that we're totally
cueless." Yosuke sighed wearily.

"Well maybe this guy has some sort of grudge against us." Kanji suggested putting his hand his
chest "I mean I know for a fact that there's a shitload of people that hate my guts. So how about
you Yukiko is there anyone you might have pissed o-"

"Never." Yukiko said firmly causing everyone to blanche and look at her.

"Come on Yukiko everyone's pissed someone off even if they didn't mean too." Chie said
nervously at Yukiko's quick denial.

"Either way we can be sure that Rise Kujikawa is real danger" Yu interrupted putting down the
milkshake which he had been drinking.

"So let's stop by Marukyu Tofu tomorrow then" Yosuke said "Purely to keep Rise safe of course."

"Yeah you totally have no other motive Yosuke" Chie snorted

"What the hell does that mean?!" Yosuke demanded standing up and glaring at her angrily.

"You heard me!" Chie yelled standing up and glaring equally as angry.

"Hey guys-" Kanji stood up to end the argument between the two when Yu put a hand on his
shoulder.

"Let's just leave them be" Yu said and began walking away.

"Yeah I need to get going" Yukiko said also leaving "Let's go home to together Kanji"

"Ok Sempai" Kanji agreed.

The three promptly left Chie and Yosuke to their argument alone in the Food Court.

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[06/22 Wednesday, Class 2-2, Yasogami High, Inaba]

The next day after classes had ended; the team had gathered together and were discussing what
they had seen on the Midnight Channel, as per usual a fuzzy image had appeared on the Midnight
Channel it was difficult to make out but it could have been Rise.

"I'm telling you guys that was definitely Rise." Yosuke said insistently.

"How can you be so sure?" Chie asked suspiciously "The image looked too fuzzy to me to get any
details out of it."

"I'm totally sure" Yosuke insisted "With those hips, that sweet rack and those beautiful legs that go
Yosuke then looked at Chie's own legs before a disappointed look covered his face.

"Hey! If you don't like my legs, then don't look at them!" Chie yelled blushing and covering up her legs.

"Narukami, what do you think about this?" Yukiko asked.

"Her legs are fine." Yu replied honestly.

"Ah!" Chie's blush deepened at the statement.

"What? No!—!" Yosuke said shocked "…Dude, on this, we disagree."

A vein bulged in Chie's head for a second before she kicked Yosuke in the stomach sending him flying off the desk he was sitting on.

"Asshole!" she yelled.

"Hey guys are you taking this seriously?" Kanji asked with an annoyed sigh.

"We are" Yu and Chie said in unison.

"Then that Tofu shop, let's swing by." Kanji suggested.

"Good idea but Yukiko and I have to go to faculty officer first so we'll catch up with you later" Chie explained.

"Ok then let's go" Yosuke said excitedly as he finally recovering from Chie's kick.

[Shopping District, Inaba]

"Just so you know, this is all about the investigation. We can't get all hung up on meeting Rise," Yosuke said as the three guys walked to the tofu shop.

"Uh huh, and who are you trying to convince me or yourself…?" Kanji asked with a scowl.

Eventually they reached Marukyu Tofu however there were a bunch of students from Yasogami there taking pictures of the building with the cameras in their cells.

"Man…there's a lot of freaky fans here…" Yosuke complained.

"The same thing could be said about us…" Kanji pointed out.

When crowd cleared out the four approached but paused when they saw a sign on the front of the store that read 'Out of tofu…'

"WHAT?! I came all the way to see Risette and it says they're out…?!"

"What's the big deal, I thought you were allergic to the stuff…?" Kanji said.

"It's the principle!" Yosuke said. "I came here to see Risette and I'm not leav-OW!"

Yosuke looked to see Yu's hand raised having slapped the back of his head. "Dude what was that
"Yosuke, focus!" Yu commanded him. "We are here purely to make sure she's safe, nothing else understand? You are not to draw attention by asking for an autograph am I clear?"

"Y-yeah ok." Yosuke sighed.

Then he opened the sliding door and barged in.

"Hello? Anybody in here?" Yosuke asked weakly.

Out from a back room a girl came out wearing a white apron over white trousers and an orange shirt. She had a white scarf over her head.

"Didn't you guys read the sign…? We're out of tofu…?"

"It's Risette, it's actually her…" Yosuke said with disbelief.

"Say, you Rise?" Kanji asked bluntly.

"Just straight out with it huh?" She said, scratching her ear and looking down at the floor. "So are you here to get some tofu…?"

"Six gamnodoki please." Yu ordered.

"Six gamnodoki it is" Rise sighed wearily.

"Chick's got a real attitude," Kanji muttered.

"Can you really blame her?" Cu Chulainn asked appearing in spirit form "It must be a pain in the ass to have fans butting into your life twenty-four seven."

"Good point." Kanji conceded.

Yosuke meanwhile was admiring Rise's rear as she got the gamnodoki…

"Oh…I'm so glad we came…" Yosuke said with a cat like grin on his face. "Our mission is accomplished."

"We still have work to do pervert." Nursery Rhyme stated shattering Yosuke's perving.

"Huh?" Yosuke froze up like a deer caught in headlights when he saw Nursery Rhyme glaring at him.

"Excuse me but has anything unusual happen here lately?" Yu asked getting to the point.

"An acceptable start I suppose." Nursery Rhyme said with a sigh.

"What like a stalker…?" Rise replied.

"Yeah, have you heard of something called the Midnight Channel?" Yu asked.

"You mean that thing on TV last night? Yeah I saw it…" Rise told them.

"You actually watched it?" Yosuke asked surprised.

"Yeah, but the girl on TV wasn't me… I've never worn a bikini like that and her boobs were larger
than mine…"

"Oh yeah…" Yosuke said, looking at Rise's chest before getting cuffed over the head by Kanji this time. "Ow damn it!"

"Down, boy…" Kanji sighed.

"Look there's a really good chance that whoever appears on that gets kidnapped." Yu warned as politely as he could.

Rise inhaled in shock.

"Look I know it sounds weird, but we're not lyin' or yankin' your chain." Kanji explained

"What are people doing around here? Beat it." A familiar voice said from outside.

Yu, Yosuke, and Kanji tensed up, albeit for different reasons.

"Excuse me? We…" Another voice said as he entered. It was Adachi. Behind him was Dojima… who visibly started at seeing four boys and a girl with Rise.

Dojima stared at all of them. Yosuke and Yu looked uncomfortable while Kanji was facing away.

"Hi… How's it going?" Yosuke said, scratching the back of his neck.

"What are you all doing here?" Dojima asked in a displeased, almost accusatory tone.

Kanji had been looking at Dojima, before facing away a second time.

"Kanji Tatsumi…" Dojima said in a suspicious manner noticing Kanji for the first time.

"We're here to get some gamnodoki…!" Yosuke nervously laughed. "We're gonna go now…"

Yosuke put the money into Rise's hand and the four quickly left escaping Dojima's scrutiny.

"I'm Detective Adachi of the Inaba Police Department…" He said holding up his badge. "We have a few questions for you…"

"You're a detective?" Rise asked.

"Look, I'm sure you've heard, but this area has been a little dangerous lately…" Dojima said. "So… what made you decide to take your break here?"

"It just seemed like the best place…" Rise said looking uncomfortable at the question.

"I'll be honest…And I don't mean to scare you or anything but…" Dojima said.

"There's a chance I'll be kidnapped, right?" Rise said bluntly.

"What?" Adachi said.

Dojima's suspicion was aroused and he raised an eyebrow.

"Those guys who just left warned me that might happen…I'll be careful, okay?"

"Really? They warned you about that…?" Adachi said.
Dojima looked even more bothered by this knowledge.  

"I'm sorry, but if you'll excuse me, I have more stuff to do..." Rise said. 

"Wait, we have more questions..." Adachi said but she ignored him and went into the back. 

The two detectives went to their car; Adachi was looking at a poster of Rise dressed in a policewoman's uniform that was being used to drive up female recruitments into the police force. It said, "Protecting today so we can have a safe tomorrow..." 

"Well, since she's in town we could have used some help from the top brass at the prefectural office to help out..." Adachi said before noticing that something was bothering Dojima. "What is it?"

"I came to warn Rise based off a gut instinct without any hard evidence... How could a bunch of high-schoolers without the inside scoop figure it out and beat us to it?" Dojima wondered rubbing his chin thoughtfully also unaware of the small grin on Adachi's face.

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When they were out of the shop and down the street Yosuke stopped his two friends. 

"Ok, can you guys quit smacking me, it really hurts." Yosuke complained. 

"Well you were making look like frigging weirdo's senpai." Kanji stated. 

"Yeah besides we didn't hit you that hard." Yu said shrugging his shoulders. 

"Didn't hit me that hard? It felt like I was going to get a concussion." Yosuke griped 

"Oh come on we only slapped you like this." Kanji demonstrated by slapping a street light with the same strength he had slapped Yosuke on for the metal to crumple and dent at the force of the slap. 

"Oh crap, look what you did." Yosuke gulped as he saw the pole of the street light deform partly at the smack causing the top to lean backwards slightly. 

"M-maybe no one will notice?" Kanji hoped. 

"Let's get out of here." Yu suggested walking away very fast. 

"I'm all for that let's go." 

"Right behind ya." 

The three quickly took off hoping no one saw what had just happened. As they ran off Aika stopped her scooter near the street light and got off. She watched the three round the corner and looked around. The Shopping district was basically deserted and thankfully Dojima and Adachi had gone the other way down the street when they left the tofu shop. 

Acting quickly, she placed her hand on the damaged street light and chanted quickly under her breath. If anyone had been watching it would have been as if time had reversed itself as the top of the street light righted itself and the dents made earlier simply filled back out as if nothing had happened. 

"Troublesome." Aika sighed as she took her hand off the street light and looked in the direction the three boys had ran off.
A few hours later after Dojima and Adachi had left Yu, Yosuke and Kanji returned to keep an eye on Rise. Sure enough she walked out of Marukyu Tofu she was wearing a pink sleeveless shirt over a gray t-shirt and had blue shorts and platform sandals on.

"What are we stalkin' this girl for?" Kanji asked.

"Because…if we stay in the shadows like this, then maybe we can find the guy who's after her…" Yosuke answered. "Be on the lookout for any suspicious characters…"

"Senpai, the only suspicious characters are us…" Kanji pointed out looking at Yosuke like he was an idiot.

"What exactly are you four doing out here?" Chie asked coming along with Yukiko and seeing the boys position.

"You look quite suspicious," Yukiko commented.

"Are YOU the killer?" Yu asked Yosuke with a deadpan look.

"Piss off!" Yosuke said with annoyance as he sweatdropped.

Rise stopped off at a magazine stand and flipped through a magazine. Soon everybody was behind a car and across the street. Aika arrived with food after Yosuke had gotten hungry and had taken everyone's orders.

"Here you go," Aika said.

"Wow! You do deliver anywhere!" Yosuke exclaimed.

"Just leave the bowls when you're done," She replied.

"I had the extra-large," Kanji said.

"Roast pork is mine!" Chie said.

"We had the large Tanmen…" Yu said taking his bowl.

"Hey keep your paws off the steak and rice…" Yosuke said quickly grabbing his bowl afraid that Chie might take it.

"The tofu ramen's mine…" Yukiko said taking her bowl

"Everybody back, the lunch special is for me," Adachi said taking his own lunch from Aika.

"Umm…did someone order a detective with their lunch?" Yosuke asked surprised that he never noticed Adachi before.

Aika ignored the situation, got back on her scooter and left to make more deliveries.

"Dojima told me to keep an eye out on…AH! I mean, I overheard you placing an order while I was doing IMPORTANT legwork for Dojima! Just good timing…" Adachi said with a nervous laugh as if he wasn't aware he that none of the group believed him.

"This totally blows. Eating with a cop is bad for my digestion…" Kanji muttered.
"She's leaving..." Yu said after noticing Rise finishing with the magazine.

"Great, let's get going!" Yosuke said, putting down his steak and rice.

"But the food...it just got here..." Adachi complained.

"C'mon, Yukiko!" Chie said.

"At least let me eat my tofu..." Yukiko protested stubbornly.

"Yosuke..." Chie said as she noticed something.

A man had just come out of an alley near the tofu shop. He wore a headband and had a backpack on; he definitely had a suspicious air about him. This was most likely because he was actually trying to be sneaky in the poorest manner possible.

"Could that be him?" Chie finished.

"Sure looks like it. After him..." Yosuke said.

Kanji finished his food and was praying towards the empty bowl by clapping his hands together.

"Ahhh... That totally hit the spot..." Kanji stood up and looked at man Chie had spotted "As for you..."

Kanji ran towards the suspicious guy.

"Come here..." Yosuke said.

The guy noticed several high schoolers running towards him. He ran before the blond one reached him...

"Come back here..." Kanji yelled

They ran past Rise, much to her confusion.

"I'll guard Rise!" Yosuke said.

"Dream on!" Chie growled grabbing Yosuke and dragging him along.

"Narukami! Keep an eye on her..." Yukiko said giving chase with the others

"Me?" Yu asked pointing to himself as the others ran off.

"Slow down you punk, so I can pummel your scrawny ass!" Kanji yelled angrily.

"No... don't do that... I'm a cop! If the suspect gets hurt. It'll be MY ENTIRE FAULT!" Adachi yelled in a panicked voice somehow keeping up with the teens.

"I'm confused." Rise said watching the scene with Yu sweatdropping at what was happening.

The others kept giving chase but despite being scrawny the suspicious man could certainly run fast. There was a highway with fast going cars coming up and he seemed intent on taking his chances with the cars.

"D-don't come near me!" The man yelled glancing backwards into the traffic.
"Shaddup!" Kanji yelled angrily "What kinda idiot would listen to—"

"I-I'll do it, you know! What're you gonna do if I get run over!?" The suspect cried apparently more than willing to throw his life away than get caught.

"Wh-What...!?" Yosuke gulped.

"Master if he dies then any hopes of answers will be lost forever." Diarmuid pointed out.

"Now what do we do?" Chie asked nervously, she had only learnt the basics of her masters Presence Concealment technique and even if she knew more she'd blow their cover if she used it front of this guy and Adachi.

"Lass, I think I have the answer but its gonna hurt." Drake stated

"I'll take anything you can offer right now." Yukiko mumbled to her persona.

"Your body is still adapting to have a heroic spirit join with your soul, but if you circulate your prana into your legs I'll be able to loan you my speed." Drake told her "The Rider class is renowned for its agility, mine might be B rank instead of A but it's still fast enough to catch him."

Yukiko nodded in affirmation and focused, she felt her prana and began channelling the strange energy into her legs. Within seconds it felt as though legs had been set aflame, she took a single step and the world seemed to blur, before Yukiko knew she was directly in front of the man and abruptly grabbed shirt and yanked it with such force than he flew over her shoulder and onto the ground behind her.

Kanji, Chie and Yosuke took the opportunity to pin the man while he was down.

"Hey leave me alone I'm just your average Risette loving fan boy," the suspect insisted.

"There's nothing average about murdering people douchebag" Kanji yelled keeping the man pinned.

"Murdering people?!” the guy said incredulously. "What are you talking about…?"

"Save it for the station, pal…” Adachi said with a grin "MAN! I always wanted to say that." He then saluted the teens. "On behalf of the police…thank you for apprehending the killer."

Adachi walked away with the suspect in cuffs.

"So that's it… It's all over now?"

"Yeah…We solved the case…WE ROCK!" Chie said.

"It's possible he was just a fan” Yukiko said with a doubting tone massing her now burning legs.

"Wait…did I really get kidnapped by a wimp like that?"

"No way" Yosuke glared in the direction Adachi had left with the 'suspect'.

[Samegawa Flood Plain, Inaba]

Later on Yu had brought Rise to the Samegawa Flood Plain to get away from what was happening
"Are you sure we're safe here?" Rise asked Yu.

"It's the best vantage point we could have," Yu replied.

"I'm used to this...having stalkers..." Rise said.

"Yeah, but wouldn't be better if you weren't used to this... or had stalkers?" Yu asked.

Rise sat down and looked at a magazine with her picture on the cover. She looked through pages of her in swimsuits and before tearing a page out.

"The girl everyone's making a fuss over...isn't the real me. It's just 'Risette' the idol..." Rise said bitterly folding up the page as Yu sat down to her left. "She's just another packaged product they've created to sell..."

Rise made the page into a paper airplane and threw it. The plane flew for a short distance before falling to the ground.

"Nobody actually sees the real me," She said with teary eyes which she closed trying to hide her pain... "Ever!"

Yu decided to cheer Rise up. He took a page from the magazine and made an origami crane.

"Wow...impressive!" Rise said taking a page and tried it herself...

"Wow you suck..." Yu said bluntly when she showed it to him.

"Real smooth." Cu Chulainn chuckled.

"HEY! That wasn't very nice..." she said glaring at him.

"Sorry" Yu apologised cursing his bluntness.

She tried again and presented a better one.

"See, I can do it if I try..." she said

Yu responded by placing a smaller one to place next to hers.

"That's really cute!" Rise giggled.

Yu slightly smiled and pulled out his phone when he felt it vibrate in his pocket. It was a text from Yosuke that read: Partner... The killer (?) has been caught...Hurry back with Risette!!

"It looks like the coast is clear..." Yu said.

"Yeah...and it's getting dark..." Rise said getting and starting to walk up the hill before pausing. "Hey, you never told me your name..."

"I'm Yu... Yu Narukami" Yu said introducing himself.

"Hi...I'm Rise..." she introduced herself.

"Oh yeah I think I heard that on the news last night" Yu chuckled
Later that night Yu was alone in the bedroom…. well alone if you didn't count the assortment of Heroic Spirits lazing about the room in spirit form. The Fool looked out the curtain and shut it after a few seconds of watching the rain fall.

The clock then struck midnight. The unplugged TV turned itself on. The image was less grainy this time. This time they clearly saw Rise on a stage with a pole in a bikini. Then TV abruptly turned itself off.

"Naturally that scrawny man was not the culprit." Semiramis sighed.

"That's not good" Yu sighed "Well it was stupid of them to just assume that a scrawny guy like that could be the killer. He looked like he'd have a hard time lifting a small TV never mind pushing a person into one."

[06/23 Thursday, Yasogami High Roof]

During lunchtime the group had all gathered on the rooftop to discuss the case.

"Did you see the Midnight channel?" Yu asked

"Yeah I saw it and I caught a glimpse of her in the store this morning on my way here to school" Yosuke said. "It looks like that crazy variety show only starts to get going and become clear once they enter the TV"

"Maybe it's the person's shadow self-that's responsible for creating that program" Yukiko suggested "Like they're somehow projecting their thoughts to us in the form of a TV show."

"Yeah that could be but why does that fuzzy image come on before they enter then?" Chie asked.

"Maybe it's the killer's way of putting some sort of message or warning out there." Yu suggested.

"But who exactly is he trying to warn?" Chie asked "and why do that?"

"It is not uncommon for serial killers to leave warnings or taunts when they are feeling unstoppable." Semiramis told them. "So it is possible you are seeing who he plans to target next because he feels like no one can stop him."

"Wouldn't that mean that the stalker we nabbed earlier wasn't our guy then?" Kanji said glumly resting his face in one hand.

"Took you long enough to figure it out." Nursery Rhyme snarked.

"The only thing we know for certain is that Rise Kujikawa is in real danger," Yu said.

[06/23 Thursday, Yasogami High Roof]

Much later after classes were finished Yu was closing his shoe locker when he noticed a familiar girl in a female summer uniform with high white socks walking by.

"Rise?" Yu inquired.

"Oh… Narukami!" She greeted.

"What brings you here?" Yu asked.
"Oh… I registered for this school in one of the first-year classes. You go here, too?"

"Yes, I'm a second-year…"

"Well then, that makes you my Senpai… so I trust you to show me what you know…"

"I'll do that…” Yu chuckled.

Rise was about to go out the door when she noticed a large crowd of paparazzi outside the school gates.

"The press wasn't here when I got here… I wonder who told them…” Rise said dejectedly.

"I know of another way out…” Yu told her.

They went out the door that led to the Practice Building… but then Yu made a left and led Rise by the hand to a secret opening in fence that Kanji had showed him once.

"This is like a TV drama…” Rise giggled.

They made their way to the shopping district however by the time they got to Marukyu Tofu the press was there as well.

"We can't get by those press people either…” Rise said even more dejectedly.

"Rise…” Rise turned around to the familiar voice to see Inoue her former manager.

"We need to talk…”

He lead both of them to Tatsuhime Shrine so that they could talk without any crowds gathering.

"I didn't want to let you go without talking one last time…” Inoue said.

Yu just stood there and listened silently knowing that this was a private affair.

"Look, Inoue … I'm not going back… I want to be more than a doll that has her life scheduled for her without being allowed to breathe…”

"Rise…the role for that movie you were supposed to be in… it was given to Kanami…” Inoue told her looking sad.

"Kanami? You mean… Kanami Mashita?” Rise asked stunned

"I'm going to represent her now… to the best of my ability…” Inoue nodded in confirmation then turned around and started walking away. Then he stopped and slightly looking back said, "You were like a daughter to me… you were the best… but now… I have to move on… and Kanamin will be at the top in half the time it was for you…” With that Inoue walked away leaving a hurt Rise behind.

"Why… does this bother me? I'm out… this shouldn't bother me…” Rise stammered as she felt a stab of pain in her heart.

"It hurts to let something close to you go, even if it is for the sake of moving forward.” Yu stated causing Rise to look at him in confusion.

"My parents are always travelling, their work takes them everywhere, sometimes even to other
countries." Yu explained taking a seat on a nearby bench. Rise took a seat next to him wishing to hear more. "One of those trips they had to take me with to England I think. I can't really remember I was only six or at the time, and I was really lonely. I couldn't speak the language so none of the kids would play with me. But that all changed one day when Alice appeared to me. She looked to be about two years older than me and wore a Victorian era dress with a mass of frills and a looped skirt, she looked like a child's doll come to life because of her porcelain-white skin, she had these big pink eyes full that looked so sad when I looked into them."

As he recounted the memory a smile crossed the Wild Cards face.

"When she spoke I could understand her, I was amazed but I didn't care how it was possible, she asked if she could be my friend, I instantly said yes. We'd talk and play games, like hide and seek and tag, and she'd read stories to me from books from the library even though I couldn't read English at the time. She was cold to touch but I didn't care. I was so happy to finally have a friend and told my parents about her, they acted strange whenever I talked about her, eventually they called a friend from the church a priest named Risei Kotomine. When they were talking I listened in, I was too young to understand a lot of what they were talking about, but I did understand that they were going to get rid of Alice and they were going to make me forget about her."

Yu let out a sad breath and kept going.

"I ran to find her and tried to warn her but she just smiled and accepted it, despite my pleading she didn't try run or get away, instead she just took my hand in her freezing cold ones and promised never to forget our time together and she made me promise the same. After I did the priest came in and what happened next is a blur. When I woke up my parents interrogated me about Alice, I pretended to have no idea what they were talking about and they seemed relieved and just left me be. After that I never saw Alice again, it hurt like nothing else having to move forward, it felt like I was leaving her behind. To this day I don't know what Alice was, if she really was a ghost, someone I made friends with or something else. Either way, I knew I could never forgive my parents for taking her away."

"That explains my appearance." Nursery Rhyme sighed appearing in spirit form. "My form reflects the desires of my master, in your case my form is identical to your long lost friend."

"So... what did you do?" Rise asked nervously.

"I distanced myself from my parents, not that they ever noticed. What I did do was treasure the bond I had made with her and all the memories that came with it." Yu stood up and stretched "If you want my advice Rise Kujikawa, think back on the precious memories you've made through your career and hold them close to you. It won't make the pain your feeling hurt any less but I guarantee it'll make the road ahead a lot easier than if you just tried to leave everything behind."

With that Yu walked away down the shrine steps leaving Rise Kujikawa alone with what he had said to her.

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Chapter End Notes

AN: I wanted to do another Velvet Club scene here, I wanted to make it a recurring thing but sadly I am running low on ideas, so if anyone has any idea feel free submit
them, if I do include an idea into a Velvet Club scene I will gladly credit whoever suggested it.
The Lover's and The Star

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Persona or Fate or anything in the nasuverse, any resemblance to any other Persona 4/Fate fan fiction is coincidental and plagiarism is not intended. No flames please, constructive criticism only.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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[06/23 Thursday, Yu's Room, Dojima Residence, Inaba]

The clock struck Midnight and as expected the Midnight channel appeared on Yu's TV, on the screen Rise's shadow was smiling and displaying her bikini's bust and her rear end to the camera.

"Marukyu… I'm a spring flower blooming into a high school idol" Rise's shadow said "That's right it's me Risette and this time…." It took out a school uniform and showed it the camera with a shy look before perking up. "I'm going to take on the most extreme challenge."

"Woah, now this is my kinda show." Cu Chulainn said appearing in spirit form to watch.

Yu however either didn't hear her or was ignoring her as he and kept unconsciously hitting 'Record' on the remote several times while his eyes were glued to the TV screen which

"I'm going to strip for you" Shadow Rise proclaimed as the camera zoomed in on her body again.

"Strip?" Yu began sweating and hitting the record button faster, he was abruptly crowded by his Persona's appearing in Spirit Form a number of male's (and a surprising number of female ones) were staring intently at the screen. Although Gawain looked rather flustered and was trying to not to look.

"Oh I'm so embarrassed" She giggled and the camera zoomed in on her eyes "But if I'm gonna do it then…I am going to go all the way. I'll take it all off for you. So stay tuned. "

She then blew a kiss and the TV turned off. Yu was brought back to reality by his cell phone ringing.

"Hello?" Yu asked.

"DUDE?! Did she say strip?" Yosuke yelled excitedly down the phone causing Yu to move it away from his head and glare down the phone at Yosuke.

"Yes, she did," Yu replied.

"This is getting crazier and crazier!" Yosuke exclaimed.

Yu stopped and played the disc he'd recorded.
"Calm down…" Yu said with annoyance.

"Yeah, you're right." Yosuke paused. "That means she's in there, right?"

"Yes…" Yu said.

"That means we failed" Yosuke groaned "We even knew the target was this time we still could stop it."

"Let's go tomorrow…" Yu directed

"Yeah got it…" Yosuke hung up.

Yu had hit play on the disc and smirked as the broadcast had been successfully recorded. He stopped it and ejected the disc before putting it safely where no one but him would ever find it.

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[06/24 Friday, TV world,]

The next day after classes had ended everyone had gathered together. Yu had a feeling so he did a walk around for clues about Rise and got her cellphone strap from her grandmother. With any luck it would help lead them to Rise in the TV World. When they entered the TV world they saw Teddie hunched over looking very depressed.

"Teddie? What's wrong?" Yu asked.

"You were all having fun without me… You fur-got about me!" Teddie complained sadly. "You abeardoned me!"

"You get lonely?" Yukiko asked surprised.

"Yes…I've bearcome a beary gloomy bear…"

"Yeah, Yeah! Cut the crap…" Yosuke said dismissively

"DID YOU JUST CALL MY FEELINGS CRAP?!" Teddie yelled with anger.

"I'm just a stupid bear who doesn't know where he came from…" Teddie cried and started rolling around on the ground.

"Stay still!" Kanji said.

"I live in oblivion and no one comes to visit me…" Teddie continued sadly.

"Listen, Teddie, We need…" Yu said.

"I got so lonely that I wanted to cry I even tried…but nothing came out!" Teddie said stopping his rolling around and lying on his stomach. "When I'm alone I start to think and that just makes me lonelier…"

"We'd never forget about you, Teddie," Chie said tenderly.

"Sometimes we even think about you…” Yukiko said.

"Does that mean I can still score with you?" Teddie asked his disposition changing very quickly.
"Nice recovery!" Chie chuckled

"Can't we just make that subject off limits for good?" Yukiko pleaded with a depressed tone.

"Hey Narukami, I gotta asked what's with the backpack?" Yosuke asking pointing to the backpack which Yu had brought with him.

"Yeah I was kinda wondering that too." Chie admitted, Yukiko agreeing with her.

"It's a change of clothes." Yu replied with a shrug.

"Dude what do you need clothes for in here?" Yosuke asked.

"Well what happens if what I'm wearing gets torn or dirty?" Yu replied answering a question with a question. "I can't go out looking like I haven't washed in days."

"Eh, good point." Chie said accepting the answer.

"Oh come your just gonna accept that?!" Yosuke cried.

"Yup." "Yes" Uh huh." The rest of the team answered.

"Ah whatever." Yosuke grumbled.

"Teddie… we're looking for Rise Kujikawa have you seen her?" Yu asked dangling the charm from Rise's cellphone that he had gotten from Rise's grandmother, earlier that morning.

"Rise Kujikawa?" Teddie asked in confusion

Teddie sniffed it and then led them down a yet another path that they hadn't been on before. He led them to a building that looked similar to a night club. It had a neon sign that said 'Marukyu Striptease.'

"Rise's in here?" Yu asked.

"I smell her loud and clear…" Teddie declared.

"Say…isn't this one of those places you find near some inn in some washed-up tourist town…?" Yosuke asked.

"NO! Not by MY family's Inn." Yukiko yelled appalled.

There were triangular folding signs that advertised various other girls. However, one poster in particular caught Yu's eye, it was in a frame and had lights surrounding it, on the poster it read "Special Guest…Rise Kujikawa!"

"Damn it" Kanji complained trying to squint in the fog. "I can barely see."

"Oh yeah right you never did get a pair of glasses for this place did you Kanji?" Chie noted.

"My bad" Teddie said apologetically "I totally forgot plus it wasn't foggy when you came over, here for you"

Teddie handed Kanji a pair of glasses which he put. They allowed him to see however, they were in fact a pair of gag glasses that the bear had made when he was bored.
"Bear" Kanji growled "Why the hell did I get these?"

"What's wrong you don't like them?" Teddie asked retreating behind Yu.

"HELL NO I DON'T LIKE THEM" Kanji yelled angrily causing the bear to flinch and look for another pair.

Yu thought carefully before nodding to himself and power walking through the entrance alone.

"Hey wait up Sensei" Teddie yelled following Yu.

The others all nodded at each other and ran to catch up.

When they into the striptease, the first thing the team saw when entering was that Yu was no there. Instead they saw a familiar heroic figure stuffing clothes into a familiar looking backpack.

"Hey it's that Samurai guy from the news." Chie exclaimed "But where did Narukami go?"

"Excuse Mr Samurai where did our friend go?" Yukiko asked the superhero who finished stuffing the backpack and hefted into onto his back.

"I'm afraid your leader needed to take breather, but never fear as your neighbourhood superhero I volunteered to lead you to victory here!" The samurai declared making his Y pose.

"Narukami give it up man you're embarrassing yourself." Yosuke stated with a sigh.

"Jeez Yosuke why are you such a buzzkill?" Chie sighed giving him an irritated look.

"Yeah Yosuke we already know its him he's just trying to lighten things up." Yukiko said.

"Yeah don't get us wrong senpai it's awesome that he actually that hero guy but there's no need to be such a downer." Kanji said agreeing with the girls.

"What?! Aw come on!" Yosuke cried before turning to Diarmuid for support. "Come on Diarmuid be honest you agree that this is ridiculous right?"

Diarmuid could only shrug apologetically, as much as he wished to agree his lord had asked for honesty and honestly he believed that despite its ridiculousness their leader was trying to keep things light-hearted in a serious situation. Realising that he was out numbered Yosuke simply hung his head and gave up.

"Well no one can accuse this lot of being boring can they?" Drake said to Li Shuwen with a snicker.

"Indeed not." The Assassin grinned.

"Come let us find our missing idol!" The Samurai declared materialising Galatine in his hand and marching forth deeper into the shadow infested dungeon.

As they ventured deeper in the group made good time thanks to Chie's martial arts and Yukiko's crack shooting, with his Axe-Sword Kanji demolished any shadows that tried sneaking up on them. With every floor that they went through the shadows got stronger and tried harder to stop them.
Eventually they came to the sixth floor and Shadow Rise's voice echoed around them.

"You came" Shadow Rise giggled "But still, I'm a little embarrassed…So I'm gonna turn out the lights!"

"Whoa! It's so dark in here!" Teddie said "This is dangerous! We should be careful going onward, Sensei!"

"Hello every-wait! What the….who are you?!" Shadow Rise's voice demanded.

Suddenly a loud sound came from ahead, the sound of metal against what was unmistakably flesh and then came a loud crash and a metallic clang, then the lights came back on.

When the lights came back on the team ran ahead to find a room with a dying serpent shaped shadow which quickly vanished as it died. Looking up they saw the curtain at the far end of the room which lead to the hallway with the stairs had been slashed open and the doorway around it completely destroyed.

"What the hell happened in here?" Chie asked examining the damage.

"Something beat us to the shadow and smashed forced the way forward open." Kanji pointed out.

"This shadow beary strong." Teddie said "Whatever did this must be beary powerful."

"This room seems like a set up to those mid-boss shadows that we've been forced to fight in other dungeons." The Samurai stated "So whatever Shadow Rise was talking to destroyed it for us."

"Yeah but why?" Yosuke asked. "Could it have been the killer?"

"That doesn't make any sense, he'd want to hinder us not help us." Yukiko stated disagreeing with Yosuke.

"Whatever did this had an enormous presence." Li Shuwen stated causing everyone to look at him. "For a moment in the darkness when we heard those sounds I felt a presence so enormous that it couldn't have been human, it was far too powerful but it vanished when the lights came back. We should avoid fighting it, even if you summoned us, without the ability to use our Noble Phantasms to their full measure we wouldn't last very long."

This caused the team to gulp nervously.

"Let's get going, I don't want to be here if whatever did this decides to come back." Yukiko said.

"Agreed, onwards." Space Samurai Y ordered.

The team was now moving a bit faster than before.

When the team were about halfway down the hall, a pair of large metallic claws gripped the edge of the destroyed door way, a pair of feminine eyes peered after the masked team member.

"Senpai." She whispered before her claws reduced their size to that of regular hands and she concealed her presence again, ready to resume stalking her target.

Eventually the team reached the final level of the strip tease, only having to stop for a breather a couple of times.
"Ladies and Gentlemen!" Shadow Rise announced. "Let me guide you to the sparkling world of wonder!"

A spotlight came on and some introduction music started playing. The centre stage rose and there were six girls who all looked alike.

"That's a lot of Risettes" Chie commented.

Just as Chie said there were six Risettes in all. One was dressed with a bonnet and had a dress with an old styled blouse jacket and thigh high stockings and shoes. Another that had a tuxedo jacket with a blouse, a skirt, and black stockings. Another Risette was kneeing a soccer ball while wearing a green soccer outfit and white high socks. The fourth was a cheerleader with a belly baring blouse and the skirt's waist band was in a V-cut, with high socks and was waving gold-pom-poms. The Fifth was in a grey business suit with slacks and wore glasses. While the sixth was in an Orange Kimono with a Square pattern and had a black obi to it. However, unlike the other five who had pigtails, this one had her hair done in a ponytail. However, all six of them had glowing yellow eyes.

"Yeah! And I know them all! "Yosuke exclaimed getting worked up. "The first one is from her third photo shoot. The one in the soccer outfits from her second… The Cheerleader…"

"All right… This show is called Risette's Dynamite Body. Are. You. All. READY?!" Shadow Rise asked winking.

Suddenly the platform she was on rose from the ground elevating her so she was the centre of attention.

"I AM!" Yosuke cheered a little too excitedly "RISETTE!"

"Ohhh…SHUT UP!" Chie snapped giving Yosuke a kick to the back out of annoyance knocking him to the ground.

"Today, I'm here to bare everything to you all" Shadow Rise declared. "What? Do you think that's a FIBBY-WIBBY?!" She held her hand to her ear as if the group had actually spoken.

The Masked man stared at Rise's Shadow along with the others, although he was actually trying to think about what to do, while the others were simply stunned.

"Well, You'll just have to figure out if I'm telling the lie or telling the truth…You're about to meet…" Then she held her index finger up… "The. Real. ME."

Exotic music began playing and the six other Risette's started clapping in time to the music as Shadow Rise had walked up to a stripper pole and started spinning around by walking, then again when she jumped up with her feet bunched up to the backs of her legs.

"I hope mine wasn't like this…Man this is brutal," Kanji sweat dropped.

"What you're seeing are Rise's true inner feelings, of course they're brutal!" Teddie stated.

The Hero thought back to what Rise had said at Samegawa. "The girl everybody makes a big fuss over…isn't the real me."

Rise's Shadow began suggestively rubbing her thigh against the pole and did so for a few seconds before the music stopped abruptly as she got no audible reaction.

"HMPH! Talk about a dead crowd." She snorted "Well then, maybe it's about time I brought out
"our SPECIAL GUEST!"

"What guest?" Yosuke grunted as he got back up.

"Today's Special Guest is…" Shadow Rise paused for dramatic effect.


"Rise Kujikawa!" Shadow Rise said gesturing to the girl question, who was kneeling on stage.

Rise was still dressed in her work clothes for the tofu shop. The apron and scarf over her head were still on.

"Stop it! That's enough!" Rise said to her Shadow.

"Rise!" The Masked Hero called to her before some Shadows came down which were dressed like detectives with trench coats and hats, like something out of an old movie.

"They're here! Grizzlies!" Teddie said running for cover.

"Everybody listen up! Remember to mind your manners and keep your hands off the dancers at all times." Shadow Rise said as the fuzz shadows pulled out revolvers and started firing bullets which were far more powerful than bullets from ordinary revolvers had any right to be. This everyone to scatter behind some seats that were there much like a club or restaurant.

"Where's my glasses?! Shit! Where the Hell did they go! I can't see without those things!" Kanji said as he crawled around on the ground looking for his glasses.

"Include!" The masked hero summoned Galatine by including Gawain, the team minus Kanji who was still looking for his glasses Included theirs as well.

"Let's do this quick!" Space Samurai Y ordered leaping out of cover along with the others.

Yukiko made quick headshots with her pistols, Chie started attacking the Fuzz Shadows crushing them with fists and kicks, while Yosuke and the Samurai quickly tore apart the ones foolish enough to get close. However as soon as the first wave was destroyed more descended from the ceiling to replace them, in greater numbers this time.

"They keep coming!" Chie cried, using Sphere Boundary to sneak up on the shadows and catch them from behind.

"This" Yukiko ducked under a shot and fired back at the shadows "Is" again "getting really" a mall volley of shots forced her into cover again "ANNOYING!" several squares opened up in the space above her and ship cannons emerged from them and fired decimating the shadows that were shooting at her.

"NO! This isn't real!" Rise said on stage.

"Easy for her to say." Yosuke grumbled ducking her a fuzz shadow which swiped at him before shoving Gae Dearg into its face.

Shadow Rise was using the pole again, pressing her chest and wrapping a leg around it. "Oh, but it is. You wanted people to notice you." Then Shadow Rise wrapped herself around the pole and spun and rubbed her thigh suggestively against it. "Looky! Looky! Everyone come and look at
"Stop it, you're wrong! I'm nothing like that!" Rise insisted starting to become hysterical.

"You don't think so, huh? Then just who is the real you?" Shadow Rise demanded irritated at her counterpart.

The other six Risettes gathered in a circle and towered over Rise, all of them giggling mockingly.

"Well go on!" Shadow Rise said. "Tell us who the real you is!"

"The Real Me… is just…" Rise began, but couldn't finish as even she didn't know the answer.

"Damn it! Where are those things!" Kanji growled in frustration at being unable to see through the fog.

"Are these what you're looking for?" Teddie smugly said holding a spare pair of Kanji glasses which were regular ones instead of gag ones.

"I can rock these." Kanji grinned taking them and putting them on.

"You're all goin' down. PERSONA!" Kanji said, as the shadows began advancing on him.

He summoned Hercules, the mad demi-god roared in challenge to the shadows and began charging at them using his axe-sword to demolish all opposition.

"Sorry for the wait!" Kanji said, folding his arms as Yu, Yosuke, Chie and Yukiko turned over to him.

Kanji smirked even as more Fuzz shadows dropped from the sky.

"C'mon," He said taunting them angrily and uncrossing his arms "C'mon! C'mon! C'MON!"

"Wow! He's awesome!" Yosuke said as Hercules continued destroying any shadows who came at him, tearing them to pieces with single blows of his fists or axe-sword.

"He's a bulldozer!" Chie grinned.

"So you still haven't said who the real Rise is…" Shadow Rise said approaching Rise on the stage.

"I'm the Real Rise!" The Risette with the bonnet said with an echoing voice.

"I'm the Real Rise!" The Soccer-playing Risette said also with an echoing voice.

"I'm the Real Rise!" The Kimono-wearing Risette echoed the others.

"I DON'T KNOW! I DON'T KNOW WHO THE REAL ME IS!" Rise cried as their voices echoed in her mind.

"I'll tell you. I'M the real RISE! You see, I am YOU and YOU are ME."

"You're wrong! You're not me!" Rise said.

"I'm sick and tired of putting on a fake smile an always having to play the flirt," Rise's Shadow taunted.

Rise started to sob, she was close to her breaking point.
"Watch closely now…" Shadow Rise said starting to untie the bikini top's straps. "And you'll see the true ME!"

"That's not true, you can't be…" Rise denied.

"STOP! DON'T SAY IT!" Chie shouted.

Space Samurai Y remained silent, choosing to instead watch.

"You are NOT ME!" Rise denied her shadow again in anger.

Purple energy surrounded Shadow Rise as the transformation began. "And now….HERE IT COOOOOOMMMMMMMMMMMEEEESSSSSSSSS!"

The Black and Purple smoke which had formed around the Shadow swirled for a few seconds before it cleared, her appearance had changed. In her place was giant fox with nine tails that seemed to move independently of one another.

"I am a Shadow…of your True Inner Self!" The Shadow proclaimed.

The shadow had glowing red fur which seemed to shine like fresh blood.

"What…is this?" Rise asked, looking at her Shadow.

"RISE!" The team called her name as they approached the stage.

"Samurai! It's…you…" Rise said as she fainted.

"Chie! Yukiko! Guard Rise!" The Samurai ordered the two.

"Got it!".

"Right!"

"Yosuke, Kanji let's go!" The Samurai summoned Gawain, Yosuke followed suit with Diarmuid.

A green field exuded from the eyes of Rise's Shadow and blanketed the Personas allowing the shadow to see what her scan was telling her.

**Gawain: Class: Saber, Fool Arcana. Great at close range. Will be 5 cm to the right in 1 second. Strength quite strong.**

**Diarmuid Ua Dubhine: Class: Lancer, Magician Arcana. Great at close range. Will try to flank me in 2 seconds. Strength is so-so.**

**Hercules: Class: Berserker, Emperor Arcana. Great with Physical Attacks. Will charge head on. Strength…He's Extremely Strong!**

"I see you!" She said before despite her size weaving around their attacks like they were nothing, before blasting them away with a large ball of magical energy from mouth which sent them all flying away, crashing into the wall near the entrance.

"What?!!" Yosuke exclaimed with disbelief.

"Teddie guard Rise!" Chie ordered urgently, having Li Shuwen put Rise down on the chair next to the bear.
"Okeydokey!" Teddie waved as Francis Drake and Li Shuwen went at Shadow Rise.

**Li Shuwen: Class: Assassin, Chariot Arcana. Great with Physical Attacks, Strength is Decent.**

**Francis Drake: Class: Rider, Priestess Arcana. Great ranged attacks. Weak at close range. Strength is not bad.**

*Both will flank at roughly the same time.*

"You're so transparent!" Shadow Rise giggled as she blocked a bombardment from Francis Drake and used one of her tails to smash Li Shuwen away causing him to become visible again.

"How did she do that?!" Chie cursed seeing her persona be detected and smashed away.

"Wait…that light?" Yosuke pointed out.

"It's scanning our Personas and see's our attacks." The Masked Hero observed grimly.

"Analysis Complete!" Shadow Rise stated.

"Change of plan people, Include now!" The team set to work on their leader's orders, dematerialised their Persona's and Including them. The Samurai had Galatine in hand. The rest of the team followed suit, Yosuke had Diarmuid's spears, Chie had Li Shuwen's fighting abilities, Yukiko had Francis Drake's pistols and Kanji was wielding Hercules Axe Sword.

The giant fox smirked and wiggled its tail in a 'come hither' like gesture.

"I've had enough of her smirking." Yosuke growled taking the bait and charging directly at the fox "I'm gonna turn you into fox skin rug!"

"Wanna bet?" the shadow asked still smug.

"It's a trap you idiot!" Chie yelled at Yosuke with a growl.

Yosuke however ignored her and leapt the Shadow's face intent on spearing its eye's. Only to be snatched from the air suddenly by one of the fox's giant tails.

"Should've listened to her moron." The shadow gloated tightening its grip on Yosuke.

"Surprise Bitch!" The shadow was surprised when it receiving an axe-sword to the jaw knocking it off balance and forcing it to drop Yosuke.

"Come on, you really thought I was stupid enough to just charge ya without a plan?" Yosuke asked with a smirk "I gestured to Kanji quietly to follow my lead; I figured if you had your attention me you would be able to block him. Our leaders not the only one who can come up with plans of attack."

"That was a sneaky sho-AAARRRGGHHHH!" the shadow bellowed with pain as Yosuke stabbed its foot with Gae Dearg.

Angered, Shadow Rise swiped Yosuke at Kanji knocking them into one another and sending them away.

"Alright so who's next?" The shadow asked. "Hey where'd the masked one go?" The shadow demanded, Chie and Yukiko looked and saw that their leader had indeed vanished.
"Samurai this really isn't the time for hide and seek." Chie yelled hoping her leader would come out.

"Include: Atalanta" The Masked Man's voice yelled from somewhere above.

"Alright what do you think you're doing….Aha!" The shadow swiped an arrow from the air that was shot from the shadows above "Nice try but-YEOWCH!" The fox was cut off as a second arrow shot mere seconds after the first struck the fox in the chest from another angle.

"Oh-I get it!" Yukiko exclaimed in realisation.

"What do you get?" Chie asked not following.

"It's simple, he fire's an arrow from the shadows to get her attention" Yukiko explained to her friend "And while she's focused on that he quickly moves to fire an arrow from an angle in a blind spot she then exposes to him."

"So she can block or dodge attacks she see's coming but not the one's she can't." Chie stated catching on taping her palm with her fist.

The game of cat and mouse continued for a few seconds, Yu landed several arrows into the fox, four into the chest, two on the front right leg, and three in the front left leg. Sadly, they weren't doing enough individual damage. However sooner or later the pin pricks would start adding up.

"Alright, I've had enough." The shadow roared blocking another arrow and ignoring the sneak shot which bounced off a bony part of the limb it struck. "What are you gonna do about this?!!"

The fox opened its mouth and sent a medium sized ball of destructive power at her other self who was with Teddie. Left with no choice but defend his friends, the hero sent an arrow flying which met the orb mid-flight and destroyed it cancelling both attacks out.

"There you are!" The fox let out another orb at Space Samurai Y's position, he was not quick enough to move and the attack destroyed the beam on which he was perched sending him falling to the ground.

However instead of impacting on it the several of the fox's tails erupted from the walls apparently coiled around the supports within, each one grabbed a limb until Yu was left dangling in front of the fox mere inches' from the ground, completely at its mercy.

"Oh no Sensei!" "Yu!" "Narukami!" "Senpai!" His friends all let out yells of concern upon seeing his predicament.

Suddenly small orb flew out of the fox's mouth but it did not strike Yu who was helpless instead it flew and hit just short of Teddie and Rise sending the bear flying away. "Oops, sorry about that!" The shadow said with a giggle "I was aiming for both of them."

"TEDDIE!" the team called out in horror, Teddie was not moving even as his name was called.

'Damn it, this thing is too strong, at this rate…. ' The Samurai thought back on the previous battles with the shadows and was struck with an idea, calling upon Nero's Charisma he looked at Rise.

"Rise!" the girl looked at the masked hero and gasped and as he moved his head to his free hand and used it to pull the mask off revealing…

"It's you, Narukami! You're the Samurai?" Rise gasped as he shook the wig off his head and
allowed the mask to clatter onto the floor with it.

"Listen, it's ok if you don't know who the real you is." Yu said pulling all of Nero's charisma which was a fairly decent rank thanks to her Imperial Privilege skill. "If you asked other people that question, they wouldn't give a proper answer either. Who are we? Why are we here? What's the Point? Where are we going? These are the questions that people spend their whole lives trying to answer. Don't feel pressured about not knowing the answers lots of adults don't have those answers either, I can't promise you'll find an answer but trying putting your faith in us and let us be your friends, you may not find the answer but with us at your back you'll be a hell of a lot closer to one than you ever could get alone!"

Thoughts whirled inside Rise's mind. Ever since she started her career, the people she thought of as friends were always after something, when she dared to let some new person close they became snobby and stuck up acting superior and even ruining the lives of people who even looked at them wrong. When she found out she was quick to drop them publicly, and became reluctant to put her faith in anyone who wanted to be her friend, but something deep inside told her she could trust the boy in front of her. With this Rise found her strength and stood up fixing her Shadow with a hard stare.

"When I started my career, people wanted to use me to become famous, they abused it and made others, miserable, it became hard to trust people so I tried to isolate myself but being alone I lost sight of myself, I may not know who the real me is but I feel like I can trust Narukami, so I'll put myself out there just once more and try to find the real me!"

The shadow suddenly let out a cry of rage and pain, static flowing over its body, as it weakened.

Yu felt himself getting free of the screaming Shadow, whose tails started to whip around and crack the ground, making Rise scream his name in worry again as he did his best to roll out of the way and closer to her...

'It's time.' echoed a familiar voice on the boy's mind, even as his gaze shot towards the raging nine-tailed fox.

"Wha...?" started to say the boy before feeling a splitting headache overcome his mind, almost making him scream.

He saw a knight fighting against another one, a scene he had already seen in his dreams...

'Let yourself...'

He saw the Velvet Room, Igor's eternal smile widening as he stared straight towards him...

'...become the Hero...'

And finally, he saw a shining card being snatched out of the air, being brought down instead of shattered...

'...and take another step on your destiny, my dear guest.'

Yu Narukami stood up. Somehow, somewhat, he knew what he had to do.

"Naru...kami...?" muttered Rise from where she still stood, staring straight at the boy's back.

"Don't worry, Rise...I will help you," muttered the leader of the Investigation Team as he adjusted his glasses before raising a closed fist. "Because that's what a Hero does. GAWAIN!"
"I'm here, my king." answered the Persona as he appeared behind his Master in Spirit Form, somehow feeling a new light shining brightly in him.

Without a word, the burning card of 'SABER' appeared in front of Yu.

This time, however, he did not crush it with the sound of breaking glass, neither did he grab it to let it turn into his partner's weapon, no. He snatched it out of the air and slammed it against his chest, even as a Magic Circle formed under him, raw power unlike anything before erupting from it as everyone in the room stared at him in shock.

"INSTALL!"

A burst of pure Prana engulfed the boy's form, blinding everyone for an instant before he stepped forward, Yukiko and Chie gasping in shock as Kanji and Yosuke let their jaws fall open in disbelief.

Their leader now stood there, his 'Hero Costume' gone and now clad in a VERY blue and grey under suit, with an equally familiar white-silver armour over it. On his right hand, the metal gauntlet tightly closed over the guard, Galatine shone silently under the fading light of the magic circle. His glasses were gone, but his eyes had turned the same aquamarine shade of his first loyal companion, as unimpeded by the fog of that world as he always was.

From her place behind him, Rise stared with absolute awe, unable to even utter a word at the sheer presence that the boy now projected, feeling her cheeks heating up slightly at his new and imposing form.

Finally, he spoke, his gaze zeroing over the shocked Shadow.

"This ends now, demon." Yu's voice announced even as Gawain's own echoed his, the silver-haired boy feeling a power unlike anything he had ever felt coursing through him. "You shall not harm my friends any further."

"Rrrraagh!!! DIE!" The shadow screamed sending another ball of energy at the boy. This time however Yu didn't move, instead raising Galatine and holding his ground. "Narukami!" "Get outta the way dude!" his friends cried as the orb approached. A small aura of prana surrounded the sword, and the orb impacted kicking up large dust cloud.

"So much for him....What!?" The shadow gloated before being stunned at what it saw when the dust cleared. Everyone stood in disbelief, as when the dust cleared Yu remained not only standing but unmoved, having caught the orb on his blade.

"Here, this is yours!" Yu cried pulling back and batting into the orb, sending it back where it came from.

The orb screamed through the air flying with far more force than it originally had possessed and when it hit the shadow in her face a loud crash and some cracking of bone was heard, over the screaming of the shadow in pain.

"DIE DIE DIE!" The shadow began thrashing about lashing out with its nine tails blindly, the orb had damaged its sight.
One the tails approached the Narukami boy from the side, when it came close he raised his sword and caught the tail on it. He twisted the sword around entangling the tail on it.

"There you are!" The shadow sent three more tails at him, but they met the same fate as the first and were entangled on the sword. "Come here!"

With a roar of anger, the Shadow pulled with her tails, dragging the transformed teenager towards herself, intent of unleashing an orb of destruction at point blank range.

She didn't know it would have been useless. Even the small display with the sword from before had been just to trick it into believing her attacks could still damage him, for now her magic would barely make him buckle. Such was the power of having a B-Ranked Magic Resistance.

"...that was your last mistake." He said calmly.

Suddenly, without any apparent effort whatsoever, Yu swung his sword-arm, the Shadow realizing its terrible mistake when her tails were cut off with the holy edge of Galatine with no effort.

Unforgiving aquamarine eyes met golden ones as the holy sword was impaled into its foxy head, the momentum she herself had given the transformed Hero being her own downfall.

Absolute silence filled the area for a few seconds before, in a burst of darkness, the abomination collapsed back into the bikini-clad copy of Rise Kujikawa.

A now flat and conscious Teddie approached the team, having recovered from the blast. His suit was burnt and marked but he didn't seem to too badly injured.

"Teddie!" The team called his name. "You're alive."

"Sorry for worrying you all, but I'm still here." Teddie said before looking at Rise. "I know how you feel...and how bad it hurts...when you don't know for sure...who you really are. It's hard. But you don't have to worry about it alone. You and me... We can figure it out together."

"You and me?" Rise asked.

"Yeah, and we have Sensei and the others too."

Rise looked at the team who were smiling.

"I'm sorry to put you all through this..." she said apologetically.

"Look, just take it easy for now," Yu said with a kind smile.

"It's been a long time, since someone said that to me." Rise smiled before getting up and approaching her Shadow.

"I'm so sorry." She said kneeling down next to her Shadow. "Look, I've fought so hard to try to figure out who the real me truly is... But I realized...no amount of searching is going to help... because there was no real me to find."

"Does that mean that there's no real me, either?" Teddie asked himself aloud.

"But I realized that Risette, You, everyone you're all a part of me."

The Shadow blinked, and then was bathed in blue light. It rose into the air before and burst into a wave of blue flames that surrounded Rise, making the girl grunted in pain as she felt something
connecting itself to her soul.

A summoning circle formed itself around her and from it a new form rose. Standing before Rise a girl wearing an old style kimono coloured blue; it had loose arm sleeves that were draped over most of her arms, leaving her shoulders bare. She wore Black shoes that served to increase her height ever so slightly, with indigo stockings over her legs. The most noticeable thing about her however was the pair of orange ears peeking out through a mass of pink hair and a fox tail poking from the rear of clothing, an ornate, old fashioned golden mirror orbited her like a moon.

"Hello master! I am Tamamo no Mae." The Caster introduced herself energetically "In class of Caster under the Lovers Arcana I am your Persona!" The fox eared woman then turned into a Tarot Card.

The card had the image of a person wearing hooded robes, with a staff in their left hand and a tome under the right arm. The roman numeral VI was present next to the word CASTER. It hovered for a moment before turning into a gentle blue light which became part of Rise.

"Persona?" Rise said before she collapsed.

"Rise!" Yu said before he caught her and gently helped her to the ground.

"Dude! No fair!" Yosuke complained

"She just completely passed out," Yu said as he returned to his hero uniform as the Install ended.

"Who could blame her after all that?" Chie sighed.

"So what was that thing you did?" Yukiko asked

"Oh yeah it looked really cool." Yosuke said.

"Install." Yu said recalling the word. "It's the next step, its more than Include, I got more than Gawain's sword, but I got his skills, his powers, his abilities with a sword and I felt way more powerful, like there was hardly any distinction between him and me."

"So another way to kick sounds good to me." Kanji said.

"There is no 'real me'!" a dark deep voice echoed, causing everyone to turn around and saw a crimson air exude from Teddie, who was still flat yet was somehow standing up.

"No 'True Self'!" The dark voice continued.

"Huh?! Who said that?!" Teddie said, and then he turned around and saw a larger version of Teddie that had yellow, human-shaped eyes. "What the HECK IS THAT?!"

"Oh balls!" Kanji cursed.

"No way!"

"Aw man." Yosuke grumbled.

"Is that Teddie's other self?" Chie asked.

'Wait, there's something strange about it' Yu thought, feeling a strange vibe come from the shadow.
'Indeed something is not right here' Medea warned 'Be careful there is more at work here than just a shadow.'

'She is correct be on guard' Medusa warned.

"SUCH IDIOTIC FOOLISHNESS!" Teddie's shadow grinned and expelled a fog from himself that blanketed the room.

"The truth shall always be shrouded in fog!"

Then a large clawed hand pushed some fog out of the way.

There was now a pit where the Shadow Teddie resided. One eye was now pink and green as there was a large hole on the left side of its head but there was no blood or even signs of anything besides a black void.

"I am a Shadow of your True Inner Self. Try though you may to find meaning…You will never know for sure if it is the truth…or a lie."

Then a vacuum began sucking everything into the large void. Shadow Teddie was taking care not to choke the air from then, however he was sucking in everything else. The team held on to nearby large debris that had implanted it's into the ground for dear life.

"He's gonna suck us in!" Chie yelled.

"So knowing that…why even bother seeking the truth at all?" Shadow Teddie asked.

"AHHHHH!" Teddie was pulled in to his Shadow vanishing into the darkness.

"TEDDIE!" Yosuke cried as the bear vanished inside the shadow.

"How can you possibly find something when you don't even know what you're looking for? The truth you seek will only bring you suffering."

"Why do you say that?!" Yu replied.

"Let me impart one bit of truth upon you…YOU ARE ALL GOING TO DIE HERE!" Shadow Teddie said ignoring Yu as he suddenly stopped sucking things into himself.

"Why did he stop?" Chie asked nervously.

"I get the impression we are about to find out." Diarmuid commented.

Suddenly out of the crack in the shadows face a thick black mud like substances began leaking. It came fell out slowly at first but got faster as it overflowed and began spilling out onto the floor.

"What the hell is this crap?" Kanji yelled nervously as the black ichor began approaching them, burning some flammable pieces of the room as it advanced.

"Master summon me please!" a voice begged Rise from within her.

"Persona" her Arcana shattered and Tamamo no Mae appeared, holding the mirror and that had been previously orbiting her when she first appeared.

"Get away from that substance" she yelled "It's pure concentrated evil, like a curse, there's no telling what might happen if it touches you."
Yukiko ran and tried to exit but the curtain that served as a door was solid as rock. She even had Francis Drake try to blow it open with cannon shots but to no avail.

"The doors sealed shut, we're trapped." the inn keeper in training yelled.

"What are we gonna do?" Chie began panicking.

"We have to get higher" Yu replied "Gawain!"

"Right" The Persona answered his master's summoning and materialised.

With nary a thought the Knight grabbed his summoner who in turn grabbed Rise and held her tightly as the Persona leapt up as high as could perching near the top of the one of the steel beams around the room, Tamamo was quick to join her master. The other's quickly followed suit having their persona's materialise and each clinging as high as they could to avoid the black substance below that seemed to devour the floor below them, it didn't take long for it to reach the rear wall and soon it had nowhere to go but up. Francis Drake and Li Shuwen perched on the same steel beam. Diarmuid implanted both his spears into the wall high up and grabbed Yosuke as leapt balancing upon them.

"Ah man, now what are we gonna do?" Yosuke panicked "We can't stay up here forever."

"What's going on?" Yu asked Rise's Persona "Teddie never rejected his shadow so why did it go berserk like this?"

The fox eared Persona stared into her mirror for a few seconds before answering.

"It looks like something interfered before he got the chance." the caster replied "I don't know what it is but it's powerful and this mud seems to be some sort of extension of Teddie's shadow."

"It cut us off." Yu realised.

"Whaddya mean?" Yosuke questioned

"Think about it, in all our previous fights with shadows we've managed to encourage our friends with our words and weaken the shadow. Whatever's behind this cut us off from Teddie so can't weaken the shadow like we normally do."

"Gah, sneaky bastard" Kanji growled

"So what are we gonna do about it?" Yukiko asked the boy.

"Kanji come over here and take Rise." Yu ordered.

"Sure, Hercules let's go" Kanji's Persona roared and after hefting its master onto its shoulder began punching holes in the ceiling as it made its way over to Yu.

"Sempai what are you doing?" Rise asked she was handed over to Hercules.

"I'm going in." Yu answered simply narrowing his eyes as Teddie's shadow which simply stared back at him coldly.

"What the hell?"

"Are you crazy?"
"You won't survive in there you could die"

"Maybe, but I have to try." Yu replied ignoring his friend's objections "I can't leave Teddie to face this alone. Besides, this is my fault. Gawain let's go."

"Very well" Yu placed both of his arms around Gawain's neck freeing up the knight's arm.

Gawain summoned Galatine and with all the force he could muster slashed at the beam, causing it to topple into the rapidly rising black mud. He dashed across with all the speed he could muster and leapt form it to other debris, closing in on the shadow.

"BEGONE!" Teddie' Shadow swiped one of its claws into the mud creating a large wave. Gawain was unfazed and skilfully leapt over it and landed on the shadows large head.

"Are you sure about this my king?" Gawain asked his sovereign "I don't know what help I'll be inside this creature!"

"You've done more than enough I'll take it from here" Yu replied dismissing his Persona "Hang on Teddie, I'm coming."

With that Yu clambered down towards the large hole which still had the black mud pouring out of it. He took a deep breath and leapt into the hole diving into the mud.

"He went in" Chie cried

"Is he ok?"

"He's alive, I can tell that much." Tamamo replied staring into her mirror "Whatever this other force is, it's placed something inside the shadow to make it go Berserker, and whatever it is, it's block me form seeing any further."

"Please, come back Narukami" Yosuke prayed

The remaining Persona users could watch and pray as the mud below them continued to rise.

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Yu was surrounded by darkness and felt a heavy weight on his entire body, but kept swimming regardless. He had to reach Teddie, it didn't matter what this mud was. It wouldn't stop him from saving his friend nothing would.

"Oh? nothing will stop you will it?" a familiar voice questioned

As Yu continued swimming he saw Nanako appear in his vision which a malicious smile on her face...no this was not Nanako.

“What are you?” Yu questioned in his thoughts as he stared at the copy of Nanako.

"I am the truth that resides inside of your 'Teddie'" the Nanako look alike said "I am All The World's Evil, I am Angra Mainyu and I am also Teddie. Knowing this are you still sure you won't turn back and abandon him?"

“What do you mean?” Yu asked as he decided to keep swimming.

Nanako kept up with him, staying in front of his vision as he kept clawing through the mud which seemed to burn him all over, but he ignored the pain and kept pushing on.
"Even if you are by some miracle able to save Teddie what then?" Angra Mainyu asked "My true form is Evil itself so will you truly accept him as a friend knowing that his true inner self is All the Worlds Evil?"

'Yes' Yu replied simply his reply causing the mud to flinch as if in surprise

"What?!" Angra Mainyu seemed to be shocked "Don't be absurd, your Teddie is evil incarnate. Why would you want such a repulsive creature by your side knowing that it was overflowing with evil?"

'If Teddie's true inner self is All Good in the World then I can accept that, and if his true self is All Evil in the World then I can accept that too.' Yu answered 'To be perfectly honest, I don't care what his true self is. I will fulfil my promise to him and more importantly than that he's my friend and nothing you say or do can change my mind.'

Again the mud flinched and seemed retreated away from Yu.

"You would put everything you know and love in danger of being destroyed by All The Worlds Evil just because you want to believe in your empty friend? What kind of choice is that?!" Angra Mainyu demanded.

Teddie was inside his Shadow and was very confused. He was surrounded by the fog but for some reason he couldn't see through it like usual and he was standing on a strange black mud substance.

"Huh?! What is this place?" he asked unable to see a thing

He kept looking around, when he looked behind him he saw his Shadow who was also there with Teddie.

"AHHH! You're here too..."

"This is where you will fade to nothing!" Teddie's Shadow said.

Teddie started sinking into a black pool that he was able to walk on before.

"HMMM!" Teddie began panicking. "WHAAAAAAAAA!" he cried as he was pulled in. "WHAT THE HECK IS THIS PLACE!"

"You were NOTHING to begin with!"

"NOTHING?!!" Teddie yelled as he kept panicking.

"You have no memories of your past! The truth is you are all the Evil in the World" the shadow replied

"Evil...I'm not evil"

"You hold within you all the Evils in the world." Shadow Teddie stated "Deep down you know this and seek to disappear before you can inflict your evil upon anyone else. So you will become nothing."

"No...it can't be true...no..."

"...die!" a familiar voice called out to the bear who perked up a bit before allowing himself to
continue sinking.

"I thought I heard Sensei's voice just now." Teddie sighed with sorrow "But that can't be. I'm empty and deep inside I have all the world evil. Why would he want to be near me?"

"TE...E!"

"Sensei?"

The blackened mud began bubbling up near the bear; it began to rise as if trying desperately to keep something hidden. It was to no avail as Teddie recognised his Sensei clambering out of the mud.

"Sensei you're here"

"Teddie, come on, let's go" Yu said extending his hadn't to the bear "Everyone's waiting outside."

"I can't go Sensei" Teddie replied with a sad look "I'm nothing, and all I carry is evil inside."

"So what?" the bear looked up at his Sensei "That just means you're more like one of us!"

"One of you?"

"Human" Yu explained "All humans have the capacity for good and evil inside. Just because you know you have one doesn't mean you don't have the other in you somewhere. After all if you all evil you wouldn't have let us out when we first came here. Remember?"

"Yeah, I do remember. When we first met..." Teddie trailed off "But..."

"So then let's go and find your answers together. We'll find out who you are and I'll prove that there's more than just evil inside you. We'll do it together."

Tears fell from the bears eyes and he took Yu's hand, he was firmly pulled out of the mud.

"What an incomprehensible choice!" the shadow remarked.

"Include Gawain" Yu summoned Galatine into his hand which began to shine with the light of the sun. "Galatine guide us out of here."

With a tight grip on Teddie, Yu was pulled by the sword and plunged into the mud. They shot through it faster than Yu had come through it before. Within moments they could see light, as they got closer the holy sword cleaved a black orb like object in two as it shot both of its passengers out of the shadow.

The shadow let out a cry of pain as it crumbled and faded away taking the rising mud with it. The hole it had been in sealed up as well as it returned to its original form.

"Holy crap, he did it" Kanji cheered

"Awesome."

"He plunged through all that evil with sheer willpower?" Tamamo said with awe "That's incredible"

The rest of the team dropped the ground and dematerialised their Persona now that the danger had passed.
With wonder, Teddie looked up at the forming being, a mass of darkness in humanoid shape that stared at him for a moment before it 'pulsed' and became a young man of dark skin and golden eyes, his body filled with countless of strange black markings that seemed quite sinister to see. His chest was bare and he wore little clothing to speak of, the most prominent maybe being the red bandana around his head. On his hand, there were two strange and bizarre claw-like bladed weapons. Sword-breakers

There was nothing amazing about this thing...person. Unlike the other 'Heroes' that everyone in the Investigation Team had gotten, he did not have any glorious aura, commanding presence, terrifying power or anything at all. In fact, looking at him the teens were barely able to feel his existence as more than a human one.

But the bear-like creature to which with it was connected could feel IT.

The Pain. The Hate. The Emptiness. The Darkness. All of it and MORE, pulsating under that fake appearance that had long-since lost all its meaning.

Above all of it, though, he could feel how TIRED the spirit of the being was.

'He' had carried all that was Wrong with the World on himself for most of his life, and long after it should have ended. For no real reason, just because he happened to be chosen.

Under all that darkness, malice, EVIL...the stuffed bear-Shadow felt the long-forgotten image of a child asking 'WHY?'

The nameless one in front of him never got an answer. But...maybe, just like he had just discovered about himself, he could give his existence a new meaning. Together, both of them.

"...I see there is no need to say anything." finally spoke the man with a voice that seemed like a distorted and darker version of Teddie's one, which honestly put all of the Investigation Team, sans Yu who had not mentioned the burning pain on chest, on edge. "Call me Angra Mainyu. I have no other name to speak about. As your Avenger and under your Star...let us see what this world has to offer, yeah?"

And with that and a hollow smile, he vanished into a card depicting a haunted-looking man chained down, with the english word of 'AVENGER' under it, which then proceeded to sink inside Teddie with the characteristic bluish glow.

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when they got to the exit Teddie laid down flat then he started to do sit-ups.

"At least until I grow all my fur back, I'm going to bury myself in training. Just you wait until I make my comeback. It's going to be amazing!" Teddie said. "It'll be a major event, and then you'll be begging for my help again!"

"See you later then Teddie" Yu waved goodbye to the bear.

The others all said their goodbye as they left the TV world. Before leaving Yu felt not one, but two souls connect to him from beyond through the bond with Teddie. He thought of it as odd but decided to check on it later. His attention refocused on the burning pain on his chest and his rapidly draining strength as he went through the exit.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]
The Team exited the TV at Junes, it was late into the afternoon and very few people were around.

"Man that was a serious trip." Yosuke groaned "I'm gonna sleep like a log tonight."

The others all mumbled in agreement but fell silent as they heard the sound of a body hitting the floor.

"Oh no." Rise cried causing everyone to look back and see Yu lying face up on the ground. "I think he's unconscious."

"Let's get this thing off him." Chie said kneeling down and undoing the front of the costume.

When it was opened up they all gasped at the horrible burns across his front and going around to the back.

"Holy shit, that looks major." Yosuke gulped "Second degree burns at least."

"He acted like it was nothing on the way back to the exit." Kanji said with Awe."

"Never mind that we need to call an ambulance." Yukiko exclaimed.

"Aw man what are we gonna tell 'em when ask how it happened?" Yosuke asked. "Junes could get shut down for something like this."

"Yosuke, this is more important than the stupid store." Chie yelled angrily at Yosuke's priorities.

"I know, I'm just say-GAH YEOWCH!" Yosuke was cut off when a small shadow jumped on his head and used it as a spring board to land on the floor, sending Yosuke onto his face.

"Is that a fox?" Chie asked

Indeed, before them was an orange furred fox with several scars on its right eye, forehead, back, and left leg. It was also wearing a red apron with a heart pattern. It approached and settled at Yu's side before withdrawing a leaf from behind the apron.

"What's it doing?" Rise asked as it suddenly put the leaf on the centre of Yu's chest were the burns were the worst.

A blue glow enveloped the injured boy and before their eyes the burns rapidly faded away leaving nothing but healthy skin. The fox gave out a low how and vanished darted away.

"That's incredible, was that leaf magic or something?" Rise asked seeing Yu's breathing become relaxed and steady.

"Hey Yukiko-senapi haven't you heard of that fox before?" Kanji asked looked to her for confirmation.

"Oh yeah, that's the fox that lives at the Shrine in the shopping district." Yukiko realised "I wonder why it came all this way to help?"

"I don't know but were lucky it did." Kanji stated "It saves us some major trouble."

"Hey, we should probably get him to a bathroom and change him into normal clothes before someone see's him and starts putting two and two together."

"Oh shit yeah." Chie said.
"Here's the bag, I put the mask and wig in it earlier before we left." Rise said holding up the backpack "It has his regular clothes in it."

The team then proceeded to awkwardly sneak their unconscious friend to the bathroom, in order to keep his heroic identity a secret.

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[06/23 Thursday, Tatsuhime, North Shopping District Inaba]

At the deserted shrine Aika stood out of sight behind it, waiting. Hearing a thud from atop the shrine she saw the Fox looking down at her before leaping to the ground.

"Good work partner." Aika said to the fox.

She dug into her bag and pulled out a bowl of freshly cooked meats and put it down on the ground. Out of a nearby hidden den three cubs emerged enticed by the smell of the meat.

"When you're done, can you return the bowl?" Aika asked receiving an affirmative howl from the fox.

With that, the girl walked away, after all these deliveries wouldn't do themselves.

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[06/24 Thursday, Deserted lot behind Marukyu Tofu, Inaba]

A mere day since being rescued Rise received a text from Yu asked her to come this deserted lot. In the middle of the lot was a small box with a folded up letter on it. Approaching she saw the letter said 'FOR RISE' on it.

The idol picked up the letter and opened the box. Inside of it was a blue domino mask. Picking it up and opened the letter, she saw instructions.

'Dear Rise, please install Caster and put on the mask afterwards. All will be revealed, from Yu.'

"Vague instructions" Tamamo noted appearing in spirit form "Well what do we have to lose? This could be fun."

"Alright here goes." Rise summoned the card and concentrated, like Yu a magic circle appeared beneath her. "INSTALL!"

She slammed the card against her own chest and was enveloped by a burst of pure Prana. When it faded she found Tamamo's mirror floating in front of her. Her entire appearance now matched that of her Persona. The Pink hair, the clothes, even the fox ears on her head had feeling when she touched them, she shivered when she stroked the tail poking out from her backside.

"Oh you look so cute looking me master!" Tamamo exclaimed with joy.

Rise decided to complete the instructions and put the mask on.

"Up here." She heard a familiar heroic voice and leapt up on the roof of Marukyu. She landed next Space Samurai Y.

"Shouldn't you be resting?" Rise asked "You were really injured after yesterday."
"Nope, I feel better than ever probably thanks to that magic fox you told me about." The Hero stated. "Now then, my reason for bring you here was simple, I would you to be my partner in heroism!"

"Me?!!" Rise asked flustered "A superhero?"

"Is that a no?"

"No, I'll do it." Rise nodded with a smile "You make it look like a lot of fun. But I need a superhero name."

"Oh, use my name master." Tamamo suggested excitedly "Between that and the Install and the mask no one will figure you out."

"Alright, from this day forth I am the great heroine Tamamo-chan!" Tamamo-chan declared striking a pose like a capital T.

"And I am her partner Space Samurai Y! Woah!" Just as he went to strike his pose the samurai lost his balance and bounced backwards on his head before fall out off the roof and crashing into some garbage cans.

The Foxy hero couldn't help herself and burst out laughing. It felt strange doing this, but in a good way. Even though she was behind a mask, it felt like she was free, she could do anything and not have to worry about embarrassment, or repercussions or anything.

Watching her from below after recovering from the crash the masked man felt another soul connect to him from beyond.

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Chapter End Notes

AN: A big thanks once again to SaintInfernalNeos for the scene's he contributed to this chapter.
Disclaimer: I do not own Persona or Fate or anything in the nasuverse, any resemblance to any other Persona 4/Fate fan fiction is coincidental and plagiarism is not intended. No flames please, constructive criticism only.

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[07/02 Friday, South Shopping District, Inaba]

Night had finally fallen over the no longer so, sleepy town of Inaba. Yu had spent the past week showing Rise the ropes as their Superhero alter egos. It seemed like she was relaxing and having fun as a hero.

She'd practiced a move that her Persona had taught her called the 'Castration Fist'. Her first use of it came on a street punk who was vandalising someone's car. Yu felt distinctly sorry for any man on the receiving end of that move if it came from an ordinary woman, but from Rise who had installed and was thus many times stronger than a normal human…..well let's just say there may be a drop in the number of males able to have children by the time the year is out.

Yu had managed to persuade Dojima to let him go out at night, he had done so by fibbing to Dojima about getting a part time job at night. He carried a backpack with leftovers from dinner to make it more convincing.

He felt the need to just take a stroll in the cool air of the approaching summer night. When he walked by Moel, he spotted Adachi standing just near it and decided to approach him.

"What are you doing out so late?" Adachi asked Yu as he approached. "It's dangerous, you know. Go home."

"I'm out because I needed a breather." Yu told him. "I've been juggling so many people and listening to their problems that I just needed a break and night time is perfect for that. So what are you doing here?"

"Me?" Adachi blinked. "I was on my way home from work…and then you came along."

"Do you mind if I hang out with you?" Yu asked

"You must have a lot of time on your hands." Adachi smiled mischievously at Yu. "Dojima will be on your ass, you know."

"I may have fibbed to Dojima about getting a part time job at night so I could stay out late." Yu said to Adachi with a smirk.

"Heheh, you're rather sneaky, aren't you?" Adachi said with amusement "Alright, sure you can stay if you want."

Yu found himself following Adachi to Souzai Daigaku. Adachi wanted to get something to eat
before he headed home and the small place fell with Adachi's budget for this month.
Unfortunately, Souzai Daigaku had already closed up by the time they arrived.

"I knew it!" Adachi sighed. "Stores out here close too soon. You know, I was meaning to make
something since I got off work early, but then I got lazy. Ugh, what should I do? I have tons of
nimono at home…"

"Quick into the alley, old lady incoming." Yu warned Adachi when he saw the old lady coming
down the street, luckily it seemed she hadn't seen Adachi yet.

So he quickly ducked into a small alley between Souzai and another store. Yu stood in front of
him, blocking sight of him. The old woman walked past, with a confused look on her face,
apparently she'd caught a glimpse of Adachi but not where he'd gone.

"She's gone; you can come out now." Yu said when she walked down the street and rounded the
corner.

"She really sucks away my will to live." Adachi rubbed the back of his head with annoyance.
"Thanks for saving my ass, you were a big help."

"Why don't you come over have dinner with us one of these days" Yu offered.

"At Dojima's?" Adachi asked with surprise over his face. "Well, isn't that a generous offer. But
Dojima-san's still at work, right? Does that mean it'll be just us? Isn't that weird?"

"I'm a good cook… here I'll prove it." Yu reached into the backpack and pulled out a lunchbox
with three beef burgers inside and opened it, holding it out to Adachi. "Here try them, they're cold
because I made them for dinner a few hours ago, but they're still good enough to eat and its better
than going to bed hungry."

Adachi was looked at Yu for moment before taking the open lunch box and trying one of the
burgers.

"….you're right, even though it's cold, it's still pretty good." Adachi said his face brightening up a
bit and quickly eating the rest of the burger "You made this yourself?"

"Yup, I learned to cook myself, neither of my parents can cook worth a damn so it was usually take
out some microwave meals." Yu told him Adachi as he started on the second burger.

"Say, I heard something about Kanji Tatsumi and that Hanamura kid." Adachi said part way
through the second burger. "Something about hitting on women in Okina city a couple of weeks
back."

"Oh yeah." Yu remembered Yosuke's 'babe hunt' plan after getting their driving licences. "Yeah I
declined, I had better things to do than make moron out of myself hitting on girls in the city."

"So your friends made asses of themselves?"

"More Yosuke than Kanji, Ai Ebihara saw the whole thing and recorded it." Yu sighed "It was
embarrassing to watch, Yosuke even squealed like a pig to try and get these two girls phone
numbers, and another number got him screamed at by the woman's boyfriend, and then the third
number wound up with his motorbike being sat on and crushed."

"What a dunce." Adachi chuckled finishing the second burger and starting on the third.
"Romance seems so complicated, I'd rather wait and see if it comes to me, you know if the right
girl is there I'll try but I don't think I'll go out of my way to seek out some random girl I see whose
pretty."

"It's for the best." Adachi agreed, "I thought I was in love once, this girl I met when I fresh out of
the academy found out I was a cop, she thought I had a huge pay check, we had a few meals
together but she dumped me the instant she saw my apartment."

"Ouch, what a bitch." Yu commented feeling sorry for Adachi.

"Yeah, I but got over it, shallow women like that aren't worth it." Adachi sighed before changing
the subject as he finished the third burger. "Well, that filled a hole. I am interested in having your
cooking again...Maybe next time. I'll just stop by on my way back from work."

Yu and Adachi promptly parted ways, although Yu felt he understood Adachi and bit more as he
made his way back home after putting the empty lunchbox back in his bag.

As Yu went from sight a shadowy spiritual figure appeared next to Adachi.

"Aren't you getting too close to him?" The figure asked shaking it head.

"It'll be fine as long as you can keep from making a scene." Adachi replied with a disturbing smile.

[07/03 Saturday, Velvet Room]

The next day after the half school day had finished Yu decided to go and see Marie again and take
her to see more of the town. So he had walked to the shopping district and entered the door way.
As usual his Persona's fell silent, but Marie was nowhere in sight for some reason.

Just as Yu was about inquire as to her whereabouts, a piece of paper on the ground near the table
captured his eye. Picking up the piece of paper Yu saw words and couldn't help but read.

"Sea Foam"

Listen...
To my voice..
My shouting, bellowing voice...

Here I am
Pouring my blood into my words
Yelling at the very edge of the world...

I am the little mermaid...

Unable to return, the little mermaid...

Fated to foam, the little mermaid...

Her sense of poetry was difficult to comment on.

"Waaaaaaah!" Marie suddenly burst into the Velvet Room and snatched the paper out of Yu's
hands. "D-Did you read it? You read it, didn't you!? N-No, it's not like that! It's uh... It's not a
poem! Yeah!" She stuttered as she buries the paper in her bag.
"I'm yelling at the edge of the world that this is not a poem! I-I don't know what I'm saying... Words are just coming out... I...Agh! *Stupid I hate you jerk I can't believe this!* Don't read my things!" Marie yelled blushing furiously. "But why was it on the floor? I don't get it."

Concluding that Marie was indeed the author of the poem he'd read, Yu decided to change the subject before Marie completely closed off.

"I was actually looking for you, I have a free afternoon, how about I show you around some more?" Yu offered.

"Fine, but you're also buying some more beefsteak!" Marie commanded apparently wanting compensation for her embarrassment.

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After leaving the Velvet Room Yu immediately went with Marie to Souzai Daigaku for some beefsteak.

"Hey, can I see a 'school'?" Marie requested putting emphasis on the word school as she clearly didn't know what it was. "You're going to one, right? I wanna go see what that's like."

"Sure, the school should still be open." Yu said as he and Marie finished their steak skewers.

Yu decided to take Marie to see his school and so took her through the Samegawa Flood Plain that lead to the school to show her around the small campus.

"You go to 'school' everyday, right?" Marie asked as they strolled along the plain in the direction of Yasogami "You don't get tired of it?"

"It's fun." Yu replied simply.

"Fun...?" Marie parroted "Oh, do they have a TV there? Can you watch "StarScandalz"?"

Marie clearly misunderstood what Yu had meant but she seemed to be enjoying it regardless. Yu supposed he'd have to elaborate what school was for later. Personally he thought school was fun not only because of his friends but the looks the faces of people like Yosuke and King Moron when they saw that he'd gotten top scores on his exams beating everyone else in his year group once again.

As if on que Yosuke came strolling along from the opposite direction and walked up to the pair when he spotted them.

"Yo, partner! Whatcha do-Oh Hey Marie, it's been a while." Yosuke greeted the hat wearing girl "I heard that you'd been with Chie and Yukiko. So what are you guys doing? Out on a stroll?"

"I'm showing her the school." Yu answered simply

"Huh? You are?"

"Yeah she wanted to see what it was like" Yu elaborated with a shrug.

"Oh, I get it. Marie goes to a different school, after all, huh. Er, still...What could be special about our school?" Yosuke asked "Oh, well. All right, I'll join ya. Allow me to welcome you to Yasogami High!"

"Can I go inside?" Marie asked staring at the building
"No problem! There's some committee meeting today, so the gate should be open. I mean, we can always say that we're showing you around the school!" Yosuke nodded

After going through the school gate Yu and Yosuke showed Marie around the ground floor, they went to the Nurse's office, the staffroom as well as couple the hallway that lead to the gym. After this they made their way up the stairs to the hall of the second floor and stood out classroom 2-2.

"And here's our classroom" Yosuke said motioning towards the classroom where the majority of their school time was spent "Pretty retro, huh? I guess you could call it cozy."

"It's so big." Marie said looked at the school with wonder.

"Huh? It is...?" Yosuke said confused at Marie's surprise "Well, there's a lot of empty land here...I guess the school's pretty big if you count the fields and yards and stuff. What about where you are from Marie? Is it cramped, since it's in the city?"

"Me?" Marie was caught off guard by the question "It's tiny. I mean, it's a single room."

"One room!?...Seriously?" Yosuke exclaimed "Is it, uh...some kind of advanced placement class or something?"

Yu remembered that he had neglected to tell his friends about the Velvet Room. Frankly it had never come up in conversation and it didn't seem to be too important enough to tell them about it.

"I don't know. It's small, it's dark, and The Nose never says anything." Marie said clearly referring to Igor "Nobody ever says anything. It's boring."

"The Nose...? Is that, uh, what you call your teacher?" Yosuke asked curiously "A teacher who doesn't talk...Isn't that neglecting your job?"

Frankly Yu wasn't that surprised to hear that neither Igor nor Margaret said much. Igor came across to Yu as silent yet cryptic and Margaret came across as dignified yet mysterious.

"Hey, I want to see more" Marie demanded "There's still more to see, right?" It seemed that Marie was very interested in the school.

"She's as strange as she was last time" Yosuke commented "Then again, everybody I've gotten to know recently has been pretty much on the odd side, so I'm used to it. Haha..."

Yosuke and Yu decided to take Marie to the rooftop of Yasogami high where the gang usually spent their time.

"...And this is where we hang out" Yosuke told her "What do you think? Isn't this a great place to spend your youth?"

"Youth?" Marie questioned "How does someone spend youth? Give me an example."

"An e-example!? Well, you know, um...building friendships, sharing your concerns, confiding in each other...stuff like that?" Yosuke stumbled to find an example to elaborate to Marie his meaning "It's kinda awkward to have to put it into words..."

"...I don't get it. Do Green and Red do that, too?" Marie asked still confused.

"Of course." Yu confirmed.

"Why do you need to spend youth? Don't you have anything better to do?" Marie asked
"Y-You want me to say more?" Yosuke asked surprised "Er, well...I mean, it's fun. Not being in superficial relationships...Being with people who know the real you."

"...The real you?" Marie pondered on this.

"Being with people like that helps keep me from losing sight of who I am. Y'know, so I can face myself..." Yosuke explained before screwing up his face which went red with embarrassment "...Arrrrrgh! This is embarrassing! I can't say anymore! Sorry!"

"Face yourself..." Marie muttered.

"Wondering about your "true self?" Yu asked

"No. I said it before, there's...no truth." Marie replied thoughtfully.

"Let's just...end this here. Please, forget I said anything." Yosuke half pleaded embarrassed "So, um...I know! You haven't seen the library yet, right!? We don't have all day, so let's get going!"

"Wait!" Marie looked at Yu apparently having discarded what Yosuke had said. "Margaret said you got a new Persona, one under the Star right? Can I see it?"

The request caught Yu off guard, Marie changed from completive about Yosuke's words to curious about a Persona in matter of seconds. He wondered if there was something deeper wrong but decided to wait and oblige her.

"I'll keep a lookout." Yosuke said going over to the door and peering down in case anyone came to the roof.

"Ok, here goes." Yu held out his hand focused, the card descended. On it was 'A beautiful woman of holy garb, with an edgeless sword in one hand and a scales/balance on the other with XVII. RULER written on it. However, before he could crush it and summon the Persona within something odd happened, the card shifted to resemble the Star Arcana tarot card. "What the...." Yu was cut off as the tarot card turned itself upside down and morphed into the image of a man bound in chains. On it was written 'XVII. AVENGER'

The Card suddenly burst into flames as if Yu had crushed it. When the swirl dissipated what was standing there shocked Yu.

A woman with blond hair and golden eyes that reminded him of a shadow. Her skin was rather pale and her body was covered in a wicked looking black armour, she even had an annoyed scowl on her face and gave Yu an hostile look.

"This is her.....she's kinda creepy looking." Marie commented bluntly.

"Yeah, tell me about it." Yosuke said from the door.

"This is different, Jeanne D'Arc is the Saber of the Star Arcana." Yu said trying to figure out what was going on. "The colour scheme is all wrong, it was silver and blue, not black and red."

Indeed, her sword, her armour, her flag, even that had a dark look to it. Her presence was distinctly different as well, whereas Jeanne was an undeniable Saint, right now it felt like Yu was in the presence of an evil witch.

"Tch, summoning me not even for battle but for something so mundane." The Jeanne copy clicked her tongue with annoyance and drew her sword form its sheath. "I'm not some toy for you to show
She was fast, before either Marie or Yosuke could react her sword was held of Yu's head. They both closed their eyes unable to look at their friend demise. They were surprised when instead of hearing steel meet flesh they heard a clang, the sound of steel meeting steel.

Opening their eyes, they saw a duplicate of the Persona Yu had summoned. The differences were in the eye colour which was a gentle amethyst and the colour scheme of the clothing. Where the Avenger had a harsh and violent red and black scheme to her armour and weapons, this new one had a gentle silver and blue colour scheme.

The Avenger narrowed her eyes on the duplicate before her.

"It's you, the weak me." The Avenger growled trying to push against her counterpart but unable to gain ground as she was met with equal force. "Why do you shield him? He should py for his insolence, no should be allowed to treat me this way, especially after how we died."

"I'm Jeanne D'arc, the Maiden of Orleans and under the class of Ruler I will let no one take a life on a whim, do you have such thin skin that a mere being summoned for such a mundane reason sends you into a murderous rage, then you are truly a witch wearing my SKIN!" Jeanne promptly kicked Avenger in the gut sending her skidding back a small way.

Yu felt exhaustion creeping in, despite reserve of Prana increasing greater than they were when he first started out keeping two Heroic Spirits in the real world was very taxing, and so he cut off the supply quickly forcing the two back into Spirit Form.

However now that the flames of conflict had been ignited between the two Jeanne's it didn't seem to be deterred by something like not having solid bodies.

"You disgust me." Jeanne Alter said trembling with rage "I regret that I was ever a weakling like you! We should have taken the throne of France for our own and dominated the people. Maybe then we wouldn't have been abandoned by the God we devoted ourselves too instead of being called and witch and burnt alive! They called us Witch, well I have risen from the grave I am the witch they wanted I will avenge myself upon the France that abandoned me-"

Jeanne Alter's rant was cut off by Ruler slapping her across the face.

"Be silent, you sound like a child throwing a tantrum." Ruler stated as Avenger placed a hand on the red mark now adorning her face. "No part of me was ever you, I don't know where you came from but you were never me, you are something that should not exist."

"You…..you….YOU BITCH!" Avenger screamed slapping Ruler in retaliation.

Ruler was quick to slap back letting out an indignant cry as Avenger suddenly began pulling her hair, causing Ruler to do the same.

The three humans present, sweat dropped at the scene only they could see, as two spirit form Personas of Jeanne D'arc began a cat fight.

"The one you got from me…..it isn't as weird as these two right?" Marie asked looking at Yu.

"No, she's the calm, quiet type." Yu answered.

"I kinda expected this from a Persona from Teddie." Yosuke sighed.
The three decided to just let the pair sort their differences on their own. After taking Marie back to the Velvet Room, Yu felt as though his bond with her had strengthened. He had also decided to stick with the Class names for the pair of Jeanne's in order to distinguish between the two.

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[07/03 Saturday, Velvet Room]

Following Marie through the doorway Yu found himself in the Limousine once again. Margret had a small smile on her lips while Igor had his ever present wide grin.

"I have a question." Yu stated taking a seat near Marie "When I summoned Jeanne earlier something went wrong, the card turned into the Tarot card version and then upside done before becoming an Avenger Class Card. The Persona looked like Jeanne, but it definitely didn't feel like her, and she didn't act like the Maiden of Orleans either. So does it have something to do with Teddie?"

"The Arcana reversed itself." Margaret was the one to answer. "Under normal circumstances this would be dangerous to a Persona user, however your circumstances are different from those of regular Persona users."

"I would recommend speaking to your friend under The Star when you next get the chance." Igor suggested "His Persona is quite unusual, perhaps it is best if it answers your questions. But remember, young master, that some stories can't be unheard once you have heard them...that persona's story is not nice in ANY sense of the word."

Yu had an ominous feeling when Igor said that, he decided to let it be and get answers when he could. Deciding that was enough he said goodbye to Marie and Margaret and left heading home.

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The Velvet Club was livelier than ever, and also more spacious. This was because more Personas had joined the ranks of the Wild Card and thus more room was needed to accommodate their downtime. Everyone was chilling out by talking to someone else, drinking, playing a game or just being by themselves.

However as with most situations like this, the peace was not to last. This was because a certain unseen King of Heroes who stood on the second floor overlooking the cheerful scene was bored. He saw however a way to liven up his night, two Heroic Spirits sat a mere table away from each. One was the Ruler Class (which rightfully belonged to him) and the second was an Avenger.

What made these two amusing was the fact that despite looking like each other (albeit with some differences in clothing colour and choice) they hated each other's guts. So using his supreme voice acting skills, he imitated the Avenger and began throwing his voice.

"Ugly tramp"

"What did you say?!" Jeanne demanded glaring at Avenger who returned it with just as much contempt.

"What's your problem now?" Avenger sighed disgusted at having to talk to her counterpart.

"Where do you get off calling me a tramp you face stealing bitch!" Ruler yelled causing Avenger to stand up angrily.
"Well how about I take your face properly then." Avenger yelled lunging at Ruler and grabbing her cheek harshly.

"OW-Let me go you filthy witch!" Ruler screamed grabbing a large tuft of Avenger's hair and pulling on it eliciting a scream of pain from her.

The cat fight became more and more vicious, as the hair and cheek pulling devolved into shoving. Sadly, when Avenger shoved Ruler he went backwards into Astolfo who was dressed up as a waiter and was bring peoples drinks to them on a silver platter. The impact combined with his clumsiness sent a mug of beer flying and splashing all over Gawain.

"Oops." Astolfo dropped the remaining drinks and covered his mouth in shock.

Standing up to get a towel to dry himself off Gawain paused when he heard a chuckling from nearby. Turning his head slowly he saw Lancelot laughing from under his helmet which was moving slightly from the chuckling. The Berserker suddenly paused as with an explosion of pain and a crash he found himself on the floor. Standing above him was Gawain wielding a barstool with an angry glare.

"Laugh at me will you? Bring it on you tin can!" Gawain yelled clearly drunk.

Lancelot stood up and roared at the challenge. He took a bar stood and ripped off two of the legs and began dual wielding them in both hands. Even drunk and mad the two were still knights of great skill and tested each other with probing blows. They were about to get serious when Lancelot overextending one such blow and lost grip of one of the legs which flew and knocked over the table which Semiramis, Medea, Medusa and Atalanta where playing cards on.

The shock caused the foursome to raise their arms in shock, out of their sleeves poured extra cards. Seeing that they had all been cheating a four-way brawl quickly ensued, with Atalanta head-butting Semiramis and Medusa pile driving Medea through a table.

Meanwhile near a wall, Nursery Rhyme sat with Jackie reading Alice in Wonderland. They ignored the chaos, even as glasses smashed on the walls just nearly missing their heads along with bits of wood and metal, while Astolfo clumsily dodged things that flew at him.

Gilgamesh enjoyed the incredible fight he had created, however things were starting to slow down and some were being rendered unconscious such as Medea and Semiramis. Not one to let his amusement end quickly he saw Nero sitting on a table sketching something in a small notepad, at her back was Cu Chulainn drinking and trying to mind his own business. Seeing another potential avenue to extend his amusement he called upon his voice acting skills again.

"What is that supposed to be a pig with its face in a cheese grater?" Nero whipped around furiously hearing the voice on the dog behind her.

"Mangy dog! How dare you." Nero growled as Lancer whipped around at the insult he hated the most.

"What's your problem shorty?!" Cu Chulainn demanded.

"How dare you insult my sketches..." Nero promptly grabbed the Lancer by the crotch and began lifting him off the ground, he squealed in pain as she did so. "A BRUTE LIKE YOU KNOWS NOTHING!" After he was above her head Nero promptly threw the unfortunate dog like a javelin and quickly pursued him intent on inflicting more pain.

As he flew and screamed Lancer's suddenly found himself between the two Jeanne's who had
remembered that they had weapons and had drawn them on each other. They went to stab just as Lancer flew between them, promptly skewering him. Shocked, they dropped their weapons and the poor dog's body to the ground.

"Lancer died." Ruler said covering his mouth in shock.

"You're not human.....bitch." Avenger said receiving a punch to the face causing the cat fight to resume Lancer's fate quickly forgotten.

Gilgamesh watched the chaos, amused as Nero used Avenger as springboard to flying clothesline Gawain and Lancelot turning the fight into a three-way brawl.

Space Samurai Y, ever the dutiful bartender caught any and all glasses that flew at him and set them down cleaning them one by one.
Yu was busy spending his Sunday morning in his room having just woken up. It had been nearly two weeks since the gang had rescued Rise. After yesterday with Marie and Adachi Yu had decided to just hang out in his room practising his Origami when all of sudden his phone began to ring.

"Why is Chie calling me?" Yu wondered aloud.

"Hello?"

"D-D-Did you hear yet?!" Chie asked nervously.

"Hear what, Chie?" Yu asked.

"They found a dead body just outside the Shopping District!" Chie said.

"Is it Rise?!" Yu asked his blood turning cold.

"No! It's not Rise! They said it was a man in his thirties or something. I don't get it! I mean, we…” Chie paused and took a deep breath "We're all meeting at Aiya come over right away!"

"Hold on, I need a favour from you." Yu interrupted Chie before she could hang up. "Li Shuwen has been teaching you his invisibility technique right? How good would you say you are at using it?"

"I'd need to install him to use it. It'll take me years to get a grasp on the technique proper." Chie replied, "Why?"

"Here's what I want you to do…." Yu gave Chie his instructions and after he left the house and locked the door. He ran as fast as he could to Aiya.

"Damn it…” Kanji pounded his fist on the table in anger after the team had ordered their food. "I don't believe it. This blows our theory about our victims being on the news. King Moron's never even been news or TV!"

"Yeah and he wasn't on the Midnight Channel either" Yukiko added
"I can't believe this happened." Yosuke said angrily "And where the hell is Chie?!

"Relax, she's doing something for me and should be here in a minute."

"Hey, guys sorry I'm late. Here you go Narukami I did everything asked." Chie said handing Yu and notepad which had several pages filled.

"Thank you, is this everything you heard?" Yu asked as he began reading the notes.

"Yup, everything I could hear before I started to run out of prana," Chie replied whipping some sweat from her forehead as she sat down and ordered good. "That technique really takes a lot of focus."

"What's with the notes man?" Kanji asked.

"I had Chie eavesdrop on the police at the crime scene and take notes what she saw and overheard," Yu answered as he finished reading notes and took out his phone and began doing an internet search.

"Oh, so did she get anything good from the cops?" Yosuke asked.

"…I see that would make sense," Yu mumbled to himself after a few minutes of reading the web page he had open before putting his phone away.

He was sure that the Midnight Channel was related to the murders somehow. They were just missing something important.

"So what did you find out?" Yukiko asked.

"Yeah man don't keep us in the dark." Kanji agreed.

"Here's your order," Aika said, bringing the group each a mega beef bowl.

"Huh?! None of us ordered this!" Yosuke told her.

"Normally, we only offer this on rainy days." Aika told them.

"Th-That's..." Yu's eyes widened "It takes Understanding to accept everything, Knowledge to set a good pace, Courage to attack the pile of meat, and Diligence to keep eating. It takes all of that to finish the Mega Beef Bowl!"

"Thanks, but why?" Kanji asked

"Please enjoy," Aika said walking away to the kitchen

"Well, let's chow down," Chie exclaimed

Taking his time to eat Yu began explaining what he pieced together from his internet search and the information from Chie.

"Ok, according to these notes the detectives on the scene think that this latest murder might the work of a copycat killer using our killer's methods to cover up their crime," Yu explained reading through the notes again and taking occasional bites from the Mega Beef Bowl.

"Wait, so someone's using the killer to cover up their murder. But why?" Yukiko asked.
"To know that, you have to dig deeper into the history of this town, which is what I was doing on my phone." Yu replied, "You see, Mr Morooka was secretly a devout catholic."

"What no way, King Moron was catholic?" Yosuke yelled with disbelief.

"You're shitting me right?" Kanji was equally disbelieving.

"No it's true, I heard….the cops talking about it," Chie said between slurps of her bowl.

"So he was catholic, but what's that got to do with anything?" Yukiko wondered "And what did you mean the history of the town?"

"According to what I found out, back in Nineteen twenty-two, the Vatican bought some land in Inaba and built a church." Yu began his explanation "It was a pretty small congregation but they bothered no one. Nothing happened until Nineteen fifty-three when there was a massacre."

The team collectively gulped their food down and stared at the Fool in shock.

"M-massacre?" Chie swallowed nervously.

"I never heard anything about that," Yukiko stated her voice shaking.

"Yeah me either," Kanji said.

"I'm not surprised, the town tried to keep the incident hushed up but it wasn't very effective. You see the congregation was slaughtered by a mob, but the priest survived and fled back to the Vatican. In so doing the Vatican who still had some pull on the world stage condemned the town believing it to be full of hate and intolerance. Inaba which relies on tourism for its economy has been dying ever since then."

"Wait….i thought Junes was responsible for that?" Chie asked pausing in her meal. "That's what everyone thinks anyway."

"It's quite the opposite actually, Junes is just a convenient target people are using so they don't have to acknowledge this incident which brought great dishonour to the town as the perpetrators were never caught. Junes hire's all of its staff locally and the prices are relatively cheap compared to the shopping district. Junes may be Inaba's last hope, it's creating jobs and like it or not is bolstering the economy as it forces other stores to either compete or close down."

"So, all this time Junes was saving the town?" Kanji wondered thinking on the information.

"Indeed, you see before they bought out the land and announced they were coming the town council was considering plans to demolish the shopping district and building an attraction that would revitalise the town's tourist industry. These plans were public knowledge, and Junes would have no doubt known about them before moving to the town."

"Wait, so if Junes wanted all the local competitors out of the way, they could have just waited for the shopping district to be gone and then come in, they'd have nothing to worry about then." Chie pointed out. "But they're coming kept the shopping district doing right?"

"Hold on, that's nice and all but what's this gotta do with King Moron?" Kanji interrupted.

"Back on subject, as I said King Moron was a devout catholic albeit privately. It's been this way ever since the massacre because the mob who committed the crime was never caught. After that, any surviving Christians in the town likely went underground and worshipped in private where no
one would find out. The theory is that the copycat found out somehow that Mr Morooka was Christian and killed him because of that. The problem is, anyone who was taught by him could be a suspect because of the way he was towards students."

"So this murderer is just using our killer to hide their crime?" Yukiko asked.

"That is one theory, but we can't rule out the possibility that it could be our killer," Yu stated taking a breath and seeing that he was halfway through the Mega Beef Bowl, he still had the rapt attention of his friends. "We don't know what kind of person we're dealing with, it's possible that they've become angry and committed this murder out of a childish need to feel like they're still winning. If so then this is good for us, because in doing a murder outside the TV World they have to have used a weapon instead of letting the shadows do their work, so that would leave a murder weapon somewhere, plus in order to get the body up there they would have left fingerprints and some of their own DNA behind."

"Hey that's right, I've been wondering, why haven't the cops been able to get fingerprints or DNA from the other victims?" Yosuke asked, "With a town this small it wouldn't be too hard to get everyone's fingerprints, anyone who refused would look suspicious."

"I can answer that, look at this." Yu withdrew his smartphone which had a blank screen as it was in sleep mode. "I've been using this touchscreen phone for over a year, do you notice anything odd?"

"Wait a minute, if you've been using a touch screen phone for over a year, then why are there so few finger marks on it?" Yukiko asked, indeed the screen looked very clean apart from a few barely visible finger marks.

"Exactly, you see I noted that when we go through the portal to the TV World, the finger-marks and prints and stray DNA on my phone would disappear, I only noticed it recently," Yu told them now three-quarters of the way through his bowl. "This is why the police haven't been able to find fingerprints or DNA on the other victims because transitioning between the world erases them."

"Alright, so are we dealing with the killer or a copycat on this one?" Kanji asked putting his bowl down and giving up along with Yosuke.

"Personally, I think this may just be a copycat, there's no reason for our killer to get sloppy now. He's made sure not to show his face to any of you or leave any real clues, such a methodical person wouldn't lash out now. But we should keep an eye on the Midnight Channel just in case. Who knows if it is a copycat, then the real deal might not like someone deciding to try and pin things like this on him."

A few minutes later and part of the team was beaten and groaning at their full stomachs, these included Yukiko, Kanji and Yosuke.

"Seriously, what's with this monster?" Kanji asked

"At least we made a dent in it... I think." Yukiko said looking into her bowl

"Done." "Me as well."

The three looked at Chie and Yu, their jaws all dropped as they saw empty bowls in front of the pair who had to their shock had beaten the unbeatable mega beef bowl challenge.

"No way" Kanji muttered

"You two beat it, man, you have monster appetites," Yosuke exclaimed
"That's so cool you beat it," Yukiko exclaimed to Chie.

"That'll be three thousand yen each from the rest of you," Aika said tonelessly shocking the three.

"What?!" Yosuke exclaimed, "You said it was on the house."

"It is, if you finish it, that's always been the offer remember?" Aika said.

After finishing paying for their food the team decided to go Junes to check up on Teddie and stopped when they three employees hanging around the electronics department.

"Oh, Yosuke perfect timing. Some guy named Doug Teddie is here for you" one of the salesmen said.

"What? Doug Teddie?" Yosuke questioned.

They ran over to the massage chairs and sure enough, sitting on one was Teddie being massage by the chair.

"OHHHHH! This is Amazing!" Teddie said through the vibrations of the chair.

"Woah he's here" Chie exclaimed

"This chair is pretty bear-ific" Teddie sighed.

"You look very comfy there," Yu said.

"What the heck are you thinking coming here?!" Yosuke demanded.

"It's about time you guys showed up," Teddie said, "I've been waiting."

"You can leave the TV?" Yukiko questioned

"Who knew that could happen" Kanji commented.

"Yeah, of course, I can leave the TV, there is an exit!" Teddie said in a 'duh' tone of voice "It just never actually crossed my mind to try and use it before. But after spending so much time with you guys I wanted to come and see you in your world."

'I've even seen a few pretty girls in her with skimpy clothing that didn't seem like bitches.' Avenger commented appearing in Spirit Form.

"Yeah well that happens" Yu deadpanned

"Yay I just knew that you would understand me Sensei," Teddie said, "Oh someone asked me what my name was so I said Duh, Teddie."

"Doug Teddie got it" Chie sighed

"Listen, Teddie, there's something really important we need to ask you," Yosuke said

"Yeah what?" Teddie asked
The gang grabbed Teddie out the chair and took him out to their usual table in the food court.

"You're absolutely positive that no one's been inside the TV since we were there?" Yosuke asked

"Yes, how many times do I have to tell you yes!" Teddie yelled with annoyance "I made a full recovery all by my bear-some self

"Man if King Moron never went into the TV set then…" Yosuke trailed off

"Then uncle was right," Yu said, "He was killed in our world, which in theory should mean that it's easier to catch him because he would have left fingerprints and DNA behind."

"Uhhh, I'm BEARY hot! I need to take my head off," Teddie complained sweat somehow forming on his costume.

He then began to remove his head before Yosuke grabbed him

"NO! You've got kids watching! It'll scar them for life if they see an empty mascot!"

"Get off" Teddie yelled shoving Yosuke off of him "Besides it's not empty anymore!"

"Stop!" Yosuke protested.

Teddie unzipped his head and popped it off, everybody gasped in surprise Just as Teddie had said he wasn't empty anymore, Inside was a bare-chested blond-haired boy covered in sweat.

"Whoa! NO WAY!" Chie exclaimed.

"AHHHH…Much…BETTER!" The boy said.

The boy picked up a bottle of water to drink and then he started chugging.

"AH! Now that hit the spot!" The boy said sounding refreshed.

"Teddie?" Chie asked, in shock.

"Yup, it's me…" Teddie confirmed.

"How?"

"I grew a body because I wanted to score with Yukiko and Chie"

The girls sweat dropped.

"You grew a body…to score?!" Chie choked.

"I really do wish we could drop that subject" Yukiko grumbled.

"By the way, are there any clothes around here?" Teddie asked, "I'm as naked as a new-born baby right now."

Yukiko and Chie blushed and grabbed Teddies lower fur and kept it covered as the three ran inside Junes presumably for the clothing department.

"Dude grew a human inside himself?" Kanji asked raising his eyebrow

"Good for him," Yu said.
"I'm totally freaked out," Yosuke said, "What kind of a bear is that?"

[North Shopping district, Inaba]

Yu, Yosuke and Kanji were all stood outside a store in the northern shopping district. Currently, they were all eating topsicles in order to cool down after spending so much time in the summer sun while waiting for the girls to come back. Yosuke and Kanji (though mostly Yosuke had whispered to him, interrogating him about his superhero identity)

"Mmm-MMMM! It's finally the season for topsicles again," Kanji said.

"Dude, how many are you gonna eat? You're gonna get a stomach ache." Kanji was eating one topsicle while holding another.

After a while, Chie and Yukiko finally showed up.

"Sorry, we're late…" Chie gasped.

"How'd it take you that long to find clothes for Ted?" Yosuke asked.

A blond boy walked up in a white silk shirt with the collar and first two buttons below open, exposing part of his chest. There were ruffles running down either side and there was a rose pinned to his chest. He wore black slacks that if it wasn't made of silk, it looked close. He was wearing black short boots.

"Whoa! Teddie, is that you?" Yosuke asked.

"Oui, Monsieur! How do I look?" Teddie replied while seeming to sparkle.

"C'est Magnifique!" Yu grinned.

"Don't encourage him…" Chie grimaced.

"This is wrong, look who are you really?" Yosuke asked in disbelief.

"Look I didn't believe it at first either but trust me it's definitely Teddie," Chie said. "In fact, he's so much like Teddie it's annoying."

"He went totally berserk in the ladies lingerie department" Yukio elaborated.

"You think so?" Teddie asked

"Listen, dude, if you're gonna unzip and turn into a human then you've gotta control your impulses okay?!" Chie snapped

"But it's my first time here," Teddie said looking down.

"Look we're not mad" Yukiko assured him "we're just giving you advice."

"Thank goodness I thought that maybe you two hated me now," Teddie said bouncing back from his depression pretty quickly.

"By the way, where's Teddie's other head?" Yosuke asked.
Yu looked confused for a moment before it dawned on him. Teddie's head was still back on the table at Junes.

Nanako looked around June's before spotting what she was after. Country pickled radishes.

"Yay, two left" Nanako reached for one before a hand grabbed both and shoved them in her basket.

"Hey kid they're mine you gotta problem with that?" he demanded causing Nanako to step back in fear "Don't be rude, you little brat. You do not want to make me mad. Cause if you do then"

Kubo reached for Nanako who was paralysed in fear, only to stop as a foot planted itself in his face sending him to the ground.

The offender was wearing an old style kimono coloured blue; it had loose arm sleeves that were draped over most of her arms, leaving her shoulders bare. She wore black shoes that served to increase her height ever so slightly, with indigo stockings over her legs. The most noticeable thing about her, however, was the pair of orange ears peeking out through a mass of pink hair and a fox tail poking from the rear of clothing. Completing the outfit was the domino mask covering her eyes.

"Hey, what the hell?" Kubo felt a weight on his chest and saw the girl was standing on him. "Get off me, you crazy bitch."

"Never fear citizens, be it criminals or bullies. Tamamo-chan partner of Space Samurai Y will always be here to help." Tamamo-chan declared placing her hand son her hips and laughing

"Nanako are you ok?" Yu asked appearing from down the aisle.

"Yeah I'm fine thanks, big bro" Nanako replied, "Who's this?"

"I am Tamamo-chan, superherione extraordinaire." Tamamo-chan declared "Fear not citizens, this fish-eyed creep shall bother you no longer."

"Oh wow, another superhero, that's so cool," Nanako exclaimed.

"Hey, you freeze!" Yu looked to see the detective Naoto running down the aisle making a beeline for the heroine, with Adachi in tow.

"Tamamo-chan cannot be chained by the likes of you." The Heroine cried pointing one finger at the sky.

She suddenly used one foot to kick off the ground causing Kubo to start sliding along recently waxed floor like a snowboard. Kubo screamed like a little girl as he slid at high speed along the floor and into a stack of tin cans knocking him out. Seconds before impact the girl jumped and landed in a very acrobatic fashion on one of the light fixtures on the ceiling.

"Come down here right now," Naoto ordered glaring at the newest masked hero in town.

"I shall not be caged!" Tamamo-chan yelled as she began leaping from fixture to fixture intent on making her escape.

"So, are you going to buy those radishes?" Yu asked pointing at the radishes which were now in Nanako's basket.
"Thanks, big bro," Nanako said looking up at him "But tell me what are you doing here?"

"This belongs to a friend of mine, he forgot it here," Yu stated showing her Teddie's head.

Fortunately, Nanako was not as easily shaken as other little kids and was not freaked out at the sight of it. He decided to escort Nanako around the store a bit more, in case that weirdo woke up and tried something.

"My beautiful head!" Teddie exclaimed gleefully taking it from Yu after he returned from the store. "Thank you, Sensei"

"Isn't it great that you're no longer empty?" Yu asked Teddie.

"Yes…But I still don't know who I am…" Teddie said sadly, before changing his expression as Yu put his hand on Teddie's shoulder.

"Let me help you with your search," Yu said, "We'll find your inner you."

"Geez, fine here," Yosuke handed Kanji a 1000 Yen bill. "Buy whatever Ice cream and candy you want…Just share it with Teddie."

"You're RICH!" Teddie exclaimed.

"We should get him to buy all our ice cream from now on." Angra Mainyu commented.

"He is the Prince of Junes!" Yu chuckled.

"We're going to head for the Tofu shop. Just wait here."

"I can't just take this from you Senpai!" Kanji said with surprise.

"Nice job Yosuke that was very mature," Chie said apparently trying to butter Yosuke up. "Oh…I get it…you may say differently, but you're still nice to Teddie."

"Huh?" Yosuke was confused that Chie was being so pleasant to him.

You know it's really nice to see you're grown up side." Chie nodded trying still trying to butter Yosuke up "Thank god you're an adult because adults never sweat the small stuff."

"You're up to something, so what is it?" Yosuke asked suspiciously sweat dropping at Chie's words.

"Well, you see Teddie did need clothes so we charged them to you," Chie admitted nervously

"WHAT?! Hold on, you mean I'm paying?! How the hell did I get volunteered for that?" Yosuke demanded angrily

"What else were we supposed to do?! That stuff was expensive, even for Junes!" Chie yelled getting just as angry.

"Woah hot stuff there's no need to fight over-" Teddie was cut off by Yosuke

"You shut up, this is all your stupid fault you know" Yosuke yelled before turning back to Chie.
"Come one let's go get some topsicles," Kanji said to Teddie.

"Ok give me one sec," Teddie said before handing Yu a pair of pink glasses "Here these are for Rise."

Teddie then ran off to catch up with Kanji.

"Ummm…it looks like they might be a while so why don't we go one ahead to the Tofu shop?" Yukiko asked

"Sure, let's just leave them be," Yu said joining Yukiko in walking away to check on Rise at the tofu shop.

[07/10 South Shopping District, Inaba]

As they walked and left Yosuke and Chie to argue, Yu and Yukiko stopped short when they saw a familiar face staring at the tofu shop. It was a boy wearing a blue hat that had been hanging around Inaba the past few months. As well as chasing down Space Samurai Y and the new Tamamo-chan.

"Hey that's the boy that was talking to Kanji both before and after he got kidnapped right." Yukiko pointed out.

"Yeah it is and we talking to him for clues when Kanji went missing," Yu reminded her out.

"So you did come here today," the boy said turning to face them when he noticed their presence "Chie and Yosuke stopped arguing when Yosuke noticed the boy and pointed it out to Chie.

"Here to try and win over Rise Kujikawa next?"

"Narukami" Yosuke and Chie ran over to see what was going on.

"Ah, so you're all here, I haven't properly introduced myself to you." the boy said. "Naoto Shirogane, detective, I'm currently helping the local police with the investigation of the serial murders."

"A bit short for a detective." Angra Mainyu commented.

"He could do with working out a bit more." Li Shuwen said.

"The police really are stumped if they're calling in outside help," Semiramis said.

"There's something that I'd like your take on if you don't mind."

"What is it?"

"The latest victim Kinshiro Morooka, I believe he was a teacher at your school?"

"Yeah, what of it?" Chie asked.

"The second victim Saki Konishi also attended your school. The media is way too focused on that right now but it's irrelevant. There is something far more important to consider."

"Like what? Stop beating around the bush." Yosuke demanded impatiently
"Your Mr Morooka was not on television before he died. Isn't that interesting?" Naoto said eyeing Yu suspiciously.

"I have a question for you detective," Yu said.

"What is it?" Naoto replied.

"What was the cause of death for Ms Yamano and Saki Konishi in the police report again?"

"…The cause was unknown." Naoto answered eyeing Yu.

"Indeed, but the town already knows that Mr Morooka died due to blunt force trauma to the back of the head. So…the killer went from using a method that uses no trace of how the victim died or even who was responsible, to something amateurish as blunt force and potentially leaving a murder weapon and fingerprints. Isn't that interesting?"

Naoto placed his hand to his chin and suddenly went into deep thought. Yu motioned at the others with his head and started walking away with them. Naoto still lost in thought began robotically walking in the other direction, the gears in his head still turning.

Eventually, when he was out of sight they were greeted by Rise.

"Hi everyone." She greeted them.

"Rise it's you, are you feeling better now?" Yukiko asked

"You bet she is!" Tamamo said popping up with an excited look on her face. "She's better than ok!"

" Do you guys mind if we go somewhere else?" Rise requested. "My grandma's taking care of the shop today and she might get worried if she overheard us talking."

"Sure lead the way," Yu said

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[Tatsuhime Shrine, North Shopping District, Inaba]

Rise had lead the group up the stairs and to the nearby Tatsuhime shrine, where they with the exception of Kanji and Teddie all gathered around Rise who was recounting what happened to her before winding up in the TV world.

'Nothing says inconspicuous like six teenagers talking at a shrine' Cu Chulainn said sarcastically 'Nope, nothing suspicious looking going on here'

"Oh man this sucks, so you have no idea who pushed you inside the TV?" Yosuke asked with a sigh.

"That's right I just remember waking up when I was on the other side." Rise explained

"That's the same story for Kanji and me too," Yukiko said

"It's fine, we expected as much." Yu said "Our killer is devious; he wouldn't let himself be caught so easily. He probably used chloroform or something along those lines to prevent any victims from identifying him. I think that proves that our killer knows that sending people through the TV isn't a foolproof way of killing them."
"Umm….listen" Rise nervously shuffled from one foot to the other.

Yu snapped to look at Rise, pulling out his detective mode.

"Thanks for saving my life guys," Rise said gratefully "I'm happier than I've been in forever."

"Huh…? Awww, you don't have to thank us!" Chie laughed nervously

"Dude...She's so cute...Man, it's finally hitting me that you're the real deal. You really are Risette."

Yosuke sighed going into fanboy mode.

"So what do you think? Can I help you all find this guy?" Rise asked.

"Sure I think it would be great to have you on the team," Yu said walking over to Rise and handing her the pair of glasses that Teddie gave him earlier.

"Thanks," Rise said taking the glasses and putting them on. "These are proof that I'm one you now, they're great just like the ones you guys were all wearing."

"Yup, you're officially one of the group," Yu said giving her a smile.

"I'm so glad we're all friends," Rise said

"Dude I'm friends with Risette finally my teen years don't totally suck." Yosuke cheered.

"Yo. How's it going?" Kanji greeted them "Dude, Teddie ate five topsicles, though if you count the ones I had before, that makes six, so I still win."

"No one asked..." Yosuke sighed

"We're all done talking already!" Suddenly Rise latched onto Yu's arm "Let's go, Senpai!"

"Where's Teddie?" Yosuke asked as Kanji returned.

"He's over there, finishing up his fifth Topsicle. What are we gonna do with him?"

"Well...I guess I'll take him home..." Yosuke sighed

[07/11 July, Class 2-2, Yasogami High, Inaba]

"So is the story true about King Moron…?" One girl asked as Yu, Chie, Yosuke and Yukiko sat in class.

"Yeah…I saw it on the news…" Another girl said.

"More importantly is it true that Risette has transferred to our school?" A boy asked eagerly

The door opened and a woman walked in, she was wearing slightly open button down blouse, tights, well-coiffed hair and high heels.

"Well now, good morning," A sultry voice said. "I'm Noriko Kashiwagi …I'm your new homeroom teacher and I'll be taking the place of the late Mr Morooka's, nice to meet ya. I don't mean to dive right but I should remind you that the finals are next week. Please don't let my bewitching looks distract you from your studying."
"From King Moron to Kashiwagi…It's scholastic whiplash!" Yosuke muttered to Yu.

'Meh, I've seen better' Cú Chulainn commented causing Chie and Yukiko to snicker.

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"Ugh! I don't know what to do about exams!" Yosuke complained.

"We can all study together, Yosuke" Yukiko suggested.

"Yukiko…" The team all stared at the voice.

"I remember him from yesterday," Yu said, stomping the urge to summon one of his Persona's in public to teach this guy a lesson if only to avoid causing a panic.

"You again…" Chie growled remembering him from a couple of months ago.

"Come on…come with me Yukiko…" the strange boy said, "Come to my world!"

He put his hand on Yukiko's arm, the girl tried to pull away but his grip was firm.

"Yo! Back off!" Chie yelled grabbing the boy's wrist causing him to release Yukiko, then Chie proceeded to flip him onto his back.

"AGH DAMN YOU!" the boy growled "Yukiko! Come on, come with me!"

"Um? Who are you?" Yukiko asked

"Sheesh, you've totally wiped this freak from your memory." Chie sighed

The strange boy looked crushed, that Yukiko had forgotten him.

"Are you messing with me?!!" The boy demanded "Huh?"

"What's going on? What do you want with Yukiko?" Kanji demanded walking over to his friends. Hercules appeared behind him in spirit form giving off an intimidating presence even to those who couldn't see him.

"You…You MORON!" the boy found his and ran off… "You'll regret this."

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[07/23 July, Dojima Residence, Inaba]

Two weeks passed and exams had finally finished much to everyone's relief. The team was all gathered in Junes to celebrate freedom from exams and the beginning of summer.

"AHHH Exams are over!" Yosuke sighed with relief.

"Speak for yourself, why do we need to learn English? If I have to I'll use auto-correct!" Rise said.

"I don't think that's the point" Kanji sighed.

"So Senpai…How did you do?" Rise asked.

"My pen wouldn't stop moving," Yu said confidently.
"Wow! That's Impressive!" Rise said with a smile.

"So where's Teddie?" Yukiko asked changing the subject.

"He's been staying at Yosuke's house as far I know," Chie said.

"Oh him, we have him working as a Mascot to earn his keep," Yosuke said pointing at the end of the food court. Teddie was in his bear costume handing out balloons to the kids, laughing and talking with them.

Teddie had handed out all the balloons and then noticed the others. He came over to them.

"What's up guys?" Teddie asked, "If you're hunting studs again I'm right here."

"That's IT! That subject is OFF LIMITS!" Yukiko cried in annoyance.

"This is really annoying why do we have to put up with these brats? Let's just steal some cash and pay the whiner rent that way." Angra Mainyu suggested

"That's a beary bad thing to do." Teddie replied

"I'm the Persona and you're acting like the fucking conscience, gimme a break." Avenger grumbled.

"Sorry Ted, this is more like a group date than some sleazy pick-up joint," Yosuke said. "There's even one girl for every guy."

"There'll never be a group date with you involved" Chie waved him off.

"Well even if did have a group data somehow or another King Moron would find out and start screaming at us," Yosuke said.

"But King Moron is gone…" Yu pointed out.

"He was an ass," Chie said.

"I didn't like King Moron either …but he didn't deserve to die like that."

"I don't think anyone liked that creep." Yosuke sighed. "But man, NO ONE deserves to go out like that."

"Alright everyone we've got to catch this guy, for King Moron's sake and everyone else's sake too," Yu said.

"Yeah, I know the Midnight Channel hasn't been airing lately, but we can't quit," Yosuke said.

"Oh I think you should," a voice said causing everyone to turn and see that it was Naoto.

"They know who the culprit is. You're done. Let the police do their job from here."

"They figured out who the murder is. Who is it?!" Chie said.

"They didn't choose to fill me in on that." Naoto stated, "but what I do know is that he is a high schooler just like we are."

"The killer's a high schooler?" Yukiko asked.
"You realise what this means. So the little game you were playing is now over…” Naoto said. Everyone, including Teddie, bristled at that.

"We weren't just playing around," Yu said narrowing his eyes at Naoto.

"Listen creep this was far from a game!" Rise snapped.

"So you don't deny your involvement?" Naoto questioned calmly.

"I don't care if you're a detective or" Rise said. "Especially when it seems like this is no more than a puzzle to you. You're the one who seems to be treating it like a game, not us."

"This game took the life of someone I cared about. We aren't just playing around" Yosuke said. "Besides we have a promise we have to keep."

"Y-Yosuke?!" Teddie's eyes grew teary.

"You think I'm playing?" Naoto said "maybe to a certain degree. I am"

"Tell me, what's a big detective doing slumming it here with us?" Yosuke asked teasingly. "Did they find the killer without you and tell you to hit the road?"

"They haven't caught the killer yet; they just know who it is and are after him." The detective paused. "It's sad that once they're through with me I have to move on, but that's the way it goes, I'm used to it."

"Yeah whatever" Kanji scoffed

"Well, I must be going now," with that Naoto turned and left.

"Is it true? That they have a suspect?" Rise asked.

"Does this mean that our group is finished?" Yukiko asked.

"Don't be so quick to jump to a conclusion, lass." Drake chimed in. "This is what I like to call, the calm before the storm."

"Remember what I said in Aiya's yesterday." Yu told them "There's still the possibility that their 'suspect' is a fraud. It's due to rain on Tuesday night, let's check the Midnight Channel just to be sure."

"He's right," Kanji said standing up "We have to check up just in case."

"So? Tuesday night then?" Yosuke asked looking around and getting nods.

Omake: Tamamo no Mae's Love Boot Camp.

When she got home Rise had sat down on her bed to relax. She picked up a short novel and began to read.

"WHAT WAS THAT?!" Rise let out a small scream as she tumbled off her bed in surprise as Tamamo popped up and yelled in her face.
"T-Tamamo what's wrong with you?" Rise demanded climbing back onto her bed and patting her chest to slow down her rapidly beating heart.

"I saw the way you were with Narukami," Tamamo said in a strangely serious voice, taking a seat on Rise's bed with her legs crossed as if leading a war council. "If you want to win the heart of a man like him you can't be all over him like that. Overly flirty behaviour like that will only get you friend-zoned because he'll think you're just doing it because it's your personality, AND I WILL NOT HAVE A MASTER BEING FRIEND-ZONED!"

Rise found herself unable to speak, she was surprised that Tamamo had not woken up the whole neighbourhood with that shout. It was then that Tamamo materialised and hauled Rise fully onto the bed and held her close.

"If you want to win him then you need to up your game." Tamamo growled, "Right now he's surrounded by a pair of cats who both have a head start on you."

"You mean Chie and Yukiko?" Rise asked finding herself caught up with the Caster's speech.

"Yes, that Yukiko has the shy, yet unreachable charm which attracts men like mountain climbers, and that Chie has a tomboyish charm that does attract certain men," Tamamo said examining Rise from different angles. "You need a charm of your own, the Tsundere option is out, that stopped being attractive to guys two decades ago, hmmm…. we'll think of something for your personal charm later. For now, we can work on your cooking."

"Why what's wrong with my cooking?" Rise asked nervously and flinched when Tamamo got in her face.

"What's not wrong? For one it's way too spicy, you use so much to cover up the ingredients you dump in at random." Tamamo scolded her before grabbing her arm and dragging her towards the door. "Come on!"

"Wait where are we going?" Rise cried.

"I'm going to teach you how to cook properly, one of the ways to a man's heart is through his stomach and luckily for you, I was one of the best a when it came to cooking food in the emperor's court."

"But it's eleven o'clock at night!" Rise protested.

"Details!" Tamamo snapped not relenting and dragging Rise downstairs to cook.
[07/27 July, TV World]

On Tuesday night the team had watched the Midnight Channel, and as expected the suspected killer, whom they knew as the strange boy called Mitsuo Kubo had appeared taunting them to come and get him. Rise was staring deeply into Tamamo's mirror using it to try and divine his location.

"Rise, did you find him yet?" Yu asked.

"Yeah…He's that way." Rise said pointing to a path that leads east from the exit.

"Wow, Rise-chan! Your sniffer is better than mine!"

"Dude, you're not due to work as Mascot. Why the hell are in you in costume?"

"I told you it's because I'm more comfortable wearing my fur over here!" Teddie yelled at Yosuke. "I swear you are one stupid bear!"

"All right, Geez!"

"All right…let's get going," Yu said cutting across everyone.

"Yeah lets do this."

"Hey dude, you looked out it for a few seconds there whats up?" Yosuke asked.

"I was thinking about a story I heard." Yu replied with a shrug.

Yosuke seemed to accept the answer and it was technically true, he had been thinking about a story, as he'd been telling it to Margaret.
After stepping into the Velvet Room once more taking a moment as Rise searched for Mitsuo Kubo using the mirror, Yu noticed that the room was empty once again and Margret was by herself.

"Hello again." Margret greeted Yu with a thoughtful look on her face. "I have been pondering about the bonds between family, according to some they are supposed to be some of the strongest, but those bonds can lead to some of the greatest tragedies which bring great sorrow to many. That being the case are the bonds of family strong or are they just like any other bond?"

Yu sat for a few moments in silence, truthfully his own relationship with his parents had been tense ever since they gotten rid of Alice. Though they were ignorant of his reasons for not being pleased with them he'd made them assume it was because they always moved around so much.

"Let me tell you story that involves the bonds between family. Long ago a girl was born in Antium known in modern times as Anzio and Nettuno on the fifteenth of December in thirty-seven AD, her name was Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus and she would become infamous as a tyrant..."

The team eventually found itself in front of a pixelated castle that seemed to be like a 16-bit style video game from the late eighties. There was a sign that said above the entrance that said "Void Quest" and a retro game melody played like background music. Below the title sign was another that read New Game/Load/Option

"What is this?" Yukiko asked "A Game?"

"He did say 'Catch me if you can' so he might see this thing as a lame ass game," Kanji said.

"OHHH, now I'm pissed! I sentence him to a kick in the face!" Chie growled extending her foot in a kicking motion.

"We should not underestimate him." Diarmuid warned.

"Indeed." Gawain said agreeing with the other knight. "These dungeons are often reminiscent of the mental state of the person in question, If this boy is no longer able to discern fiction from reality we could be in trouble, the shadows have been getting stronger and more numerous even as your prana reserves have grown."

"Danger is half the fun of these dungeons, no adventure would be worth going on without some danger." Drake commented with an excited smirk "I wonder if we could plunder some treasure while we're there."

"When we saw him on the Midnight Channel, behind that childish exterior there was definitely a threat of death. He is no assassin but he has definitely killed, I can sense it." Li Shuwen stated.

They went into the game and it was modelled like a castle, as the team walked through it whole place looked like a retro video game, everything was pixelated even the doors. As they advanced a few text boxes even popped up occasionally.

"I know the creep from the midnight channel is in here..." Chie growled.

None of them seemed noticed the dice shadows that were appearing from out of the walls behind them.

"You wanna mumble a challenge to me again? With those beady little fish eyes you got? Come on
I dare ya!" Kanji demanded, Hercules letting out a roar of challenge along with him.

As the moved forward a text box suddenly popped up into their vision.

"What the hell is this?" Kanji asked.

Inside the text box was written two options.

Begin a new Quest

End your Quest

A cursor selected the first option, as they continued walking the box closed itself but another quickly took its place.

Please enter your name:

Mitsuo

The name of the person they were after wrote itself inside the text box without any input from them.

"All geeks love little game time…" Yosuke said.

"And all girls love Teddie!" Teddie said. "INSTALL"

Snatching his card out of the air a red magic circle formed under Teddie and released a burst of prana which engulfed his form. When the smoke cleared they saw that the bear costume vanished and now he was in his human form, but his skin was slightly darker and the curse-tattoos from Avenger covered his body, the sword breakers Tawrich and Zarich where in each hand both looked like the claws of a wild animal.

"I always wanted to do that! How'd I look wasn't I awesome?" Teddie asked before being tackled from behind by a dice shadow causing him to fall to the ground and the team to sweatdrop.

"Hey!" Teddie growled getting up and pointing Tawrich at the shadow "Attacking someone from behind is a cowardly thing to do! Take this!"

Teddie attacked clawing the shadow apart but was caught off guard when another one

"Do you think Teddie will be fine by himself?" Yu said.

"He'll be fine," Rise said.

"Hey…" Yukiko said began. "Chie and I were talking about it and about what you said at Aiya's do you think this guys is a fake?"

"The suspect is a male high school student" Yu said with a nagging feeling of doubt in the back of his mind. "The police caught onto him after he turned himself in for killing King Moron and apparently the other two as well."

"He's approached Yukiko twice now, each time he was standing at the school gates waiting for her." Chie said.

"He poked his head into my grandma's shop once and started talking, he went on and on about the biker gangs and how they're all toothless unless they've got their whole gang behind them." Rise put in.
"GRRR I WAS NEVER IN A BIKER GANG" Kanji growled

"Take this! And this! And that!" Teddie yelled as he clawed apart some of the dice while other simply self-destructed as soon as he got close.

"If he's the real deal then we'll soon find out." Yosuke said.

"Even if he is the real killer we still don't know what his motives are or why targeted people who showed up on the TV" Yukiko pointed out.

"We'll find out the truth when we locate him, it should be easier than you think to tell if he's real killer or not." Yu said

Teddie growled and charged at the dice to attack himself only for the start exploding and blasting him to one another only to explode and send him to another dice, much like a beachball.

"Alright then let's go find this loser and grill his ass" Chie said clenching her fist.

"Yeah…” Yukiko said.

Feeling pumped everybody installed their Persona's. Yosuke got a slight nosebleed at the amount of cleavage Yukiko was showing, and Kanji had brought a spare shirt due to his regular shirt vanishing when he installed Hercules. Yu decided to Install Nero, he was now wearing a high-class elegant crimson-white garment, like something a noble of old would wear. It had no without buttons for the upper part, somehow showing a lot of his toned chest without falling off, much to Rise's delight also causing Chie and Yukiko to go red.

Upon locating the stairs and going to the second floor another Text box popped up, this time with someone speaking.

*How dare you stand against me for being a rotten orange! I'll make a worthless human like you taste endless pain! Take this!*

*Critical hit! Punishing hit! Mitsuo has been knocked down...*

"You know it's becoming pretty obvious that this Kubo kid is more than just 'insane', but 'broken' in a pretty dark way." Angra Mainyu said with a creepy smile on his face causing the others to shudder.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

As expected the team met resistance in the form of shadows as the advanced through the various floors, and as was the pattern the shadows in this dungeon were even more powerful than the ones in the previous dungeons.

At first the shadows started off easy, large groups of lustful snakes which Kanji and Chie easily dispatched with their fists.

However as the team went up floor by floor they were swarmed by even more powerful shadows. Including strangely a large group of rare golden Shadows called Supreme Hand. All of which tried to overrun the group by summoning Platinum Dice shadows, but thankfully Drake was quick enough to obliterate them and the Supreme Hands, which didn't become wisps of smoke when they died like other shadows instead their bodies turned into piles of golden coins.

"See I told you this would be worth it!" Drake exclaimed materialising herself and rushing up to
the piles of coins. She grabbed a handful and held them allowing them to slip through her fingers.

"Dude, is that real gold?" Yosuke asked breathlessly as the others all gasped at the sight.

Drake looked at one of the coins in her hand and seemed or weigh it for a second before putting it in her mouth and biting down on it, when she took the coin out of her mouth she inspected it thoroughly much like a detective would look at the piece of evidence.

"It's real!" She announced her eyes lighting up with glee.

"How much do this is all worth?" Kanji wondered.

"Let's see seven piles, Yosuke can split his share with Teddie..." Rise mumbled ignoring Yosuke's indignant 'Hey!' "Enough that if we fenced it all and put the money together we could buy our own private island still have enough left over to build a summer mansion on it with all the luxuries we could ever want."

"Man this is our lucky day!" Chie chuckled with glee.

"How are you so good at valuation Rise?" Yukiko asked.

"I got sent lots of presents from fans hoping to score a date with the idol Risette." Rise explained "Some of the things I got which looked homemade I tended to keep but the other stuff that I could tell was bought in a store I sold, I learnt the value of precious metals so that I knew I was going to get stiffed on the price."

"So how are we gonna carry all this?" Kanji asked.

"Rise can you?" Yu motioned towards the gold with his head.

"Sure." Rise replied grabbed her mirror and aiming it at the gold, a white light shone from the mirror and suddenly it began sucking up all the golden coins into itself like a vacuum cleaner, within moments all the coins were cleaned up. "This thing has a handy little storage space, I have some contacts who can fence this stuff for us at a good price, gold is pretty valuable these days."

"Our luck is getting better!" Yosuke cried jumping up with joy.

"Don't jinx it, man." Kanji said with a sigh, he knew that Yosuke was going to jinx them.

Eventually the group found themselves on the confusing seventh level, which had crossroads that lead in opposite directions both of which were seemingly dead ends. When they touched one of the walls of dead ends the team found themselves teleported to another crossroads.

Eventually they found themselves all rounded a corner with the tank like shadows hot on their tails and saw a door. Going inside they found a large room with a big chest near the back. However just as they took a step forward a pair of black hand shaped shadows appeared.

"What the hell is with these two?" Yosuke asked.

"Killing hands." Rise replied looking into her mirror. "They're strong, really durable and-"

Both hands suddenly shot at Yosuke, one held him in the air by Gae Dearg while the other made itself into a fist and punched the boy in the crotch.

"...fast." Rise deadpanned as the shadows dropped Yosuke as the boys winced.
"Why…why does everybody go for my balls?" He groaned grasping his crown jewels painfully.

"You wanna piece me? Bring it on!" Kanji growled gripping his axe-sword tight as one of the shadows clenched into a fist and seemed to imitate a boxer hopping around an invisible ring while the other darted away into the shadows of the room.

"Hey where did the other one go?" Chi cried looking around for any sign of the second one while Kanji tried hitting the Killing Hand in front of him.

"Damn it, it's running all over the place." Rise whined "It's moving from the walls to the ceiling and to other walls again, it won't stay….wait it stopped?"

"Where is it?" Yu asked her.

"It's…..Kanji behind you!" Rise called out to the other boy in warning, however it came too late as the other shadow now in the shape of a fist charged Kanji dodging shots from Yukiko and even briefly giving her 'the finger' before becoming a fist again as it slammed into his back breaking his guard. The other Hand quickly capitalised on this and punched Kanji across the face, the other hand joined and both rapidly punched Kanji making him dizzier and dizzier.

"Hang on Kanji I'm comi-AGH!" Teddie was cut off as one of the Killing Hands made itself into a fist again and slammed into Kanji sending him crashing into Teddie and ploughing both of them into a wall.

"Kanji, Teddie!" Chie cried out.

"Are you two ok?" Yukiko asked worriedly

"Do…we look ok?" Kanji snapped as he fell out of the wall with Teddie falling on top of him.

"My head is spinning." Teddie groaned unable to stand.

"Jeez, no need to be a jerk about it Moronji." Rise sighed before looking at the shadows again who were now before Chie and Yukiko….making a rather lewd gesture.

"Er…..what are they doing?" Chie asked the gesture lost on her. "What?" Chie asked as Yukiko blushed, while Rise gave her a raised eyebrow "What am I missing?"

Chie turned red as a tomato as Yukiko whispered the gesture's meaning to the meat lover.

"Alright you're in for it now!" Chie yelled furiously charging at one of the shadows.

The other Hand stopped as a shot glanced it, causing it to face Yukiko.

"I think it's time for you to disappear now." Yukiko said shooting at it again.

Yu, Rise and the now recovered Yosuke sweat dropped at the scene which was quite comical. The Killing Hands kept dancing around the room dodging the majority of the attacks aimed for them, that's not to say the girls missed entirely they did land some blows but most of them were small glancing blows.

"This is ridiculous." Drake sighed.

"Indeed, my student had let her anger take control." Li Shuwen sighed apparently disappointed in the cartoonish scene, the two girls were attacking the shadows which weaved and danced around them all while occasionally taunting them by giving them 'the finger'.
"It's hard for anyone to shoot straight while angry." Drake shook her head.

"Yosuke I have a plan." Yu told the other boy after taking time to examine the scene. "I'm going to get them to overlap when they do, nail them in place with your spears and I'll finish them off."

"On it."

"Chie attack its left side; Yukiko shoot it's right!" Yu yelled orders at the girls.

The two broke out of their anger enough to follow the commands and as expected the shadows dashed away, the moment they overlapped Yosuke saw his chance and tossed Gae Buidhe and Gae Dearg each spear nailing a finger of both shadows holding them firmly in place.

Now with both wide open Yu inhaled then exhaled charging prana into Aestus Estus. He moved the sword in a circular motion, becoming engulfed in flames as the motion completed.

"Fax Caelestis!" Yu charged slashing both shadows in one swift motion.

Flames erupted from the wound incinerating both hand shadows, leaving only the two spears which held them in place.

"Not bad Praetor, but not perfect you need to add more flair to it add showmanship to it." Nero chided him.

As Yosuke went to recover his spears there was a loud clinking sound got everyone's attention, Kanji now having recovered went to the chest which was the source and saw that the lock had opened up on it. He opened it up and reached inside pulling out a strange black sphere.

"The hell is this thing?"

"It's probably something important later on" Yosuke said "if this place is based on a game then we might need to open a door or something."

"Alright I'll keep it safe then" Kanji said pocketing the orb.

"So what now?" Chie asked

"Let's take a break in here for a while" Yu said "Then when we're rested up we'll keep going."

Everyone let out a sigh of relief and sat down to rest.

Eventually the team finished their break and got to the tenth level and a pair of double doors presented themselves up ahead. A red Warning! text flashed and buzzed at the doors. Yu presented the orb they received the doors began opening up.

"W-WHO ARE YOU!" a familiar voice demanded.

"Who am I? I am nothing, and you are me" a voice that sounded emotionally detached said.

"SHUT UP, IT WAS ME I DID IT, WHADDYA SAY TO THAT?"

"That guy sounds like the guy from the Midnight Channel doesn't he?" Chie pointed out

"I feel nothing." the emotionless voice replied.
"Hey look up ahead" Rise pointed through the doors that which had now fully opened.

"No even suspected I did it! That's why I had to kill the third one then they noticed me."

Yu and the team all ran inside and saw that they were in a strange pixelated arena type area.

"I fucking killed him!" Mitsuo yelled with a tone of desperation.

Yu noted that Mitsuo was desperate to convince his counterpart, clearly his shadow and most likely himself that he killed his victims, which didn't make much sense, it raised more questions than answers.

The other Kubo was sitting in front of an old-style TV, playing a video game on a console of some sort. As they entered the place they were in looked kind of like an arena or coliseum.

"I don't care what some poser like you has to say…just get out of my sight!" Mitsuo roared angrily.

"You still won't accept me will you?" The other Mitsuo said an orange aura gathering around it "I am a shadow come to me. I shall put an end to your emptiness…"

"Damn it, this was bound to happen…” Yosuke sighed disappointed, but unsurprised.

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[07/27 July, Junes Food Court, Inaba]

"Listen up, everybody! I want to go to Yuki's Inn!" Teddie said. "Parties! Hot Springs! Yukatas! Geishas! Mt. Fuji! FUN FUN FUN!"

Everyone sweat dropped at Teddie’s declaration, they had all gathered at the Junes Food Court after solving the case.

"Yes it does sound like fun, but maybe another time…” Yukiko said sounding uncomfortable

"Its tourist season being summer and all," Chie said.

"So it's a no then…?" Teddie asked sadly.

"Maybe later…” Yukiko said patting Teddie on the head.

"Let's go to Narukami’s place instead" Yosuke suggested.

"That sounds perfect" Rise cooed. "I'd love to see your place."

"We can let Nanako in on the fun too" Yosuke proposed.

"Yeah, she'd like that" Yu replied with a smile

"Let's take it one step further and cook her up a big feast" Yukiko suggested.

"Nice!” Kanji apparently liked the idea. "Does that mean that you're really good cooks?" He asked Yukiko and Chie.

"Yeah of course we are?" Both girls replied, sweat dropping and smiling nervously.

"Have you two SERIOUSLY forgotten about the whole school camping fiasco?" Yosuke gave them both hard stare.
"Hey! I'm pretty good cook too you know!" Rise said. "What do you say I cook something special up for you?"

"Can you cook better than I do?" Yu asked the Idol with a challenging smile.

"Genius!" Teddie exclaimed loudly "I just thought of a beary good idea! Whaddya say we do a rice omelette cook off with everyone?"

[07/27 July, Junes Grocery Department, Dojima Residence, Inaba]

"Is that foie gras?!" Yosuke asked surprised at what Rise had in her hand.

"If you want to make a truly special rice omelette the foie gras is essential." Rise replied.

"That would be special..." Yu stated.

"I have a bad feeling about this..." Yosuke whispered.

"Ok so this cook off will just be between you the three girls?" Kanji asked

"Yeah" Yu confirmed "And Nanako will be the judge"

"Since we all know that I'm going to win, this contest is just for show right?" Rise asked smugly

"Enjoy being smug while you can because you're about to go down" Chie growled clenching her fist.

"I'll finish you in one blow" Yukiko said drawing her thumb across her throat in a cut throat motion.

"Whoa this is going to get pretty intense" Kanji chuckled "I see some serious sparks flying over there."

Later on at the Dojima residence Chie, Rise and Yu had finished cooking their omelettes for some reason Yukiko was not present.

"Hey where is Yukiko?" Yosuke asked curiously.

"She's not here; apparently her family needed her to help out at the inn, so she had to run home."

"Aw man for real?" Yosuke sighed dejectedly.

"Maybe we should celebrate closing the case later then," Yu suggested.

"Yeah that'd be best," Kanji said.

"So does mean the cook off is cancelled too?" Yosuke asked.

"Aw I was looking forward to bonding with everyone too," Teddie sighed.

"Wait...Where did all these rice omelettes come from then?" Kanji asked pointing out the rice omelettes that were on the coffee table.
"Yu made every single one of them!" Rise smiled.

"That's sensei for ya!" Teddie said, in awe.

"Can we start eating them now big bro?" Nanako asked.

"Yeah, dig in before it gets too cold," Yu said.

"Well, then enough of this silly chit chat…" Chie grinned picking up her spoon.

"Let's dig In!" everyone said in unison.

They all started eating.

"This is good!" Nanako said.

"Yeah, it's beary good!" Teddie agreed.

"Ennh…It's about average," Kanji said, a little downcast.

"Yeah, it does taste average…" Chie commented.

"Dude you've got some seriously mad skills" Yosuke said.

"You cool with this?" Rise asked. "Senpai, this is just average, so the party's not picking up like it should…"

"I put wasabi in one of them..." Yu stated hoping to get everyone to liven up.

Everyone gasped and looked at him as if he had just confessed to the killings.

"So it's like Russian roulette with Rice Omelettes?!" Chie said nervously.

"Jeez, Partner! What would you do if Nanako got the one with Wasabi in it?!" Yosuke said.

"I was okay!" Nanako said happily.

"Okay…raise your hand if you got the spicy one!" Kanji asked.

No one raised their hand.

"Huh…Guess no one noticed…" Yu said.

"Ehhh, this party just doesn't have its zing…" Yosuke said, uncomfortably.

They finished their omelettes and then drank sodas.

"We may have had to postpone the celebration party, but I'm still stoked we did it…" Yosuke said.

"Yeah… we caught the culprit…" Yu said.

"We've been through so much it'll be kind of nice to go back to our normal routine …" Chie said.

"I just want to get that icky stuff out of my mind…" Rise said.

"We're all going to be going our separate ways…" Teddie said.
"I guess the group's breaking up" Kanji sighed.

"No," Yu said suddenly. "Let's keep meeting up."

"Yeah good plan" Yosuke said.

"Yeah, fantastic!" Chie agreed.

They all laughed.

[08/28, Junes Food Court]

One month later the team were all having lunch in the food court when the discussion had turned to the topic of the murders.

"So hey, anything new going on with the case?" Kanji asked.

"I haven't heard anything since they caught that Kubo kid" Yu replied.

"No one mentions it anymore, It's like everyone's forgotten about it even happened" Rise remarked.

"I'm so sorry…I know that the celebration party keeps getting postponed because of me…" Yukiko said apologetically.

"It's okay it's not your fault." Chie said reassuringly to Yukiko. "Everybody's got stuff on their plate."

"Yeah. I'm swamped with my part time job".

"Oh jeeze, I really should get going now… see you later ok" Yukiko sighed as she read a message on her phone.

"See ya!" Yosuke and Chie said.

"Her inn must be busy…" Yu observed.

"I'm glad things are back to normal," Kanji said.

"Aw man..." Chie looked upward and stretching her arms behind her head. "Summer vacation's almost over and we never planned for anyplace cool to go."

"Yeah...that's too bad..." Yu said.

"Hey why don't we all get together and go the beach next year! Whaddya say Yu?" Chie asked cheerfully.

"Won't work Chie..." Yosuke hissed.

Chie was confused, and then she realized her mistake.

"Oh yeah I forgot" She said.

"Yu won't be here...You're won't be here next year..." Rise said, dejectedly.

"Yeah..." Yu sighed feeling depressed at being reminded of that.
“So what about summer homework?” Chie asked laughing nervously and trying to change the subject "Have any of you guys done that yet?"

The group seemed to lighten up at the change of subject except for Yu who had a bad feeling.

[9/24 Marukyu Tofu, Inaba]

Due to lack of business our store will be closing down. Thank You for all your years of support. Sincerely, Marukyu Tofu , The sign said.

"Wow Partner, guess the rumours were true then..." Yosuke said. "Did Rise say anything to you about this?"

"No..."Yu said, softly pounding his fist once on the door. "No answer..."

Yu opened his phone. "Rise hadn't shown up for our group meetings lately so I wondered if something was up."

Yu tried dialling Rise's number.

"The number you have dialled is no longer in service..." the automated operator replied.

"Girls don't make any sense...I can't believe she'd take off without telling us anything" Yosuke said.

"I'm sure she had her reasons..." Yu replied.

"No...it just goes to show that the only ones who thought we were friends was us."

Yu gasped at that, as it sent a chill down his spine.

"Let's go..." Yosuke said.

[10/4, Aiya's Chinese Restaurant, Inaba]

"We keep meetin' over those murders, but there's nothing to talk about," Kanji complained to Naoki.

"Really?" Naoki said.

"Yeah, and it's a hassle tryin' to stay nice all the time about it..." Kanji replied.

Yu had been walking by on the street and was about to open the door when he heard what Kanji had said.

"Seriously...you two sound like an old couple who's gotten bored with each other..." Naoki remarked.

Kanji spat out his food in disbelief. "Look ya douche! I was asking for some serious advice not a smart ass response."

"Sorry, Kanji! My bad..." Naoki said with an uneasy laugh.
Another wave of sorrow overcame Yu as he kept walking.

[10/13, Yasogami High, Inaba]

"Hey… There they are…" Yosuke said, looking into the library. Yu saw at a table was Kou, Daisuke, Yukiko, and Chie.

"What are they doing?" Yu asked.

"Studying for exams…" Yosuke started to enter. "Hey let's ask Yukiko if we borrow the notes she took in class?"

"…..well"

"Is something wrong?"

"No… I'm fine," Yu lied

"well whatever dude."

Later on at home, Yu and Nanako were eating dinner. Dojima was at work and the two cousins were watching the TV.

"Big bro…?" Nanako asked.

"Yes…?" Yu said politely.

"No one comes around anymore… Wouldn't it be nice if everyone came around to play?"

Yu slightly gasped at hearing what she had said.

[10/18, Junes Food Court]

Yu was at the food court looking at messages on his phone. He checked one from Chie.

Sorry Yu, but I'll pass on today's meeting. Yukiko said she can't make it either.

"Of course not…" Yu grumbled, putting away his cell.

"No one's coming today?" Yosuke asked, Yu saw that he was wearing his Junes apron.

"No," Yu replied.

"Sorry man. I gotta work…" Yosuke said.

"What about Teddie?" Yu asked suddenly. "Don't you want to go back there and see?"

"You mean in the TV? Nah not me I'm done with that. I've got some seriously bigger fish to fry dude. I gotta start thinking about college and stuff. So what are you going to do about entrance exams?" Yosuke asked
"I don’t know yet.” Yu replied.

"Are you sure that's smart?" Yosuke asked. "Shouldn't you start thinking about that now? so you can be ready for when you go back to your old school?"

Yu had nothing to say and felt even worse at the way Yosuke had casually mentioned that subject.

"Yikes I've really got to get back to work. Later!" Yosuke waved him off and walked away.

Yu just looked after him total disbelief, everything seemed to just be falling apart, like everything they'd done together was meaningless.

Later that night the clock struck Midnight, and even as Yu stared at it the TV did not come on, it was like the Midnight Channel had never existed. He walked over to the TV and put his hand to the screen…..but his hand did not pass through there was no rippling like water it was like the other side didn't exist at all.

"But why not?" Yu wondered before a creepy voice cut in.

"I have nothing." Yu looked to the side and out the darkness was a floating baby with computer scripts encircling its head.

"That's a shadow, but why?"

"Everything is Nothing." It stated.

"What is it doing on this side?" Yu cried to himself, as far he knew Shadows shouldn't exist in the real world.

"Friendship is an illusion, you're on your own and you're empty!"

"Install!" Yu tried to summon Gawain's power but it wouldn't work, the Tarot Card appeared but was blank. He tried again, with Cu Chulainn this time but again nothing, no rush of power and the card was blank. "What the hell happened my Arcana?"

"You have no power, you have nothing at all, you are empty just like me." The shadow told him.

"Enough, you're wrong!" Yu cried desperately trying to stave off the despair that threatened to consume him.

The shadow gave out a cry and floated over to him, it reached for his throat to strangle him….and cried out in pain flinching back as a large slash appeared on its right arm.

"Stay away from my father." The voice belonged to the Persona Jack the Ripper who instead of being a man as one would expect was in fact a little girl.

She couldn't be older than eleven years old and had white hair, cut short and uneven along with silver coloured eyes and as the group noticed at least four sheathed blades behind her back. She was wearing a sleeveless black jacket with a belt going across it just below her small chest. On her legs were thigh high stockings and on her feet were dark purple shoes. Bandages were wrapped around hands; belts were on her arms as well tied just above the bandages.

"Jack…” Yu breathed out the name of the Hanged Man Arcana Persona.
"We're all here." Yu looked to see Cu Chulainn leaning against the door. "You didn't think we'd seriously just abandon you now huh?"

The shadow floated back and suddenly flinched as it bumped into Lancelot who roared at it. It looked around saw that they were all here; Gawain near the TV, Medea and Atalanta near the window with Neor draped out across the sofa, Both Joan's standing next to each other in front of the shelf, Semiramis and Nursery Rhyme on either side of Yu, while Medusa stood dutifully next to the TV. All of them had their respective weapons ready.

"Impossible, you cannot be here the connection…"

"Yes your puny barrier was easy to break through when he started calling out to us." Medea stated cutting the shadow off. "Did you truly think that a pitiful mental barrier like that could keep out a Magus from 'The Age of the Gods' such as myself?"

"His hold over you has cracked, now break it and go back." Medusa said standing aside revealing the TV behind her.

Yu letting his instincts guide him went over and placed his hand on the TV which suddenly cracked, yet the cracks did not stop at the TV they spread to the room and the world itself until the cracks had spider webbed all over the place.

"See ya on the other side kid." Cu Chulainn chuckled as the world shattered like glass and everything fell away.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

As he walked through the main entrance of the school alone. Yosuke thought about how his life seemed had hit an all-time low. No one seemed to care about the case anymore and his grades kept slipping no matter how hard he studied and now everyone just seemed to be drifting apart.

"Looks like the exam scores are in, aw man better bite the bullet." Yosuke groaned and approached the board.

There was his name in Dead Last, Hanamura Yosuke. In their entire grade, he was dead last. Looking up he heard familiar giggling. At the top of the stairs near the windows was Narukami with Rise, Chie and Yukiko all hanging off him and laughing with him, naturally he’d aced the test and was first out the entire year with notes for special honours attached to his name.

"This sucks." He complained as made to walk away, Yosuke paused as the girls giggling and laugh had just stopped. Looking at the scene again he saw the girls slowly fade away as a bright light began streaming in through the windows behind Yu who was now halfway down the stairs and holding a hand out to him with a gentle smile.

As Yosuke made to take Yu's hand his Persona card LANCER appeared just above Yu's hand. Yosuke's eyes slowly widening as he reached for Yu's hand the realisation dawning on him. As he took the hand the card began to spin faster and the light from the windows become so bright that it was impossible to see.

"Of course...this is all...!"

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

Nearly a year had passed since the battle with Kubo and for one Yukiko Amagi things had gone completely downhill. First, her mother withdrew her from school and kept her working full time to
become the new manager of the Amagi Inn. Then her friends had slowly drifted apart with
Narukami being taken away early by his parents presumably to live with some new relative.

As she took away some plates that once had steak on them she thought about Chie and how her
mother had banned Yukiko from seeing her again calling her a bad influence. Without Rider or her
friends to talk to her courage to just leave the inn had crumbled to dust.

Looking back at the customer who plate it was the door she gasped, it was Yu talking to some other
person she assumed was a relative or something. Yukiko tried to call out to him, to say something,
anything but it became caught in her throat. He glanced over at her but didn't show even a hint of
recognition as his gaze crossed her. Yukiko felt her heart sink, her feelings crushed she barely
acknowledged her mother snatching the plate away and dragging the girl away by the sleeve.

"You see one day that this is for your own good as well as the good of the inn." Her mother told
her as she shoved Yukiko into her room. "You need let go of this nonsense about leaving, out there
you have no future here your future is waiting for you on a silver platter."

With that the door was shut and the clicking of the lock being sealed resounded as her mother's
footsteps faded away Yukiko slumped against the wall, her vision blurring as hot tears fell from her
eyes and rolled down her face and into her hands which were clasped on her knees.

"W-w-w-why! Why have things gone so wrong?" She wondered tearfully "Everyone's just broken up,
I can't talk to Chie and Rider is gone, someone please-"

Yukiko was cut off by three loud knocks coming from her door.

"What?" Yukiko found herself wiping her tears away with her sleeve and looking at the door.

Now from the cracks of the door, a gentle white light was streaming in. The door frame parts of the
wall near it seemed to become translucent as the white light streamed over them. Hesitantly Yukiko
walked over to the door but stopped before it as the knocks resounded again.

"T-the doors locked I can't-" Yukiko was cut off by the three knocks again as if whoever was on the
other side disagreed.

"But the lock-" Three knocks interrupted her again.

Yukiko noticed that the knocks, while certainly loud never seemed to get impatient, they stayed at
the same pace and sound level. Finally, the girl gave in and placed her hand on the door handle
intent on proving to whoever on the other side that the door was...locked? Yukiko was shocked as
she met no resistance when she turned the handle and no sound of jostling, instead the door gently
swung open.

"I see the lock, it never really existed did it?" she asked Yu who was standing on the other side of
the door, white light coming from behind him, a gentle smile on his face, as she took his hand she
noticed her Persona card RIDER floating above their joined hands, the white light completely
consumed the Inn leaving no trace of the false world.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

Six months had passed for Teddie since that battle against the Fish Eyed Boy's shadow. It
happened without warning, the Fog crossed over into Sensei's world but this time, it was different,
the Sky changed having the same red and black pattern as his own world and wherever Teddie
went there were shadows.
Nearly all of the Shadows he had seen were in their blob forms only changing into battle forms when Teddie tried threatening them. Other than that they all seemed to ignore his presence. But his friend they were all different. Appearance wise they resembled themselves before they rejected their shadows, a mirror image of their true forms. Naturally, upon seeing them the bear had tried to get their help but none of them seemed to even acknowledge him.

Yukiko he had found in the shattered remains of the building he presumed to be her Inn, there were only ruins and debris of it left with some blob shadows skittering through occasionally while Yukiko sat atop a makeshift throne talking about a Prince and being saved.

Chie had taken over the school, she had forced the lesser shadows into a makeshift throne while ordering the others around and kicking them violently when they made any mistakes. When Teddie tried to talk to her he received a harsh kick out of the school gates but other than that no response.

Yosuke meanwhile was hanging around in Junes but instead of working he had built an arena out of the Aisles and enticed the shadows into fighting each other for his amusement. Like the girls, he too didn't speak to Teddie not even recognising his existence.

Kanji meanwhile was easier to find than the others he could found charging around the town in nothing but a bath towel with several shadows slithering behind him. Occasionally he stopped to strike poses and give speeches to his audience about acceptance who all posed with him. Just like the others talking was futile it was like Teddie didn't exist to him.

Rise too like Kanji was fairly east to find she was in her grandma's tofu shop or what used to be a Tofu Shop. Now it had been trashed and changed into a club resembling the dungeon she had made for herself back in the TV World. Music played in the background as Rise would strip for her audience of shadows or try on skimpy outfits. Teddie had made the mistake of trying to stop her during one such session and was violently ejected by the shadows.

"How did this happen?" Teddie wondered to himself sadly as he wandered up the hill towards a park. "Why did the fog turn everyone into shadows, oh where is Sensei? Is he like the others? He's my last hope."

Teddie had tried summoning his Persona but even with the world like this he couldn't summon Avenger in this world. This realisation had led to a lot of bruises and injuries while trying to fight the shadows.

"Huh is someone there?" Teddie asked upon arriving at the hill overlooking the town and seeing a human shaped figure, the shape was unmistakable it was... "Sensei!"

A beam of white light from the sky illuminated him but it was definitely his sensei. Yu turned around and to Teddie's shock he was not like a shadow but his normal self, his grey eyes and smile directed as Teddie, a hand outstretched, the AVENGER card floating gently above his wrist.

"Sensei please, I need your help." Teddie cried as he desperately ran towards Yu and grabbed the offered hand, upon doing so the light grew brighter and brighter before enveloping everything and shattering the illusion.

A few months had passed since Kubo had been defeated and arrested for the murders, summer had come and gone and the gang had just gotten their results back. Chie found that she had gotten dead last much to her dismay. Teddie and Yu were not around as much and the others were acting really weird and distant lately.
Which was why Chie was surprised when they had called her to meet them in the North Shopping district just outside of Aiya's. Before her were Yukiko, Yosuke, Kanji and Rise.

"Hey guys, so why'd you need me to meet you out here?" Chie asked a little unnerved at the looks she was getting.

"Look Chie we've been talking and..." Yosuke trailed off looking to Kanji.

"You see the thing is..." Kanji trailed off too.

"Look Chie we've decided we can't hang around you anymore," Yukiko told her harshly.

"What do you mean?!" Chie cried in disbelief.

"Look Chie your results weren't just dead last in our entire grade you were dead last in the entire school, Kanji here beat you," Yosuke told her.

"Chie the thing is you use your stomach as your brain," Kanji said, "If you spent as much time studying as you did stuffing your face then you'd be a genius by now."

"So we can't be around you anymore, we don't need you passing your laziness on to us we have future's to worry about." Rise snapped at her.

"Please just do everyone a favour leave us all alone," Yosuke told her as they all began walking away.

"Hey wait, guys..." Chie was dumbstruck and tried to stop them and gained a little hope when Yukiko paused to look over her shoulder.

"I've told my mother your no longer welcome at the inn if you come around we'll call the police," Yukiko informed her in an emotionless tone before walking away with the others.

Chie felt her hopes and feeling all shatter inside of her.

"This...this can't be happening." Chie hiccupped as she started to cry "Someone please, come back...huh!"

Chie paused as she saw a familiar pair of shoes and a hand come into her view. Looking up she saw Yu standing there with a smile his hand outstretched and her ASSASSIN card floating just above his wrist.

"Of course." She realised seeing white light streaming from behind Yu which suddenly enveloped everything as she took his hand. "This is all just..."
Inn. This combined with her parents making Chie and Kanji out to be violent thugs who threatened her and a restraining order for stalking on Yosuke had forced her friends to back off. As for Yu he had completely vanished beforehand, it was as if he'd stopped existing, neither Nanako nor Dojima seemed to recognise his name and the rest of her friends seemed to have forgotten about him and Teddie.

And so here she was in her dressing room getting ready for another concert. It was the third one in the same week.

"Risette stop spacing out get changed you're on stage in five minutes." Inoue snapped at her impatiently.

That was another problem, ever since she had been forced back into show business everyone called her Risette all the time like her real name didn't exist at all. Resigning herself to misery Rise stood up from her seat before her vanity and looked at the skimpy bikini outfit that Inoue was holding out to her.

Before she could take it, however, she heard a series of three gentle yet perfectly audible knocks at the door. Turning to face the door she could see a white light leaking in through the cracks in the door.

"What are you doing?" Inoue snapped angrily "Don't open that door it's not for you, now put this on and sing Risette! This is all you have now!"

Rise couldn't place the feeling in her stomach and ignored Inoue and pulled the door open. When it swung open completely her face illuminated brighter than the sun. Standing behind the door was Yu, a white light streaming from behind him and her Persona card CASTER floating gently above the wrist of his outstretched hand.

"Senpai!" Rise cried with elation.

"Risette do as I tell you and sing!" Inoue yelled angrily "You are Risette and nothing more."

However, the girl no longer cared for the fake's words.

"I'm so glad you're here!" Rise cried leaping into his arms "This was just a horrible nightmare!"

The white light began consuming the room, as it devoured Inoue Rise swore she heard the sound of a computerised cry of a baby.

For Kanji Tatsumi, two months had passed since they'd put that fish eyed punk behind bars for the murders. Despite it being a Monday he was not in school. No, he had reverted back to ditching class, the reason for this was simple, all of his friends had abandoned him and left him alone. Teddie and Yu had dropped off the map, like neither of them existed anymore. Yukiko and Yosuke had suddenly gotten nervous around him and were actively avoiding him sometimes running away when they saw him coming. The last time he'd seen Chie and Rise had been the encounter which hurt the most.

"Look Kanji just buzz off and quit hanging around us already will ya?" Chie had demanded angrily.

"Yeah, you delinquent freak, we have social lives and reputations to worry about!" Rise yelled stunning Kanji into silence.
"So why don't you just go knit your stupid dolls or whatever and leave us normal people alone," Chie told him taking Rise by the arm and walking away from him.

Kanji had been dumbstruck by their behaviour and even as he turned around to go home he heard Rise mumble 'Freak' as she went.

This was how Kanji found himself in his room, looking at the picture of his now deceased father.

"Pops, I've tried my best to be a man but...I don't think I have the strength to go on anymore." Kanji said trying desperately to hold his tears back even wiping them away futilely as they continued gathering in his eyes. "I'm all alone now, my friends...everyone has abandoned me, please dad what should I do?"

"Kanji no one has abandoned you." His father's voice echoed in his mind.

"Wha-pops?" Kanji was struck with disbelief was he hearing things.

"Your friends are still with you if you don't believe me just open the door behind you." His father's voice said as it faded away.

"The door?" Kanji stood up looked at the door to his room.

He gasped as from beneath the crack of the door a gentle white light streamed in. Kanji found his body moving on its own as it opened the door.

"Senpai!" Indeed, standing there with a gentle white light streaming from behind him was the Senpai he thought was gone. A hand outstretched and above his wrist was his Persona card, BERSERKER.

"Of course, this shit isn't..." Kanji took the hand and white light consumed the whole illusion.

The darkness went away, shattering like cheap glass. Now standing in the middle of what seemed like an all-white place, the members of the Investigation Team stared at each other, smiles on their faces and their hand extended as their Cards floated silently over them.

In the middle, looking at his friends as they stared back, Yu stood, the Saber Card in his hand suddenly turning into several more that spun around him while releasing an otherworldly light.

As one, the Personae materialized behind the other 5 teenagers and one 'bear', the Heroes staring at the display in awe as they felt a strange energy flooding them and their Masters...

"This feeling..." came Diarmuid's voice as he felt himself getting stronger.

"It's coming back, like something long-forgotten..." muttered Drake with a massive grin.

"...but that never has really gone away." sentenced Li Shuwen while raising a closed fist.

"I can feel it! My power...is all here again!" cheered Tamamo while spinning her mirror in her hands.

"So, breaking out of that pathetic illusion has let them break some of our restraints? Heh, about damn time..." snorted Angra with a feral look.

Heracles didn't say anything, but the small growl he released while gripping his axe-sword and
nodding to his partner seemed confirmation enough.

'This feeling...' thought Yu as he saw the images of all his Personae, standing around him for an instant, before the image on the back of his mind flashed back to the Velvet Room.

Igor's ever-smiling visage stared at him, even as the Cards spun faster.

'It's time, my dear guest...You know what to do. You can feel it now. Let that guide you...and let the Legends take form, to open the path to the Truth you seek...'

Yu's eyes snapped open.

And at once, 7 voice's shouted as the sound of breaking glass echoed.

"INSTALL!"

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

The team found themselves back in the arena, their installed forms all ready for battle with new energy flowing through them.

"There he is!" Yosuke cried pointing at the shadow which seemed to be clutching its head in pain.

"I've got this!" Yukiko said taking aim with her pistol and firing directly at the forehead of the shadow.

The shot was on a direct course for Mitsuo's Shadow. It could have been fatal...if not for the red block which abruptly appeared and shielded it from harm.

"Oh come on, what is this crap?" Chie yelled as more coloured blocks began appearing and assembling themselves into a bit looking video game warrior.

"Damn it, you won't be able to take out the Shadow without first destroying its outer shell!" Rise told them after looking at the analysis in her mirror.

"Then let's take him out." Yu commanded.

The team all nodded and charged into battle. Shadow Mitsuo responded to the challenge by sending out many of the blocks from its form, at them. Using Galatine, Yu cleaved through block after block that was in his path, and it wasn't long before he got close to the shadow's shell.

"...no, Sempai, get out of there quickly!" Rise cried with enough panic in her voice that Yu instinctively obeyed.

Just as the Fool moved backwards a large bolt of red lightning struck the spot where he had been seconds before. More bolts came down forcing Yu to retreat eventually stopping when he was safely out of striking distance of the Shadow's shell.

"Whatever you do, don't let those bolt hit you! Those things are potent enough to possibly kill any of us in one hit! Even with Sempai's Magic Resistance the shot would have been crippling!" Rise warned everyone still looking in her mirror.

"So we need to destroy that damn shell from the distance?!" Yosuke groaned.

"Yeah, destroying the shell should stun the shadow itself letting you get good hit in on it..." Rise stated while biting her lips.
"I can do it."

"Yukiko?" Chie looked at her friend.

"Rider's Noble Phantasm has the firepower to destroy its shell...just cover me for a second!"
Yukiko said as she began focusing allowing Rider's spirit and her own to synchronise as the power of the Noble Phantasm began to swirl.

The rest of the team were not idle in this time, the melee fighters staying on the edges destroying any stray blocks they could in order to give Yukiko a better shot at the shadow. Rise meanwhile began sending talismans at the blocks which stayed closest to shell easily decimating them.

"Ok...here I go!" Yukiko cried while backflipping into the air.

As she did so, a huge majestic golden ship appeared behind her, along with a fleet of much smaller ships, at the head was a ship with the name Golden Hind on the side, Yukiko landed on the bow of the ship. Three more cannons hovered just above her head.

"The king of storms, a swarm of ghosts! This is the beginning...of the Wild Hunt!" Yukiko shouted in the kind of free-spirited tone one would expect from Drake herself.

The team moved out of the way as all of the ships fired their cannons at once. The sheer number of cannonballs which peppered the Shadow created a huge fireball-like explosion which forced the team to shield faces from the wind and heat generated, the whole area behind the dark being reduced to rubble.

When it finally died away and smoke cleared, they could see the baby's form lying on the ground defenceless.

"Chie, Yosuke finish it!" Yu commanded.

"Right!" The two said.

Connecting with her Master's spirit, Chie closed her eyes and focused, a slight step forward, swaying her arms to the right, then stepped back, then forward once more as her arms swayed to the left. Everyone could see a symbol glow a bright red behind her, then a surge of explosions behind her as well. It seemed like something out of one of her Kung-Fu movies. Chie took another step and another quickly closing the gap, before thrusting her clenched fist towards Shadow Mitsuo. A mighty gust of chi rushed from her arm, in the shape of a lance decimating the ground, but the shadow remained, they could all tell that damage was done to it but it was still not enough.

"Damn it all!" Chie growled as she backed off "How was that not enough?"

"The inhumanity of the monster has prevented my No Second Strike from finishing it...a terrible insult, but not one you must feel sorry for, my disciple." spoke Li Shuwen with narrowed eyes.

"Here, I'll give it a try!" Yosuke cried as he dropped Gae Dearge, favouring Gae Buidhe with both hands.

He narrowed his eyes in concentration before charging with all the speed available to him as he felt Diarmuid's spirit resonate with his own.

"Let's go Gae Buidhe!" The yellow spear seemed to glow as Yosuke struck the shadow in the chest and skidded to a halt behind it, he kicked off the arena and charged striking again, he did over and over until he struck the Shadow eight times.
The unhealing wounds made by the cursed spear were easily visible on the Shadow but still it was not enough. Even worse, the Shadow appeared to be recovering, at least spiritually, as blocks appeared to be phasing in and out of existence.

"Son a bitch, how is this asshole not dead?!"

"I'll try now!" Kanji yelled while charging and letting out a war cry as he held his axe-sword aloft.

"Kanji, wait!" Rise cried too late Kanji got into striking range and cried out as a large red lightning bolt struck him.

"KANJI!" Everyone cried out as the boy's body crashed to the ground and stayed motionless for a moment, his skin charred black by the bolt.

"Is he...?"

"He's...dead..." Rise said looking at her mirror, the results of which were impossible to deny.

"RARGH!" before everyone's very eyes, and before their feelings could grab hold, Kanji started moving again, a dark reddish miasma covering his body for a moment before the boy appeared to be back to his normal condition.

"Ka-Kanji!"

"Ugh...hey there, everyone!"

"You're alive! Bu-but how?!"

"It's God Hand, Berserker's Noble Phantasm! I can revive myself immune to whatever killed me the last time, and while the amount of times I can do it is limited so are the ways this bastard can kill me!" Kanji explained with a grin before bat ting the Shadow into the arena wall, with such force that it collapsed and the stands above it dropped on top of it.

The digital growl of frustration from within the smoke and debris told them it was still alive despite all this damage.

"Aw, why can't I do something cool like the others?" Teddie whined as the others swarmed Kanji, berating them for making him worry.

"Well, unless you want to be severely hurt yourself in order to activate Verg Avesta, which is mostly useless, you should shut up." Avenger snapped.

"No...I can feel 'something more', deep inside..." Teddie tried to explain to his Persona.

Sighing to himself Avenger, paused as he felt a power similar to the 'dark evil' from when he had, another lifetime ago, been 'trapped' inside the Greater Grail...

"Use the mud." Avenger told the bear, a dark grin covering his face.

"O...kay? Here...we...go!" Teddie raised his hands into the air and focused. "Angra Mainyu: All The Worlds Evil!"

A black portal appeared just above and outside the hole which contained the Shadow. All of the Personae gained an ominous feeling in their stomachs and made their confused wielders back off. As they did, out of the portal came a tidal wave of the same black mud from when Teddie's Shadow had fought against them. More and more poured out until it took the form of a huge black
serpent, which immediately dove into the hole, causing the Shadow to scream in pain as it was submerged in the terrible Ichor.

A few seconds passed, without warning, the fog of the TV World condensed above the Ichor for a few moments, dissipating itself into it. When it did, a hand emerged from the mud. Snarling, the Shadow pulled itself out. But now it looked different, its entire body half-melted, making it resemble something out a horror movie rather than a real enemy.

"Damn it, what is this thing made of?!" Kanji growled.

"There was...'something' there..." Rise whispered while looking into her mirror.

"What was it?" Yu asked her.

"I don't know, but it was that same power which intervened when Teddie's shadow appeared!" Rise informed them.

Emerging from the Mud completely, the half dead Shadow reformed its defences, albeit now it resembled a half melted action figure rather than the video game bit warrior of before. The half liquid defence solidified and the shadow began slowly walking out of the hole, as if each motion brought great pain.

"It rebuilt itself after all that?!" Yukiko gasped.

"Master, let's try it ourselves!" Tamamo said to her master. "With my Noble Phantasm back we can use my new super-secret move!"

"Ok, here goes! God who resides in Izumo...Aesthetically certain, Breath of the soul..." Rise began chanting as levitating Ofuda began appearing. "Residing in the mountains and watery heavens, Amaterasu...Let this freely become the proof of purification!" Torii archways which were glowing began to appear as the mirror levitated into the air burst with light as energy began flowing through it, "Thy name is Weighted Stone of Tamamo...become the sacred treasure, Mirror of Uka!"

"...Just kidding!" Tamamo added quickly with a grin.

The Shadow stomped towards them now out of the side of the arena. With the nigh infinite Prana at her disposal, Rise summoned hundreds of thousands of different talismans, that appeared forming a wall of white paper and black inked Kanji.

"..." suddenly, Rise sweatdropped and looked at Caster's spiritual form. "...Do I have to say it?"

"It's essential to the move!" Tamamo insisted jumping from one foot to the other excitedly. "Come on, I'll say it with you!"

All of the talismans began lighting up, igniting into elements of Ice, Fire and Air as Rise let out a sigh and acquiesced to her Persona's wish.

"Rise?" Chie spoke the idols name questioningly.

"What' the matter?" Yukiko asked.

"If any of you record this I'll kill you." Rise vowed before narrowing her eyes on the opponent.

"BEST WAIFU'S WRATH!" Rise and Tamamo yelled as one.

Everyone blinked.
In response to the cry, the wall of magic fired, becoming streams of red, blue and green, the presence within Yu twitching at the display not out of anger but more like intrigue. The bombardment quickly overtook Shadow Mitsuo, which once again screamed in pain as it was consumed. Eventually, the bombardment ended and smoke which had been kicked up cleared, the shadow's shell had dropped to its knees and its entire front side had cracks spider-webbing all over it.

"One...one more powerful blow should do it...!" Rise told them.

"I got this." Yu said releasing the Install and summoning another Card.

"Hey, it's trying to escape!" Yosuke yelled as the Shadow began using its shell to crawl towards the door.

"Not for long." Yu said as he crushed the Arcana Card, summoning the Tyrant of Rome.

"One always must save the greatest art for last." Nero stated while pulling out a rose and holding it to her lips. "Behold my glory... Hear the thunderous applause..." she began incanting throwing the rose at the shadow. "Sit down and praise... My Golden Theatre!" she swung her sword while slashing towards the Shadow three times, upon the third stroke a white light consumed everyone's vision.

When they could see again, they saw they were in a Golden Theatre whose size and beauty seemed to surpass even the famed coliseum of Rome. The shadow grasped feebly at the place where it planned to escape once was, now replaced by a red-golden wall.

Inside this Theatre, escape was completely impossible.

Left with no choice, Shadow Mitsuo commanded its shell to stand and fight intending to make its last stand.

"Realising the futility of his escape attempt our would-be hero turns to make his final stand even knowing that death is certain." Nero narrated readying her sword. "Meanwhile, our true heroine and her lovely Praetor shall end the battle with a single final master strike the likes of which not even Mars or Minerva themselves could hope to rival!"

It was then that Nero began moving her sword slowly in a clockwise motion, seeming to leave an afterimage as it did so. The Shadow threw out a fist, intending to crush her before she could finish...but it was too late as she completed the circle and dashed forward, its huge fist missing her by inches as she made a huge slash across its upper chest, leaving a massive, last wound.

Nero turned and walked away from the Shadow, which seemed frozen in place. Approaching her audience, she planted her sword in the ground. "Behold the Closing Rose that Fames Stars; Fax Caelestis!" Nero declared raising her arms in a flashy manner and, as she did so, flames erupted from the wound she had inflicted, growing larger and larger before completely incinerating both the shell and the screaming Shadow within.

The flames died away leaving just Mitsuo, albeit with slightly charred clothes, and his shadow now back in its human form. The team all released their installs and Yu dematerialised Nero.

"Huh? Who the hell are you guys?!" Kubo demanded as he opened his eyes to find the team staring down at him.

"We came to catch your scrawny ass..." Kanji told him.
"The police are after you" Yosuke explained "They think you're the one who killed King Moron and the other two murders in town…"

"Yeah…I did it…" Mitsuo laughed. "It was me…"

Mitsuo's shadow simply shook its head and disintegrated vanishing into nothing instead of turning into a Persona or going berserk again.

"It just vanished, what is this?" Yukiko asked at the sight.

"So if you're the killer then prove it. Tell us how you killed Mayumi Yamano and Saki Konishi." Yu demanded.

"I just smashed 'em on the head like I did with King Moron!" Mitsuo yelled.

"I've heard enough Chie can you?"

"Oh sure." Chie got the unspoken message and punched Mitsuo in the stomach sending him into unconsciousness. "Aw man I'm so tired." The meat lover groaned letting her shoulders slump.

"I feel as if I need to nap for a week…or two…" Yukiko agreed.

"I...really need some beauty sleep after this..." Rise said, feeling like she was about to keel over.

"I ache all over…damn..." Kanji groaned trying to keep his muscles from going stiff.

"Hey...who's gonna carry him?" Yosuke asked while pointing to Mitsuo, who Chie had knocked unconscious after their short interrogation.

"One, two three not it!" Chie said quickly.

"Not it!" Yu, Rise Kanj, Yukiko and Teddie said quickly.

"Not it...aww, damn it!" Yosuke groaned. "Why do I carry this fatass?!"

Cause you were last, dude." Kanji told him as the rest of team nodded in agreement.

Yosuke simply groaned in response and began dragging Mitsuo with him as the team made their way to the exit.

"So...even though he's not our guy the cops will still pin the murders on him..." Yukiko sighed.

"That is a strong possibility, but the police don't know the cause of death for Mayumi Yamano and Saki Konishi and if Mitsuo can't produce that then he might only be charged with King Moron's murder." Yu responded. "If the killer tries again while he's police custody, it'll prove that Mitsuo is a fake and he'll only get charged with King Moron's death. We will just have to wait and see..."

Chapter End Notes

AN: Ok finally this is done, holy crap its long. So credit to SaintInfernalNeos he wrote that scene where everyone feels their Ultimate NP's being released and he amazingly beta'd the whole battle against Shadow Mitsuo and that last scene too, even putting in edits of his own so lots of praise and credit to him for being so kind and putting up
with me.
Three days had passed since Mitsuo Kubo had been arrested. As Expected the police charged him with the murders but the team had decided to keep an eye on things in the meantime.

Yu had decided to spend the day with Marie. After spending some more time showing the strange girl around town, Yu finally brought her to Junes in order to rest.

"I'm thirsty. I want something to drink." Marie stated demandingly "Something that isn't sweet. And not water!"

Before Yu could do anything Teddie suddenly ran up and interrupted.

"Sensei! Welcome!" he greeted excitedly "Ooooh! Who's this girl?"

"Ah yes, Marie has only met, Yukiko, Chie and Yosuke so far." Gawain realised.

"It couldn't hurt to introduce her to more of our friends," Nero said.

"What the heck is this thing?" Marie asked giving Teddie a funny look "It's moving...Gross."

Avenger snickered at this as did several of Yu's personas.

"Bwuh!? How rude!" Teddie sniffed with what Yu believed was mock hurt. "How can you say that about cute little moi?"

"And it talks... What's it made out of?" Marie asked with a grossed expression still present on her face.

"This Teddie is fifty percent kindness, by volume," Teddie stated proudly clearing his throat.

"Huh? ...What about the other half?" Marie tilted her head in confusion.

"Teddie fur." The bear replied simply with a grin.

"...Kindness and... fur...?" Marie raised her eyebrow in confusion.

"Don't worry about it, most of the things he says don't make much sense to us either." Nursery Rhyme said appearing in spirit form.

Yosuke suddenly strolled up to them.
"Oh, hey, it's Yu and Marie!" Yosuke said "Soo….Whatcha up to this time? Taking a tour of Junes?"

"Greetings Ms Marie." Diarmuid greeted her as he appeared in spirit form.

"I don't need a tour. I already saw it." Marie grouched giving a dismissive wave to Diarmuid.

"Whoooooaa! Yosuke got deeeeenied!" Teddie chuckled teasingly.

"Shut up! It's nothing like that!" Yosuke snapped at the bear who kept grinning impishly.

"Actually it kinda is." Avenger quipped before a look of realisation came over him. "Wait she can see and hear us?"

It was then that Kanji arrived strolling into the food court apparently looking for Yosuke.

"Yo, Yosuke. Y'know that CD I was askin' about...Uh, who's this?"

"Who's this old-timer?" Marie asked tilting her head at Kanji.

"O.. Old-timer!?"

"I see what you mean." Yu nodded examining Kanji.

"Yeah, same here." Yosuke agreed.

"Who are ya callin' old!?" Kanji yelled angrily.

"Kanji, what are you yelling about?" Rise demanded as she joined them "I thought you came to talk with Yosu- Oh! Sen..." Rise stopped upon spotting Marie, she strolled up to the girl and got very close to her "Whoa…” she turned to face Yu "Senpai? Who is this girl? What is she doing with you?"

"Her name's Marie" Yu informed her simply.

"I know this person" Marie stated looking over Rise "I heard about her from Margaret. 'Someone even I can't handle.'"

"That's not how it goes!" Rise snapped with annoyance "It's 'Something even I can handle!'"

"...That's not so different." Marie said after a few seconds.

"Yes, it is!"

"Yosuke-senpai, what's with this girl!?"

"Me!?!" the boy straightened with surprise "Er, she's Yu's mate..."

A sudden silence fell across the group.

"Can he not put his foot his mouth for one day?" Chu Chulainn sighed placing his palm upon his face.

"Drat, another rival, I'll have to rethink our strategy." Tamamo No Mae growled with annoyance.

"What!? 'Mate'...?" Rise looked shocked.
"Sorry... I think I just added fuel to the fire." Yosuke sweatdropped upon realising his mistake

"Huh? Heyyyy!" Chie and Yukiko interrupted the awkward moment before it could get worse walking up to group "Oh, everyone's here."

"Oh, Marie-chan's with you, too? Hello." Yukiko greeted the cap wearing girl.

"Senpais, you know her?" Kanji asked.

"We had fun together the other day. Right, Marie-chan?" Yukiko explained.

"I don't recognise you. Which high school are you from?" Kanji asked curiously "Wait... You're even younger than me. Which middle school are you from?"

"Middle school? What's that supposed to mean? You're pretty rude, old-timer." Marie said.

"Why do you keep calling me old!?" Kanji demanded angrily.

"Hey do me a favour and take off your shirt, and your bra while you're at it!" Avenger cried with a perverted smile on his face.

A silence fell over the group again, the girls had looks of disgust (none of which bothered Avenger in the slightest) while the guys wisely decided their mouths were best kept shut, save for Teddie who seemed rather pleased with the idea.

The girls looked ready to yell but were cut off when Marie spoke up, a thoughtful look on her face as she remembered something.

"Margaret told me what do if something like this happened," Marie said aloud as she slowly approached the tattooed persona.

"Huh?" Avenger became confused when somehow Marie's hands gripped his ethereal shoulders, holding in place. "How in the-GAH!" Avenger let out a cry of agony as Marie drove her knee into his crotch with surprising strength for someone of her size.

The persona's dropped to the ground clutching his crown jewels and while crying out about the impossibility of the act as he was still in spirit form. Seeing this, all the male persona's chose to return to their master's souls, not wishing to be around a girl who could crotch shot them while they were in spirit form.

"He had that coming," Yukiko stated with a nod.

"Yup." Chie agreed "So how'd you do that?"

"I….just did it," Marie told her, unsure of what else to say.

"Y'know, I don't know much about her, either." Yosuke stepped in deciding a quick change of subject was in order. "How old are you, Marie? Where you live? Are you here on vacation?"

"I don't... I don't remember." Marie confessed sadly as her expression became a sad one.

"Yosuke! That's really insentive!" Chie glared at the boy angrily.

"Yeah, Senpai. Not very sub-buttle of you." Kanji stated.

"Hey, you brought it up! ...Wait, what?" Yosuke backpedalled realising a problem with what Kanji
had said: "What did you just say...?"

"Sub-buttle." Yu said bluntly getting snickers from his Persona's.

"Did you think the word "subtle" is pronounced sub-buttle?" Rise asked looking at her classmate with a raised eyebrow

"Kanji's got a sub-buttle." Teddie joked with a laugh

"Sh-Shut up! Quit talking about my butt!" the boy yelled with embarrassment.

"Oh, ugh... Why'd you make me think about your butt!?" Rise demanded angrily "You're the most un-subtle person ever."

"The un-subtle sub-buttle..." Yukiko snorted "Haha, hahaha, hahahahaha!"

"Ha... Ha." Marie let out a small chuckle.

Yu spent time with their friends and Marie after a few hours passed everyone decided that they were done hanging out and went home.

"...Those were funny people." Marie said "I don't get them. They're loud and stupid.....So stupid. "Sub-buttle." Marie let out a snicker.

Despite her complaints Yu could tell that Marie appeared to have enjoyed herself.

"Did they all face their true selves?" Marie asked

Yu merely nodded at her.

"I see..." Marie paused in silence for a few moments "...I was thinking... Maybe I should work on trying to get my memory back. W-Well, one of these days...they look like they're having fun...I wanna be like that."

"I'll help you." Yu offered.

"Please do.....I don't know what to do." Marie explained "I'm not asking you to help right now, but when the time comes; I'm going to count on you. Let's go home now.....Oh, but let's go by the river on the way!"

He had no reason to refuse, so before taking Marie back to the Velvet Room they walked by the river.

[August 1st, Samegawa Floodplain, Inaba]

A couple of days later Yu found himself dragged by Marie to the Samegawa floodplain.

"So, about my memories... What do you think I should do?" She asked Yu who had as much idea on what do as Marie did.

"Are there any clues?" Yu asked.

"No, nothing." Marie reached into her bag and pulled out the bamboo comb she showed him a while ago. "If you remember, I told you that I had this when I first started remembering. Will this
"It looks its made of bamboo" Yu pointed out.

"...Bamboo? What is that rare?...But this doesn't look like the ones at Junes. They don't look anything like this. " Marie stated with interest "It seems older... Do you know any stores that might sell stuff like this?"

Yu thought about it for a moment until he remembered the perfect place to start searching. Tatsumi Textile's which the store that Kanji's mother ran. Even if they didn't sell this type of thing then hopefully they could at least find out more about this comb and what it might mean. "Tatsumi Textile's which Kanji's mother runs might know what to make of this."

"That old-timer's place? Hmmm... That's kinda surprising." Marie said.

She nodded and they all headed to Tatsumi Textiles, when they got there both Rise and Kanji were in the shop.

"Yo welco- oh, Sempai." Kanji greeted.

"Ooooh, Yu, what a coincidence! Oh, Marie's with you too?" Rise greeted

"Oh, I see. Wait... Don't tell me the two of you are on a date..." Rise said nervously.

"No it's nothing like that" Yu replied calmly before the situation could get out of control.

"Sheesh, don't scare me like that. Hey, Kanji! Yu wants to talk to you." Rise said relieved.

"Huh? What's up?" Kanji asked.

Marie pulled out her comb and showed it to Kanji.

"Do you know what this is? Tell me anything you know. Anything at all." She demanded.

"This thing? It's uh... It's a comb. A pretty damn old one." Kanji told her which made.

"We know that we were wondering if you could tell us more about it." Yu pressed for more details.

"That's a comb? It doesn't look like it's very easy to use, with that shape." Rise commented.

"So, what do you want from me? You need me to figure out where this thing came from?" Kanji asked.

Marie nodded in confirmation.

"Er, I don't know anything, but..." He looked at Rise as if to ask if she knew anything about the comb, but she shook her head no. "Hey! Mom! Come over here! Yo!"

"I hear you, I hear you. Don't shout so loud- Oh, hello. I haven't seen you in a while. Is this girl another of Kanji's friends?" Kanji's mother asked coming into the room.

"She wanted to know about this comb. You know anything, Mom?" Kanji asked dodging the question.

"A comb? Let me see..." Kanji's mother began examining the comb that Marie held out to her "Hmm.....this is very old, I'm sorry. We don't carry anything like this one."
"Can you tell me anything about it?" Marie asked eagerly "Anything at all."

"...I've never seen a comb shaped like this. I don't think it would be for everyday use." Kanji's mother explained, "You may have better luck asking at a museum or a gallery than at a clothing store."

"Museum? Uh, so it's rare?" Rise asked what we were all thinking.

"Well... I don't know if it's rare, but it's definitely not something that would be sold around here." She explained.

"Huh? If it's not sold, then where is somebody gonna get one? C'mon lady, help us out here!" Kanji yelled. He seemed to be getting into this. A bit too much if you ask me.

"Don't talk to your mother like that!" she scolded her son, it was apparent that Kanji's mother could be scary when she wanted to be. "I'm sorry I couldn't be any help. But I've really never seen anything like this."

"...Why do I have this?" Marie asked herself with a downcast expression on her face "Would I have been given it as a gift?"

"I'm not so sure about that. Combs don't make very good gifts." Kanji's mother interjected gravely "The word for comb, 'kushi' also has the sounds for the words for pain, 'ku' and death, 'shi.' It's an old belief that combs have the power to cause separation. But, I don't know if kids today care about that stuff."

"Oh yeah, my friend Kiyohime used to send love rivals combs in order to keep them away from her beloved, you know before the whole bell thing." Tamamo no Mae commented.

"Kiyohime...wait bell!" Rise mumbled upon realising the story.

"Are you in, Ms Tatsumi?" the voice of a customer asked, "May I have a word with you?"

"I'm coming. Just a moment, please." Kanji's mother stated "Kanji, please see to our guests. I need to speak with a customer. Please, make yourselves at home."

With that, she left the room to tend to the customer.

"Pain and death, huh. Yeah, I guess I wouldn't want to give someone that." Kanji said agreeing with what his mother said.

"She said separation? I didn't know that combs are actually bad luck." Rise said.

"I didn't know combs had any kind of luck," Yu said agreeing with Rise.

Marie repeated the word separation, and started thinking about what Kanji's mom said. It looked to Yu if she started to remember something.

"Marie, are you alright? Does your head hurt?" Rise asked, concerned.

"Whoa, you okay? Sit your ass down and get some rest." Kanji said in a panicky tone.

"Did you remember something?" Yu asked curiously.

"I don't know... But... There's something..." She shook her head before continuing "Ugh, it's gone. I can't remember... Something came up in my mind. I was about to recall it." Her expression seemed
"What, you can't remember? You don't remember anything about that comb?" Kanji asked.

It was at that moment that Yu remembered that they never mentioned Marie's amnesia to anyone.

"Huh? Wait a second. That's not your comb?" Rise asked in a scandalised tone.

"It was on her before she lost her memories. Perhaps it was supposed to be a curse from someone?" Semiramis suggested.

"She said this isn't a normal comb, what did she say? A Moozium? A Galerry?" Marie stumbled over the words, Yu chuckled a bit at her mispronunciation earning him a glare from the girl.

"Maybe I'll remember something if we go to one of those. You help, too." It was more a demand than a request but Yu didn't mind; this was important to her and planned to see this through to the end. With this case over or at least on hold, until the killer made their next move, Yu had plenty of time to help Marie.

"I'm tired. I'm going home today, but let's continue this later." She then left the store and headed to the Velvet Room entrance on the wall next to Daidara's store.

"What's up with her?" Kanji asked.

Yu quickly followed after her, when he finally caught up to her the girl and said goodbye before returning to the Velvet Room.

[August 1st, Dojima Residence, Inaba]

When the day had finally ended Yu had swung by and brought Adachi home for that dinner he'd promised the man. Yu was sat opposite Adachi at the living room table while the cream stew cooked.

"Big bro, the potatoes are still hard." Nanako said wandering in and sitting to join them.

"Don't worry, they'll soften up before it's ready." Yu reassured her.

"Today, we're having shoe!" Nanako told him mispronouncing the word.

"Shoe? Oh, you mean stew?" Adachi realised.

"Yeah, shoe...Stew!" Nanako corrected herself this time.

"Hey, you did it." Adachi said to the girl with an encouraging smile.

"Do you like stew, Mr Adachi?" Nanako asked.

"Hmm, yeah, kind of." Adachi replied in unsure tone.

"Kind of?"

"He eats a lot of instant of food." Yu chimed in "He hasn't had a proper cooked meal in a while so he's forgotten what it tastes like."
"Hehe, you're not wrong." Adachi admitted sheepishly rubbing the back of his head. "Hey I bet Dojima tells you all the time what a great help you are!"

"Nope." Yu said as did most of his Persona's.

"I knew it. He's probably just embarrassed." Adachi said with a smile. "So I heard you were moving back in the spring. I bet Dojima is going to cry!"

Being reminded of this caused Nanako to look down sadly, realising that in less than year she would be all alone again.

"Dumbass." Several of Yu's persona's all commented in spirit form in unison.

"Uh, sorry, sorry. That's still a long way away!" Adachi said quickly trying to back out the hole he'd dug.

"Yeah..."

Thinking fast Adachi suddenly remembered a magic trick he could do. "Umm...Hey, Nanako, have you ever seen this trick?"

Adachi produced a 500-yen coin and had Nanako's attention. "Now watch closely." Adachi clutched the coin tightly in his hand. "Are you watching?"

"This should be good." Nursery Rhyme said.

Adachi opened his hand again and the 500-yen coin disappeared.

"What!? How!? Why!? Again! Do it again!" Nanako demanded completely surprised by the trick.

"Nah, this time I'll show you an even better one!" Adachi told her. "Look in your big bro's pocket."

"My pocket?" Yu looked in his left jacket pocket and to his surprise the 500 yen coin was there, he took it out and examined it.

"What the hell?" Cu Chullain seemed surprised "I know it's just a cheap trick but I didn't see him move."

"Wow! You're the best, Mr Adachi!"

"That was a surprise."

"I'm pretty good with my hands, so it comes easy to me." Adachi's trick had worked. Nanako was smiling again which made Adachi seem relieved "Maybe I should have been a magician. Then I wouldn't be in such a-Uh...well. I guess there's no job like a government job. It's not like I can make a living working with my hands."

Adachi shrugged and gave it up realising that being a magician might not pay as well as being a cop, even if his current pay was as much as he would have liked. Yu sensed the bond between him and Adachi grow a bit stronger.

"That's smelling pretty good. I think the shoe's about ready." Adachi said teasingly.

"It's STEW!" Nanako cried correcting him this time.

"Shiatsu?"
"SHOE!" Nanako had mispronounced it again.

"WRONG!" Adachi continued his teasing having lead Nanako into saying the wrong thing.

"No, I said it right!" Nanako insisted puffing her cheeks out in annoyance.

The trio ate the cream stew, Adachi looked happier than Yu had seen him. It was easy to tell that the man had enjoyed the home cooked meal. The food had been enough to make Nanako sleepy causing her to go to bed earlier than usual.

"Thanks for the meal, it was great just like you said." Adachi stated as he prepared to go back home. "You know, I never really liked my parents, they left me alone a lot too, always busy with work, I hardly ever saw 'em even on my birthdays."

"I hear that." Yu said in agreement, there were other smaller things that Yu disliked about his parents but Alice would always be the major nail the coffin. "Always moving around, claiming they know what's best for you, but they can't even say what your favourite food or colour is."

"We have something in common." Adachi realised before stepping out and walking home. "See ya."

As he closed and locked the front door, Yu couldn't help but wonder what other parallels may exist between himself and Adachi, the boy couldn't deny that just that one thing was something he had in common with no one else in Inaba, amongst other things….

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[August 6th, Dojima residence, Inaba]

A few days later Yu decided to relax at home, he was watching the TV when the front door opened and he heard Nanako's voice.

"I'm ho-achoo!" Nanako sneezed as Yu set down the manga and saw Nanako who was soaking wet apparently she'd been out in the rain without her umbrella.

"Why didn't you take your Loveline umbrella with you?" Yu asked curiously as began drying the little girl off with a towel he had retrieved

"I lost it?" Nanako replied sounding more like she was asking a question.

"Is just me or did that sound like she was asking us?" Nursery Rhyme questioned.

"Let's just leave it be." Yu sighed deciding to go and lie down, he felt exhausted.

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[August 7th, South Shopping District, Inaba]

The next day Yu looked at the price tag for a new Loveline umbrella to replace the one that Nanako had lost. Sadly his wallet was empty save for a one thousand yen note, which wasn't nearly enough for the replacement umbrella.

"I need a job." Yu sighed as he hung his head in dismay.

Suddenly Yu felt his leg be nudged and saw an orange furred fox with several scars on its right eye, forehead, back, and left leg. It also appeared to be wearing a red apron with a heart pattern around
"What do you want?" Yu asked the fox.

In the response the fox ran over to a notice board motioned with its head for Yu to follow. He did so and the fox deposited a wooden Ema in his hand. On it was written 'Look at me-Shu Nakajima'.

"You want me to try and make this wish come true?" Yu asked the fox who yipped in confirmation.

"Yeah but, I don't even know who this is or where to find him." Yu told the fox who motioned towards the notice board.

"What is it?" Yu looked at the notice board and read a job offering

**LOOKING FOR A TUTOR**

It's for a first-year middle school boy.

Anyone interested,

Please contact Mrs. Nakajima.

Yu dialled the number to call up the lady who posted the notice.

"Hello, Mrs. Nakajima speaking." the lady greeted as she answered the phone.

"I'm calling about your ad…for a tutor." Yu explained the reason he was calling.

"Oh, that!" she began happily explaining details to the boy.

"You are good!" Yu complimented the fox who responded with a happy yip.

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[August 7th, Nakajima residence, Inaba]

A little later on Yu arrived at the Nakajima residence; Mrs Nakajima had led him to her son Shu's room and left him alone with the boy. The boy in question was wearing a blue-collared shirt with folded short sleeves, black pants, and dark brown shoes, and wears blue rectangular glasses.

"Listen Just so you know, I got no interest all in getting into Yasogami High School." Shu said rudely "You're just the only tutor I could find that could start right now…..do you have a problem….what are you looking at?"

"Nothing. I was just listening so I don't miss anything." Yu replied

"Are you even any good?" Shu asked sceptically.

"Top of my year through middle and currently high school" Yu replied truthfully.

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[August 7th, Samegawa Flood Plain, Inaba]
"Damn it, why am I doing this again?" Rise demanded with a frustrated tone as she failed to catch the fish she was aiming for again.

She'd been trying to catch the river guardian ever since taking a wish Ema from the fox as well.

"Because, granting simple wishes like this when he's doing the same is a great way to demonstrate how much you have in common." Tamamo answered excitedly having physically materialised beside her master. "Now hurry and catch that fish!"

Letting out another growl of frustration Rise cast the line of her fishing rod back into the water. Her eyebrow twitched slightly as she saw a large fish shaped shadow under the water apparently stay just out of reach or her hook and bait.

[Dojima residence, Inaba]

Eventually night fell and near nine seven pm Yu finally came home.

"I'm home." Yu called out to Dojima who was sat eating dinner Nanako

"Welcome home!" Nanako called out to Yu who was holding a couple of math books underneath his arm.

"Well now you were out late." Dojima pointed out

"That I was." Yu deadpanned before marching back to his room in a zombie like fashion.

[August 10th, Daycare, Inaba]

Three days later, during which Yu took some time off to spend a day with Marie; she was rather absent minded and wanted to see a dolphin. She was naturally upset that one didn't appear after she counted to three but in his defence Yu was pretty sure that Dolphins didn't come to the Flood Plain or anywhere near the this river for that matter. She explained how she felt like giving up on trying remembering and snapped at him when he told her not to give up. He refused to give up on her and took her anger fully.

She got another headache and Yu wanted desperately to help her but she clamped up and she demanded to be taken back to the Velvet Room and Yu obliged her.

Later on when Ichijo learned he was tutoring, he asked Yu if he could help out at the day-care centre which brought the children to the park on the hill. Looking at the notice board the pay was certainly decent so he decided to go for it. Rise also seemed to join him enthusiastically for some reason. She waved off any pay from the day-care and insisted that ti went to Yu.

Things were going rather well, Yu occupied some of the children by showing them how to make a flower crown, while the Rise used Tamamo's talents to put on a small magic show for the children. Needless to say they were all very impressed.

However the peace did not last as Yu was broken out of making the flower crown by a pair of arguing young voices who were with none of the groups.

"Look you broke it!" one child named Kaneko yelled.
"Did not!" another denied whom Yu knew to be named Yuuta Minami.

"What's going on here?" Yu asked the two.

"Yuuta broke my Neo Featherman robot!" Kaneko accused holding out his toy which indeed had

"It's not broken! Lemme see…it!" Yu grabbed Yuuta's shoulder before he could rush forward.

"I know that you're angry but let me take care of this ok?" Yu asked with a pleasant but firm tone.

Yuuta simply nodded unable to resist Yu' firm tone of voice which he used when he meant business. He turned to Kaneko knelt in front of him.

"Now then let me see it." Yu held out his hand and took the toy which Kaneko reluctantly gave him.

Looking it over it seemed that the Neo Featherman robot toy did have a few loose parts, mostly around the arms and head, it also seemed to have a large indent in the back almost if slammed against something hard.

"It isn't hard to see that Yuuta didn't do this." Atalanta stated "The day care workers all say he is troubled but never lashes out, and always returned toys he borrows in the condition he borrowed them."

"Yeah and this Kaneko boy has a habit of trying to set up other kids to get into trouble." Astolfo pointed out.

"Yuuta it won't be long before its time to go home so go see Rise's magic show while I have chat with Kaneko ok?" Yuuta sighed, he wanted to argue but ultimately obeyed and went to go see Rise' magic show.

"Now then, why did you break your own toy and try to blame Yuuta?" Yu asked drawing Gawain's Charisma.

"I didn't he really did break it!" Kaneko protested stubbornly with an annoyed look on his face.

"Unfortunately for you, I happen to have been told that Yuuta is a boy who tends to spend time by himself but always returns what he borrowed in the same condition he borrowed it." Yu told the boy strongly "While you on the other hand have a habit of making trouble by trying to frame other children. So what do you have to say for yourself?"

"I'm tell the truth!" Kaneko yelled refusing to meet Yu's eye's.

Letting out a sigh the boy drew on Medea's magecraft and touched Kaneko's right wrist.

"You're lying; do you want to know what happens when little kids lie like that? Just look at your wrist."

Kaneko did so and cried out in shock as a black vein like pattern was now visible on his wrist.

"W-w-what's that!" Kaneko cried trying scratch at the black pattern to get it off, it was however in vain as the pattern remained.

"That's sludge, it forms inside you when you lie, you've done it so much that now you can see it. Now it'll keep growing and growing," the pattern spread up Kaneko's arm with each word climbing upwards near his elbow causing the boy to panic slightly. "until it reaches your mouth and the
sludge comes pouring out, then everyone will know that you're a liar."

"Ok, ok I'm sorry, I'm sorry." Kaneko cried tears coming out of his eyes as the pattern on his arm vanished. "I did it myself, but that's only because my mom wanted me to make trouble for Yuuta so his new mom would have to pay her for it."

"Why?"

"I don't she hates Yuuta's new mom." Kaneko admitted tearfully.

"Good boy." Yu patted his head "Now no more lies or the sludge will come back. Ok?"

"Y-yes." Kaneko sniffed.

After bout ten minutes or so time was up and the parents all arrived to collect their children. Yu had taken Yuuta aside along with Kaneko to end the dispute before it could become worse.

"Look your parents are here we can sort this out now." Yu said calmly as the woman he'd been told was Eri Minami and Kaneko's mother approached.

The woman easily spotted the Eri and upon spotting the damage to her son's toy began ranting at Eri. She must have known that her son's new favourite target was and had begun berating the poor woman in front of her.

"I am so sorry."

"It's beyond repair" Kaneko's mother yelled pointing at the toy Kaneko was holding.

Before Eri could speak up again Yu decided to intervene and gave Kaneko a smile causing the boy to shiver and speak up instantly.

"Yuuta didn't do it" He said quickly

"Kaneko what are you saying?" his mother asked "Of course he did it."

Yu's smile at Kaneko widened just a fraction of an inch, but it was more than enough to get Kaneko to speak up again not wanting to see Yu's scary side again.

"No I did it myself." Kaneko admitted quickly.

"This is ridiculous clearly you've persuaded my poor boy to lie to cover up what that brat did." Kaneko's mother exclaimed.

"No it's true." Yu said stepping in "Yuuta was by himself most of the time, I had one eye on him. Plus your son told me that for some reason you wanted him to make trouble with Yuuta, something about disliking Mrs Minami?"

"I…y-you….this isn't over" Kaneko's mother yelled grabbing her son and stalking away.

"Thank you for helping us." Eri said politely with a slight bow to Yu and Rise who waved her off.

"It's what I do." Yu replied.

"I kinda feel bad that we used magic on that kid." Cu Chullain said.

"Yes, it was perhaps a bit too harsh." Atalanta agreed.
"Well something tells me that this isn't over yet." Rise sighed watching Kaneko and his mother stalk away. "Women like that don't give up easily."

Yu had feeling that his summer was going to become even more complicated.
Disclaimer: I do not own Persona or Fate or anything in the nasuverse, any resemblance to any other Persona 4/Fate fan fiction is coincidental and plagiarism is not intended. No flames please, constructive criticism only.

AN: Credit to Gundam-Knight-Chris for his contribution to the last part of this chapter. Also on another note. if the quality of this chapter seems low I apologise, I lost my desire to write this fic but was able to force these Summer chapters out cause I felt I owed you guys something at least.

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[August 10th, Dojima residence, Inaba]

Later on when it had become dark Yu returned to the Dojima residence.

"You're home!" Nanako ran to greet him. "There's dinner do you want me to warm it up?"

"Sorry, but I already ate." Yu apologised

"You did?" Nanako looked rather downcast at hearing this.

"Oh, Nanako." Yu paused to look at the little girl "Have you heard of Neo Featherman?"

"Course, everyone knows him."

"They do huh?" Yu sighed as he began walking up the stairs again. "Heroes these days sure aren't what they used to be."

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[13th August, Dojima residence, Inaba]

A few days later that night Yu, Dojima and Adachi were all gathered around the table for dinner. Nanako was currently away using the bathroom.

"Ease up there Dojima!" Adachi tried to get Dojima to relax. "Look I'm glad the case is solved too, but lay off the booze!"

"Hey, Yu!" Dojima slurred pointed his chopsticks at the boy and ignoring his partner.

"Y-Yes?"

"If it isn't some chick, then what is keeping you out so late?"

"The truth is..." Yu wasn't sure whether he should voice the truth or not considering how
unbelievable it was but decided to just go for it. "I met this fox and it asked me to get a part-time job, It's caused a lot of problems."

"You're a riot Yu I never knew that about you." Dojima laughed drunkenly.

"He's right" Adachi agreed although not laughing openly like Dojima was "You're freakin hysterical."

"I don't get it" Nanako said as she sat down..

Later on Yu sat on the sofa in his room reading a book and read particular passage that really reflected on his earlier situation.

'Even if I told them, they'd just laugh at me.'

"I hear ya its so true." He sighed to himself.

[16th August, day-care, Inaba]

Three days later when August the sixteenth rolled around Yu and Rise were at the day-care once again.

"So you see you do this and-"

"Don't lie!" the voice of Kaneko who was arguing with Yuuta again yelled.

"I'm not lying!" Yuuta insisted angrily glaring at Kaneko.

"Come on no more fighting you two." Yu said coming between the two glaring boys.

"But Yuuta's lying he said he saw Loveline!" Kaneko explained angrily.

"I did! I really saw her!"

"But Loveline only exists in the TV." Another girl stated with confusion.

"So-" Yuuta was about to through his rotor blades at the girl who spoke but froze upon feeling a familiar aura, and noticing that Kaneko had frozen up too. He looked to see a familiar demonic visage peeking out from behind Yu's shoulder. "Eep."

"Now Yuuta, you weren't about to start a fight were you?" Yu asked with a smile similar to the one he gave Kaneko the other day.

"Nope" Yuuta shook his head rapidly in denial "I was just gonna go and listen see what Ms Rise was doing today…er…see ya."

The boy quickly sprinted off to see Rise's show again. At any other time Kaneko would have called Yuuta chicken for running away, but having experienced Yu's scary side he decided that he didn't want to antagonise anyone again.

"That's amazing you stopped potential riot." One of the day-care workers said walking up to Yu with her colleagues.

"Yeah can you teach us how to do that?" another asked.
"Well…its not something I can really teach." Yu replied with slight nervousness "I learnt it by watching it in action. So I just sort of…..do it, I'm not sure how."

"Aw, it would be great to keep the kids in line with it." The third groaned.

[August 17th, Tatsuhime Shrine, North Shopping District, Inaba]

The day came and went quickly and before Yu knew it was already the seventeenth. He was currently realizing at shrine where the fox apparently lived.

"There are a whole lot of clouds in the sky today." Yu sighed looking up at the cloudy sky above.

Well at least we get a break from all that heat." Rise chimed.

"This earning money stuff is hard." Yu sighed as he let his head fall.

Suddenly they all perked up at the sound of someone being knocked to the ground and a scooter driving away.

"Thief!" an elderly lady's voice yelled "Someone stop him!"

Yu and Rise ran out of the shrine to help the old woman who was lying on the ground apparently unconscious.

"Ma'am!" Yu yelled at the woman "Are you alright?"

"I'll get him" Rise said, installing and assuming her Tamamo-chan guise when she was sure no one was looking, she began sprinting at superhuman speeds after the thief and his scooter.

It didn't take long for the heroine to catch him. Even on a scooter a with the power of Heroic Spirit she was still faster. One good leap and some sprinting was enough to get Rise close enough to knock the thief off of his scooter which skidded to a stop without its rider. After knocking him out, calling the police and taking the stolen purse back, she returned just as an ambulance arrived to get the old lady to the hospital.

[August 17th, Inaba Municipal Hospital, Inaba]

At the hospital the Yu was getting an explanation of the elderly lady's condition while Rise waited outside the door for him.

"It looks like she hit her head when the thief pushed her to the ground." The nurse explained.

"There's no need to worry though she'll be fine."

"That's good to hear." Yu said with relief as the nurse stood up from kneeling beside the elderly lady's bedside and walked towards Yu.

"Well, well now, aren't you a little cutie?" the Nurse said flirtatiously putting a finger on Yu's chin "What do you say the two of us hit the town?"

Outside the door a vein throbbed in Rise's forehead, her hearing had improved as well.

"Can't I have to work." Yu said immediately beating a retreat, out of the room.
"Your loss then." the nurse chuckled apparently encouraged rather than put off by Yu's refusal which confused Yu.

'She might see it as a challenge.' Semiramis stated 'Some women who flirt like that want to be refused, she probably thinks you're playing hard to get or something like that and that make's you different from most males who would have jumped at the opportunity. I don't think you've seen the last of her.'

'Great' Yu sighed mentally

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[August 17th, Nakajima residence, Inaba]

Later on Yu over to the Nakajima's to tutor Shu in math. Rise, deciding to keep trying to catch the River Guardian.

"Now that one…"

"Hey enough math" Shu interjected surprising Yu "mister...Is school fun for? Do you like it?"

"Yeah it is." Yu stated to his pupil thinking back over the memories he'd made with his friends who he wouldn't have met if not for school. "Its lots of fun."

"Really?" Shu seemed downcast at the answer. "Cause it's not fun for me at all. I'm surrounded by idiots all the time."

The reply surprised Yu causing him to looked around the room, he spotted a picture of Shu with his mother standing near a birthday cake. The picture showed the date of his birthday which was only three days from now. A plan came to Yu's mind, he could tell form his interactions with Shu that the boy was lonely, and felt more than a little pressured. Yu hoped his plan would help ease some of that.

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[August 18th, Bus Stop, South Shopping District, Inaba]

Today was different for Yu; Rise wasn't she and Tamamo were still trying to, as she put it 'catch that bastard fish'.

"Well, it's the hottie from yesterday." Yu looked to see the nurse from the hospital getting off the bus.

"Ah crap, this looks like trouble." Cu Chullain sighed. "Don't get me wrong she's a looker and seems nice, but I'd be cautious."

"Oh, hi there." Yu greeted back politely hoping she'd leave him alone.

"Were you coming to see me?"

"Not at all." Yu replied bluntly "I was going to see the old woman.."

" Oh are these for me?" the nurse asked ignoring Yu's blunt denial.

"No these are meant for the patient.."
"Well aren't you forward one?" She interrupted him again. "I kinda like that in a guy."

"No that's…." before Yu could finish she started dragging him with her "Wait, where are we going?"

"You just leave the rest to me." She said with a smile as she dragged Yu off.

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[August 18th, Bar, Inaba]

A little later on the nurse whom he had found was named Sayoko Uehara during her drunken ramblings at the bar she’d dragging him too, had began opening up to him. Although Yu suspected the alcohol had something to do with that.

"I'm over being a nurse!" Sayako complained "The old geezers only boss me around and the ones under eighty just want to look down my shirt!"

"That must be hard." Yu said carefully not wanting to make her angry.

"And you know what the worst part is, they come, they heal and they leave." Sayako continued her rant "They all bail as soon as they can."

"That should be a good thing." Yu said confused at her statement.

"Maybe its time I quit and find another job."

"Well what else would you want to do?" Yu asked her.

"I don't freakin know!" Sayako almost yelled slamming her empty glass down next to the other two. "That's enough talk about that."

'I don't think she remembers that she started this conversation.' Gawain sighed.

"You know there's a big festival coming up soon?" Sayako asked changing the subject "Why don't we go together?"

"I'm going with some friends." Yu objected once again seemed only to encourage Sayako.

"You can take a quick spin through the festival with them, and then ring me when you're done." Sayako explained "I'll give you my number."

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[August 18th, Bus Stop, South Shopping District, Inaba]

With that Sayako took Yu's phone, put her number into it and left but not before taking the flowers that he'd gotten 'for her'. He made his way back to the bus stop after buying some more flowers hoping to catch the bus to the hospital and visit the old woman. He sniffed himself and sighed.

"I smell like booze now."

However luck was not on his side as Eri Minami got off the bus and spotted him.

"Hey you're from the day-care centre." Eri greeted recognising him.
Before Yu knew he was at the park again sitting next to Eri watching Yuuta play with another boy.

"Look, I found a bug!" the boy Yuuta was playing with said.

"I think there's more over there." Yuuta pointed to a patch of grass beneath a tree.

"Okay!" Yuuta ran off with the boy to go and find the bugs while Eri talked with Yu.

"You see, Yuuta isn't really my son." Eri confessed "He's my husband's boy."

"Oh I didn't know that." Yu stated.

"That's why I'm not sure of how to act around him." Eri said wistfully "I'm not his mom and yet I kinda am, I'm not sure how he feels about me but there are times when I think he hates me."

"Ok, Mom!" the other boys mother came and collected him and the left "See ya!"

"Yeah...

"I wish I knew how he truly felt about me." Eri sighed standing up and walking away with Yuuta, Yu noticed that neither of them made an attempt to hold hands.

[August 18th, Bus Stop, South Shopping District, Inaba]

It was the afternoon now and Yu once again tried to catch the bus to the hospital to see how the elderly lady was doing.

"Oh my!" Yu looked and saw the woman he had been trying to visit all day, apparently she had been discharged, she certainly looked better. "Aren't you..."

"Yeah!"

[August 18th, Samegawa Flood Plain, Inaba]

The elderly woman who was named Hisano Kuroda as she told him, had requested to be brought to the Flood Plain.

"The grass is uneven, so watch your step." Yu said holding Hisano's hand as he lead her down the embankment.

"Thank you."

A few moments of silence passed before Hisano spoke up again. Rise who had arrived a few moments ago after Yu had called her sat watching in silence.

"I came here because I am moving away fairly soon." Hisano explained as she looked out at the river water which reflected the dying sunlight. "This town holds too many memories of my late husband." She withdrew from her pocket a beautiful black comb with a floral pattern on it. "Pretty isn't it? It was a gift something that my husband gave me a long time ago. However now... I don't need it anymore."

Yu and Rise gasped as she tossed the come into the river where it landed with a light splash.
"But why?" Rise asked quietly "Why throw it away?"

"Well you see things changed by the end." Hisano explained "The love that I had for him had all dried up. That was the memory of a love that's passed so why carry it around now?"

"I'm glad I ran into you before I left town." Hisano said as she turned to leave "You're the spitting image of my husband when he was a young man."

Rise skidded down the embankment and stopped next to Yu as Hisano walked away. They turned to see the River guardian leaping out of the river with the comb stuck in one of its scales. The mere sight of the fish made Rise furious.

"We have to get it back, but that comb means more to that old lady than even she knows. That comb represents her bond with the person she loves; even if she says that it dried up years ago I don't think that's true." Rise said insistently.

Yu felt something was off about this, Rise wasn't acting like herself, she'd never been this passionate about the feelings others before.

'Did she always have fox ears?' Astolfo asked.

"Caster?" Yu said realising that it was Tamamo no Mae he was talking to instead of Rise.

"Yes, I asked my master to install me so I could talk physically without the old lady getting suspicious." Caster stated. "We need to get it back to her and show her that her love outweighs any guilt that she might be feeling."

"Guilt?"

"Yeah, I can just feel it, she feels guilty for outliving him....we have to help her." Tamamo said clenching her fist with determination.

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[August 20th, Summer Festival, Inaba]

Two days passed and the Summer Festival had finally arrived. Yu was currently hanging around with Kanji and Yosuke.

"Those are some major bags under your eyes, you two." Kanji said through a mouthful of Takoyaki.

"I've been busy." Yu explained as Rise nodded along with him, the bags were due a lack of sleep.

"Nanako was going to tag along with you tonight right?" Yosuke inquired after the girl.

"My uncle said he would bring her along later." Yu stated trying to fight the urge to fall asleep.

Rise gasped as she spotted Hisano sitting on a bench next to a stand. She tugged at Yu's sleeve to get his attention and pointed at the old woman.

"Look it's her." Tamamo pointed out.

"Let's go give it back to her quickly then." Yu said as he began walking past Yosuke and Kanji. "We'll be back in a sec."
"Huh? Okay." Yosuke looked after him with confusion.

The duo quickly ran up Hisano and got her attention.

"Hey wait!" Tamamo called out grabbing the woman's attention as Rise allowed her to take over.

"I had a feeling that I might see the two of you here." She said with a smile "Are you here together?"

"Yes but that's not important right now." Tamamo said as Yu held out the comb that Hisano had thrown away. "We had to give you this back."

"That's my comb... But how did the two of you ever…” Hisano was so shocked she couldn't finish her sentence.

"Well…." Rise scratched her cheek with embarrassment as she recalled yesterday which went much like the day before except they finally succeeded in their goal late into the night hence their lack of sleep.

"Alright this time we'll catch that stupid fish for sure!" Rise growled with a fire in her eyes as Yu prepared the fishing rod and put on his TV world glasses.

"Persona!" he let out his battle cry as he cast his line.

They didn't have to wait long, a large white foamy rippling appeared right where the hook was and Yu felt a bite.

"I've got him." Yu began reeling the River Guardian in while making sure to be just careful enough that the line didn't snap.

All looked good until the tugging on the line intensified and Yu relaxed his grip reflexively so as not to cause the line to snap, but this action only allowed the guardian to begin taking more of line. Yu was dismayed as it looked like the River Guardian would evade them yet again until Rise grabbed onto the rod.

"Not this time you bastard!" she yelled pulling the rod with all her might.

Instead of the line snapping as Yu thought it would, together his strength and Rise's were strong enough that the River Guardian came out of the water and was sent sailing into the air. The comb which was attached to its scale came loose and fell into Yu's hand.

Rise meanwhile used a couple of charms to blow the guardian onto Land, leaving it flopping as tried and failed to make it back to the water.

"This meant a lot to you didn't it?" Tamamo asked rhetorically "After you threw it I could tell that you were very sad. So we got it back for you."

As she hesitantly held her hand out and touched the comb old memories and feelings that she thought buried and gone resurfaced. It was of when her hand first gave her the comb at a Summer Festival so many years ago. It was in that moment of memory that she realised that the well of love for her husband had not dried up, it simply ran deeper than she thought.

"I don't know what to say..." Hisano stammered as tears of joy fell onto the comb "When my husband gave this to me it made me very happy. But through my tears I had a hard time remembering that. I...I truly loved my husband after all."
Yu could definitely see that Hisano was happier than she had been in a very long time, her feelings for her husband had resurfaced once more and were giving her solace with the memories she had made with him.

In back of the boy's mind, a flame with the number 'Thirteen' burned to life and, slowly, another soul started to connect to him from Beyond.

Yu kept smiling at Hisano for a few moments until he saw Shu running with a large round sphere that Yu recognised as a firework.

"Hey isn't that the boy that you tutored?" Tamamo asked watching Shu run by.

"Yeah he's got..."

"Then go after him before he hurts himself." Tamamo said with a smile which surprised Yu "I think I'll stay here with Hisano for a little bit."

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Shu ran with the stolen firework down into a side path that was empty of people, he hoped to make his escape when he heard a familiar voice call his name.

"Shu!" the boy turned around to see his tutor standing there alone.

"O-oh it's you!" Shu said with relief.

"Isn't that a-" Yu saw that it was indeed a firework. "What are you doing with that?"

"I don't want there to be any fireworks!" Shu yelled with anger as he gripped the explosive tight. "Everyone in my class made plans to watch them with each other. But no one bothered to ask me if I wanted to come too. They're all just jealous of me because I'm smarter than they are! So now, nobody gets to see the fireworks! Its their fault they asked for this!"

"Shu..." Yu said his name firmly getting the boys attention "I got something for you."

"What is it?" Shu asked watching Yu withdraw a video game from his pocket Othello Eppon Inc. It was fairly new and was one of the few games that Shu was actually interested in but couldn't get.

"It's a present, Happy birthday Shu." Yu said with a smile.

"How'd you know?" Shu asked surprised.

"I noticed the date on a photo in your room." Yu explained "It was clearly your birthday."

"But why did you get me this?" Shu asked still confused by Yu's actions.

"Because It's a game that you can't play by yourself." Yu replied taking the firework from Shu and handing him the game. "You're gonna have go up to someone and ask them to play it with you."

"But everyone I know is so immature."

"Does that really matter?" Yu asked thinking of his own friends and how they could act sometimes. "It's ok to have fun and goof off sometimes."

"Mister, I stole that firework." Shu finally confessed.
"Then we'll give them back!" Shu gasped at what Yu said, his tutor had said we. "I'll go with you to apologize with you later, just give me one sec ok?"

Yu arguing once again.

"Look what you did!" Yuuta yelled at Kaneko who had Yuuta's cotton candy near his feet.

"I didn't do it" Kaneko denied "That was your fault not mine!"

"Your lying that wasn't my fault!" Yuuta yelled angrily.

"Calm down Yuu..." Eri placed her hands on Yuuta's shoulders hoping to comfort him.

"That's quite a mouth your kid has on him." Kaneko's mother complained "I'm not surprised though, rotten little kids always have moms like you." The verbal assault caused Eri to flinch. "So I guess the real failure here is you as a mother."

"But I..." Eri tried to argue but no words would come out.

"Yooouuu HAG!" Yuuta charged at the woman with intention of ramming into her but wound up shoving past her and stumbling instead.

"Why you miserable brat!" Kaneko's mother yelled and raised the hand she was holding her purse in with the intention of smacking Yuuta.

"Yuuta!" Eri dove at Yuuta knocking him out the way and receiving the blow that was aimed for him.

"Hey! Come on wake up!" Yuuta begged tearfully shaking Eri as she lay on the ground bleed from a wound to her head.

Yu ran over to her and knelt down to check on her, putting the firework on a candied apple stand.

"She's bleeding but I'm can't tell whether it's serious or not." Yu said trying to examine Eri to see how bad her injury was.

"Mister...help us please" Yuuta begged

"I-It was her fault she shouldn't have-" Kaneko's mother immediately stopped talking upon seeing the look Yu was giving her.

"Do something she's hurt." Yuuta begged Yu "Please help her!"

"Sure thing!"

Meanwhile at the parking lot Sayako opened her ring in phone and saw that Yu was calling her.

"Well well, I didn't that think he'd actually call." Sayako said answering the call "Hello?"

"I need your help!" Yu said urgently "She's bleeding from the head. You need to tell me what to do ok?"
"Wait just what is going on?" Sayako asked

"Help me!"

"Yes of course." Sayako got serious upon realising that this was not a prank and began instructing Yu about what to do. "First, find something long and clean to bandage up the wound."

"Ok lemme look" Yu looked around before he heard the voice of Ai Ebihara.

"Huh? What are you doing down there?" Ai asked as Yu spotted a striped scarf around her neck.

"Look Ebi, I need to borrow this alright?"

"You what?" Yu took the scarf with waiting for an answer.

"What next?

"Keep it cool so it doesn't swell" Sayako instructed him.

Yu ran over to a shaved ice vendor run by old lady Shiroku.

"I-I'm sorry, but we're out of ice." Shiroku said apologetically.

"What's wrong, Narukami?" Ichijo asked

"I need ice..." Yu replied looking around and beginning to panic until he saw Aika who held a metal cooler

"Here's your delivery." She said opening the cooler to reveal a large block of ice.

Yu quickly took a piece of and wrapped in some cloth and applied it to the wound in order to help prevent swelling.

"Mom your awake!" Yuuta exclaimed happily as Eri opened her eyes after a few minutes.

"Yuuta?"

"Mom!" Yuuta hugged Eri tightly and began crying for the woman he had accepted as his mother.

"Hey nice job she looks like she'll be okay." Sayako said as she finally arrived at the scene.

"She does thanks to you."

As Yuuta cried into Eri Yu was suddenly brought back to reality as heard a child point the firework at the candied apple stand.

"I want big one Daddy, get me that one." The child begged his father who looked unsure.

"Crap, sorry about this." Yu stood up grabbed the firework and ran return the firework.

After returning the firework to where it belonged Yu was joined by Rise who had taken control back from Tamamo as he walked through the festival grounds again.

"Big Bro." The four all looked to see Nanako dressed up as Loveline running towards them.
"Nanako?"

"There you are." Nanako exclaimed as she tackle hugged Yu.

"What's the matter?" Yu asked seeing that the little girl seemed slightly upset.

"I've been looking for you everywhere." Nanako explained to Yu who remained confused.

"Why are dressed up like that?" Yu asked. "And where's your dad?"

Before she could answer a firework launched up into the sky and exploded in a burst of orange green and blue colour. Within seconds more fireworks of different colours joined it in the sky as the display began.

"The Fireworks have started." Nanako said excitedly pointing at the fireworks.

After watching the fireworks for a few moments Yu heard Shu calling him.

"Hey Mister!"

"I made it just in time!" Yu said to his student who looked happier than he had in a while.

"Wow thank you." Shu said gratefully "You're the first person to go out on a limb for me. You don't know how much this means."

"So how are you Shu?" Yu asked his student who wiped his tears away and took a deep breath.

"There's something I wanna confess to you." Shu took another breath "I think we should end our tutoring sessions."

"End them why?"

"Because you probably didn't know this but I was suspended from school because I cheated on a test." Shu confessed "You see my mom had such high expectations and wanted to prove that she could raise a kid on her own so that's why I had to be the best at everything. But when that transfer student came he became number one at everything. He was like Mr Perfect, that's why I cheated, to try and beat him and make mom proud. I thought that I had to be the best at everything in order to be loved, but I found out from her a few minutes ago that wasn't true. She said she'd always be proud of me no matter what. But now I see that's not true thanks to you…..here take this."

Shu gave Yu what looked like test results.

"I thought that those results were my only bond with my mother but I was wrong." Shu explained "You taught me more than maths and stuff; you showed how to stand up again and believe. I've decided that I'm gonna think about my life and set my own path. I feel like this is just the beginning and not just because I'm young, because I just realised that."

Yu smiled as Shu laughed embarrassed, he could feel the tight bond that he had formed with Shu. Time seemed to again as Yu felt a familiar sensation and heard the voice of a man speaking probably a Persona of the Tower Arcana.

In back of the boy's mind, a flame with the number 'Sixteen burned to life and, slowly, another soul started to connect to him from Beyond.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]
After Shu left Yu and the others found Yuuta approaching them with Kaneko who was slack jawed at seeing Nanako dressed as Loveline.

"No way it's Loveline." Kaneko exclaimed causing Nanako to blush

"See? Told ya she's real!" Yuuta smirked at Kaneko victoriously "I wasn't making it up either, right, Mom?"

"Nope you weren't making this up at all." Eri said kneeling next to Yuuta with a smile before looking at Yu with a grateful smile. The scarf which Yu had borrowed from Ai had been replaced by a proper bandage. "Listen, thank you so much for everything. I was scared of Yuuta and of really trying to connect with him. But protecting someone you care about is a wonderful joy that you showed me."

Again that feeling came again a flame with the number 'Fourteen' burned to life in back of his mind and once again another soul started to connect to him from Beyond.

With that Yuuta and Eri who had finally accepted each other as mother and son walked away hand in hand. It was then that Sayako approached him from the side.

"I think I might've lost sight of what truly matters most." Sayako said with a nostalgic smile on her face as she watched the mother and son walk away.

"And what would that be?" Yu asked the nurse.

"That healing people and saving lives truly is a wonderful thing." Sayako stated wistfully "It's something so obvious I can't believe I forgot it. But you were there to help me remember it. Thank you."

For a fourth time Yu felt a familiar sensation as once again at back of his mind, a flame with the number 'Fifteen' burned to life and, slowly, another soul started to connect to him from Beyond.

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After meeting up with Yukiko and Chie in Yukata's and after Nanako who had gotten dressed into her own. Yu and Rise made their way through the festival to the shrine to meet up with the other boys.

"It's hard to walk in this." Nanako said as she tried to trip while holding a bag of cotton candy.

"You look so cute Nanako!" Chie exclaimed causing the little girl to blush with embarrassment.

They quickly arrived at the shrine where they agreed to meet up and sure enough Kanji, Teddie and Yosuke were all waiting for them. Teddie was still stuffing his face with food from various food stands.

"I can't believe that you're still eating." Yosuke sighed at the bear.

"Yeah why stop?" Teddie asked not seeing the problem.

"Don't come whining to me when your gut hurts again." Kanji ordered the bear.

"We're here." Chie announced as they approached "Sorry we're a little bit late."

"It took a while getting everyone dressed." Yukiko explained as Kanji looked away from the girls with a blush.
"You girls are all looking hot." Yosuke complimented.

"Yes very everyone's very pretty! I like"

"Hey there!" Dojima greeted surprising everyone with his arrival. "I finally made it thanks for watching her guys."

"How'd that happen?" Yu asked his uncle "I thought you had to work."

"Yeah I did, but I dumped it all on Adachi instead." Dojima said with a smirk. "I'm not gonna pass up this festival!"

"Look they gave me some cotton candy!" Nanako said coming up to her father holding up a bag of cotton candy with Loveline on the logo.

"Really, well how you dig in and after that we'll both go and hit up the shooting gallery.

"Sounds good!" Nanako exclaimed happily latching onto her father.

"Well, you guys have fun." Dojima said waving as he led Nanako away into the festival.

"Big Bro, I'll see you later."

[August 22nd, Junes Food Court, Junes, Inaba]

A couple of days had passed since the festival. Yu had decided to spend the day with Marie. After spending some more time showing the strange girl around town, Yu finally brought her to Junes in order to rest.

"I'm thirsty. I want something to drink." Marie stated demandingly "Something that isn't sweet. And not water!"

Before Yu could do anything Teddie suddenly ran up and interrupted.

"Sensei! Welcome!" he greeted excitedly "Ooooh! Who's this girl?"

"Ah yes, Marie has only met, Yukiko, Chie and Yosuke so far." Gawain realised.

"It couldn't hurt to introduce her to more of our friends," Nero said.

"What the heck is this thing?" Marie asked giving Teddie a funny look "It's moving...Gross."

Avenger snickered at this as did several of Yu's personas.

"Bwuh!? How rude!" Teddie sniffed with what Yu believed was mock hurt. "How can you say that about cute little moi?"

"And it talks... What's it made out of?" Marie asked with a grossed expression still present on her face.

"This Teddie is fifty percent kindness, by volume," Teddie stated proudly clearing his throat.

"Huh? ...What about the other half?" Marie tilted her head in confusion.

"Teddie fur." The bear replied simply with a grin.
"...Kindness and... fur...?" Marie raised her eyebrow in confusion.

"Don't worry about it, most of the things he says don't make much sense to us either." Nursery Rhyme said appearing in spirit form.

Yosuke suddenly strolled up to them.

"Oh, hey, it's Yu and Marie!" Yosuke said "Soo....Whatcha up to this time? Taking a tour of Junes?"

"Greetings Ms Marie." Diarmuid greeted her as he appeared in spirit form.

"I don't need a tour. I already saw it." Marie grouched giving a dismissive wave to Diarmuid.

"Whoooooooa! Yosuke got deeeeenied!" Teddie chuckled teasingly.

"Shut up! It's nothing like that!" Yosuke snapped at the bear who kept grinning impishly.

"Actually it kinda is." Avenger quipped before a look of realisation came over him. "Wait she can see and hear us?"

It was then that Kanji arrived strolling into the food court apparently looking for Yosuke.

"Yo, Yosuke. Y'know that CD I was askin' about...Uh, who's this?"

"Who's this old-timer?" Marie asked tilting her head at Kanji.

"O.. Old-timer!?"

"I see what you mean." Yu nodded examining Kanji.

"Yeah, same here." Yosuke agreed.

"Who are ya callin' old!?" Kanji yelled angrily.

"Kanji, what are you yelling about?" Rise demanded as she joined them "I thought you came to talk with Yosu- Oh! Sen..." Rise stopped upon spotting Marie, she strolled up to the girl and got very close to her "Whoa..."she turned to face Yu "Senpai? Who is this girl? What is she doing with you?"

"Her name's Marie" Yu informed her simply.

"I know this person" Marie stated looking over Rise "I heard about her from Margaret. 'Someone even I can't handle'."

"That's not how it goes!" Rise snapped with annoyance "It's 'Something even I can handle'!"

"...That's not so different." Marie said after a few seconds.

"Yes, it is!"

"Yosuke-senpai, what's with this girl!?"

"Me!?" the boy straightened with surprise "Er, she's Yu's mate..."

A sudden silence fell across the group.
"Can he not put his foot his mouth for one day?" Chu Chulainn sighed.

"Drat, another rival, I'll have to rethink our strategy." Tamamo No Mae griped as she began mumbling something to herself.

"What!? 'Mate'...?" Rise looked shocked.

"Sorry... I think I just added fuel to the fire." Yosuke sweatdropped upon realising his mistake.

"Huh? Heyyyy!" Chie and Yukiko interrupted the awkward moment before it could get worse walking up to group "Oh, everyone's here."

"Oh, Marie-chan's with you, too? Hello." Yukiko greeted the cap wearing girl.

"Senpais, you know her?" Kanji asked.

"We had fun together the other day. Right, Marie-chan?" Yukiko explained.

"I don't recognise you. Which high school are you from?" Kanji asked curiously "Wait... You're even younger than me. Which middle school are you from?"

"Middle school? What's that supposed to mean? You're pretty rude, old-timer." Marie said.

"Why do you keep calling me old!?!?" Kanji demanded angrily.

"Hey do me a favour and take off your shirt, and your bra while you're at it!" Avenger cried with a perverted smile on his face.

A silence fell over the group again, the girls had looks of disgust (none of which bother Avenger in the slightest) while the guys wisely decided their mouths were best kept shut, save for Teddie who seemed rather pleased with the idea.

The girls looked ready to yell but were cut off when Marie spoke up, a thoughtful look on her face as she remembered something.

"Margaret told me what do if something like this happened," Marie said aloud as she slowly approached the tattooed persona.

"Huh?" Avenger became confused when somehow Marie's hands gripped his ethereal shoulders, holding in place. "How in the-GAH!" Avenger let out a cry of agony as Marie drove her knee into his crotch with surprising strength for someone of her size.

The persona's dropped to the ground clutching his crown jewels and while crying out about the impossibility of the act as he was still in spirit form. Seeing this, all the male persona's chose to return to their master's souls, not wishing to be around a girl who could crotch shot them while they were in spirit form.

"He had that coming," Yukiko stated.

"Yup." Chie agreed "So how'd you do that?"

"I…just did it," Marie told her, unsure of what else to say.

"Y'know, I don't know much about her, either." Yosuke pointed "How old are you, Marie? Where you live? Are you here on vacation?"
"I don't... I don't remember." Marie confessed sadly as her expression became a sad one.

"Yosuke! You're scaring the poor girl!" Chie glared at the boy angrily.

"Yeah, Senpai. Not very sub-buttle of you." Kanji stated.

"Hey, you brought it up! ...Wait, what?" Yosuke backpedalled realising a problem with what Kanji had said: "What did you just say...?"

"Sub-buttle," Yu said bluntly getting snickers from his Persona's.

"Did you think the word "subtle" is pronounced sub-buttle?" Rise asked looking at her classmate with a raised eyebrow

"Kanji's got a sub-buttle." Teddie joked with a laugh

"Sh-Shut up! Quit talking about my butt!" the boy yelled with embarrassment.

"Oh, ugh... Why'd you make me think about your butt!?" Rise demanded angrily "You're the most un-subtle person ever."

"The un-subtle sub-buttle..." Yukiko snorted "Haha, hahaha, hahahahaha!"

"Ha... Ha." Marie let out a small chuckle.

Yu spent time with their friends and Marie after a few hours passed everyone decided that they were done hanging out and went home.

"...Those were funny people." Marie said "I don't get them. They're loud and stupid.....So stupid. "Sub-buttle.." Marie let out a snicker.

Despite her complaints Yu could tell that Marie appeared to have enjoyed herself.

"Did they all face their true selves?" Marie asked

Yu merely nodded at her.

"I see..." Marie paused in silence for a few moments "...I was thinking... Maybe I should work on trying to get my memory back. W-Well, one of these days...they look like they're having fun...I wanna be like that."

"I'll help you." Yu offered.

"Please do.....I don't know what to do." Marie explained "I'm not asking you to help right now, but when the time comes; I'm going to count on you. Let's go home now.....Oh, but let's go by the river on the way!"

He had no reason to refuse, so before taking Marie back to the Velvet Room they walked by the river.

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A couple of days later Yu found himself dragged by Marie to the Samegawa floodplain.

"So, about my memories... What do you think I should do?" She asked Yu who had as much idea on what do as Marie did.
"Are there any clues?" Yu asked.

"No, nothing." Marie reached into her bag and pulled out the bamboo comb she showed him a while ago. "If you remember, I told you that I had this when I first started remembering. Will this help?"

They all looked at the comb for a few seconds thinking of how it could help us.

"It looks its made of bamboo" Cu Chulainn said.

"...Bamboo? What is that rare?...But this doesn't look like the ones at Junes. They don't look anything like this." Marie stated with interest "It seems older... Do you know any stores that might sell stuff like this?"

Yu thought about it for a moment until he remembered the perfect place to start searching. Tatsumi Textile's which the store that Kanji's mother ran. Even if they didn't sell this type of thing then hopefully they could at least find out more about this comb and what it might mean. "Tatsumi Textile's which Kanji's mother runs might know what to make of this."

"That old-timer's place? Hmmm... That's kinda surprising." Marie said.

She nodded and they all headed to Tatsumi Textiles, when they got there both Rise and Kanji were in the shop.

"Yo welco- oh, Sempai." Kanji greeted.

"Ooooh, Yu, what a coincidence! Oh, Marie's and the others are with you too?" Rise greeted.

"Oh, I see. Wait... Don't tell me the two of you are on a date..." Rise said nervously.

"No it's nothing like that" Yu replied calmly before the situation could get out of control.

"Sheesh, don't scare me like that. Hey, Kanji! Yu wants to talk to you." Rise said relieved.

"Huh? What's up?" Kanji asked.

Marie pulled out her comb and showed it to Kanji.

"Do you know what this is? Tell me anything you know. Anything at all." She demanded.

"This thing? It's uh... It's a comb. A pretty damn old one." Kanji told her which made.

"We know that we were wondering if you could tell us more about it." Yu pressed for more details.

"That's a comb? It doesn't look like it's very easy to use, with that shape." Rise said.

"So, what do you want from me? You need me to figure out where this thing came from?" Kanji asked.

Marie nodded in confirmation.

"Er, I don't know anything, but..." He looked at Rise as if to ask if she knew anything about the comb, but she shook her head no. "Hey! Mom! Come over here! Yo!"

"I hear you, I hear you. Don't shout so loud- Oh, hello. I haven't seen you in a while. Is this girl another of Kanji's friends?" Kanji's mother asked coming into the room.
"She wanted to know about this comb. You know anything, Mom?" Kanji asked dodging the question.

"A comb? Let me see..." Kanji's mother began examining the comb that Marie held out to her. "Hrm...this is very old, I'm sorry. We don't carry anything like this one."

"Can you tell me anything about it?" Marie asked eagerly. "Anything at all."

"...I've never seen a comb shaped like this. I don't think it would be for everyday use." Kanji's mother explained. "You may have better luck asking at a museum or a gallery than at a clothing store."

"Museum? Uh, so it's rare?" Rise asked what we were all thinking.

"Well...I don't know if it's rare, but it's definitely not something that would be sold around here." She explained.

"Huh? If it's not sold, then where is somebody gonna get one? C'mon lady, help us out here!" Kanji yelled. He seemed to be getting into this. A bit too much if you ask me.

"Don't talk to your mother like that!" She scolded her son, it was apparent that Kanji's mother could be scary when she wanted to be. "I'm sorry I couldn't be any help. But I've really never seen anything like this."

"...Why do I have this?" Marie asked herself with a downcast expression on her face. "Would I have been given it as a gift?"

"I'm not so sure about that. Combs don't make very good gifts." Kanji's mother interjected gravely. "The word for comb, 'kushi' also has the sounds for the words for pain, 'ku' and death, 'shi.' It's an old belief that combs have the power to cause separation. But, I don't know if kids today care about that stuff."

"Oh yeah, my friend Kiyohime used to send love rivals combs in order to keep them away from her beloved, you know before the whole bell thing." Tamamo no Mae commented.

"Huh, I didn't know that. But now that you think about it, it does have those words in it..." Rise said.

"Are you in, Ms Tatsumi?" the voice of a customer asked. "May I have a word with you?"

"I'm coming. Just a moment, please." Kanji's mother stated. "Kanji, please see to our guests. I need to speak with a customer. Please, make yourselves at home."

With that, she left the room to tend to the customer.

"Pain and death, huh. Yeah, I guess I wouldn't want to give someone that." Kanji said agreeing with what his mother said.

"She said separation? I didn't know that combs are actually bad luck." Rise said.

"I didn't know combs had any kind of luck," Yu said agreeing with Rise.

Marie repeated the word separation, and started thinking about what Kanji's mom said. It looked to Yu if she started to remember something.

"Marie, are you alright? Does your head hurt?" Rise asked, concerned.
"Whoa, you okay? Sit your ass down and get some rest." Kanji said in a panicky tone.

"Did you remember something?" Yu asked curiously.

"I don't know... But... There's something..." She shook her head before continuing "Ugh, it's gone. I can't remember... Something came up in my mind. I was about to recall it." Her expression seemed to darken a little.

"What, you can't remember? You don't remember anything about that comb?" Kanji asked.

It was at that moment that Yu remembered that they never mentioned Marie's amnesia to anyone.

"Huh? Wait a second. That's not your comb?" Rise asked in a scandalised tone.

"It was on her before she lost her memories. Perhaps it was supposed to be a curse from someone?" Semiramis suggested.

"She said this isn't a normal comb, what did she say? A Moozium? A Galerry?" Marie stumbled over the words, Yu chuckled a bit at her mispronunciation earning him a glare from the girl.

"Maybe I'll remember something if we go to one of those. You help, too." It was more a demand than a request but Yu didn't mind; this was important to her and planned to see this through to the end. With this case over or at least on hold, until the killer made their next move, Yu had plenty of time to help Marie.

"I'm tired. I'm going home today, but let's continue this later." She then left the store and headed to the Velvet Room entrance on the wall next to Daidara's store.

"What's up with her?" Kanji asked.

Yu quickly followed her, when he finally caught up to her the girl she said goodbye before returning to the Velvet Room.

Looking around Nanako Dojima couldn't see much. There was the inky blackness of the night sky with stars twinkling in the distance.

"W-where am I?" the little girl asked walking forward "Daddy? Big Bro where is everyone?"

Suddenly she bumped into something and screamed falling onto her behind as she looked up to see a man wearing a dark robe and skull mask looking down at her.

"There's nothing to be frightened of." A feminine voice reassured her. "He's sleeping right now."

Nanako looked to see a woman wearing white with tanned skin looking at the man who upon closer inspection was greyed out, like a statue. She could make out about four more figures equally as frozen as the man before her. The lady approached the skull masked man and placed on hand upon his chest. When this happened the man was washed briefly in a triad of colours, pink, green and blue. which quickly faded away.

"W-who are you?" Nanako asked.

"No one you should be concerned about." the woman answered before turning her back to Nanako. "I wonder how a human like you is here? No matter, unless you feel like wandering this darkness for a while try going in there."
The woman thumbed to a building with a blue sign above it that Nanako had not noticed before. The Velvet Club' flashed above the building. Before Nanako could say anymore woman walked away, her body seeming to melt into the inky blackness.

Nanako had no idea why but she felt that the pretty lady seemed lonely. Maybe when they meet again, they could be friends! The little girl smiled at the thought then realized that the woman told her to go into this weird club so with nothing else to do...she went inside.

Nanako could make out a whole collection of different people, ranging from knights to magicians and even archers. Most of them were rather handsome men and the rest were beautiful or cute girls. It was like she had just walked into a clubhouse for fairy tales. Suddenly, she realized that all the occupants in the club were staring at something. Oh right, they were staring at her.

She fidgeted nervously, unused to so many people looking at her. Nanako wished her big bro was here to help her.

One of the strange people stepped toward the girl, a pretty blonde woman dressed in a red and white dress. She had this boisterous smile on her face.

"Hello, you must be Praetor's little sister Nanako." The blonde woman kneeled down in front of her. "I am Emperor Nero Claudius." She introduced herself with a flourish.

Nanako shyly waved at Nero. "H-hello, Miss Nero." The way she blushed slightly in embarrassment due to her nervousness was enough to strike at all the heartstrings of the Heroic Spirits even Berserkers and Avenger Jeanne.

Nero squealed with joy. "You are just so cute! I can see why our Praetor dotes on you quite affectionately."

The little girl gasped in surprise. "You know, big bro?" She asked innocently.

Gawain, who was at the bar of the Velvet Club, was drinking a mug of beer then in a drunken banter stood from his seat.

"Of course we know, my king..." He declared with a slight hiccup. "We're part of his soul."

Atalanta quickly silenced the drunk knight by clamping her hand over his mouth. "You idiot!" She hissed through her teeth. "Don't tell her that!"

Nanako, being the innocent child she is, tilted her head cutely. "Part...of his soul?" She repeated until she came to realize something. She had seen this on TV once. "Oh, are you part of his... Um, ha-rem? Yeah, harem!"

The resounding looks of shock and surprise from the Personas seemed to convince many that the child heard something rather...unsettling.

Nanako fidgeted and glanced around the room at the stunned silence, although she thought she heard a few chuckles. It was then that she started looking upwards.

Meanwhile from the seconds floor a certain man with red eyes watched the scene below. He was dressed more casually, in a white t-shirt and black trousers. Watching the mongrels below interact with the girl who had somehow made her way into this place. He took sip of some wine before looking down again, she was looking up but before he could dismiss it he realised that she was looking right at him. She could see him. Maybe there was some amusement to be found in this after all.
As Nanako locked eyes with the red eyed man she felt something pull on her whole body and suddenly….she found herself back in her own bed. The suns rays shining upon were through the window.
The Beach

Chapter Notes

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[-][-][-][-][-][-]

[August 23rd, Dojima Residence, Inaba]

Yu blearily woke up to the ringing of his cell phone.

"Hello?" he inquired sleepily.

"Morning" Yosuke's voice greeted "hey remember how I mentioned how we should all go to the beach before? Why not go today?"

"Sure I've been looking forward to it," Yu said trying to shake the drowsiness away.

"Right!? When you think of the summer, you think of the beach! And vice versa! I'm sure suntanned skin and a little accidental hand-slipping is in our future! Oh man, I'm so excited!" Yosuke sounded delighted; Yu could tell where his friend's mind had wandered. "I'll go ahead and call up the others! See you later!"

Yu shut his cell phone and looked outside; the sky was bright and clear today...It was the perfect day for an outing. Before he could think more on the subject his phone rang again, this time when he answered it the person calling wasn't who he would have expected.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

[August 23rd, Road to Shichiri beach, Inaba]

Later on, the team was on the road to Shichiri beach the trip was long and Rise was getting impatient.

"SENNNNN-PAIIIIII!!" Rise called to Chie. "Is the beach really this way? We've been on the road for a while…"

"I'm positive!" Chie said. "Can't you smell the ocean?!"

"What smell…?" Rise said. She didn't smell anything.

They were all riding along on their scooters,

"You can definitely trust her on this, Rise...Chie's got the senses of a beast, remember?" Yosuke said with a chuckle.
"HEY! What are you saying…?" Chie demanded angrily.

"Hey! I was only complimenting you…"

"You call that a compliment, you idiot?! What kind of girl wants to be compared to a big dumb animal…?"

While the older teens and Rise were on their scooters, lagging behind were Kanji and Teddie. The latter of whom had decided to wear his fur and some roller skates to try and keep up with Kanji who was on his bicycle due to his lack of a scooter.

"Hey, dude, gimme a break, will ya?!" Kanji panted peddling as hard as he could. "Have you seen the map, this is crazy!"

Teddie was just having a hard time skating and breathing.

"Wait…fur…me…" Teddie said, trying to reach out to grab Kanji's bike to keep up "I'm…I'm… done…fur…" the bear collapsed from exhaustion.

The rest of the team ignored the two's bickering and after a couple more minutes of riding, they rounded a corner and the glistening blue ocean came into view.

"Oh-ho-ho-ho-ho!" Chie chuckled with excitement ceasing her argument with Yosuke as the ocean came into view. "LOOK! THE OCEAN!"

"All right!" Yosuke cheered as they drove by the water.

Yukiko admired it for a few seconds until she slightly slipped on her scooter, luckily she able to right herself before anything serious happened, but blushed with embarrassment regardless.

Yu had looked nonchalantly at the ocean when suddenly he saw in his rear-view mirror Kanji pedalling fast and Teddie angrily screaming following Kanji on his skates. They seemed to be moving faster. He was rather impressed when the pair gained enough speed to pass by.

Chie looked in shock and then took it as a challenge… "Hah! Nobody's beating me to the WATERRRRRRR!" And then she sped up.

"Yeah! Let's go!" Yosuke yelled excitedly speeding yup to match her.

"Ummm Okay," Yukiko said speeding up.

"Wait for me!" Rise called as she sped up to catch up with the others.

Yu smiled and allowed his friends a head start before revving up his engine, within seconds and sped up easily catching up to them.

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[August 23rd, Shichiri beach, Inaba]

Eventually, they finally arrived at the beach, the guys changed rather quickly this left Yu, Yosuke and Teddie standing around waiting for the girls and Kanji who was taking his time. The beach was rather empty, strangely with only a few people dotted on it even then they quite far away.

"Man…I'm getting nervous. I mean, Risette in the flesh, wearing a bikini…" Yosuke said. "What are the ramifications here? Am I using a lifetime supply of luck here…?"
"Yes..." "Yup" Yu and Teddie said in unison.

"Oh man...Here they are..." Yosuke breathed ignoring both Yu and Teddie.

"Senpai!" Rise greeted as she ran up in a pink polka-dot bikini.

Yukiko was wearing a simple white bikini; Chie was wearing a yellow bikini top tied in a knot at the back of her neck and wore a yellow mini-sarong.

"Summer...is...AWESOME!" Yosuke said clenching his fist.

"Ooooh...such beautiful mermaids...I feel like this could be my chance for a summer romance..." Teddie commented.

"Like that'd ever happen..." Chie snorted.

"Hey, where's Kanji?" Yukiko asked.

"I bet he's still worn out." Yosuke said "Riding all that way on a bike really did a number on him. Nearly everyone's jaw's dropped when Kanji came along wearing a black speedo.

"DUDE!" Yosuke yelled. "What the hell is THAT?!"

"It's your basic black..." Kanji replied with a confused tone.

"Dude! I'm seeing things that I never needed to see!"

"You're the only one who's saying that Senpai" Kanji said to Yosuke.

"Ummm can we get in the water...?" Yukiko said blushing.

"Wait, Kanji...Why aren't you getting a nosebleed from me...?" Rise asked flirtatiously.

"Why would I get a nosebleed?" Kanji asked.

"Why would you get a...?" Rise stumbled angrily.

"That thing is liable to cause injuries..." Yosuke commented.

"What the hell does that mean?!" Kanji demanded angrily.

"It's just making me see things I can't unsee!" Yosuke yelled back equally as angry.

"Geez, they're hopeless. I'm gonna go ahead and jump in the water! Chie-chan, Yuki-chan! Let's be mermaids! Wheeeeee!" Teddie yelled then dove into the water or tried to before Cu Chullain wearing a Hawaiian t-shirt and shorts grabbed hold of his shoulder halting him in his tracks.

"Hold it bear, we need to establish something first." Cu Chullain stated seriously.

"Establish something, what's the problem?" Yosuke asked

"See that rocky outcropping nearby?" The blue Spearman pointed to a ledge of rock that extended out of the sand and a few metres of the ocean. "If you guys are gonna swim we need you to swim nowhere near there got it?"

"Uh sure but why?" Chie inquired.
"Well we can't catch our lunch if your swimming scares the thing off." The Lancer replied setting down the pair of case's that Yu had brought with him.

"Wait you're gonna catch lunch, like fishing?"

"Correction we're gonna catch lunch, then cook it and join you later," Yu stated digging into his bag and retrieving a fishing rod. "Alright, equipment check."

"Ready."

"Fishing rod and spare?"

"Check!"

"Spare fishing line?"

"Check!"

"They're really serious about this," Chie said sweat dropping at the two.

"Yeah, why are they so pumped up about fishing?" Kanji asked.

"Alright swimming time, YIPEEE!" Teddie ran and dove into the ocean, Avenger following close behind.

"Hey, he went in first!" Chie yelled "C'mon, you two. Let's go!"

"Hold on!" The girls halted and looked to see Tamamo in the flesh. "Master, you can't come to the beach and not let your cute persona have any fun."

"Caster, but what if someone see's you?" Rise asked worriedly.

The Caster persona responded by summoning her mirror which let out a bright flash.

"There we go, I've put up a bounded field around the beach and the nearby ocean, it'll keep any unwanted visitors away." Suddenly she did a twirl was wearing a bikini. "Come on master let's have a race."

Caster promptly ran into the water with Rise hot on her heels.

"We might as well do it too." "Yeah, I think they deserve a break." Chie and Yukiko agreed.

In a flash of light, Li Shuwen and Drake appeared. The latter scratched while the former folded his arms and looked thoughtfully at the ocean. Chie looked and saw Kanji's Berserker sitting on the beach with his legs crossed, looked out at the ocean. She shrugged and went swimming herself.

After a few minutes the duo had set up and began fishing, they attached a Genji beetle as bait for the sea guardian and waiting patiently. Their eyes were all focused on the water, as they waiting for their prey to take the bait, they overheard the banter of the others who were swimming a short distance away. Suddenly they heard a loud clang and the splashing of water.

"Ow bitch, what was that for?" Avenger whined nursing a bruise on his head, as Teddie was doing the same, they both were looking at Caster who had bashed them both with her mirror.

"No peeking." She replied.
Nearly half an hour passed and while the others were having their own fun; Yu and Cu Chulainn were still trying to catch the Sea Guardian. In the time that had passed, they had caught several Meguro Tuna and some octopi which they had promptly thrown back into the ocean, having no means of preserving them.

Their efforts had been made more frustrating by Berserker cannonballing into the ocean and deciding to swim for himself., creating large waves and ripples as he did so.

"Come on you damn fish show yourself." The Lancer growled as he watched the waters, before spotting a shadow and directing his rod in its direction.

She pointed in the direction of the beach, Yu turned just in time to see the girl's running back into the water.

"You sicko!" Rise screamed as she, Chie and Caster all ran back into the water.

There on the beach was Kanji….covering his lower parts in Seaweed, apparently, he was missing his bathing suit.

Then as if called, Berserker emerged from the water, tapping Kanji on the shoulder and holding out Kanji's missing bathing suit.

Quick as lightning the boy snatched it up and ran off to put it on, yelling a quick thank you as he ran off.

Out in deeper waters, Yukiko and Rider had sailed out in a longboat which the latter had summoned forth. Currently, the manager-to-be was looking out over the water, while her Persona lay back with her hat tilted over her eyes, the oars lay by her sides, thus leaving the boat to drift wherever the current took them.

"This, is the sea?" Yukiko asked in wonder, this was her first time going to a beach or to the sea. Her family had always been tending to the Amagi Inn, even more so during the holiday season so her family had rarely left town and even then, only for business.

"That it is lassie." Rider told her not bothering to open her eyes. "Out here on the open ocean, the only things you need to worry about are the wind and the weather, on the sea you can go to the edges of the map and beyond, on the sea you can go to the edges of the map and beyond. You can chart any course you like and no one can stop you all you need is the resolve to see that course through, well that and a decent ship."

"The resolve to see it through, my own course…" Yukiko mumbled dipping her hand into the water.

Suddenly, her thoughts were interrupted by something catching her eye. There was something moving towards the boat, rather quickly. See it suddenly leap out of the ocean as it was only a few feet from the boat, a shark! However, before she or Rider could react something impacted the shark, sending it skipping across the surface of the water until it hit a rock stack nearby and slide into the ocean.

"STAY AWAY FROM MY ROD YOU BASTARD OCTOPUS!" Cu Chullain's voice screamed
getting a chuckle out of Rider and a few seconds later, Yukiko as well.

"Here it is, the Sea Guardian," Yu said as a large shadow came into view once more.

"It's definitely a fish this time," Lancer said with a grin.

After a few tense moments, the large fish bite onto the hook and began to pull with all its strength.

The Sea Guardian was still intent on fighting however and pulled hard, intent on snapping the line to break free. Lancer, however, was ready and waited for moments when the line was not taut and reeled in the line in until it became tense again. He kept this method up until the Guardian had no way to go but towards him.

The water became white and foamy as the Sea Guardian's struggling became visible as it approached the surface with its violent thrashing and attempts to escape.

"No, you don't COME HERE YOU BASTARD!" Lancer yelled pulling on the rod.

When it was finally close enough Lancer and Yu hauled the catch out of the ocean, the Sea Guardian was larger than any fish Yu had ever seen and was more than worthy of its name. So he had the Blue Spearman hold a pose, it was nearly larger than persona himself and so he had to grab it by its middle and hold it facing downwards that way.

Yu took out his cellphone and took a picture of Lancer holding the Sea Guardian with one hand and doing a peace sign with the other.

After doing some preparation, the Fool decided that now was a good a time as any to start cooking the sea guardian on the large grill that was conveniently placed on the beach. Cooking the fish had taken about twenty minutes, and that was not including the time it took to prepare the fish by doing things such as removing the head and carefully deboning it.

Idly he saw the others still having fun, Berserker, Kanji, Yosuke and Diarmuid were playing a small game of Volleyball, which ended with Berserker smashing the ball into Yosuke's nads. Such was the luck of the prince of Junes. Yukiko was still out on the water with Drake. Chie meanwhile was having large splashes in the water and then quicker than any human began chopping at the droplets as they hung in the air. As for Rise, she and Caster were using the latter's magecraft to walk upon the surface of the water so they could look into the clear waters, at the marine life below. Teddie and Avenger were trying to peak on the girls, unsuccessfully if the bruises on their heads were any indication.

When lunch was ready Yu called to everyone and got them all to line up for some after returning their Personas to spirit form to save energy. First up were Yukiko and Rise both of whom had a modest slice of the fish wishing to watch their figures. Next came Yosuke, Teddie and Kanji, the four each had an average sized slice which didn't put much of a dent in the fish considering how huge it was. Lastly was Chie, the fact that she had the largest slices which came as no surprise to anyone because she was, in Yosuke's words 'A walking stomach' which earnt him a kick to his own.

Yu placed a piece of fish on one of the two remaining plates, then took one himself and joined his friends.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]
Naoto Shirogane was at a loss for words. She'd followed the group of would be victims out here on a hunch. But what the girl disguised as a boy had seen had stunned her. All was normal when the group first arrived at the beach, but then out of nowhere, a blue haired man appeared in beachwear and grabbed the blonde haired one, whom Naoto could not find any records on. Before walking off with Yu Narukami with some fishing gear.

Then next to Rise Kujikawa, an odd looking girl with fox ears and tail appeared, also out of thin air, next was a muscle bound giant near kanji, a female pirate woman near Yukiko Amagi seemed to conjure a boat in the water and got aboard with the girl.

Near Yosuke Hanamura was a dark haired, man wearing a bandanna and greenish armour. He had a dutiful look, to him and seemed more like a bodyguard than someone there to relax.

Finally, next to Chie Satonaka was a man in a flame patterned martial arts garb, who sat down and carefully watched the girl, who began doing sort of kata in the water but the speed at which she was doing it was, not human.

Ever diligent Naoto used her cellphone to take photographic evidence of the superhuman feats, like Satonaka, chopping droplets of water as they were in the air, and the blue haired man tossing the octopus he'd caught with such strength that it crashed into a shark a fair distance away near Yukiko Amagi and the woman she was with.

Then there was Rise Kujikawa who was walking on ocean water, with the fox girl! Naoto despite her disbelief and after checking to make sure she wasn't dreaming, kept taking pictures, silently praying that her phone had enough memory for all of this.

"Stop." An emotionless voice commanded as a hand was put on Naoto's shoulder causing her to freeze up, someone with blue hair stepped into Naoto's view.

"A-aika Nakamura?" Naoto stuttered out still unable to move, as Aika put a finger on her forehead and Naoto felt everything seemed to fall away, she heard Aika's voice.

"Sleep, and when you wake, you shall remember nothing out of the ordinary happening today."
Naoto's eyes glazed over as the hypnosis took hold and the detective fell to the ground like a puppet with its strings cut.

Aika grabbed Naoto and leant her against a tree before taking her cell phone. She then proceeded to delete all the photographic evidence that the detective had gathered of the bizarre happenings, at the beach that day before returning the phone to its owner.

Then she withdrew her own and dialled a number.

"It's done." She reported. "All the evidence is erased, and Naoto Shirogane has been hypnotised to forget these happenings, Lord El-Melloi."

"Good," Lord El Melloi the second replied, "It is not Ms Shirogane's time to awaken just yet, and we can't risk the exposure of the Moonlight World."

"Caster put up a bounded field to keep mundanes away, the beach is empty anyway, by the time Naoto Shirogane wakes up they will be gone," Aika replied diligently.

"Very well, they should be fine on their own now, return to your deliveries." Lord El Melloi commanded before hanging up.
Aika nodded and walked back to her scooter which had only one order so far. A Nikudon for someone called Akira Kurusu.

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After a couple more hours of fun on the beach, the sun was beginning to set. The Persona's had stayed in spirit form, now having had their fill of fun for one day.

"Pretty busy day," Yosuke commented as he, Yu and Kanji all stood up on the nearby path looking down at the beach.

"Well, I never woulda come to the beach if you hadn't invited me," Kanji replied.

"Haha, I guess it would be out of character for you." Yosuke chuckled.

"...It actually might be more fun to try stuff that's out of character." Kanji said.

"Yeah...in a way, your nature is like a wall, after all. Surrounding yourself with high walls makes things simple, but simplicity isn't always a virtue..." Yosuke stated wisely. "Oh man, what was that!? Did I just get all philosophical there!"

"By all means, keep going." Yu teased the boy

"Oh, well, if I have your permission...! C'mon, you're embarrassing me even more!" Yosuke griped crinkling his forehead in a frown.

"I think it's fine. I look at that big ocean out there and think, man, why keep hangin' on to all this embarrassment? Just let it go." Kanji said sagely.

"So you don't deny that it was embarrassing, huh...?" Yosuke sniped with a smirk.

The three boys looked down at the beach and saw the girls and Teddie playing together.

"Ok, why don't we play a game?" Chie suggested, "Whoever loses has to buy barbeque on a stick for everyone else!" As usual, her brain was in her stomach.

"But that's a prize only you would want to play for, Chie-senpai..." Rise pointed out.

"Then the loser gets to smooch Teddie!" Teddie suggested with a grin.

"Talk about kicking someone when they're down!" Rise sighed.

"Then, instead of playing a game, why don't we do something else together? Like, bury Teddie in the sand?" Yukiko proposed getting a hearty agreement from the others.

It wasn't long before the bear turned human was buried up to his neck in sand protesting all the while.

"Good times never last long." Yosuke sighed. "I wonder if our high school days will end that way too..."

"Yeah, I guess you're right, the bastard behind all of this is still out there," Kanji said.

"That's true..." Yosuke paused thoughtfully before speaking again. "Man, though, this trip turned out way better than I imagined. Hey, I've got an idea. Why don't we go skiing during winter break? Wait 'til you guys see how awesome I am on a snowboard!"
"Talking' about winter already? Get serious for a sec will ya?" Kanji sighed "That asshole is still in town somewhere and."

"I know Kanji," Yosuke snapped before calming himself "I know, but right now we can't do anything, we've got no leads."

"What we do know is that Kubo was an attention seeking copycat, who was probably put into the TV by the real killer." Yu explained "Our killer wasn't deterred by the fact that we saved each of his would-be victims, we discovered his method of killing and could stop it, but instead of playing it safe and laying low our killer kept trying, he wasn't scared by the fact that the number of people hunting him who knew how he did it was growing. This leads me to believe one thing."

"And that is?" Yosuke and Kanji leant in both interested.

"That this whole thing, throwing people into the TV world, us rescuing them and gaining a new ally to help hunt him, it's similar to Mitsuo, it's a game to him."

"A game of cat and friggin mouse," Kanji grumbled.

"Wait a sec, Mitsuo tried to confess to the murders and turned himself in at the police station, but was let go after an interrogation." Yosuke pointed out. "But the killer was still able to snag him after he left the police station in broad daylight."

"That means it's probably someone who can hide in plain sight. Someone that people all over town would see every day but would never look at twice because their presence in different places around town is normal." Yu speculated.

"If the fiend truly is hiding in plain sight, there are many who could fit such a description," Diarmuid said thoughtfully.

"Hey, guys!" The boys looked over to Rise who had called them, she was standing by her bike with the other girls who had begun packing up, "Let's get going, it's getting pretty late."

"All we can do for now is wait," Yu told them walking back onto the beach to pack up. "He'll try again sooner or later."

After packing up all the fishing gear and put what was left of the Sea Guardian into the cooler he'd brought with him, Yu attached it to his scooter. Yosuke and Kanji helped Teddie get free, Caster took down the bounded field and after making sure no one had left anything behind they began the trip home, which was by contrast uneventful. When they were gone a certain blue haired detective began waking up, ashamed that she had fallen asleep on the job and angry with herself that her targets were gone.
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[September 1st, Yasogami High Front Gate, Inaba]

"Summer vacation is over for good." Chie sighed as she Yu, Yukiko and Yosuke walked to school together.

"I actually got lost on my way here," Yosuke sighed hanging his head.

"The break was sort of long." Yukiko said trying to remain neutral between him and Chie.

"I don't care how long it was that's just pathetic." Chie shook her head.

"I'm surprised you realised you were lost." Yu teased getting a giggle out of Yukiko and Chie, and a hearty laugh out of Rider and Cu Chulainn.

"Dude cut me some slack." Yosuke griped scowling at Yu for the remark.

The four of them stopped short of walking through the gates when they heard a familiar voice.

"Good morning." They looked to see a certain blue haired detective.

"Uhh…who are you?" Yosuke asked struggling to remember the detective.

"He's that tiny detective." Yu explained for Yosuke who gained a look of realisation.

"My name is Naoto. " Naoto reminded them with a tone of insistence in his voice. " Please use it instead of some insulting nickname. Moving on I know the police think the investigation is over and that this case is solved but there are still several points that lead me to believe otherwise. So that coupled with some personal business I must attend to means I'll be staying in town for a while. I'm now a freshman at your high school. So let's try to get along, whaddya say?"

"Sure I don't see why not." Yu answered calmly.

"Well see you later."

The team watched as the detective walked off.

"What was that about?" Cu Chulainn asked watching the detective walk into school.

"I think our new friend is suspicious." Li Shuwen said with a smirk.

"It's not terribly surprising." Diarmuid said "Think about it, all the kidnapping survivors all
sticking teaming up. That's got to be suspicious to a detective."

"Whatever the case we better hurry and get to class, we're leaving early." Chie reminded them, causing them to hurry.

[September 8th, Train to Tatsumi Port Island]

"THIS IS SO FREAKING COOL!" Yosuke yelled jumping up in excitement while they were travelling on the train with the rest of the school. "I've been dying to go on this school trip!"

Yu was sitting watching the scenery go by. It was just like when he first came to Inaba.

"We'll hit the tourist spots, take pictures with cute girls and maybe have an out of town romance!"

"I doubt we'll have time for that." Yu spoke up Yosuke's mood to crash.

"Whaddya mean?!" Yosuke demanded angrily.

"We're visiting a private school." Yukiko said "But that's all they told us."

"Yeah I hear this trip was being arranged by King Moron." Chie said munching on some potato chips. "But he died before he could really get past the planning stages, so apart visiting the school it's a mess. Especially as some kids from a school in Tokyo are gonna be there at the same time."

"So we might not have any free time. Kashiwagi may be our chaperone but well she's Kashiwagi." Yu told him.

"And that should tell you all you need to know." Chie said sardonically

"Aw man, this sucks." Yosuke groaned his head dropped in disappointment.

[September 8th, Inaba Police Station, Inaba]

It was noon, and as per usual Adachi had been lumped with desk duty. As such he was on his own in the office at his desk while the others were out getting lunch he was doing paperwork. Thankfully all he had to do was sign a few papers with ordering a pile of 'tips' about the murders, which was far less than he usually had to do when he got desk duty.

Suddenly a familiar fist slammed onto the desk, causing the wood to crack where it had been impacted and scatter the papers he had just gotten in order.

"Man, Now I'm gonna have to get those all-in order again." Adachi complained to his Persona who had materialised before him. "You know you're lucky there's no security camera's in here or you'd have been busted."

"I'm bored." The Persona complained

"So get a hobby." Adachi retorted being down to pick up the papers.

"This town is boring, there are no amusements parks, no arcades and nothing to do at all."

"You don't have to tell me that, But I'm a rookie, so I get a rookie's pay get off my back already."
"I want to fight!" The Persona demanded slamming both hands upon Adachi's desk.

"And I wanna be obscenely rich and live in a mansion but reality disappoints us both." Adachi answered as he began ordering the papers again.

"Those kids are going on a field trip today. I'll wait till they're alone go a few rounds, I want to see how good that Narukami kid is in a fight." The Persona stated restlessly.

"One problem, I don't need you being recognised and exposing yourself."

"Then I won't use my Noble Phantasm." The Persona replied heading for the rooms TV.

"Make sure you don't blow my cover, oh and I'm not gonna support you, so use the Prana you've got wisely." Adachi relented as he finally got the papers back in order and set them down.

"Yeah, yeah" The Persona waved him off as they vanished, slipping through the TV.

"Man, what a pain." Adachi grumbled.

[September 8th, Iwatodai Train Station, Tatsumi Port Island]

Everyone disembarked from the train. Rise and Kanji had joined the others in waiting to be escorted to the school they were visiting.

"I'm so lucky!" Rise exclaimed "This is the first-time freshmen and sophomores get to go together."

"Yeah, with the drop in enrolment they're trying to cut costs by making this trip only once every two years." Yukiko explained.

"Well if you guys are out on this trip it won't blow too hard." Kanji commented.

"Hey have you heard about this Tatsumi Port Island that we're going too?" Chie asked

"I've just heard that it's a man-made island." Yukiko answered, "Everything there faces the ocean, oh I know since we're going together maybe we should invite Naoto to come with us." Yukiko suggested drawing everyone's attention to Naoto who was standing by himself in a corner of the station near some vending machines. "I'm kinda worried about him."

"Well I'm not." Chie said nonchalantly. "Didn't he say he was coming on this trip just to help out with the case."

"He may some big star detective but when this case is over he's still just your average kid." Rise commented.

"I guess I should sorta feel his pain, I know how much it sucks being a transfer student. Yosuke said.

"Let's go talk to him." Yu suggested walking over to Naoto.

"Huh hey wait!" Yosuke called after him like he was about to protest, but it was too late as Yu was already at Naoto.

"This place we're going to is called Gekkoukan High School." Yu said trying to make conversation with Naoto. "Do you know anything about it?"
“Hmm….I do know that before it was a High School the building was owned by the Kirijo Group.” Naoto answered giving Yu a wary look. “But for some reason they spent a large amount of money remodelling it into a school and founded Gekkoukan.”

Everyone save Naoto and Yu nodded. Both were meeting each other's eyes. Yu was curious at the cold look Naoto was giving him.

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[September 8th Gekkoukan High School, Tatsumi Port Island]

Later the Yasogami students moved from the train station and were now gathered at the gates of Gekkoukan High School.

"Dude this school is majorly ginormous." Yosuke remarked gazing over the large school building.

"It's the size of three Junes stores." Yu commented.

"What we're standing on is a school and Junes is a department store." Yukiko said trying desperately to hold in her giggles.

"There's nothing even remotely funny about that." Yosuke whispered ignoring the principal.

"Hello everyone." A girl stepped forward and started speaking to the students.

She was wearing the school outfit, which consisted of a black blouse and skirt, with a red, white, and black patch, with a red ribbon. She had brown glasses on and long flowing brown hair.

"Welcome to Gekkoukan High School." she greeted them with a polite bow "I'm so glad to meet you all I am Chihiro Fushimi from class three B and Student-Council President."

"That has got to be the hottest four-eyed fox I've ever seen!" Yosuke commented blushing at the girl's appearance.

"I will be the one giving the tour and showing you around this campus of ours. I hope you all enjoy it." Chihiro said cheerfully as she gave another polite bow. "I would like you all to know, for our school this is a first. We've never had other students for a cultural exchange tour before. We will do our best to make sure everyone involves comes away with something valuable and unforgettable from this experience."

Fushimi then lead them to a second-floor classroom, inside with a teacher who was wearing glasses, a poorly fitting lab coat that was open with a shirt one wouldn't expect a teacher to wear. He had black hair that looked like someone had put a wig sideways on his head. Honestly he looked like he had only just crawled out of bed.

"First up, we have a special lecture that we've prepared for you all today." Fushimi stated gesturing at the classroom. "So if you would please have a seat."

Everyone filed in and took a seat with the team taking seats near each other. However, when the teacher began talking everyone was regretting taking a seat.

"Welcome… Nice to meet you all." The teacher greeted a boring tone that a person could fall asleep too. "A meeting is only the beginning of the parting, the Alpha and the Omega. My name is Edogawa, and I'll be keeping you company for this period. You are all from Yasogami High, correct? Ah, a school of many gods. I had considered a lecture on Qabbalah philosophy, but I have
"A better idea," he chuckled and carried on. "Since I was able to meet you all today, I shall tell you a story of partings. One could say that this is Japan's oldest tale of curses. You all know about the gods who created this country, I assume? The two gods who gave birth to this country are the god Izanagi and the goddess Izanami. They got along very well…"

"Boring!" a voice all too familiar to Yu called out, judging by the way the other team members sat up straight and gained confused looks they had heard the voice too.

"But one day, Izanami died giving birth to Kagutsuchi, the fire god. Extremely saddened by this, Izanagi left for the land of the dead to bring back Izanami. Yomi… the dark, dark, underworld…"

"Sorry guys, I set up a telepathic link between us." Rise said apologetically.

"Wait so everyone heard me?" Chie asked, her face becoming red.

"Yup." Yosuke told her, everyone could hear the grin in his voice.

"Aggh." Chie groaned with embarrassment.

"Seriously why do we have to listen to this guy?" Kanji complained changing the subject.

"Yeah, I heard ya, I have so much pent up energy." Yosuke whined "I need to let it out, I need to fight!"

"I can help there." Tamamo spoke up "I scanned this city, and there's a big space pretty far underground. It seems to be an old military bunker, we can go a few rounds there without being disturbed."

"Sounds like a good idea to me." Drake agreed.

"Indeed." Li Shuwen agreed.

"Ahh… is our time up already?" the teacher asked as the bell suddenly rang, "I may have gone on too long… Eheheh."

[September 8th Gekkoukan High School entrance, Tatsumi Port Island]

Yosuke was still looking annoyed as they sat on the coach riding towards where they would be spending the night.

"Thank you, Children, for all being so good in class today!" Kashiwagi said on a microphone that the Conductor usually used for tours. "Now we're heading for our Inn for the night."

"Oh man, I hope it isn't gonna be worse than what I've been through today…"

They got off the coach when it stopped and walked with their luggage to the place they'd be spending the night.

Seaside Clamshell Inn

"YES!" Kashiwagi said. "The Seaside Clamshell Inn. I got a good deal on it…"

2 Hour Break- 3500 yen
3 Hour Break- 4000 yen
Reduced Rates:

**From 8 AM to 8 PM** - 4000 yen

**All Nighters:**

1 Room 9 PM to 12 Noon - 7000 Yen
2 Rooms 12 Noon to 2 PM the following day - 7000 Yen

"Yes, children, it just recently opened so I get one hell of a sweet deal!" Kashiwagi exclaimed causing everyone to sweatdrop.

The students in front sweatdropped. Then they walked in and Kashiwagi followed them in. The team however hung back.

"Is this a real hotel?" Yosuke asked glancing at the suspicious looking building.

"It's screaming sketchy to me." Kanji commented looking over the building.

"Really? I wouldn't know I've never been to a skanky motel." Chie stated.

"This part of town is called Shirakawa Boulevard…" Rise said, blushing. "I bet this place was a very different kind of hotel before."

"I see, a love h…" Yu started to say before Yosuke clamped his hand over Yu's mouth.

"Shut it, your gonna freak 'em out dude!"

"It doesn't sound so pervy if Narukami says it…." Chie stated.

"Yeah he's nice." Yukiko agreed.

"What really?" Yosuke groaned "Aw man, he always gets off easy."

"Hold on everyone!" Kashiwagi suddenly came rushing out, pulling Naoto along with her. "Hey, sooo…I may have booked a few less rooms than we need, so here's the thing, you seven will be spending the night elsewhere. You'll be shown there by a former student of Gekkoukan, she's part of the show for elementary students tomorrow. Well toodles!"

Before they could say anything Kashiwagi quickly retreated into the hotel, as she hadn't made any mistake at all.

"Hey, are you students from Yasogami High school?" The group all turned to see a girl with neck-length light brown hair and brown eyes, wearing a pink top with white lace design, light navy collar short jacket, light beige short shorts, and brown high heel boots.

"Er…yes that's us." Naoto spoke up approaching her.

"Lets see…Yu Narukami, Yosuke Hanamura, Yukiko Amagi, Chie Satonaka, Kanji Tatsumi, Rise Kujikawa and Naoto Shirogane right?" The girl asked after listing off their named seeing their collective nod she continued. "I'm Yukari Takeba."

"Yukari Takeba? The actress who plays Pink Argus in Featherman Victory?" Yukiko suddenly asked excitedly getting close to Yukari.

"Ease up Yukiko, give her some space." Chie chided the girl pulling her back. "Sorry about that,
Yukiko's a fan of the show."

"It's ok." Yukari chuckled nervously before coughing into her hand and regaining her composure, she looked at the hotel and turned beet red. "Jeez, that's where you were gonna stay, what kind of irresponsible teacher do you guys have?"

"Oh, someone's been here before." Angra Mainyu sung leering at Yukari "I say we pry and find out who she banged."

The team barely managed to conceal their surprised looks.

"Wait you're here? Then is Teddie here too?" Rise demanded telepathically

"He can't be seen right now, how would we explain it?" Chie cried through the link.

"Relax he's on the rooftop out of sight he'll show himself when all's clear." Avenger quipped sarcastically

"Anyway, you were lucky that Gekkoukan was monitoring the trip, we had to after Mr Mooroka passed away before he could make the arrangements." Yukari having not heard Avenger at all.

"Do you work for the school as well?" Yukiko asked

"Nah, I'm close friends with one of the administrators of the school." Yukari answered vaguely. "She asked me to keep an eye on things while I'm here. Anyway, I'll show you guys to dorm where you'll be staying, follow me."

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[September 8th Iwatodai Dorm, Tatsumi Port Island]

"Well here we are." Yukari said wistfully as she looked up at the building she had lead them to. The dorm was a four-story building, with a sign saying Iwatodai Dormitory over the doors.

"Hey are you alright?" Yukiko asked of the older girl.

"Yeah sorry, just memories, this used my dorm with my friends when I was at school." Yukari said shaking her head. "The place is still being renovated but the it should be fine for you guys for a couple of nights the bare necessities are still here."

With that Yukari unlocked the doors and pushed them open, the team followed her in. Teddie who had joined them on the way had been made invisible thanks a spell from Rise. However when they were all inside a loud sound began blaring causing the team to cover their ears.

"Damn, what the hell is that?!" Kanji yelled angrily over the noise.

"It's so loud!" Chie complained.

"What?!" Yukiko yelled unable to hear her friend.

"What the hell, why is the alarm still here?" Yukari groaned "Hold on I'll take care of it."

Yukari quickly ran over to a control panel on the wall. She rapidly hit a few buttons and the alarm abruptly stopped.
"Sorry about that. I thought they'd have at least deactivated that stupid thing." Yukari said apologetically "Ok, so follow me."

They did so going up the stairs to the second floor.

"Alright this floor is for the boys." Yukari told them, "Now go pick a room for the night."

Yu, Yosuke, Kanji and Naoto did just that. Yu took the door that was the third on the right. With Yosuke taking the room next to him, Teddie undoubtedly following. Naoto meanwhile chose the door opposite of Yu.

"Uh…” Yukari was about to say something, but it died in her throat.

"What's wrong senpai?” Yukiko asked tilting her head.

"That room." Yukari said looking at the door Yu had chosen "It used belong to a good friend of mine, he passed away a couple of years ago."

"I promise to be respectful." Yu vowed firmly.

"Thanks. Come on I'll show you girls to your rooms." Yukari said sadly trudging up the next flight of stairs with the girls in tow.

'That was a half-truth' Semiramis commented as Yu the boys entered their respective rooms. 'She was holding something back, I think she may have been in love with whomever was in this room before you.'

'This room, it smells strongly of Thanatos. As if he was here, occupying this room for a long time.' Medusa said suddenly appearing leaning against a wall in spirit form.

The room itself was quit spartan, with a simple bed, a wardrobe and desk where a computer had clearly been, if the outline in the dust was any indication.

'I get weird feelings from this place.' Cu Chulainn chimed in.

'Indeed, a strange aura hangs about this building.' Gawain agreed nodding his head.

"We'll keep our guard up, just in case." Yu stated looking around the room sensing the eerie aura that seemed soaked into the room.

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It didn't take long for midnight to roll around. A quick scan by Rise revealed that Yukari who had taken her old room, was fast asleep. Not wishing to push their luck any further, the team snuck downstairs and out of the dorm.

Then they made their way to the military bunker, they found the entrance which was concealed and had plants growing over it and went inside. The team went down, deep into the complex, passing long abandoned and out weapons and heavy armour, all of them many decades old.

"Man this place is a wreck." Yosuke commented looking around at the large room they entered.

"Hey, are tanks supposed to stand on four legs like that?" Kanji asked pointing an tank lying on its side, with four sets of treads acting like legs. Near it on the ground was the wrecked turret, which strangely looking like it had wings either side of it.
"No they're not." Rise said summoning her mirror and approaching it "Let me do a scan."

On closer inspection it looked like the tank been through a war. It had scratches, large gashes in the metal, large dents and holes covering it, as did the turret.

"It looks like this tank and the turret, were shadows once." Rise told looking at the results in her mirror.

"This tank was a shadow?" Chie asked incredulously.

"Not just the tank, the turret as well. It seems that they were separate shadows but worked together." Rise clarified.

"Are they still dangerous?" Yu inquired standing next to her.

"No, these shadows were beaten a while ago. About two or three years ago. The remaining essence of the shadows is so faint I only barely managed to detect it. These things aren't going to be causing trouble without some serious help." Rise replied putting her mirror away.

"So there were shadows on Tatsumi Port Island two years ago?" Yosuke asked.

"Two years ago….hey wasn't that Apathy Syndrome most heavily reported in this city two years ago before it stopped?" Yukiko pointed out.

"I remember that." Chie said "That was that weird condition where people just stopped doing anything, it was really creepy, they didn't eat or move or do anything. Then it all went away when February of Twenty-Ten began."

"It was also around that time, that weird cult popped up, you remember, the one preaching about the end of the world." Yukiko added "Their leader vanished one day and the cult just fell apart."

"So the shadows that were here, were defeated by someone in Tatsumi Port Island nearly two years ago." Yu stated putting the facts together. "This caused the Apathy Syndrome to also disappear. It's safe to assume that the shadows caused Apathy Syndrome somehow."

"Wait, but if shadows caused Apathy Syndrome, why do they kill people who get thrown into the TV?" Chie asked "Why don't they just give them Apathy Syndrome instead?"

"Maybe it's because of the killer?" Rise suggested causing everyone to look at her. "Well back then, whoever was responsible for the shadows getting people wanted them to give people Apathy Syndrome for some reason. But our Killer is just interested in killing people, so maybe that's why the shadows are killing people instead of giving them Apathy Syndrome?"

Everyone was silent for a moment, their thoughts awhirl at this information. If the shadows had been involved in that, then what else had the shadows been involved in throughout history?

"Enough of this crap!" Kanji yelled causing everyone to see that he had installed Hercules. Further evidenced by the fact that he lifted and tossed several tanks aside to make room. "We're here to fight right? So let's do this!" He lifted up the axe-sword and crashed it into the ground impatiently.

"Alright, you're on." Yukiko said installing Rider. "I'll fight you."

"I will team up with Yuk-"

"Not happening bear, I'm with Yukiko." Chie interrupted installing Assassin and halting whatever
scheme Teddie was cooking up.

"You can be with Kanji." Yukiko suggested.

"Oh beary-well." Teddie said with disappointment as he got out of his bear costume and installed Avenger.

"Ok so its Kanji and Teddie versus Chie and Yukiko." Rise announced, "Which just leaves Yosuke and Senpai."

"But what about you Rise?" Yosuke asked as he installed Diarmuid and readied Gae Dearge, not wanted to use the other spear just yet and risk permeant injury to his friend.

"I'll just stand on the side-lines and watch." Rise replied with sly smile, backing up against the wall out of the way.

Yosuke nodded and looked at Yu who had that same blue magic circle below his feet, and orbiting him were about sixteen arcana. He inspected each arcana in front of him carefully before nudging it aside with his fingers to inspect the next one.

After a few seconds of inspecting he chose an Arcana. The Emperor.

"Install, Nero!" He called out.

A red light rose from the circle and enveloped the Fool. When it was finished he was wearing a red roman general style uniform, in his right hand was the strange flame shaped blade, Aestus Estus.

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[September 8th, CCTV Surveillance Room, Police Station, Paulownia Mall, Tatsumi Port Island]

There were few officers on duty this time of night. But all of them would tell you that the thick fog which filled the Surveillance feed monitoring room did not belong there, nor did the figure concealed within it, who was staring at one feed in particular. Of a group of six teenagers entering a pair of thick pair of metal doors which had weeds and other plant life overgrowing them.

"There you are." The figure chuckled before erasing the footage on all the cameras for the past hour or so. "Lets see what you've got."

With that the figure departed, taking the fog with them. When the officers from the dayshift entered the room, they would find the officer who had been manning the feeds. His head firmly planted through one of the shattered screens and his hand gripping his gun, never having had the chance to withdraw it from the holster.

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[September 8th, Military Bunker, Tatsumi Port Island]

As she narrowly avoided the blow which shattered the concrete where she had last been standing and returned fire which her pistols Yukiko knew she was in a bind. The mana bullets she fired did nothing to Kanji. After installing Berserker, he gained the mad persona's immense durability and that was without Mad Enhancement switched on. Kanji never turned the skill on when installing, for fear of harming his friends. As such he did not gain the boost it provided but he did not need it. She could use the Golden Hinds cannons, but there was a problem.
She quickly dodged another attack moving up on of the support pillars which dotted the room.

'If I use too much power then I'll trip Kanji's God Hand, then he'd become immune to them.' She thought quickly avoiding more attacks and leaping to cling to another pillar. 'It's only thanks to the fact that he keeps Mad Enhancement off that my agility is greater than his, without that I wouldn't be able to dodge, but he's hot my heels and I can't keep running forever.'

'Damn it, Yukiko-Senpai won't hold still, those bullets and cannonballs are really pissing me off.' Kanji thought angrily. Every time he thought he had her she'd dodge at the last second forcing him to pull his axe-sword of the ground try to find her again. 'I don't know how long we've been fighting but I'm running low on juice.'

'I need to end this now!' Both fighters thought in unison as they each saw the other preparing their respective Noble Phantasms.

The Golden Hind manifested itself and Yukiko leapt onto the figurehead, an armada materialising behind her ship.

"GOLDEN WILD HUNT!" "NINE LIVES!"

The two powerful Noble Phantasms were unleashed an collided in an explosion of light, this itself caused a massive shockwave which caused not only the whole bunker to shake violently but, unknown to the team, the city above as well.

[September 8th Iwatodai Dorm, Tatsumi Port Island]

"W-wha!" Yukari Takeba cried awoke with a start and fell out of her bed with a thud. "Ow what….an earthquake?"

Yukari confusedly stumbled to her feet as the dorm shook under the powerful tremor. However as quickly as it came, the shaking stopped.

"It stopped, thank goodness." Yukari sighed in relief. "I should check in on those kids."

She tried making her way to the door only for her legs to give way, she felt slightly dizzy.

"After my head stops spinning."

Meanwhile Chie was having an easy time with Teddie, who was out of his bear costume having installed Avenger. A small part of her was rather suspicious.

'Teddie isn't this bad at fighting' Chie thought to herself as she landed another kick on Teddie's chest which caused him to fly onto his backside and causing his install to vanish leaving him in his normal clothes . 'What's going on? He's barely fighting back.'

Her Persona had been quiet throughout the match giving no advice. Apparently, he wished to see her progress without his aid, which was fine seeing as this was just a spar. Frankly she'd been dominating in this fight with Teddie returning only half-hearted attacks which did little to no damage.

"Hey Teddie, come on get back up I know you've got more in you than that." Chie called out to the
bear in human form.

He didn't respond. In fact he wasn't moving at all.

"Oh Crap I didn't kill him did I?" Chie panicked wondering if she'd used something lethal without realising,

She rushed over to the fallen bear however before she could bend down to inspect him, she heard a chuckling.

"Bear print Chie? I'm honoured." Teddie suddenly said his eyes open.

It took only half a second for Chie to realise what he meant, the bear could see up her skirt She'd been tricked!

"YOU PERVERTED BEAR, I WAS ACTUALLY WORRIED ABOUT YOU!" Chie screamed, her face going red, whether with anger or embarrassment only she knew for sure.

Teddie quickly reinstalled Avenger as Chie flipped over him and reared back her leg.

"DRY UP AND DIE YOU STUPID LECHEROUS BEAR!" Chie yelled kicked Teddie in his crotch with all her might, causing him to fly into the wall opposite.

Although his chuckles had become considerably higher pitched, Chie was still furious but also slightly concerned as to why he was still laughing.

"Verg Avesta!" Teddie chanted, suddenly catching Chie off guard.

Teddie was enveloped in a dark shroud which took the form of some sort of wolfman. It jumped at her, she tried to kick it away but her foot merely passed through and it shrouded her.

She felt it, all of her blows being reflected on her. She didn't receive any wounds but the pain itself was just as real. The kicks on her arms, her chest her legs, to her head and finally the absurd pain of Teddie's family jewels being crushed by all the might she had put into that kick, the fact of anatomical differences between them made no difference and so Chie fell to the floor, paralyzed by the sheer pain coming to her all at once.

Teddie had stood up and began making his way over. Tawrich and Zarich in each hand, he limped slowly until he stood over Chie, his pain was fading but hers had all come at once leaving her defenceless and exhausted, Teddie had taken a while to finally lie down and play dead causing her to use up more prana than she thought she would have too.

So she clenched her eye's shut as Teddie loomed above her. However the blow never came, instead she felt a weight suddenly come down on her knocking the wind out of her. Opened her eye's she saw Teddie's install had dropped again and he was unconscious. She felt tired herself and decided she was fine with a tie before lying down to rest.

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"Sheesh, Yukiko really gets competitive when she gets all fired up like that doesn't she?" Yosuke commented nervously with a sweatdrop as the whole place trembled as Yukiko and Kanji's Noble Phantasms collided.

It was like something out of a shounen manga, really cool yet something you'd never think would happen in reality. However Yu was concerned by the borderline earthquake that the collisions had
caused, and hoped that it had not done any damage to the city above them.

"Well, at least its Kanji on the receiving end and not us." Yu told his friend non-chalantly.

Neither of them had started fighting yet instead choosing to watch the others go at it for a little while before getting into it themselves.

"That's a little cold don't you think?" Yosuke asked his friend at the apathetic way he seemed to prefer Kanji to be fighting Yukiko and not either of them.

"Are you saying that you'd like to have a whole fleet's worth of cannons firing at you?" Yu asked giving Yosuke a funny look. "I didn't realise that you were a masochist. Don't worry, I won't judge you for it."

"WHAT?!…NO I just….ugh forget it, let's just do this." Yosuke groaned deciding to stop himself before he put his foot even further into his mouth.

"Ok, are you both ready?" Rise asked looking between the two who both nodded "Alright, Ready"

"Steady!" The two gripped their weapons tightly their focus entirely on each other.

"Fog?" The boys prepared to attack each other but both abruptly stopped upon realising what Rise had just said.

"Fog?" The two echoed her what she had said before realising that there was fog seeping into the bunker.

It became thicker and seemed quickly surrounded the two boys and girl before spreading outwards throughout the bunker.

"So you're the leader of this sorry bunch?" A voice asked from with the fog "You don't look like much to me, even borrowing a heroic spirits Noble Phantasm and powers."

"Who the hell are you?" Yosuke demanded levelling his spear at the fog.

Yu squinted and could just make out a silhouette hidden in the fog. But he could tell anything other than that they were there. He couldn't see any clothing, or whether they were male or female, even the voice was distorted. The weapon, he couldn't tell what it was, the silhouette in the hands seemed to shift, as if to try and conceal it as well.

"What's going on here?" Atalanta asked with confusion.

"This isn't a human that's for sure." Cu Chulainn stated seriously.

"Indeed, our opponent is not a shadow either, but a Persona like us." Medea informed them, intrigued.

"Did the killer send you?" Yu asked the figure within the fog.

"Wait the killer what?" Yosuke asked looking from Yu to the fog and back again.

"Yosuke you be careful you idiot, that's a Persona!" Rise shouted at him before looking down at her mirror and frowning "I can't detect anything, my scans are just bouncing off that fog."

"A persona!" Yosuke cried before growling "Did the killer send you?"
"No that guy didn't send me, I came here on my own." The Persona replied seeming to shrug its shoulders. "There's really nothing to do in that backwater little town."

"How can this be?" Ruler asked with surprise.

"What's wrong?" Gawain inquired.

"My True Name Discernment skill, it isn't working. I can't see that Persona's true name, status or anything else" Ruler gasped shocked "But that's impossible even the fog of that world shouldn't be able to block it."

"Maybe that fog is some type of Noble Phantasm?" Cu Chulainn suggested. "But I've never heard of a hero related to fog, the only one who comes close is Jackie."

"Father, it's different from my mist, it smells a little bit like rotting flesh." Jackie commented.

"That just makes things more confusing." Astolfo chimed in, Yu could see the persona rubbing the back of his head in his minds eye.

"Well you're going down!" Yosuke letting out a battle cry as he charged into the fog.

"Yosuke!" "Yosuke Wait!" Rise and Yu called after him.

He ignored them and quickly vanished in the fog.

"The glasses aren't working either." Yu looked at Rise who had her special glasses on. "I should be able to see through the fog but the glasses are ineffective."

"So maybe it really is a Noble Phantasm" Tamamo mumbled, her fox ears twitching.

Rise and Yu both focused as they could hear the sounds of battle, metal meeting metal, the exchange of weapons. The two held their breath, a few seconds passed before the sounds stopped. The silhouette of the enemy Persona had vanished, leaving no way to see even what type of weapon was being used.

"Yosuke?" Rise called out into the fog

Yu suddenly shoved her aside. "Watch out!"

As she fell onto her behind a body flew between them and hit the wall with a loud crash. It was Yosuke, his install vanished returning him to normal. He was out cold.

"Ok, finished with the appetiser and now the main course." The Persona stated, their silhouette returning.

"Yu, be careful." Rise said with worry.

"Don't worry, go help out, understand?" Yu commanded.

Rise nodded and went to work as the boy walked into the fog.

"So lets see what you got" The enemy chuckled as their silhouette vanished.

"So that's how you beat Yosuke so fast." Yu realised "You used the fog to hide where you were."

"Ha, make excuses for your friend all you like!" Yu quickly whipped around and Aestus Estus just
narrowly blocked an attack from his side. The enemy pressed their weapon against his own, locking with him, as expected from a Persona they were strong, stronger than any opponent he had faced thus far. "Huh? Oh so you blocked me did you? Your friend couldn't even tell where I was coming from."

"This fog conceals everything about your identity, it even distorts your voice. But it doesn't conceal the direction your voice is coming from." Yu said, holding firm before pushing the weapon he could not see away. "Even if you stop talking, I'm willing to bet that you aren't an Assassin. You said you came alone, are you an Archer perhaps?"

"A close range Archer, that's just stupid." The enemy chuckled coming at Yu from behind this time, this strike was faster, a split second too late and the blow would have hit him.

They disengaged, but instead of striking from somewhere else, the enemy attacked again, Yu remained on the defensive. As long as he kept his guard up, he could survive this.

"Stranger things happened, so if you aren't an Archer that means you don't have the Independent Action skill, that's good."

"Oh, afraid I'd get you between the eyes?"

"No, you said earlier that you came on your own." Yu replied as he continued to parry blows from his enemy. "I'm willing to bet that the killer didn't supply you with much prana, I bet he wants to keep his identity and yours a secret badly enough that you don't even have enough to use your Noble Phantasm."

The next blow was significantly stronger, a wave of pain flowed through the Fool's arms. The next blow was stronger and caused Yu to slide backwards. The third blow was even stronger, and almost caused his sword to fly out his hands but he quickly returned it to a defensive position, anticipating another attack.

Suddenly, he as flying backwards, unable to cry out as all his breath had suddenly left him. Then he crashed back to the ground rolling painfully along it before skidding to a halt. He barely had any time to get his breath back, he raised Aestus Estus just as his enemy's weapon crashed against his own.

"You spend so much time talking about what I don't have, but what I do have is greater power and skill than you." The Persona said smugly, pressing down, causing Aestus Estus to get closer to Yu's throat. "Install all you like, but at the end of the day that human body of yours has limits to what it can do. So even if you borrow a heroes' powers and skills, there will always be a gap between a human like you and hero like me."

The enemy pressed down harder putting more weight down on their weapon, now the sword was only inches away from slicing his neck. "You got too cocky, did you really think that you could beat me so easily?"

"I wasn't looking for victory, just a few minutes." Yu replied

"What?"

"It's ready!" Medea told him hurriedly.

"Now Medusa!" Yu cried out.

"Blood Fort Andromeda!" The gorgon's voice echoed through the fog invoking the Noble
Phantasm.

At the very same time the fog around them turned a blood red colour, the coppery smell of blood entered the air. The pressure upon him relented and Yu could tell that they were looking around in confusion. The boy quickly got to his feet and attacked, he locked blades again but the enemy's strength was diminished.

"W-what the hell is this?" They gasped trying to catch their breath "What have you gone and done?"

"This is Medusa's other Noble Phantasm, Blood Fort Andromeda, I planned to ambush Yosuke with it. Normally it takes days to set up, but with Medea's help, as well as sacrificing range and number of targets, It can be set up faster. It's a bounded field that sucks away the magical energy of those caught inside, and with no supply of prana, you'll run empty pretty fast."

"You installed a persona and were able to sustain two other persona's in the real world at the same time, and use a Noble Phantasm, there's no way unless….the girl?!"

"You got it, Rise and I were colluding this whole time, she supplied me with more than enough Prana for this fight. Now." Flames ignited covering Aestus Estus as he pointed at the shadowy opponent. "You are weakening with every passing second so you have two choices. Stay and fight in your weakened state and get beaten by a kid, or run away with your tail between your legs, what'll it be?"

A frustrated growl came from the figure shrouded in fog. "You won't so lucky, next time I'll have all I prana I need and my Noble Phantasm will turn you into a bloody stain!" The figure began fading away, the fog around them also quickly receded. "You'll regret this! I'll crush every persona you throw at me next time, just you wait!"

With that last echoing threat, the enemy was gone, having fled. Medusa shut down the Blood Fort and Yu released the Install, falling onto his behind. The danger had passed for now. He looked and saw Chie, Teddie, Yukiko, Kanji and Yosuke were all up again. Now they had to get back to the dorm.

"I think, we should call it a night." Yu suggested.

Everyone agreed and they began making their way out of the bunker.

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[September 8th, Iwatodai Dorm, Tatsumi Port Island]

Yukari Takeba was currently frantic. She'd been woken by the earthquake and had gone to check on the kids staying in the dorm, but with the exception of Naoto Shirogane who was strangely still sleeping, they were all missing.

"Where could they have gone, this town is dangerous at night." Yukari ranted as she headed towards the stairs.

"Stop." The demand from a monotone voice caused her to whip around.

There in the hallway, was a girl she didn't recognise. She had had braided navy blue hair adorned with a hairclip with a Chinese design.

"Who are-" Yukari stopped mid-sentence as the girl extended a hand towards her, she felt her
consciousness slip away as this happened her eyes glazed over.

"There is nothing wrong, all of them are safely in their rooms and were not woken by the earthquake."

"All of them are safely in their rooms and were not woken by the earthquake." Yukari parroted.

"You forget this and go back to sleep." Aika commanded.

"I will forget this and go back to sleep." Yukari echoed the command and began stumbling back up stairs to her room.

Diligent as ever, Aika Nakamura had infiltrated the dorm and those she charged with cleaning up after had left. She knew they were going to fight and most likely unleash Noble Phantasms.

Then the earthquake happened. Her magic circuits flared at the outburst of prana. Clearly a Noble Phantasm had been unleashed. She was thankful that they had gone underground to prevent there being any witnesses, it made her job much easier. Which meant she only had to cover for the two remaining people here. Naoto had briefly awakened during the earthquake but Aika had quickly taken care of that. A quick hypnotic suggestion put the detective right back to sleep.

Aika let out a weary sigh, it's not that hypnotism was particularly difficult, but the time of night did bother her, however she had a duty to fulfil and now it was done. Now she would go back to her own bed. She was certain that the Second Owner would deal with the rest, even if they would most likely never find that out her charges were responsible for the earthquake.

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[September 9th, Train back to Inaba, Iwatodai]

The team had managed to return to the dorm without incident, which was odd considering the emergency services out investigating the town for damages. When they woke up however they found themselves herded back onto the train and heading back to Inaba. The trip had been cancelled, apparently the artificial island which had the school on it had been closed.

No one had been injured by the earthquake thankfully, the property damage was almost entirely superficial.

"It seems that two of the Artificial island's supports which go down to the ocean floor had fractures which were exacerbated by the earthquake last night." Naoto informed them. "So the Kirijo Group has closed down the school while repairs are underway, they're also searching for anymore fractures in the supports, it could take months to complete."

"So if the earthquake never happened that wouldn't have been a problem?" Yosuke inquired causing Kanji and Yukiko to suddenly find the windows very interesting.

"Have you two ever heard of overkill?" Rise teased the two telepathically causing them to blush just slightly.

"It's safe to say that the Featherman Show isn't going to happen either." Chie sighed with disappointment through the link which Rise had kept active.

"Not for a number of years, but those fractures would have become a problem eventually, it's better that they're dealt with sooner rather than later I suppose." Naoto answered looking out of a window.

"I heard the epicentre of earthquake is being investigated by a team lead by Mitsuru Kirijo
"Isn't it weird for the head of big company like the Kirijo group to be investigating an earthquake herself?" Chie pointed out.

"I agree, but then again it is her property, however rumours and circumstantial evidence have circulated for years about the Kirijo group being involved in some very shady activities." Naoto said with a suspicious tone, the detectives eyes narrowed at the scenery passing by. "Nothing concrete though, the Kirijo group is very thorough at keeping their dirty laundry from airing, if nothing else."
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[September 12th, Dojima Residence, Inaba]

Later in the day when the sun was beginning to set Yu was in the living room.

"Good afternoon! This is Eye News bringing you a Special Report." The announcer lady on the channel stated.

"Our special Guest tonight is more than just your average high school student," The announcer stated. "He's also an accomplished private detective with serious credentials. Most recently," The camera panned to its left to look at Naoto. "He helped the police with the serial murders in Inaba and his innocent façade is hard to resist. The Detective Prince… Naoto Shirogane."

"Thanks for having me on the show," Naoto greeted.

"So is it true?" The female announcer asked. "Has this mysterious roller-coaster ride of a murder finally come to a close?"

"It hasn't…" Naoto answered. "When you step back and look at the case as a whole, I find it hard to reach the same conclusion as the police have."

Suddenly Nanako came downstairs in her pyjamas and began rummaging through the fridge.

"So what are you trying to say?" The announcer asked taken aback by what Naoto was saying.

"I'm not prepared to make a definitive statement yet but…" Naoto paused for a moment. "…something doesn't feel right."

"I met him at the festival!" Nanako exclaimed holding a glass of milk in her hands.

"Well…" The female announcer chuckled nervously. "What would that be?"

Naoto paused before delivering her next statement.

"There were three victims in this case, which means the next step is to look at even the slightest inconsistencies…"

[September 13th, Yasogami High, Inaba]

The next day after school had ended the team began walking home
"You know; I was kinda surprised…" Chie stated.

"By Naoto going on that program last night?" Yu asked.

"Yeah!" Chie replied. "It was so weird. He doesn't strike me as the type to go on a TV show."

"From what little, I saw from meeting him he doesn't seem to be the attention seeking type," Yukiko commented. "Going on Television seems out of character."

"Agreed…” A voice interrupted. "I would have preferred not to do it…”

Everyone stopped looked and saw Naoto leaning against a tree just outside the school gate.

"Naoto…” Rise spoke the detective's name.

"Can we talk for a second?" Naoto asked

[September 13th, Souzai Daigaku, Inaba]

After Naoto had led the team to Souzai Daigaku, everyone had taken a seat at a table just outside the store. Yosuke had bought a Quelorie Magic, Kanji had bought Topscicle's, while Chie was eating a Steak Skewer.

"This won't take long," Naoto assured them. "You see I have some new thoughts on the case and I'd like to go over them with you all…"

"What's the point?" Yosuke asked. "The case is solved and closed already…"

"You said that something didn't seem right to you…” Yu stated.

"Yes…there are some things the victims have in common…” Naoto said. "All three victims were kidnapped before they were murdered. In addition to that, the victims had been the subject of recent media attention, which had forced them into the limelight. But besides those similarities, there's nothing else that makes these victims particularly unique…”

"However…if you look at the history of some of those at this table, you start seeing a wider connection…”

"Really? How do you get that?" Yosuke asked.

"There was a larger gap in time between the second and third murders. But still, what didn't slow down were the number of disappearances that fit the criteria; Yukiko Amagi, Kanji Tatsumi and Rise Kujikawa " Naoto listed the three off "All three of you went missing after you were featured on TV, and yet…all three of you managed to survive, or maybe a survivor is what you disguised yourself as, in order to avoid suspicion of the police…”

"Exactly what are you suggesting?" Rise demanded with an edge in her voice.

"Some of you had direct contact with the victims, so I'm merely deducing the possibility that one of you might be…”

"Alright that's enough," Yosuke said angrily "I'm not gonna sit here and-"

"Yosuke!" Yu spoke the other boy's name to calm him down.
"Hey look!" A girl pointed at Naoto. "Isn't that the 'Detective Prince'?!"

"Yeah...He's so hot!" Another girl giggled.

Two other girls joined in and started whispering with the first two girls about Naoto.

"Let's take this elsewhere..."

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[September 13th, Samegawa Flood Plain, Inaba]

Naoto had led the team to the river where they had taken a seat at the table beneath the gazebo.

"So let me get this straight. You think that someone from this group is some kind of crazed serial killer...?" Chie asked sceptically.

"I did consider the possibility but now I think it's actually the complete opposite of that," Naoto replied walking closer to the group.

"And how so?" Yu asked.

"You aren't responsible for the murders. But somehow...you were able to pursue the killer in a way that no one else could. Each time you rescued somebody, you gained a new ally in the chase. Look at it in that angle...and all the dots begin to connect. But if that theory is correct then it raises a flag around Mr Morooka's murder," Naoto explained. "No media attention and he didn't go missing first either, the way his body was found..."

"What do you mean? They found his body hung upside down the same way Ms Yamano and Saki were." Yosuke pointed out.

"Yes, the bodies were found in similar positions, however, for the other two cases, the medical examiner couldn't determine the cause of death, but in Mr Morooka's case, it was clear that he died from blunt force to the head. The police tried to resolve this discrepancy and ultimately couldn't do it...The prefecture was desperate to close the case..."

"Keep going..." Yu urged at Naoto's pause.

"Well...at this point, my next step is to uncover some evidence..." Naoto walked closer to the picnic table. "...That is conclusive, let's see what I can come up with."

"Now you're just gonna walk off?" Yosuke asked. "Where are you going?"

"Listen, this is not some sort of game for me," Naoto said before walking off.

Naoto then turned around and walked away leaving the group.

The next day the team were gathered in an empty classroom during lunchtime discussing what they had seen on the Midnight Channel.

"Did you guys see the Midnight Channel last night?" Chie asked. "Wasn't that Naoto on there?!"

"It sure did look like him…" Yukiko conceded.

"I asked Teddie to check out the TV World, but he said no one was there," Yosuke stated. Kanji was just looking out the window scowling at the raining sky.

"We already know that the killer is connected to the Midnight Channel somehow but whoever it is didn't create it," Gawain stated his arms folded.

"The Midnight Channel, I don't think it was created by anyone." Medea chimed in as she materialised in front of the blackboard.

"What do you mean?" Rise asked.

"When we're in that place I've never detected any bounded fields, nor complex magecraft of any kind." The Caster began explaining. "While true a skilled enough magus with enough time and resources could perhaps create a similar place, a mage from the Age of Gods like myself would detect it easily, but I haven't sensed anything, and it's not a reality marble either. But then…"

Medea began mumbling to herself clearly trying to theorise an answer.

"It is most strange though," Diarmuid stated wandering over to a window in spirit form. "Whenever we go through the TV, I had to describe it say that it almost feels like we're stepping out a room made of jello and into the fresh open air."

That was when Medea suddenly became alert again, her eyes widening "Through a doorway….that's it!"

"What's it?" Chie asked confused.

"Our opponent is not magus" She declared with absolute certainty in her voice.

"But how can you be so sure?" Drake asked with a raised eyebrow.

"It's like Diarmuid said, you've noticed haven't you? In the Midnight Channel, the lack of pressure on your bodies, like you're weightless and more powerful?"

"Now that you mention it I do feel freer there." Tamamo stated, "Like there's nothing holding me down."

"Exactly!" Medea took up a piece of chalk and drew two circles next each other on the chalkboard, one bigger and one about half the size of the first one and then pointed to the larger one. "This circle represents The World, the one that we live in." She promptly wrote The World just above it. "And this…." She wrote Midnight Channel just above the smaller one "Is the Midnight Channel."

"Are you saying what I think you're saying?" Cu Chulainn suddenly burst into the conversation with disbelief materialising and staring with wide eyes at her drawing.
"Ok, I'm lost can you guys explain this for those of us who aren't Mages?" Yosuke requested.

Medea let out a sigh.

"Ever since the Age of Gods ended magecraft has been in decline. Basically, as technology has advanced, the ability of magic users has only declined, magecraft relies on mysteries to exist, those are just the rules of The World that we live in." Medea decided not to go into the specifics.

"However, the Midnight Channel exists outside of The World that we live in and thus outside of the rules, specifically outside of Gaia's influence."

"And Gaia is?"

"The embodiment of the planet, it see's magecraft as an anomaly and tries to stamp it out. You see, back in the Age of Gods mankind used to live side by side with the truth of the universe, but here in this Age of Man, your civilization is trying to search for that truth. Basically, the Earth obeys the law of the most prosperous species on its surface. During the Age of Gods that was Gods and the Phantasmal species, Dragons and creatures you've no doubt heard in fairy tails, as such Mystery thrived and so did magecraft. However when that era ended the rules of the world were completely changed from one that obeyed Mystery to one that obeyed Physics. The Phantasmal Species began ceding the Earth's surface to humans and moved to the Reverse Side of the World, where Mystery still thrives. As for the Gods well...no one knows where they went, maybe the Reverse Side of the World too. However, not all of them are gone."

"What she's saying that with Gods and Phantasmal Species disappearing, with only the few that remain, sleeping the centuries away. A side effect of this is modern magi getting weaker and unable to create new mysteries." Cu Chulainn continued "Magi jealously guard their secrets as much as they can. If they were to discover a place like the Midnight Channel, where those Rules don't apply and The Age of Gods continues, then its unlikely they'd go broadcasting about its existence without wiping your memories before you left."

"You forget one thing." Li Shuwen cut in drawing attention to himself. "Magi are rather inhuman as it is. When they study their craft they drive themselves apart from the values of common people. Morality is not something they are concerned about. So it is possible that a mage is behind this, if one discovered the Midnight Channel then they'd be like a child in a candy store, they wouldn't know where to begin, so its possible they've simply gone insane and you all entering and leaving is part of some Four Dimensional chess like experiment in magecraft."

"So to sum it up we're probably dealing with some crazy mage, and Ms Yamano and Saki were just casualties of his experiments?" Yosuke yelled angrily.

"Could be." The Hound of Ulster shrugged

"Ah crap, the deeper we go into this the less we know," Kanji complained.

"Yeah, we have more questions than answers now." Rise sighed.

"What is the Midnight Channel exactly and where did it come from?" Yukiko wondered aloud.

Only silence was her answer as no one had a real explanation. Then the school bell rung marking the end of lunch.

"Lunch time's over, let's keep an eye on the TV for now," Yu ordered them.

The team nodded in agreement and left the classroom to return to their own classes. The Persona's
"How long must we keep this up?" Diarmuid asked upon seeing a nod of confirmation from Li Shuwen that they were alone "This deception does not sit well with me."

"I hear ya, we all know the truth already. A Magi Experiment, that's a load of crap." Cu Chulainn grumbled "This is a Holy Grail War and we all know it. The Midnight Channel was created by the Grail as a battleground then altered later by someone else, hence why people end up back in the real world when they die. We know because the Grail supplied the info just like a regular war."

"But this is not a regular war." Li Shuwen stated, "While all we Persona's will have our wishes granted should we succeed in this ordeal, only one human may their wish granted."

"In that case its likely that our masters will turn on each other for such a wish," Diarmuid said downcast. "They may even fight to the death for it."

"But remember it is in our best interests that our masters live and work to together, part of the pact with Grail states that if our respective master dies then we will not attain our wish. That was part of the reasoning behind this lie, why we kept the Grail and War's existence a secret." Drake pointed out.

"The Archer position is to be filled soon." Gawain spoke up "When it is, I suggest we come clean, we tell them about the Grail and the War, then pray that their bonds can overcome the temptation of the Holy Grail."

"Any objections?" Assassin asked looking around, seeing none then he nodded "Alright after Archer is revealed we'll come clean."

With that, they decided there was nothing more to talk about and one by one began returning to their respective master's souls until only Medea and Gawain were left.

"White Knight, I hope you are correct about the power of our master's bonds, for all our sakes." The Princess of Colchis said before vanishing as well.

"As do I, Caster." Gawain sighed looking out of the window "As do I."

Eventually, he too vanished returning to his master's soul.

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[September 15th, Dojima Residence, Inaba]

That night Yu was in his room as the clock struck midnight the TV popped on. On the screen, there was the silhouette of Naoto from the night before. Then there was static and the picture turned to what looked like a science lab.

"Hello there, everyone. I'm the Detective Prince Naoto Shirogane." Naoto's shadow introduced itself. "This is the Genome Project and it's the experiment of the century, I'm about to undergo a body altering operation…"

"What's that mean?" Yu wondered.

"The technique I will use is forbidden and fantastic!" Shadow Naoto continued "As I embark on this journey, everyone can follow. Watch closely, for what you are about to see, is a person born anew before your very EYES!" As Naoto said this, various implements like a couple of robot arms
with clamp, a drill head, a saw, and a light appeared as well.

"Once the surgery is complete, it will be a commemorative day. A day I can walk down a whole
new path. I would very much like to share this moment with you. So be sure to tune in…"

Then the picture faded out as another rumble of thunder was heard. Then Yu's phone rang.

"Hey, …what's…?" Yu said as he answered.

"DUDE! I JUST SAW HIM! IT WAS NAOTO! I SWEAR IT WAS PLAIN AS DAY!" Kanji
yelled from Yu's phone.

"Just calm down…" Yu tried to say, but Kanji continued.

"Well if the little pissant's been kidnapped, it's not gonna do us any good now is it? I swear,
something about that kid seriously bugs the crap outta me." Kanji said. "Want me ta get the group
together?"

"Yeah, we'll all get going tomorrow after school," Yu stated hanging up the phone.

[September 16th, TV World Entrance, Inaba]

The next day everyone had gathered in the TV and was waiting at the entrance while Rise scanned
the place to try and find Naoto. Teddie was in his fur trying to sniff for any hint of Naoto in there.

"I don't know where, but someone's definitely here…" Rise said as she used the mirror to scan the
area. "And it seems this world is growing larger too."

"Good going with the sniffer Rise, it seems my schnozz is a little burnt out want a massage?"
Teddie asked.

"Don't distract her bear!" Yosuke yelled cuffing Teddie on the head.

"So the case isn't over yet?" Chie sighed.

"If that's the case then…that's why Naoto went and did that TV show!" Yukiko realised.

"I think you're right…He's testing the theory that only locals who show up on TV get kidnapped."
Yu stated.

"The kid made himself bait?!" Kanji yelled angrily.

"That's dumb!" Chie said. "What's he thinking? He could die!"

"Freakin' asshole! He could have warned us he was going to do something stupid like that…" Kanji
grumbled.

"He did say this wasn't a game to him…" Rise said downcast before her expression brightened.
"I've got a lock."

[September 16th, Secret Laboratory, Inaba]
"What the hell is this place?" Kanji exclaimed as he saw a building that had grey rusted metal paint and two antenna dishes on it come into view.

"It looks like a hideout from one of those pumped up action flicks," Yosuke commented as they went inside.

The inside was littered with wall consoles, security monitor screens, security doors.

"They say acting in those things is hard. " Rise said "They got a ton of lots making it super-hot, then they throw in smoke everywhere"

"Teddie, all the events and buildings in this place are constructed from people's repressed emotions right?" Yu asked the bear.

"Yes indeed," Teddie confirmed.

"Remember what Naoto said on the Midnight Channel?" Yu asked, "What I took from that was Naoto rejecting his life as a superstar boy detective."

"So how does that play here?" Yukiko asked looking around.

"Maybe this is some kind of secret lab," Yu suggested.

"Naoto is running away from something." Kanji stated, "I'm sure of it."

The screens started to light up and show static before clearing into an image of Naoto.

"I was getting tired of waiting for you," Naoto said looking at them through the screen. "I've just had about all I could take of this ridiculous, blubbering child…"

"No! No, please!" pleaded a copy of Naoto wearing a lab coat and a beanie cap with its head at its knees and hands on its ears. Naoto was calmly standing by watching. "DON'T GO!"

"THAT's Naoto's Shadow?" Yosuke said surprised.

"Seems like a scared little kid," Kanji said pointed out.

"Guys! Look up!" Rise said as Tamamo sensed incoming shadows.

They all looked up and saw Shadow matter oozing on the ceiling.

"It's coming from the floor, too!" Teddie exclaimed as shadow matter began oozing from the floor as well.

The two different parts broke up into small strings, which then coiled around each other, and then created strands linking the coils, with circles that formed faces when they stood up. They looked like DNA strands with faces, Rise called them Fail Gene's.

"Here they come!" Yosuke said.

"Trying to talk with you is exhausting. I'm leaving," Naoto turned around and started to leave the lab. It had two large surgical lights and a metal table where the "surgery" was supposed to take place.
"Why? Why do people always leave me? I'll be alone forever. You know what it's like. Don't leave me alone!" Shadow Naoto whimpered

"We may share the same face. But do not imply that we have anything else in common." Naoto said coldly looking over his shoulder at the shadow. "As long as you continue to act like a child, I will never be able to relate to you."

"Who are you trying to fool? You know the truth." The shadow chuckled as the lights turned on. "You know it well. I. Am. You."

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"I'm not acting like anything. This IS the real you." Shadow Naoto continued.

"Don't!" Chie said. "Arguing will just make it worse!"

"You're wrong!" Kanji said. "He has to stand up and face this! Stay strong, Naoto!"

Kanji took out some more Genes with the Axe-Sword.

"We had to go through this too," Kanji said leading the team deeper into the place created by Naoto's heart.

The Laboratory was a veritable maze, eventually, they came to a sealed door which Kanji simply smashed open.

"Come on let's hurry up get to that kid already," Kanji demanded impatiently.

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The team finally got to the hallway of the final floor, Rise detected that Naoto was in behind the door ahead. One again they could see inside of the lab on the monitors that they passed as they headed for the door, where they saw Naoto and his shadow. Who was frozen in place, shock and fear keeping the detective from moving

"You heard what they all say…You're just a little kid…A little stupid kid…” The Shadow said with a malevolent smile on its face. "No one cares about you. Just your ability to solve puzzles. Once they're done with you, then it's back to the playpen."

The colour of the operating theatre lights changed from light green to malevolent red.

"When they need you, they're nice and when they're done they're not and that's hard for you to take. It makes you a lonely child…” Naoto tried to retreat backward while gasping. Screens in the background behind Naoto displayed the Shadow. "I'm finally ready to grow up and be a man for once. I want people to see me for who I really am! I want a reason to stay alive!"

"Go away. I can find my own reasons to stay alive…” Naoto fell to his knees.

"No, you can't. Not unless you can change the person you are. A child."

"Stop saying that!" Naoto demanded covered his ears.

"Remember all those handsome, strong men you read about in detective novels? You wanted to be just like them, didn't you?" The shadow continued its taunt. "Flip it around and you'll see…you admired them because you knew you always would be a child."
"It's not true!" Naoto whimpered.

"Naoto Shirogane. Such a rugged, masculine name you've got, but…"

"SHUT UP!"

"…it still doesn't change the truth…"

"STOP IT!" Naoto said, grabbing the Shadow by the shirt.

"The gender barrier is so difficult. Overcoming it is daunting. That's why you tried so hard to be this cool, powerful man. But that would be rather difficult since you're not even a guy!"

Everyone let out noises of surprise.

"Whoa! Did I hear that right or did things just get wacky in my head?"

"So wait…that dude isn't a dude, then?" Kanji asked shocked.

"There's no point in whining over it…” Naoto said, her voice beginning to crack. "It's not going to change anything!"

"You've heard that from a whole lot of people, haven't you…'Stop crying, Naoto, it won't fix anything. Just get over it,' The Shadow said on one of the large screens. "But that just makes you want to cry more…and here you are, saying the exact same thing. What're you trying to protect?"

The Shadow moved forward and put her arms on Naoto's shoulders. "You can stop pushing yourself. I know exactly how you feel. I promise. I mean, after all, I am you…"

"You're not…"

"Don't say it!" Chie cried.

"Lay off! She has to get through this…” Kanji yelled as he ran towards the door to the lab.

"Kanji!" Yu called after the boy.

"If we don't help her through this, she'll suffer forever!" Kanji pulled his arm back and smashed down the door with a powerful punch.

"You're not me. You're NOTHING LIKE ME!" Naoto yelled.

"HA-HA-HA-HA!" Shadow Naoto laughed, and then purple fog enveloped her and she transformed.

"Right…now get ready…” Kanji said.

When Shadow Naoto appeared again, she had changed. For one her face was robotic and She was dressed in a tattered red coat with a black tight and sleeveless shirt with silver accents and a metal plate on her collar. Her black pants had two black straps on her thighs, and another two strapped around her shins separate from each other. She wore black metal plated shoes, which appear to be attached to her trousers. There were also jet wings protruding from her back and there were jets on each side which allowed her to hover.

"I am a Shadow…of your True Inner Self…"

"We just gotta do our thing and kick some serious ASS!" Kanji cried a fist clenched in
determination as installed Heracles.

"How dare you act so high and mighty? You're a hothead…and I loathe hotheads. Your emotions always get the best of you…Come on, it's time to reassign some body parts!"

"No, don't!" Naoto cried as manacles clamped around her forearms and lifted her onto the operation table. "Lemme GO!"

"It's time!" Yu declared as he installed Gawain.

"YEAH!" Everyone else agreed, installing their own Persona's.

"What? More people tired of who they are?" Shadow Naoto asked. "Well, I'll just have to add you to the operating table!"

In her right hand appeared a matte black, western-style straight bow. In her left was a sword, except it was strange, the blade of the sword coiled into a spiral. When the shadow placed it on the bow it seemed to change, becoming more like an arrow.

"What is that?" Yosuke asked.

"Oh Shit." Cu Chulainn cursed.

"IT'S A NOBLE PHANTASM SCATTER!" Rise cried urgently which caused everyone to run in different directions.

The Group was just barely away when the arrow was loosed, when it impacted their previous position exploded, the sheer power sending some of them flying even while escaping the worst of the damage.

"My ears are ringing." Yosuke groaned from on the ground across the room.

"What the hell was that?" Chie groaned as she stood back up.

"It was Calabolg." Cu Chulainn growled, "That was Uncle's Noble Phantasm, but how did this shadowy bastard get it?"

"I don't think we can keep ourselves, ok come Gawain!" Yu commanded, releasing the install and summoning Gawain directly.

"Another pest I must destroy!" A pair of hands seemed to build themselves out of Shadow Naoto's back, each on holding some kind of sword. The arms promptly detached began flying like rockets homing on Yu. Gawain intercepted the sword holding arms but they both exploded upon contact with his sword kicking up smoke.

"Narukami!" Chie cried.

"Be careful!" Rise warned, using Tamamo.

**Analysis: Attack will be repeated.**

"She's about to use the same attack. Quickly! Change Personas!" Rise yelled as another pair of arms with a sword in their grasp appeared on shadow Naoto's back and launched themselves.

"Lancelot!" Gawain vanished in a swirl of blue flames and Lancelot took his place letting out a roar.
He charged forwards, snatching the sword from the grasp of the flying hands which simply exploded and kept going towards Shadow Naoto, who already had more sword hands ready, six instead of two. Even so, Lancelot was not impeded, with skill he slashed and destroyed the arms, preventing any of them from getting past him.

He quickly closed the gap only for Shadow Naoto quickly fly away leaving Lancelot a sword which quickly became brighter before exploding in his face.

"She's so fast!" Yu growled as Shadow Naoto avoided the attacks from Lancelot again as she flew around the room.

"Indeed." Came the voice of the Persona of the Hermit Arcana. "With those wings, she's far too fast, she'll just keep retreated and striking from a distance."

Shadow Naoto took the opportunity to fire far more swords at the, luckily Chie and Kanji intercepted them while Yukiko tried counter-attacking with gunshots.

"Summon me, Then I'll use my Noble Phantasm, it should at least create a weak point after that, use my student, he'll be able to do more damage and close the gap."

"Alright, here goes, change Chiron!" Lancelot vanished in a swirl of blue flames, in his place was a calm-looking man, gentle like a calm sea. He wore a somewhat archaic style of dress. He was a man of delicate features clad in leather Armor.

"Are you sure about this? What if she dodges?" Yu asked Chiron who chuckled in response.

"Worry not, my Noble Phantasm has a tracking ability and will always hit the target I decide." Chiron responded, "However its power is rather low, so you'll need to follow up."

"Guys, keep her busy, I have a plan," Yu ordered receiving nods from the others.

"Culverin Canons!" A pair of canons appeared beside Yukiko and fired at the shadow which continued flying around and dodging.

Yosuke followed up with a jab from Gae Buidhe as she passed by, but she moved to evade and kept on going. She made a sharp turn upwards to avoid a sweeping attack from Kanji.

"You are all so annoying!" Shadow Naoto growled as she launched several swords at Chie who was blown backwards.

"Stop it! That's enough! Don't hurt them anymore!" Naoto pleaded.

"I just need them to sit still! Otherwise, how can I fill their bodies full of holes?" Shadow Naoto asked darkly. "Ever since I was little, I've been bad at making friends. Then my parents died in that accident and Grandfather took me in, I haven't made a single friend since…"

Naoto was unable to deny it, this was true. She hadn't made any friends since her parents died.

"That's why Grampa would allow me to tag along and help solve his cases…Before long, I was the 'Genius Child Detective.'" Shadow Naoto laughed mockingly. "At first everyone went crazy over me… Then the critics tried to discredit me…pointing to my age or gender. That's when I decided to grow up and become an adult. But it's much harder to change the fact that I'm a girl…And growing up will not change that fact. That's why my little present to you is gonna be a whole new life!" The Shadow pointed the bow at Naoto
Naoto closed her eyes and braced herself for what was to come next.

"Cut the crap, bitch!" Kanji yelled as Heracles hurled a piece of rubble at Shadow Naoto.

Naoto opened her eyes in time to see her Shadow dodge the makeshift missile.

"Look, I really suck at making friends too," Kanji yelled "But who GIVES A SHIT?!"

Naoto gasped at Kanji's words.

"I really hate muscle-bound buffoons…" Shadow Naoto commented.

Heracles picked up a steel girder and ran at Shadow Naoto, Kanji himself let out a battle cry as he charged with his Persona.

Shadow Naoto retaliated by loading an arrow into the bow and firing it at the Persona, who simply shrugged it off and kept charging. When the next few shots didn't work she fired at Kanji instead, forcing Heracles to stop his charge and protect his master.

"Ok now. Antares Snipe!" It was quick, from the ceiling, a thin yellow beam crashed down and struck true spearing Shadow Naoto through the back directly between her shoulders. "Now Achilles, finish it!"

"Change, Achilles!" The Arcana changed becoming the Temperance and out it appeared a young man with roguishly handsome face and blonde hair that almost looked like it was green, his eyes were that of a Raptor constantly in search of prey.

"Alright, my turn." Achilles smirked gleefully.

The armour around his legs vanished and so did he. One moment he was in front of Yu and the next he was next to Shadow Naoto.

So while Shadow Naoto was fast she was no match for Achilles who was famed for his speed. Which threw Shadow Naoto off, he promptly used his spear and with a couple of powerful swipes, the shadow screamed as the screeching of metal came from her back, her wings let out a small explosion and erupted into fire sending her spiralling downwards to crash into the ground.

When the shadow sat up she found a spear pointed at her throat.

"You're beaten, now die with some dignity." Achilles said.

"You're a fool if I were you I'd watch my Achilles Heel!" The moment the words were spoken, a red arrow impaled itself into the legendary heel. The effect was instantaneous, the invincibility which Achilles was famous for, left him. Then swords surrounded him, and impaled him all at once, piercing his lungs, his heart, his stomach, everything that could be pierced was.

"G-gods damn it!" Achilles cursed as blood dribbled from his mouth. "It's has been a while since my last loss. ...My bad, Master."

With that, the legendary Hero vanished, forced to retreat back into Yu's soul to recover.

"W-what happened?!" Chie cried.

"He was defeated?"

"He got cocky." Chiron told them with a sigh "He was so assured of his victory that he never saw it
"Guess I just have to finish this off, ok, come Altera!" Yu summoned the Death Arcana which had the image of a Saber on it. But instead of being rushed like normal, it seemed to crackle, then all of a sudden, chains wrapped around the card before it vanished. Any attempts to summon it caused Yu a headache.

"What the hell?" Cu Chulainn gasped.

"What happened to the Death Arcana?" Gawain asked with confusion.

"It looks like it was sealed, but how and why?" Medea asked.

"Alright, fine, let's try Vlad" The Devil Arcana appeared, a Lancer class this time.

The Persona was dressed in a royal fashion, appearing as black as a shadow in the night, contrasted with his pale face and long, silk-like white hair.

"Finally, It is my turn. I will finally erase that stain from my name!" Vlad laughed "But first, begone from my sight, Kazikli Bey!"

It happened in an instant, several stakes appeared from the ground impaling the shadow and rendering it helpless.

"Now it is truly over, no matter what Noble Phantasms you copy, you cannot escape death." Vlad declared.

"NOOO!" Everyone suddenly looked to see someone standing atop a large castle shaped amplifier. The figure was a young fair girl with mid-back length pink hair tied with purple ribbons and light blue eyes. She had slender figure and is clad in a cyber-goth-loli dress with white detached sleeves, with a circular skirt and several belts on the top connected to her collar that covers her chest area and wore knee-high shoes with two sharp spikes. She has long pink claws instead of fingers. Her most prominent features were the dragon horns, and the protruding dragon fangs, along with a long draconic tail and pink scales scattered throughout her body. In her hand was a lance that doubled as a microphone stand.

"No, no, no it can't be over yet! I haven't had the chance to debut yet!" She cried with distress.

"Uh, who is that?"

"You fool what are you even doing here?" Vlad yelled losing his composure "The battle is decided."

"I don't even remember calling on her," Yu commented.

"As the number one idol in the world, I can't allow myself to be overlooked for a debut, after all, who knows when the next chance will come." She responded, "Now be in awe, I am Elizabeth Bathory and now prepare to hear the greatest hit among heroic spirits."

"I'm not supplying her with prana so how is she getting ready to use it?" Yu wondered.

"Forget it just run for it!" Vlad yelled urgently as Elizabeth took in a deep breath.

Kanji lifted up Naoto and the whole team did as instructed. They could hear the cacophonous noise coming from behind them. As it continued the whole structure began to crack and break apart
causing them to run faster until finally, they cleared it just as the whole thing came down.

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With the battle finally over the team was gathered around Naoto.

"I guess...now you know my whole story..." Naoto said, her voice now more feminine.

"Do you think people won't take you seriously as a girl? Is that why you dress like a boy?" Yukiko asked.

"It just doesn't match my image of a cool detective," Naoto said. "And I don't want to be sidelined by the stupid critics, so why give them more ammunition for that?"

"Sounds like a load of shit to me..." Kanji stated bluntly causing Naoto to gasp.

"You know the real truth, right?" Yukiko said with a smile. "You don't want to become an adult... or for that matter even be changed into a man..."

"Time for you to try facing yourself," Yu said motioning her head towards her shadow which had returned to the form with the too large scientist lab coat.

Naoto turned and saw the crackling static form of her Shadow, back in the scientist guise.

"Look, I tried my best to ignore you..." She said as she got up and started walking towards her Shadow. "...And keep the child locked deep inside. But no matter how hard I tried, you were always there. I am you... and you are me."

"It's been my dream to someday become a cool, hardboiled detective!!" Shadow Naoto said happily as she became enveloped in a blue glow.

"When I should have wished for...No...What I will wish for...is not to become an adult or man. But rather to accept you as you are..."

Naoto's Shadow changed in a flash of blue. The Shadow reformed as a tall tan-skinned man with white hair, wearing a red cloak.

"I am just a nameless Persona under the Archer class of the Fortune Arcana, I'll be your Persona from now on." He said simply before changing into a card an Arcana card, the Fortune Arcana. It spun down into Naoto's hands. She cupped them and took the card causing it to vanish and turn into a warm blue glow which sank into Naoto's body.

"I don't know how you guys did it... It's impressive... Keeping this secret so long. No wonder the police couldn't gain any traction... in this... case..." Naoto fell to her knees as her legs buckled beneath her.

"That's quite a fight you had..." Yosuke said with a chuckle.

"You went all out..." Chie said. "You totally put your life on the line."

"I had faith in you. I knew you guys would come for me..."

"Dumbass, it was a huge gamble!" Kanji said. "You ain't no genius at all. You're just frickin' crazy..."

"Maybe, but now I know for myself, that this case is far from solved."
[Wizard Marshal Zelretch’s office, Clock Tower, London]

"What the hell was that?" Waver demanded glaring at the old vampire tossing a Saber Class card down on the desk that seemed to change to the Death Arcana before settling back on the image of Saver. "Is this one of your pranks?"

"I had nothing to do with this." Zelretch replied calmly "Hassan of the Hundred faces was supposed to be in the Death Arcana, but someone else meddled with it and put Atilla the Hun in their place. I managed to seal her before Narukami could summon her proper and the contract was established."

"Ok, but who would switch out Hassan for Atilla the Hun and Why?"

"Easy to discern who simply guess what her wish would be," Zelretch told him

"And what would that be?"

"The Destruction of Human Civilization, so if our side won the War all their Persona's would get their wishes granted and we lose by winning."

"There aren't many with the power to alter this Holy Grail never mind tap into the system and bring another heroic spirit into the system." Lord El Melloi II rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"It's Nyarlothep, turning our victory into a defeat so he wins his wager with Philemon its one of his favourite tricks." Zelretch sighed and bridged his hands, "Oh and you might want to back away from the Card."

"Why?" Waver asked before glancing down at the Card and seeing a pitch-Black Butterfly had landed atop it, seeing it gave Waver a sense of dread.

The butterfly began to fly off, with the Persona Card firmly in its grasp, as it did so a malicious chuckling could be heard in echoing throughout the room.

"Nice laugh jackass, go back to Saturday morning cartoons where you belong," Zelretch called after the butterfly as it vanished taking the card with it.

"He stole the card!" Waver exclaimed.

"Let it go, he's thinking ahead planning his next move for after the war." Zelretch placed his hands behind his head and looked up at the Stoney ceiling of his office.

"Well, there another matter, pretty much everyone in the Clock Tower is staying away from Inaba as you said, except for one group, they dispatched a pair of magi to make contact with Narukami."

Waver said.

"Idiots he's an awakened Persona User, they'll never leave that place alive."

"But they want to talk to him about their own goals, they don't know."

"Doesn't matter, the Nakamura's have special permission to be near Persona users, have them record what happens to those messengers and I'll forward it to 'them' and they'll think twice and wait patiently like they should have." Zelretch leaned back in his chair. "Oh and one more thing, I had to put Kojiro Sasaki in as the Magician Arcana's heroic spirit."
"Wait, what about Semiramis?" Waver yelled with frustration.

"Well…"

Outside the Velvet, Club Semiramis stood opposite a person who had asked to speak with her in private, as such they were outside and away from the windows, fortunately, another brawl was going on inside so everyone was pre-occupied thus allowing the her the person she was meeting to remain undisturbed.

"So, what do you think of my offer?" The figure opposite her asked calmly.

"Hm…to do what you request would require me to sever my current contract and put my wish on hold," Semiramis replied with an even tone but the other person could tell she was intrigued. "Plus I would require a new Persona user chosen by the Grail in order to contract with."

"Don't worry, I have such details all figured out, my sponsor can make sure the Grail will select my candidate, and that the Grail start another war very soon after this one." They chuckled "All of the pieces are in place, including the energy needed in order for the Grail to actually grant our wishes. All I need is your trust."

"Hmmm…very well I agree, I can wait, I am nothing if not patient and I am wasted here anyway." In the palm of her hand materialised the Magician Arcana, she promptly took it and tossed it aside, it lost its glow as it did so and floated gently to the ground, the contract severed.

"Well, let's depart shall we?"

"Indeed, I've had enough of this place."

With that, the two walked away vanishing into the starry void near surrounding the Velvet Club.
For Whom the Bell Tolls

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Persona or Fate or anything in the nasuverse, any resemblance to any other Persona 4/Fate fan fiction is coincidental and plagiarism is not intended. No flames please, constructive criticism only.

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[October 7th, Inaba Hospital, Inaba]

Three weeks had passed since the battle Naoto's Shadow, and after she had recovered from the battle Naoto had insisted they get a check-up.

"Everyone's tests came back normal," Naoto stated sitting down with the team in the cafeteria.

"Yeah, and what about Teddie, there's no way he's normal…" Yosuke said pointing at the bear.

"The tests weren't a complete waste," Naoto told them taking a seat by the window. "And it's that our medical instruments couldn't really tell us anything."

Naoto withdrew an X-ray of Teddie.

"This was what we found after taking an X-ray" She showed them the X-ray image. It showed that Teddie's insides were empty…nothing was able to be seen inside.

"That's freaky!" Chie cried

"There are no bones," Yukiko exclaimed.

"Tah-dah!" Teddie said, holding up some papers. "Sorry to keep you waiting! I have the results of everyone's physical exams."

"What?!" Everyone yelled seeing the papers in the bear's hands.

"I mean it would be beary em-bear-assing if I were the only one fully exposed. Are you ready?!" Teddie said. "I have some major reveals!"

"Nice!" Yosuke said. "Ok Teddie, you can tell us what all of the girls' measurements are."

"Damn you Yosuke you damn pervert!" Chie yelled.

"I don't want my stats to be broadcast!" Yukiko said.

"Let's see what you've got!" Rise said leaning towards the bear before pausing as she saw something on the results. "Naoto, it says here you're stacked. Are you sure they didn't get the measurement wrong?"
"Look, the only thing important here is that the doctors could find nothing physically wrong with
Teddie!" Naoto cried getting flustered and snatching the papers from Teddie's hand, "The results of
everyone else is irrelevant! We're all healthy!"

"Hey! At least let me have a peek!" Yosuke cried, chasing after her.

"Give those back!" Teddie yelled also giving chase.

"No!" Yukiko shouted, chasing after the boys with Chie and Rise close behind.

[October 8th, Front Gates, Yasogami High, Inaba]

"Man I can't believe Midterms are next week." Yosuke groaned.

"Don't talk about it, it bums me out." Chie groaned also not liking the thought of more exams.

"Good Morning," a familiar voice said.

As they were reaching the gate they turned and saw….

"Naoto?" Chie greeted the newest persona user with surprise.

"Have you recovered?" Yukiko asked.

"I have, thank you so much for all the help you gave me."

"Don't mention it, but what's going on with your uniform…" Yosuke said.

Yu noticed that she dressed the same way she was before the kidnapping.

"I decided to dress with what seemed most comfortable to me…" Naoto answered.

Any reply from Naoto was cut off by two boys walking past spoke to each other.

"Hey, it's the Detective Prince!"

"That's no Prince that's a Princess… " The second one said.

"No way really?" The first guy said. "Holy crap."

"The cat's outta the bag, news sure travels fast," Naoto said with a nervous laugh.

"Try your best to ignore them," Yu advised.

"Don't worry about me, I was hoping we could all go over the case together," Naoto said. "I think
whoever is behind all these kidnapping and murders, is hiding out in plain sight."

Suddenly the bell rung signalling the start of homeroom.

"Let's talk later at the lab," Yu suggested.

[October 8th, Junes Food Court, Junes, Inaba]
All right," Naoto said. "First, I heard the doorbell ring. But when I opened the front door, I saw no one there… Just as alarm bells sounded in my mind, someone grabbed me roughly from behind and covered my mouth with something."

"Wow, how could you remember all that?" Rise asked, her eyes wide with wonder.

"The culprit seems to have used a chemical to incapacitate me, but luckily I wasn't completely unconscious. I had been expecting a trick along those lines, so I was somewhat prepared. And of course, I was desperate to gather as much information as I could."

"No wonder you're an ace detective!" Teddie said wearing his mascot outfit.

"That ain't something to be proud of you're too damn calm about all this…" Kanji commented.

Naoto chose to ignore that. "Judging by their actions and body type, I'd say the culprit is definitely a man," she said.

"Judging by their actions and body type, I'd say the culprit is definitely a man. I heard no conversations or voices, so I believe he is acting alone."

"What is it?" Yu asked.

"Well, it's after that that things get murky…" She said. "I felt a single impact, which I assume that was when I was thrown into the TV… Judging from how long it took from my kidnapping to ending inside the TV World, I'd say it was all done in a matter of minutes."

"So you were immediately thrown inside the TV after being kidnapped…" Chie summarized and yet was thinking about something. "Oh! Could there have been a TV on the side of the road?"

....

"What?"

"I think we'd know if someone kept lugging a TV around town Chie." Yukiko said to her friend who sweatdropped.

"Regrettably, my memory from there on is a blur…" Naoto said.

The question remains, though, as to how Kubo learned of that world," Naoto said, looking deeply troubled.

"He probably didn't learn of it." Yu said.

"What do mean?" Naoto asked.

"This town is small and news travels fast." Yu explained "It wouldn't take long for people to find out he'd gone to the police station right after the murder of Mr Morooka. Kubo is an attention seeker and everyone knows it, he's admitted to the crimes freely. He wanted the attention, he's taking the credit for crimes he didn't commit. I'm willing to bet that when news got out that the police had a suspect, the real killer might have gone to the police station in disguise and shoved him into the TV."

"That's quite a theory, it's probably not too far from the truth. As it is, much of our speculation could be tested if we could ask Kubo in person. However," Naoto looked downcast. "I've unfortunately been taken off of the investigation."
"The police wouldn't admit that it wasn't Mitsuo outside in the first place," Rise said. "Once you've said something on TV, it's not easy to admit you were wrong."

"I believe the primary cause of my dismissal was because I raised that possibility to them. The police won't readily concede that they made false charges...All the more so if the accused is a juvenile. In fact, the overwhelming sentiment with the police force is to end this case with his arrest." Naoto sighed.

"Even if there's another killer?!!" Chie asked.

"Those dickheads... I had a feeling that would be the case. Not that I trusted 'em in the first place," Kanji growled with annoyance.

"With that in mind, I have no doubt that the culprit will continue with his attacks," Naoto stated. "We can only watch and wait for him to make the next move...But this is no longer a mere job, or someone else's affair. I want to know the truth of why we were targeted. Please allow me to join your effort."

"Of course." Yu agreed.

"Thank you very much." Naoto said "I'll do my best, Leader."

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[October 9th, The hill overlooking town, Inaba/]

Yu had met Rise and was sitting with her alone on the bench near the picnic table.

"I've been thinking about what happened with Inoue for a while now. Why my mind went blank thinking about Kanami. I mean, I ran away from showbiz because I was tired being an idol. And yet, I felt so angry about it. Why do you think that is?"

"Because Risette was Rise too." Yu answered simply

"I had a feeling you'd know. I'm just upset it took me this long to realize it. Risette's name in lights, idolized by the masses...that was me too. I was afraid of losing that me. There's no way to become someone else. I ran away from my plain, gloomy self. Then I ran away from my idol self..."

"So then which you do you think you are now?" Yu asked.

"I guess I'm the homicide detective self. I would've run away from that too if I hadn't realized that I'm trying to become who I wanted to be." Rise smiled self-consciously. "I pick a role. When I'm through with it I continue chasing the real me by picking another role. But in the end, all those roles are me."

"I don't want to run away anymore. I don't want to search somewhere else for myself. So I'll hang in there as the complete me," Rise paused looking at Yu. "You know, I'm so glad I came to this town. It's where I met you."

Yu smiled as he felt their bond deepen. Rise suddenly stood up and ran to the railing overlooking the town and peered out at it.

"Look! That line over there is the shopping district. That's... us. Haha, we're so small..." Rise trailed off "I need to remember that... Senpai... You're leaving in the spring, right?"
"I've made up my mind about something. You see..." Rise seemed to hesitate before gathering her courage "I'm thinking of going back into showbiz this spring. I am Risette, after all...And when I consider it that way, I think I can have more fun working. I know how hard it is for a star to make a comeback after an entire year's absence...but even then, I want to start over from the beginning."

"Perhaps a restart is what you needed from the beginning?" Yu suggested "Time to just take a breath and start over."

"Senpai, this..." Rise's eyes were shining as she held something in her hands. "I want you to have it, Senpai."

She thrust a signed photo of herself out to him, he gently took it.

"It's one we took at school. I look really normal, don't I?" Rise said "But even then, I signed it Risette. A Risette without a fake smile... Senpai... I won't make the same mistake. I won't run away... I won't try to be someone I'm not. The many Rises inside of me... I want to cherish them. I quit thinking about such stupid things! I mean, in reality, there's no such thing as a real me or a fake me. As long as you know what you really want to do, no matter how hard it is, you'll be okay. ...I can do it!

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

[October 10th, North Shopping District, Inaba/]

Yu had decided to spend the morning with Chie, they were currently in front of Chinese diner Aiya... after finishing today's training.

"Today is steak bowl day! Just you wait!" Chie said enthusiastically at the prospect of meat.

"I-I don't have any more..." The voice of a crying child snifed.

"Don't tell me they're at it again!?" Chie cried apparently familiar with the situation. "Let's go!"

Chie quickly ran up to three punks who were surrounding another younger kid who was sitting on the ground crying.

"What are you up to!?" Chie demanded.

"Huh? Aw, not her again."

"You know these three?"

"They're a bunch of cowards who were hassling an old friend of mine." Chie explained.

"Hehe, I know how to handle this bitch." The leader chuckled

"Huhuhuhuh! You look like you have something planned!" Another punk said.

"H-HELP..." The crying kid pleaded.

"Hear that, Chie? He wants help."

"How do you know my name...?" Chie asked.

"We ran into the guy you saved last time... Had a friendly conversation." The Punk leader said with a smirk "He told us all kinds of stuff. Like where you live, and about that precious "Yukiko-chan"
"What are you trying to pull!?” Chie demanded getting annoyed.

"Oh, I'm just gonna have a little chat with this kid. Stay put, okay? Cause who knows what'll happen to "Yukiko-san" if you get in our way...?" The Punk leader threatened.

"And got it." Yu said loudly pressed a button on his phone.

"What the hell are talking about?" One of the punks demanded of Yu.

"Oh don't mind me please go on, I was just recording everything you said on my phone." Yu stated holding the phone and showing that it had indeed been recording for the last few minutes.

"He was recording!" The three punks stiffened at the knowledge.

"I wonder what my detective uncle would think if I showed him this." Yu wondered in a false pondering tone "Hmmm….I think you three would be spending the night in a cell at the very least."

"G-gimmie that pho-AGHHH!” The punk cried out as his hand was gripped by Tamamo-Chan.

"I think you should just back off, don't you?" Tamamo-chan asked with a dark smile, causing the punks to all gulp fearfully before retreating.

"M-Miss and Mr... Thank you...” The Crying kid said stopping his tears and standing up.

"Huh? Oh, no, don't worry about it!” Chie said

"My heart's still pounding, was that stupid of me?” Chie asked.

"I don't think so, you protected that kid." Yu replied.

"Hey thanks for the help." Chie said with a gentle smile. "It might've been stupid, but I wanted to save them...That kid, Yukiko...How I feel about this isn't fake. I really want to protect them..."

There was a deep pause, Yu waited because he could sense that Chie wanted to say more.

"Um, well...I also want to protect you...I might be a little flaky... And maybe you don't even need protecting...But... I...I want to protect you...” Chie stammered.

"I'm counting on you." Yu said to her with a smile.

"Yep. I'm counting on you! So, let's have some steak!” Chie smiled and became livelier at the thought of steak.

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After eating with Chie they had gone to the riverbank. She had been quick to want to go back to training. Yu was surprised she could keep her food down, exercising so soon after eating.

"Okay! I think that's enough for today!” Chie said seeming a bit more enthusiastic than usual.

"Yeah... I feel like I haven't been on-form in a while. Hey, uh... there's something I want to tell you. Something I've been thinking about all this time. I still don't have a clue what my good points are. But... I thought I could just keep on searching. I just want to protect people. And to do it, I'll stand
up and fight. I'm going to fight alongside you till the very end. I mean... we'll always be friends!"

"Of course, we will." Yu nodded agreeing with the sentiment.

"Here this is from me to you." Chie said handing Yu a wristband.

Oh, and it's new, so it's clean! It makes a matching pair with mine. Hahaha..." Chie paused ..I think this "power" of mine is what I wanted all along. The power to protect everyone. I understand now. I'm not supposed to use it to become more self-reliant...I'm supposed to use this power to protect people... Yukiko, my friends, my family, this town... and you."

"Alright then, my body and mind are all worn out! Let's go get some meat, and I mean the good stuff!" Chie cheered.

With that Yu went on a meat-eater's tour of Inaba with Chie.

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[October 10th, Dojima residence, Inaba]

After finishing his tour with Chie Yu had gone home to relax a bit until the afternoon had rolled around and he decided to visit Kanji. The Emperor had insisted on coming to Yu's room for some reason. He saw no reason to refuse the request and so he agreed.

"Sorry for bargin' in like this... I thought it'd be a good place..." Kanji said apologetically looking around "Oh, first though...There's one more thing I figured out. Rise stopped by our store the other day...Kanji: She said the dolls were cute, so I told her I made 'em. Then she said that was creepy...

Yu felt a pang of annoyance, that was completely unfair, he'd have to reprimand Rise later. His thoughts must have shown his face however because Kanji interrupted his chain of thought.

"Hold on sempai, it did kinda sting, but I kept on showing her the other stuff I made and in the end, she said, "Maybe you're an amazing guy after all.' It pissed me off the way she said it, but that aside. I get it now... This is what he was talking about. I've just been throwin' in the towel all this time. Of course no one could understand me... I have been keepin' my distance outta fear. So I decided that I'd do things my way, no matter how tough, but it ain't just about hanging out with guys who understand you and telling the rest to get bent. You gotta make an effort if you want people to understand you. I wasn't even trying."

Kanji paused before resuming his speech.

"Not just about my hobby. But like, when the police suspected me, about hassling that kid, It didn't even cross my mind to try and tell 'em my story. I let 'em think whatever they want and because of that, you, Ma, and that kid all got dragged into it. I didn't put in the slightest effort to try and make 'em understand, it's easier for me to act tough..." Kanji said with a wry smile. So from now on I got two rules: Rule one! Be myself. Rule two! Get people to understand me. I want you to have this, Senpai."

Kanji handed over a cute looking strap.

"This thing's me being me. Now I can say it straight out... That "other me" is me." Kanji declared.

"This... For reals...!?" Kanji asked surprised at the new power awakened within him "I get it... So I've become a little "stronger," huh...? You're my hero, dude... And my best bud!"
The team gathered on a peaceful spot on a hill in the park which overlooked the town. The sun was beginning to set now and the team had brought drinks and snacks with them, setting them on the nearby picnic table.

"So tell me something," Archer spoke up materialising on the roof with the team causing all of them to look at him. "Which one of you will get their wish granted by the Holy Grail? We Heroic Spirits have been promised our wishes granted as long as we are your persona's for as long as needed. But only one of you can have that wish from the Holy Grail. So who will it be?"

"Wish...what are you talking about?" Yosuke asked confused.

"I thought your personas would have told you." Archer said seeing the other Heroic spirits had fallen silent. "When this mystery is solved and you have defeated the culprit one of you will have the right to make a wish...anything they want to be granted."

"Anything?" Chie said quietly.

"Absolutely anything." Archer confirmed.

"Is this true?" Yukiko asked of Francis Drake who pulled her hat down over her eyes.

"Aye, its true." the pirate responded.

"Why keep this a secret?" Yosuke asked.

"Because you guys had a good thing going." Avenger spoke up. "We knew that only one of you could have their wish granted But you all had such fun together and were great friends. We didn't want to risk tearing your bonds apart so..."

"...We made a pact with each other." Diarmuid continued "Forgive my impertinence my lord, but we knew the Grail would materialise when this journey was over so we agreed not to speak of the Grail at least, until we had our Archer."

"That way, you could all keep being friends and we figured by the time the Holy Grail appeared you'd be able to resolve the issue and agree by then." Tamamo finished. "So we were planning to tell you but this guy beat us to the punch."

"As I said the Grail can you give you anything you desire." Archer said "The revival of someone you love." Yosuke's fist clenched. "The ability to protect the weak." Chie looked to the ground. "Control over your destiny." Yukiko's face became hidden behind her bangs. "Answers about the nature of your true self." Neither Rise nor Teddie said anything. "Acceptance from everyone for who you truly are. "Kanji said nothing. "Or perhaps a world where justice always prevails no matter what." Naoto adjusted her hat uncomfortably. "These wishes can be granted however there is an obstacle standing in the way...him." Archer projected Kanshou and Bakuya and pointed the former in the direction of Yu.

"Him...but."

"Think about it." Archer cut Yosuke off "As he establishes more bonds he only grows stronger, gaining more Heroic Spirits to command and with them even more dangerous Noble Phantasms. He is the biggest threat to your wishes, even if you do get to the Grail, he knows you all better than
you know yourselves add to that his army of Heroic Spirits and he'll be nigh unstoppable. Your best hope is to eliminate him now while his potential remains unrealised."

"I..."
"If friendship is your worry, then don't. You can just beat each other into submission for the wish." Archer continued "But how much do you know about him anyway? Think about it, he'll leave next year so what are you really loosing anyway compared to what you stand to gain."

The team was silent, Gawain did not speak nor did any of Yu's Persona's seem ready to protect him.

"Fine I'll make it easy on you." Archer locked his eyes with Yu's own unwavering ones "I'll do it for you."

Archer made to attack but was blocked by Avenger who materialised and locked Kanshou with Tawrich.

"What are you doing?" Archer asked.

"Masters orders ya dick." Avenger replied with a smirk.

"You think I should turn my back on sensei...just to ask a magic cup who I am?" Teddie demanded quivering with anger. "If getting those answers with a shortcut means betraying him then I don't want them. Maybe I'll find out myself someday, maybe I won't but I will not turn my back on Sensei or my friends."

Archer was surprised as a yellow spear was held to his throat its owner Diarmuid who had a fierce look on his face.

"Its true I could use that wish to get Saki and the other victims back." Yosuke said "But even though I lost her, I gained awesome friends that I wouldn't have met if not for him. I admit I'm jealous of his ability and yes he probably could kick my ass, but I won't betray my partner. Not for some stupid wish."

A hand came close to Archer's throat, its owner Li Shuwen ready to kill.

"It's true that I want the power to protect the weak and the helpless." Chie explained glaring at Archer "But I don't want it so badly that I'm willing to take a shortcut to it. The road I take may be long and I'll sweat and bleed a lot. But my friends are by my side, so I know I can keep standing up no matter what. So I don't need the Holy Grail, I can just work hard and I'll get what I want." Li Shuwen's smirk grew in response to his student's declaration.

A pistol was pressed to Archer's temple courtesy of Francis Drake.

"I don't need a wish to control my destiny." Yukiko stated "I have what I need to control my future already. What I want now is to protect him and solve this mystery, nothing more, nothing less."

A massive enveloped Archer's entire right arm, Berserker held it tight ready to tear it off if need be.

"Could I still call myself a real man if I killed the guy who helped to accept myself for who I am?" Kanji asked "No matter how weird things got he was always there when I needed him. So if you're sayin that if I want everyone to accept me then I need to kill my best friend then SCREW THAT!"

A paper talisman lowing ready to go off was held right near Archer's head, Tamamo glaring fiercely at him.
"I don't need to explain myself to the likes of you." Rise said "But I'll never betray him, no matter what kind of offer I'm throwing away. Even if it means my life is ruined, I have what I need right here."

A copy of Bakuya was pressed to Archers' throat by Naoto who cut off his supply of Prana.

"My ideal world where justice prevails, that's something I do want." Naoto confessed "But getting it means I have spill the blood of an innocent and a friend to get it, then I'd rather just keep living in this world where sometimes justice doesn't win. I refuse to cross that line and become a criminal myself."

"Absurd, but if that's your decision." Archer banished his projected sword and held his hands up in surrender "I'll help out, but you might wind up regretting this later."

"I doubt that." Kanji remarked.

"We'll be fine." Rise agreed, the rest the team all speaking up in support.

"You're a strange kid." Archer said looking at Yu "To think someone in the modern era is capable of inspiring loyalty like this...I think I'll see you at the Throne of Heroes one day Yu Narukami."

With that Archer disappeared returning to Naoto's mind. The other Persona's followed one by one. But even so, the Counter Guardian was satisfied. A smile crossed his face as he stared at the smog chocked sky of the Blade Works. It seemed that, no matter the world, just like the bad ones, the small good things were still the same.

A few minutes later the other Persona's had finished explaining what they knew of the situation. The IT had sat down and were currently absorbing the information.

"Ok….so to summarize we're in the middle of a Holy Grail War?" Yosuke asked a hand on his face.

"And the killer is basically his own team and wants the wish too?" Yukiko continued.

"And to get it, he has to power up the Grail by sacrificing the eight of us?" Naoto finished.

"Yes." Gawain said with a nod of confirmation. "In a normal Holy Grail War, master's summon Heroic Spirits as Servants to fight in the Grail War, when Six Servants have died they are sacrificed to the Grail and the winning Master and Servant gets their wish, but that's not the case here."

"Yes, here as long as we help you triumph over the killer then all we Persona's will have our wishes granted." Diarmuid stated. "But if we fail we will not have them granted."

"So does that mean we have to sacrifice the killer to get this one wish?"

"No." Li Shuwen said. "The information we have from the Grail is that our team will have an alternate method of powering the Holy Grail. All we know is that it will be revealed when the mystery reaches its final stage."

"Oh man, we have more questions than answers." Yosuke groaned.

"I have a question, did the killer know we would be Persona users and is that why we were
targeted because we're the only ones who could be sacrificed to the Grail?" Naoto inquired.

"Unlikely." Archer said appearing before them. "I know for a fact that there is no magecraft in existence which can tell unawakened Persona users from regular humans. Even if it did exist at some point, I can guarantee that the knowledge is destroyed and the one who invented it is dead along with anyone who knew it as well."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that any Magus along with pretty much anyone else in Moonlight world who approaches a Persona user without permission is signing their own death warrant." Archer said bluntly "All I can tell you is that whatever protects you Persona users, it's not Counter Guardian. It's something far more powerful."

"Like what?"

"If I knew that I'd tell you."

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[October 10th, Aiya, South Shopping district, Inaba/

"Look We're here with the authority of the Mages Association, now tell us what we want to know, where are they?" A man demanded.

He and his partner were glaring Aika Nakamura who simply stared back at them from the restaurant.

"The Wizard Marshal warned everyone to stay away from here." Aika replied.

"For the last time our mission super secedes even his authority now tell us what we want to know."

The other demanded.

"You're going to die, you shouldn't have come here." With that Aika quickly slide the door shut in the faces.

"Why you-" The First man began to yell before he was cut off by his partner putting a hand on his shoulder.

"Enough we don't need her help, and she can't stop us we'll just search the town it's not large, so we'll find our two targets eventually."

"All we know is that one of them was in the hospital until recently when they were discharged, the other has been spotted around town."

"Alright lets-" he stopped talking, as both clearly heard the chiming of a church bell as if a funeral was occurring.

All of a sudden a sandstorm kicked up completely obscuring their view of the street they were on.

"What the hell?"

"A sandstorm?"

"Magus." A deep yet bone-chilling voice echoed despite the how loud the billowing sand was. "Thou hath trespassed where thou ought not."
"Who the hell are you?!"

"In accordance with the contract with he who flies upon blue wings, thy heads are forfeit." The voice told them is a matter-of-fact manner.

There was a shink, the sound of metal cutting through the air.

"W-wait-" The first mage barely had time to speak before his head fell from his shoulders. His partner cried out in fear before his head too was separated from its shoulders.

"Tis done. Know this young mage, so long as thou doest not trespass, though has nothing to fear from me. For now I depart."

With that the chiming of the bell stopped, and with it the sound of billowing sand. Aika, who had her back to the door released a breath she hadn't known she had been holding. She looked up and surveyed the empty restaurant. She felt something on her face and wiped it away, tears, born not of sorrow but sheer terror of what she had just experienced.

Eventually she found the courage to open the door. There was nothing, not a corpse, nor a drop of blood or a grain of sand. Nothing to indicate anyone had been there at all. Aika let out another breath, she'd contact the Wizard Marshal if he didn't know already, maybe now the Association would be smart enough to stay away.
To Become A Family

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Persona or Fate or anything in the nasuverse, any resemblance to any other Persona 4/Fate fan fiction is coincidental and plagiarism is not intended. No flames please, constructive criticism only.

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[October 11th, Dojima residence, Inaba/]

The next day rolled around quicker than Yu had expected. Currently, it was the evening and he was cooking dinner for everyone. As he cut into the prawn to remove the hard shell, he winced.

"What's wrong, Big Bro?" Nanako asked coming from her room.

"Nothing. Just need the first aid," Yu said reassuringly as he rummaged through a drawer for a first aid kit.

He pulled out a metal box, however instead of the first aid supplies within he found several random objects but partly beneath them was a picture of Uncle Dojima, Nanako and another woman. The three were sitting on a blanket for a picnic, Nanako was flashing a peace sign at the camera.

"Oh! That's a picture of Mom from our day of Samegawa! So that's where it went!" Nanako said, taking second.

"Did you lose it?" Yu asked.

"Uh-uh… "It's just… one day, Dad took all her pictures and put them all away."

"Really?" Yu asked.

"It was after the car accident," Nanako said looking down, though she was mostly looking at the picture. "When she died."

Yu gasped.

"It's sad." Then Nanako paused for a moment. "But I don't know much more than that because Daddy never talks about it."

"What do you think?" she asked looking at the picture again. "Can I keep this without him getting mad at me…?"

"Why don't I ask him for you?" Yu offered.

"Thank you!" Nanako said excitedly.

After this short back and forth Nanako found the first aid and put a Band-Aid on Yu's index finger.
"I feel bad," Nanako said as she placed the Band-Aid over the cut. "Dad's been so sad since he lost Mom."

"I know," Yu said in sympathy.

"But I still love him. A lot."

"Yeah. I think that he does!" Nanako said. And then she said, "And I…" Then she paused and blushed.

"What is it?" Yu asked.

"I love you too, Big Bro…" She said, only looking at Yu.

Later that evening, Dojima finally came home.

"I'm back…" he announced his presence as he fell onto the sofa.

"Um…" Yu said.

"Yeah? What's up?" Dojima asked him.

"Well," Yu said showing him the picture. "I came across this. It made Nanako really happy. I thought we could leave it out."

"I think right now you know her better than I do…" Dojima said regretfully "It's up to you."

"Daddy!" Nanako said happily. "You're home now!"

"Hey sweetie," he said trying to be kind. "What have you got there?"

"Well, you see… I have…" Nanako's tone was cautious as she was holding a paper in her hand. "I have this thing at school and…"

"What is it?" Dojima asked.

"My stomach hurts…" Nanako complained, dropping the paper and holding her stomach as her face twisted into discomfort.

"Are you okay?" Yu asked, concerned.

"Did you eat something you shouldn't have?" Dojima asked, concerned and getting down on one knee in front of her.

"My tummy feels stingy! It really hurts!" Nanako said, whimpering.

"Okay," Dojima said calmly. And then he said, slightly calmer as he thought of something. "Wait, haven't we been through this before? Did it feel like it did last time?"

"I'm not sure."

"Damn!" Dojima cursed. "Where did I put that medicine?"

Suddenly his work cell began ringing. "What?! Now of all times?!" He walked on the paper Nanako had been holding which was now on the floor. "Yeah, Dojima here. Adachi, I can't talk!"
Then Dojima paused as Adachi was saying something.

"What?" Dojima became very interested in what he was told. "A handwritten letter? For me? Is it from Ichihara? When did it arrive?!" Adachi clearly gave one of his poor excuses because Dojima quickly became angry "You forgot?! You freaking Moron! I'm on my way!"

"Daddy?!" Nanako said, still in pain and stunned.

"I'm heading out…" Dojima said in hanging up the phone and preparing to leave. "Yu, there… there should be some medicine in the first aid kit. Take care of her."

"But she's-!" Yu was cut off as Dojima left.

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"Are you feeling better?" Yu asked after giving her a glass of water in which he dissolved medicinal tablets.

"Kinda…" Nanako with a saddened tone.

The TV was on and there was a program about a baby penguin.

"And when he arrived, a heart-warming reunion with its father was waiting for him." The narrator said as a baby penguin leapt into its fathers' arms.

"Hey, Big Bro… I have a question," Nanako said. "Do you think Dad is my real father?"

"What?" Yu asked.

"It's weird…But I just have this feeling that sometimes I'm not his real daughter."

'Uh oh, looks like Dojima's behaviour is coming back to bite him in the ass.' Cu Chulainn commented.

'Indeed' Nursery Rhyme agreed 'If this goes on he won't have a relationship with his daughter at all.'

"Why's that?" Yu asked ignoring his Persona's running commentary on the situation, although they weren't wrong.

"Because, the way he acts, Daddy cares about the bad guys more than me. I'm sick and he rushed out and left me."

"Hey what's this?" Yu asked picking up a paper which he had spotted on the floor.

"That's mine. They passed it out at school today, the teacher told us to have our parent sign it." Nanako explained.

Yu looked at the paper. It was asking what time parents could observe their children from the twenty-fourth through the twenty-sixth.

"She said they should put down what time they could make it," Nanako said. "But Daddy won't come to it. When he can choose between me and work, he always picks work."

"Let's ask him when he gets back and see what he says," Yu said trying to cheer Nanako up.
It "Okay, good idea...I'm going to bed now. Good night!" Nanako got to her feet and bowing to Yu before leaving to go to bed.

[October 12th, Police Station, Inaba]

Yu had gone to the police station immediately after school had ended. His Uncle had requested a change of clothes. Apparently, he was going to be pulling another all-nighter. As he went to the office where Dojima was he heard his Uncle's frustrated voice yelling.

"Dumbass! I don't know won't cut it!" he yelled, "It's a detective's job to keep looking until he solves the case."

"Yeah ok sorry!" Adachi's voice replied apologetically as Yu entered.

"Adachi." He called out to the Jester.

"Oh, Yu." He greeted gathered up some papers off a desk.

"Is my uncle here?"

"No, he just stepped out but he should be back any second now, here have a seat." Adachi let out a long-suffering sigh. "Dojima never gives up, it's like he's always on the case, is he like that at home too?"

"What do you mean?" Yu asked curiously as he took a seat and set down the bag he had brought with him.

"He still isn't convinced that gamer kid's a serial murderer, so he's researching it on his own and on top of that he's going totally nutso over this recent hit-and-run case." Suddenly Adachi ran off. "Ohcrap! Backtoworkbacktowork!"

Yu turned around and saw it was his uncle.

"Well, we know why Adachi ran away." Cu Chulainn chuckled.

"Oh. Hey there." His Uncle greeted.

"Here. The change of clothes you asked for." Yu said standing up and handed his uncle the bag.

"Great, thanks a lot," Dojima said gratefully. Nothing was mentioned about the night before. Yu had figured that Dojima felt bad about the night before but didn't want to lose face. At least, that's what Yu hoped.

However, Yu took something out of his pocket.

"Oh, one more thing." It was a folded-up paper. "It's from Nanako."

"What is it?" Dojima asked, curious.

"They're doing a parent-teacher thing where you come to observe the class. They want to schedule you, but they need to know what time."

"Anytime is fine. I'll fill this out later." Dojima said glancing at the paper.
"Are you coming home tonight?" Yu asked.

"I doubt it." Dojima answered, "Is Nanako feeling any better?"

"I think finally recovered but…” Yu paused unsure how to proceed without pushing his Uncle too far.

"But what?" Dojima asked with concern.

"It's nothing, Uncle," Yu said, trying to whitewash his concerns about Dojima.

"Hey, you do have a minute?" Dojima asked.

[October 12th, Aiya's Chinese Restaurant, North Shopping District, Inaba]

Yu had accepted the olive branch Dojima had extended and followed him to Aiya's.

"Sorry for the wait…” Aika sighed tonelessly placing a beef bowl, some soup, vegetables and a glass of water in front of Dojima.

"I haven't had a bite since lunch," Dojima commented.

"And here's your seven to-go orders," Aika said to Yu, placing a large bag with seven boxes in it.

"Great. Thanks." Yu said gratefully.

Dojima reached into the bag he brought with him, then he pulled out a binder. "I've been meaning to tell you something for quite some time now. Chisato's car accident."

"What's this?" Yu said, taking the binder that was handed to him by Dojima.

"I got a call last night, it was from my old mentor Mr Ichihara." Dojima began explaining as he separated his chopsticks. "I'd asked him to look into her hit and run again and his results had come in. Check it out."

Yu opened the binder and started reading through it. There were pages of information pm the accident. Witness statements, what little there were. An official Medical examiner report.

"It was a white sedan, probably a large American car. No cars like that are registered here." Yu looked at Dojima. "We checked the records and no one junked or repaired a car like that. Then, last week a similar accident happened again. We're just getting started, but this investigation is critical."

"He believes it to be the same person that struck his wife. I can sense his desire for revenge," Jeanne Alter chuckled as Dojima started eating.

"Nanako doesn't seem to know it was a hit-and-run. Why didn't you tell her that?" Yu Dojima had been reaching for more beef with his chopsticks when he stopped, an intense look in his eyes.

"You weren't there!" Dojima snapped becoming defensive, but after a pause, he softened his tone. "It's hard. She was on her way to pick up Nanako when the guy hit her. It was a cold day. No one saw it happen. No one found her until it was too late. By the time word reached me, Nanako was still stuck at that preschool. Out there all by herself. She was all alone…Waiting for a parent who would never come."
"That explains it." Nursery Rhyme said, "He can't face her because he couldn't even catch her mother's killer."

"I could barely face her, much less tell her the truth." Then Dojima's face and tone hardened. "It's her father's job to catch criminals. But when it comes to this guy, I don't even have a scrap of a clue to go on. I will not rest until I catch this guy."

"But think of what it's doing to Nanako…" Yu said trying to steer him to his daughter.

"What do you mean?" Dojima asked taken aback by what he had said.

"You're so focused on this case, that even when she's sick…"

"She's the reason I'm doing this!" Dojima snapped.

Both males looked at each other, neither giving ground. Then Dojima said in a cold, quiet voice. "Mind your own damn business."

"Does this fool not realise that he won't have a relationship with his daughter if he keeps this up?" Atalante admonished.

"Yes, sir." Yu conceded deciding not to push Dojima any further.

[October 12th, Dojima residence, Inaba]

Yu finally came home after leaving Aiya's with the dinner for everyone Nanako and Yu from Aiya's.

"Big Bro. Where's that paper? Did Daddy fill out the form for me?" Nanako asked.

"Yeah, he said anytime is fine," Yu said kindly to Nanako.

"You mean it!" Nanako said excitedly. "Daddy's gonna come to school?! Yay! I'm so happy!"

"Yeah…" Nanako said happily, clapping her hands together. "It's our very first Parent-Teacher Conference! My friends said all of their parents are coming too!" Nanako was blushing with excitement.

"Oh! By the way…" Yu pulled out the picture of Nanako and her parents from his bag which he had framed for Nanako and gave to her. "Here."

"I thought you'd like it framed. Now all you need to do is find a place for it."

"Thank you," Nanako said smiling and hugging the picture close. "Hey, Big Bro? When you die and leave this world what happens?"

The question caused a most of his Peronae to fall into a stunned silence, notably, Jackie and Atalante.

"I blame Dojima for her asking that kind of question at this time." Cu Chulainn groused.

"Well, then you go to a place called Heaven," Yu told her, the conversation caused him to remember asking that priest where Alice had gone.
"Good, that's what I thought, so Mom went to Heaven didn't she?" Nanako said asking for confirmation.

"That's exactly where she went," Yu said with a smile. "And I bet she'll be watching your Parent-Teacher conference too."

"Yeah…" Nanako nodded. Then her face fell as she realized something. "When I die do you think that I will go to Heaven? Because if I did, then I could see Mom!"

"I don't think I care for where this conversation is headed," Atalante said a dark tone as the rest of his Personae remained silent.

Yu was quite taken aback at this statement.

"Well, that's a long way off from now."

"Okay…I really want to see Mom."

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[October 13th, Rooftop, Yasogami High, Inaba]

"There was an accident at Samegawa about a year ago. Could you look into it?" Yu asked Naoto.

"I could probably find a news clip about it right now," Naoto answered as she began searching the internet on her phone for anything. "Here, I think this is it…"

Naoto showed a webpage with a news clip that said: **Hit-and-Run near Samegawa - Woman Dies**

A woman walking home was struck and killed by a car while crossing the street near the Samegawa Flood Plain.

The driver appears to have fled the scene, and the police are treating the incident as a hit-and-run. She was later identified as local resident Chisato Dojima.

According to a statement from Inaba Station, the accident took place in the evening hours. As few people were in the area at the time, her body went undiscovered for some time.

No useful eyewitness accounts have yet been received. As the victim was a family member of an officer, the police are committed to conducting a thorough investigation and tracking down the culprit.

"It seems that the victim was a local woman named Chisato Dojima," Naoto stated.

"That woman was Nanako's mother," Yu explained causing the team to make noises of sympathy.

"Oh yeah, I kinda remember that poor Nanako, it was the talk of the town for a while," Yukiko said.

"So did the ever catch the guy?" Rise asked.

"Uh-uh…not that I remember," Yukiko replied shaking her head.
"According to this here, the case is open, they never solved it and apparently they have no clues to go on. This'll be hard for the police to solve."

"I know…"

"Oh man. That's so awful. I just wanna punch that creep."

"Tch. Nothing good ever comes from runnin'. Pussy!" Kanji snorted.

"I feel bad for your uncle," Yosuke said. "I mean the guy's a detective. This is gotta be eatin' him up inside."

"Yeah it is, it doesn't help that Nanako reminds him of his wife. Add to that the fact that he apparently can't face her because feels ashamed at not catching the guy and you've got a recipe for a really bad father-daughter relationship." Yu stated.

[October 13th, Dojima residence, Inaba]

The front door slid open. "I'm home…" Dojima said tiredly.

Nanako was excited. "Welcome back!" She ran over to the end table and stood in front of the framed picture. "Lookie, Lookie, Daddy. It's Mom's picture! I put it right there!"

"Great…" He sighed clearly unpleased with the picture being in plain view.

"Remember when we took this picture, Daddy? When we went to Samegawa?" Nanako asked clearly excited.

"Let's talk about it later, okay Nanako?" Dojima requested walking over to the sofa and sitting down.

"Okay…" she said quietly before sitting down. "Daddy? Remember my school thing?"

"Yeah, what about it?" Dojima asked closing his eyes to rest them.

"Well, um…where's the paper?" Nanako asked.

"The one I gave to you to sign yesterday," Yu elaborated.

"Oh, this thing." Dojima took the paper out of his pocket.

"You're sure anytime is okay?"

"Yeah, fine." He muttered in a tired voice. "But you should know I probably won't make it."

Nanako clearly looked hurt at this.

"I'm sorry, but I'm so busy I can't afford to take the time off," Dojima said apologetically.

"But you said you would!" Yu protested, feeling a spike of annoyance.

"It's okay," Nanako said quietly, her head down, tears forming in her eyes. All the adults looked at her. "You don't have to come. You have to work on a case. You have to find the bad guy." She was sobbing now. "You care more about those bad guys more than you care about me don't you?!
FINE! JUST FORGET IT!" she cried as she ran off to her room.

"Nanako! Wait!" Dojima said. Her door slammed as her response. "Perfect. What's gotten into her lately?" he asked, mostly to himself.

Yu was angry but said in as reasonable a tone as possible, "She was hoping you'd go to this. Now you've gone and disappointed her."

"I can't help it. I have to work," Dojima said with a tone of frustration and tiredness.

'Some mongrels require the direct approach, subtlety has failed, if the fool refuses to see then he must be made to see regardless of what he desires.' It was that voice again, one Yu didn't recognise, nevertheless, it had a point.

"Liar, you're using that as an excuse to run away and you know it!" Yu yelled a spike of anger pushing him forward.

"WHAT DO YOU KNOW?!" Dojima yelled punching Yu in the face.

"I KNOW PLENTY!" Yu answered Dojima's point and accented his point with a punch to Dojima's face in return, fortunately, Medea used magecraft to throttle back his increased strength, as such Dojima merely stumbled back instead of flying through the wall. "NANAKO WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO HAVING HER DAD AROUND TO IMPRESS HIM IN CLASS, AND YOU DISAPPOINTED HER, YOU'VE BROKEN HER HEART!"

"AND JUST WHAT THE HELL WOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT HER HEART?!" Dojima demanded as he punched Yu again in the face.

"MORE THAN YOU, SHE THINKS YOU CARE MORE ABOUT CRIMINALS THAN HER!" Yu returned a punch to Dojima on the word her to emphasise it. "YOU NEED TO FACE HER AND START BEING A FATHER."

"HOW AM I SUPPOSE TO FACE HER WHEN I CAN'T EVEN CATCH THE BASTARD WHO RAN OVER HER MOTHER!" Dojima thundered.

There was a great crash and both males were quickly on their backsides holding their foreheads. They both decided to head-butt each other at the exact same time.

It was then before Yu could retort that he saw Dojima looking to the side. He turned and noticed Nanako. She had come downstairs clearly hearing the noise.

"Nanako…" Dojima said, surprised.

"Well shit." Cu Chulainn deadpanned.

"Someone ran over mommy?" Nanako asked, honestly Yu would have been surprised if hadn't heard. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"Because you didn't need to know!" Dojima snapped his feelings still running high.

"Daddy, why are you mad at me? Why me? And how come you never listen to anything I say?! NEVER!" Nanako began to sob, tears streaming down her face, her emotions could no longer be held in. "You're a stupid daddy! Stupid! Stupid! Stupid!"

"Don't you talk to your father like that!" Dojima said, standing up, angry at her disrespect.
"Why shouldn't I?! It's not like you care about what happens to me anyway! I don't know what I did, but it's clear you hate me!" Nanako was far from done with letting her thoughts and feelings out. "You aren't real! It doesn't matter, because you aren't my real Dad!"

Dojima was deeply cut by what Nanako had said, he was so stunned that he was unable to stop Nanako as she ran out the door

"Nanako!" Yu yelled

"Why would you say that?!" Dojima yelled after her hurt and confused.

Yu moved to pursue her but by the time they were outside she had already vanished from sight.

"We'll take the shopping District and see if she went there," Yu said.

"Okay, and I'll see if she went to Junes. Let's hurry." Dojima urged him putting aside the feelings that had just been let out.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

Yu had checked everywhere Moel, Souzai Daigaku, The Shrine and even nearby houses, still, he could find no sign of her.

"Yu!" Dojima called running up to him. "Did you find her?"

"No. Nothing." Yu shook his head.

"Did she mention wanting to go anywhere lately? Anything you can think of?"

"….wait she asked whether she would go to Heaven when she died," Yu remembered.

Something clicked in Dojima's mind. "No…she wouldn't…"

Then a siren rang out. It was an ambulance, It turned left down the street towards….

"It's headed for Samegawa," Yu realised.

Horror crossed Dojima's face as he broke into a sprint, running as fast as he could towards Samegawa. Fear of what might have happened to Nanako spurred him to go faster.

'Nanako!' He thought with panic.

He flashed back to that day in Samegawa.

Chisato and Nanako were enjoying themselves by wading deep in the river, while he sat on the picnic blanket and watched them with a smile.

'Chisato, please! Protect her!' He prayed to the spirit of his wife.

'Protect Nanako!'

His pace got faster as images of Chisato's grave flashed in his mind.

'I'M BEGGING YOU!'

[-][-][-][-][-][-]
Yu eventually arrived at the Flood Plain.

"You found her, thank god." Yu let out a sigh of relief.

"I think you should go to her," Dojima said as Yu arrived.

"Listen, you're the family member she trusts the most right now. Chances are, she's more likely to listen to you than to me."

"No, you're wrong. She needs her father right now" Yu stated intently. "If you run away now you'll be pushing your daughter away for good this time. This your last chance to try and make things right again."

Dojima let out a sigh, before steeling his resolve and approaching his daughter.

"Daddy…" she said, she looked up when she heard someone approaching her.

"So this is where you've been," he said with a relieves tone.

"When Mom was still with us. You and me and Mom would come to this place to pick flowers. It was just the three of us." Nanako reminisced in a small voice, looking away from her father.

"It was…" Dojima said at the memory.

"Why, Mom?!" Nanako said, starting to cry again her tears falling into the river. "Tell me! Why did you have to leave me?! Daddy! I just want to see her so bad!"

Nanako's pain and tears finally penetrated the shell Dojima had created around his heart to protect himself all these years.

"Nanako…"

"I think sometimes you've forgotten about Mom!" Nanako sobbed. "You hid all her pictures and you never, ever talk about her!"

"Do you hate her now?! "

Dojima walked over to Nanako and knelt down to look at her. "You've got it all wrong."

"What have I done? Do you hate me too, now?!"

"Silly Goose…You know I could never hate you." He said stroking her head. "And I'm sorry I made you feel that way."

"Nanako, please forgive me," he pleaded, tears falling down from his face as he hugged his daughter.

[October 14th, Dojima residence, Inaba]

The next day Nanako and Yu were cooking together, moulding some Mochi.

"You know what, Big Bro?" Nanako spoke up. "You know how since Mom died, I've been kind of lonely? It got me thinking, maybe Dad's been lonely too."

"She's certainly matured to reach a conclusion like that hasn't she?" Gawain said.
"So I said I won't cry about it anymore. It's my job to cover for Mom now! So I'm gonna work hard so Daddy won't get lonely!" Nanako declared happily.

"That's nice of you, Nanako," Yu said sincerely.

"And you and I can work hard together."

"Great. Sounds like a plan."

"Oh yeah..." Nanako looked as if she had just remembered something and pulled out a picture. "I'm giving this to you." Yu saw that it was the family picture of Nanako, Dojima and Chisato having a picnic at the river.

"Dad made extra copies," Nanako told him. "Your family too so you should have a family picture. Let's get a picture of you, me and dad all together one day. I love you, big bro."

"I'm home," Dojima called as he came in.

As he entered Yu feigned a wince at the bruises on his cheek and forehead from yesterday. Yu himself wasn't really hurt due to his powers but it would be suspicious if he didn't at least feign some pain after his fight with Dojima.

"Daddy's back." Nanako gasped.

After he came in he had placed down a strawberry cake on the table. Everyone gathered around the table and waited until he made some coffee for himself and sat down.

"You know, I've been thinking. This is a special day for all of us." He said.

"Really?" Nanako asked.

"It is." Dojima nodded "It's the day when the three of us become one big family."

"What about before?" Nanako asked confused.

"Yeah, you've got a point," Dojima said sheepishly before losing his eyes taking a solemn tone. "Well then, today's the day we make it official."

"Okay..." Nanako said turning to Yu. "I'm really not sure what he's trying to say, but look we have cake, Big Bro."

"Yep." Then he noticed the cup in front of him "Uncle, this cup..."

"As of now, it's your cup. Please use it. It would make her happy."

Yu was surprised his Uncle would entrust him with the cup his wife Chisato had once used.

"I'll take good care of it," Yu promised.

"Oh, before I forget..." Dojima reached into his briefcase and pulled out a paper which he then gave to Nanako.

It was then, that Yu felt it, two more souls connected to him from beyond, tarot with the numbers V and VIII, Hierophant and Justice representing Dojima and Nanako respectively.

Upon unfolding it she saw that it was the form she had needed her Dad to sign.
"Any day is…something."

"It means; I'll be there any time they want. I promise."

"Well…dig in."

Everyone clapped and said, "Time to eat!"

"Families…go through a lot together… They laugh. They cry. They bicker. They're meant to share their whole long lives with each other. And well, it's a good thing." Dojima said.

"Uh-hm!" Nanako agreed happily.

"But unfortunately, I was trying to avoid that by chasing someone who had run away. And… you're the one who made me realize it. So, thanks for that," Dojima said to Yu gratefully.

"I did it because we're a family," Yu stated with a smile.

"I'm not gonna give up. I'll find the guy who hit your Mom. I promise," Dojima vowed to Nanako. "But I won't make that an excuse to stay away anymore. It'll just be a part of my job. You see, this isn't just any town. This is my town. It's the place where you and Nanako live. It's special to me and I will keep on protecting this place. As a Detective…and as a father."

"Daddy, you're cool!" Nanako said happily.
The School Festival

Chapter Notes

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[October 26th, Class 2-2, Yasogami High Inaba/

"Ok so in regards to what our class is doing for the Culture Festival is a Group Date Café." The male Class 2-2 Representative said.

"YOU'VE GOTTA BE FREAKIN' KIDDING ME!" Chie said, standing up from her desk, irate. "What the hell is a group date café, anyway? Whose idea was this?!"

"I effed up, man.... this was supposed to be a joke." Yosuke groaned laying his head down on the desk.

"YOU DID THIS?!!" Chie yelled at him.

"It's okay," Yukiko said, interlocked her hands beneath under her chin with a blush. "I've never been on a group date, so I thought it might be okay to give it a try."

"You actually voted for it?!" Chie asked, stunned that Yukiko of all people would vote for a group date cafe.

"I gotta say, I was curious myself..." one male student stated.

"I thought it was good for some laughs..." A female student confessed.

"This class is pathetic..." Chie said sweatdropping.

[-][-][-][-][-][-][-]

Later on, Chie and Yukiko noticed a bunch of girls crowded around the bulletin board.

"I can't believe people entered that beauty pageant." One girl said.

"They've got some guts getting up on stage." another commented.

Getting a closer look both Chie and Yukiko froze in anger and shock upon seeing the names on the entry list.

Miss Yasogami Pageant

Yasogami High Gym, 14:00, 30/10
Contestants are as follows:

Entry No. 1 Satonaka Chie

2. Amagi Yukiko

3. Kujikawa Rise

4. Shirogane Naoto

5. Kashiwagi Noriko

6. Ohtani Hanako

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

Upon gathering up on the rooftop, Yu and the others were treated to the sight of Chie kicking Yosuke into the fence.

"You signed our names up without asking first?!" Chie growled

"It seemed like a good idea…I mean, everyone's got a secret crush on Yukiko. Plus, we have an Idol and a Detective Prince…I just wanted to make sure our stars at school didn't get overlooked." Yosuke replied trying to defend his actions. "I did it with good intentions!"

"Then why did you put ME in the mix?!" She gasped and kicked Yosuke hard as she realised the reason. "I don't wanna be the comic relief!"

Yosuke was about to reply when he cried out.

"GHHHHHGGGAAA!" his hair stood out on end and he smoked a little bit before dropping to the ground. "AHH…. Dude what did you shock me for?!"

"Because…" Yu looked at Yosuke taking his hand off of the fence "Whenever you do something dumb Kanji and I are usually dragged along for the ride later when you get karma'd."

"That didn't seem like magic." Rise pointed out.

"GHHHHHGGGAAA!" his hair stood out on end and he smoked a little bit before dropping to the ground. "AHH…. Dude what did you shock me for?!"

"Because…" Yu looked at Yosuke taking his hand off of the fence "Whenever you do something dumb Kanji and I are usually dragged along for the ride later when you get karma'd."

"That didn't seem like magic." Rise pointed out.

"Indeed for it is no mere parlour trick!" A loud voice boomed making everyone save Yu to jump.

When they all looked they saw standing before the doorway was a tall handsome man with black hair and electric blue eyes. He had a black cloak draped over his shoulders and most prominently a gauntlet of some kind over his right hand.

"Greetings, under the Arcana of Magician in the Class of Archer I am NIKOLA TESLA!" The man boomed haughtily.

"Nikola Tesla!" Naoto's eye's widened "As in 'the' Nikola Tesla?"

"Er….who?" Yosuke asked

"He's a scientist, one of the greatest minds of the twentieth century, he pioneered AC or Alternating Current, electricity," Naoto explained. "Mark Twain dubbed him Professor Thunder and Lightning."

"Indeed, the Modern Prometheus, just as the ancient Prometheus brought fire to humans, I have
revealed Zeus' thunder to the world." Tesla declared proudly. "With your help, I shall advent of a new world in which interacting electric currents come and go in space itself and nothing can stop us! Save for a miscreant named Edison." He grumbled that last part.

"Cool…. Wait what about Semiramis?" Yosuke asked, "I thought she was The Magician?"

"Semiramis is gone," Yu said with a sigh.

"Indeed, the poisoner cancelled her contract which means she won't be getting her wish," Tesla stated with a shrug. "One of the rules of this war is that until our wish is granted by the Grail we have the right to bow out of the war. However our wish obviously won't be granted, but when it is granted we must stay as your Persona's until the end of your lives."

"But why would she do something like that?" Naoto wondered. "I'm sure she had one otherwise someone like her wouldn't have entered into this war, to begin with."

"Yeah, I think her wish was to live and rule forever," Yu stated.

"Something doesn't add up here," Naoto said rubbing her chin thoughtfully. "Someone like Semiramis just giving up on her wish just doesn't make sense."

The Team remained silent as the ominous mystery hung in the air. Something else to add to the pile of questions needing an answer.

[-][-][-][-][-][-][-]

[Soccer Field, Yasogami High, Inaba]

After lunch ended Yu had been asked by the coach of the soccer team to help out with the team's practice.

"You remember Narukami from the basketball team?" Kou asked introducing Yu.

"Yeah, thanks for helping out man. This festival has been killing us, a bunch of guys bailed."

Daisuke said.

"Well, what our class is doing for the festival is lame we're doing a freakin' play," Kou whined.

"Stop your whining, Hammy," Daisuke teased as Yu intercepted the ball with his stomach and began dribbling it up the pitch.

"C'mon, Narukami, SHOOT!"

"Where'd 'Hammy' come from?" Yu asked kicking the ball very hard, however it missed the net narrowly and hit someone.

[-][-][-][-][-][-][-]

Yu had been waiting outside the nurse's office when the girl he had accidentally hit with the ball came out. She was a short girl with very rosy cheeks and was carrying an instrument case.

"I'm sorry. Are you okay?" Yu asked seeing that the left of her forehead had a bandage on it.

"Yeah, I'm fine. It's no big deal. I promise" she said. "Please, don't worry about me."

She walked off, only to trip and fall on her face.
"Ow…that hurt," she said as both she and Yu sweatdropped.

[Samegawa Flood Plain, Inaba]

Yu felt bad and so had decided to help her out by carrying her trombone for her on her way to Samegawa.

"Thank you, but you didn't need to carry that for me." The girl reassured him her head now sporting a bandage on the right side of her forehead as well.

"It's alright," he told her. "So is this where you like to come and practice?"

"Yep! The culture festival is coming up so I gotta get ready."

She put the trombone to her mouth ready to play but paused when she noticed Yu was still there.

"As long as I'm here, I thought I'd hear you play something." He explained his presence.

"I'm not really good at, though…" she said, worried he'd be disappointed.

"Okay…" he said, not worrying about it being an issue.

"All right…here goes…"

Yu listened to her play, sure she could use some improvement but she wasn't terrible. After she stopped she looked at him and laughed sheepishly.

Yu introduced himself to her and learnt that her name was Ayane Matsunaga. After a few more tries at practising, getting a bit better each time she stopped.

"I wasn't supposed to be the one performing in the festival, the school symphony on has two trombone players, and the guy who's way better than me got hurt and now he can't do it," Ayane said as she and Yu sat on the steps leading down to the riverbank, watching the sun go down.

"Well, that kind of stuff happens," Yu said.

"I know I'm not a naturally talented musician, but…I really do love playing music. So I keep at it because I have this crazy dream…that I can make someone happy with a song."

"That's an awesome dream…" Yu said.

Ayane just chuckled at that. Then she said, "I'd better practice."

She stood up. "By the way, thanks for staying to listen to me. For some reason, my head feels better now."

Instead of leaving, Yu just looked at her.

"Aren't you leaving?" she asked pointedly.

"When you finally put on a good show then I will," he replied bluntly.

"For a nice guy, you're kind of a jerk," Ayane chuckled.
Two days later Yosuke came bursting into the classroom where everyone else was preparing decorations for the group date café.

"DAMN YOU CHIE!" Yosuke yelled.

"Problem?" Chie asked

"Hell yeah, there's a problem! What the eff! You entered me into a freakin' drag show?!"

"Oh, right. That…" Chie said with a devilish smirk on her face as she and Yukiko were making some curtains and decorations for the group Date Cafe. "Rise said it was important for all of us to have fun at the festival."

"That's one messed up version of 'fun'! A drag show, really?! I mean this is Crossdressing. CROSS DRESSING!"

"Maybe next time you'll think twice before signing me up for a beauty pageant!" Chie growled turning to glare at him.

Both of them grit their teeth and glared at each other.

"Wait, so why didn't you sign any of the other guys up?" Yosuke demanded

"Because you were the one who signed us all up, why should they take the fall because you're a dumbass?!" Chie asked

"You don't have a choice sempai, remember Kashiwagi is in charge of these events." Kanji pointed out.

"Aw, man might as well give my all." Yosuke groaned.

After classes, Yu met up with Rise at the Second Floor stairwell.

"Yosuke shouldn't worry about a thing, with us as his producer's I'm sure we can make a girl out of him." Rise said.

"All things considered, it shouldn't be too hard," Yu said with a smirk causing Rise to giggle.

"Hey! I heard Risette is entering this year's beauty pageant!" A male student said from below them.

"They went all out with the posters, too!" another guy said.

Rise growled as she saw the pageant poster featured her in one of her in one of her Idol costumes. Black stockings, pink skirt, sleeveless vest that was black in the front and pink in the back, white dress blouse with a pink bowtie that had a diamond brooch in the centre of the knot. She had her arm reaching out to the audience as she smiled, her right hand covered in a pink glove.

"I think everyone in Inaba's gonna turn out for this thing!"

"Why am I the focus of the poster?" Rise wondered as she Yu went to the ground floor and looked at the poster which prominently featured the idol. "I already said I didn't want to be the Idol Risette anymore."
"Don't worry about it." Yu said, "You are what you wish to be and nothing can change that without your consent."

[October 29th, Class 2-2, Yasogami High Inaba]

The Festival was in full swing. There various booths created by the various clubs showcasing their talents lining the hallways and outside. Various forms of entertainment, games or even small cafés had been set up to entertain the guests in the classrooms.

As for the Group Date Café. It had been a bust, no one turned up and It looked like no one was going to turn up so pretty much everyone ditched the event to go look around the rest of the school. Yu first stopped off at Kou's classroom to see the play, "Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet."

"Is it to be Romeo or to be Juliet?! That IS the question!" Kou said. He was wearing a long blue tunic with a small headband that had a feather in it and was holding a katana in its scabbard.

"He's Hamlet…" Yu said, not sure of how to react. "And a ham…"

"That's Hammy," Daisuke said, smiling and not surprised.

Yumi was behind them shaking her head. "Why did I agree to do this, I'm no longer part of Drama Club?"

Then there were two guys walking by. "Hey, I heard the school symphony's screwed this year…"

"Yeah, I guess the trombone player they've got sucks big time."

That caught Yu's attention so he decided to check in on the band. He went to the music room and heard Ayane bow in contrition to the club leader. "I'm sorry. I know I keep messing up!"

"I knew this was too much to ask of you…" the club leader said.

Then Yu saw someone walk past him at the doorway and gasped.

"Long time, no see…" the person said. It was the person who had gotten injured several weeks before that Ayane had replaced.

"Where's your cast?" The group's leader said.

The trombonist just laughed and said, "They took it off, just in time for our big concert for the Culture Festival!"

The leader looked awkward. "Yeah…about that…" He said as he looked at Ayane, who had her head down.

The trombonist looked puzzled and then looked at Ayane, understanding dawning on his face. "Oh right, gotcha…"

"I-I think you should play the Trombone for the concert!" A girl said to the returning trombonist.

"If she choked during the concert, we're screwed," The trumpet player who beat out Yu said. Yu was slightly irritated at the girl's bluntness. "Look, you're all thinking it. Admit it."

Ayane looked down and sad.
"I'll step down..." Ayane murmured.

Everyone was stunned. "Go ahead...take my part."

"Really? Are you sure?" the leader asked.

"Yeah..." Ayane said, putting her head up with a weak smile.

"I think you should let her play."

"I'm sorry, Narukami?" the leader was confused as to why Yu was speaking up like this. "You may not have been here every club session, but surely you've seen..."

"She's been practising every-!" Yu said before he was cut off by Ayane dragging him away by the hand, leaving the remaining band members confused.

Ayane had taken Yu to the walkway between the Practice Building and the Main Building. Then she let go of him and ran a little further while catching her breath.

"You sure you want to do this?" Yu asked. He wondered why she would give up...Especially as she wanted to play in the concert before.

Especially since he hadn't really paid attention to her in Band when he had joined.

But now Yu was confused that she would give up that dream. While he didn't pass by every day in Samegawa, every day that he did...she was there practising. He also paid attention to her trying in Club. He knew she was trying...but then her nerves would come in and ruin things.

"Yes. I can live with myself if I mess up, but I don't wanna screw it up for everyone else."

"Okay..." Yu said, not really knowing what else to say, but accepting that as an answer that was valid for her.

She smiled with her eyes closed. "It's just that I feel like such an idiot..."

And then the tears started falling as she started to cry.

She put her hands to her eyes and cried into the fists she made. "Here I thought, I was one step closer to making my dream come true...It's so frustrating..." she said as Yu gave her a tissue.

"Thanks for sticking up for me. It made me feel a whole lot better," she said. "I guess it's not a complete loss. I mean all that practising reinforced what I already know: I love playing music. So I'm gonna keep on playing." Then she sobbed again.

"And next time they'll ask you, you'll be great," he replied.

"Yeah, I know it's silly...I really have no reason to cry, but...I just can't make the tears stop falling."

Yu now knew why she was crying. And it was so obvious...No one else in the Music Room had her back. She had been practising hard for them to try to make this work. To live up to the responsibility fate had placed upon her.

And at the moment that fate decided to add a difficulty spike...Ayane decided to Quit because she didn't want to be a burden to them...even if the others fears were misplaced and she had played well...they would have been on edge.
So Ayane made a sacrifice…and while she didn't regret it…she was still saddened by her loss of a major opportunity and the lack of confidence her peers showed.

"Then come with me," Yu said.

"Where to?" Ayane asked through her tears.

"Let's check out the Festival…I hear it's pretty cool…" he said.

Yu smiled.

Yu took Ayane around the various booths. First, they had Yakisoba noodles. Then they checked out Classroom 1-2's Kabuki play. Then they checked out the Haunted House.

"That was so fun…Everything was so scary…" Ayane said.

"Hey, jerk." "Pardon me." Yu looked to see Marie and….Ruler?

Indeed, Marie was here at the festival standing next to Jeanne who was wearing a female school uniform. How was she here? Yu did not remember materialising her.

"My apologies but may we borrow him?" Jeanne asked politely "We're friends from out of town we were hoping he could show us around the festival."

"Oh uh…sure see you later senpai and thank you," Ayane said before cheerfully walking away.

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"So how are you here?" Yu asked Ruler as he walked with her and Marie around the festival. "I don't remember materialising you."

"Margaret came and asked me if I would mind showing Marie around the festival." Ruler replied cheerfully. "Margaret supplied me with even prana to stay materialised on my own. I was able to show her quite a few things before we spotted you."

Yu was rather disconcerted that this had all happened without him realising it. The fact that none of his other Persona had said anything meant they probably were not aware of it either.

"Hey, come on, let's go I want to see more," Marie demanded impatiently.

Yu nodded and the three began a tour around the culture festival. They played games which surprisingly Jeanne didn't do so well, while Marie aced them winning several top prizes much to the awe of some of the people who watched her play and the dismay of the people running the games.

Then they went to get some food from some of the vendors. Marie enjoyed many of the steak based food and snacks, while Jeanne was interested in sweets.

Eventually, their time came to end and as the festival began to close for the day. Yu and Ruler escorted Marie back to the shopping district where the door to the Velvet Room was.

"Hey, thank you," Marie said keeping a hold of her prizes. "It was fun, I'll cherish this memory." With that, she stepped through the ethereal door vanishing from sight.

"Well, that was fun." Ruler said cheerfully. "We never really had festivals in my time."
"Who'd thought it," Yu said, earning a confused look from Jeanne. "The famous Jeanne D'Arc has a sweet tooth." This caused her to blush.

"Yeah, you were really going all out on those sweets." Cu Chulainn commented with a chuckle appearing in spirit form along with Jeanne Alter.

"To think the other me is such a gluttonous pig." Jeanne Alter laughed. "I can't wait to spread the news." With that, both persona's vanished returning to Yu's soul.

"Hey wait come back here!" Ruler yelled indignantly with a cherry red face, she gave chase to the two as she vanished as well.

[October 30th, Dojima Residence, Inaba]

The next morning Yu woke up, did his morning routine and went downstairs to find Nanako already preparing breakfast.

"Umph…There! All Done!" Nanako said happily as he came downstairs. "Teacher says that you need to eat well in the morning. I just know how to make toast and cook eggs. So I made eggs sunny-side up and a rolled omelette!" Then she noticed the eggs in the pan. "The rolled omelette turned black."

"That's okay, Nanako …I can just scrape the blackened part off and eat the omelette," Yu said.

"No Big Bro!" she laughed. Then she said, "I heard the burnt parts are bad for you."

"Yes…they are really bad."

"But Dad likes it like that, so I always tell him he shouldn't eat it."

"Well, Itadakimasu!" Nanako said.

"The eggs are yummy! Chickens are amazing!" Nanako said happily.

Yu simply smiled.

Then the doorbell rang. "Huh? Someone's here?" Nanako said. Then she and Yu went to the door.

"Y-yo," Kanji said, nervously bowing.

"It's Kanji! Good morning!" Nanako said excitedly.

"Sorry to show up, this early in the morning, man. The old hag wouldn't shut up about me taking this to you," Kanji said. "I thought it'd be a pain to lug around school, so I brought it now. Uh… you don't want it, do ya?" he asked.

Kanji was holding a large bento box, looking embarrassed.

"Ooh!" Nanako said. "We're having breakfast now. Let's eat it!" Nanako said.

Kanji was surprised and blushed. "Huh? Uh, I don't know if you'd… like it, Nanako-chan… haha..." Kanji nervously laughed.

Then he spread out the dishes. There was Chikuzen-ni, Konbu-maki… And more simmered dishes.
But Kanji looked sheepish. "Sorry…it's all brown and stuff…"

Nanako disagreed. "It's great! Your Mom is a really good cook!"

That took Kanji by surprise. "Y-you think so?! C-cool, I'm glad to hear it!" Then he said with embarrassment, "Actually, I-I cooked part of that… It's, uh, that…that simmered one."

Nanako was surprised. "You can cook?" Then she said with awe. "You can make knit dolls too! You really can do anything!"

That caused Kanji to smile. But Nanako wasn't done yet, "When I get bigger, I want to be like you, Mist…Um, Kanji!"

"Mist…?", Yu asked.

"You just HAD to ask that part!" Kanji said.

Suddenly there was a musical tone coming from out of Yu's pocket, he reached in and withdrew his phone and answered the call.

"Hi-mom?" Yu was surprised, his parents hardly ever called him.

…. …

"Hold on, slow down." Yu tried to get her to slow down however she was not deterred and simply kept talking.

…. ……. ….

"Wait, what?"….! …!

"Email? My own good! Hey hold on just a sec-" Suddenly the phone let out the tone that indicated the call had been ended. Yu glared at his phone before locking it and putting it back in his pocket.

"Dude, what was that about?" Kanji asked with surprise.

Yu sighed and rubbed Nanako's head reassuringly.

"I'll tell you and the others later, it's kind of important."

"Are you gonna be ok big bro?" Nanako asked with worry.

"Yeah, everything is gonna be fine." Yu told her.

Suddenly the boys heard a sound like bells ringing. They looked at each other, puzzled and soon the sound stopped.

"Oh, you're going to be late Big Bro. There's a festival at school today, right?" Nanako asked.

But Kanji interrupted. "Whoa! Look at the time! Guess we'll have to use my secret passage."

"Secret passage?" Yu asked.

"There's a hole in the school fence. It's a shortcut that lets you avoid the teachers," Kanji explained.
Nanako was aghast. "Kanji! You're a delinquent!"

Kanji remembered Nanako was still there. "Ah crap!" he said, sheepishly running his hand over the back of his head.

"That's so cool!" Nanako finished.

"Cool..?!” Kanji said with a blush. "U-uhh, not really…"

Then he realised Yu was giving him a glare. "I mean, Senpai! C'mon. stop glarin' at me!"

"Nanako, will you and Uncle be at the Festival later?" Yu asked.

"Um-hm!" Nanako said with an excited bowing nod. "He said he was gonna got off early."

"Bye, Nanako!" Kanji said. Then he said, "Man, times like this I wish I had a sister like her."

The boys made their way to school.

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"Heh heh…And so it begins…" Kashiwagi said, chuckling with a hint of dark glee that the pageants were starting, first with the cross-dressing pageant.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! IT'S WHAT YOU'VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR! THE 'MISS' YASOGAMI PAGEANT! He was wearing a white tux without tails.

"Entry #1! This lively beauty is the heiress to Junes and has more heart than sodding brains. From Class 2-2 it's Hanamura Yosuke!"

The spotlight then lit up Yosuke he was dressed up in a white schoolgirl blouse, with a cream sleeveless sweater that had a red bowtie tied at the neck, red checkered skirt, white socks that to below his knees, black shoes. A few locks of his hair tied up in a slight, very high ponytail. He had blush and lip gloss on.

"H-Hi!" Yosuke said in a nervous, effeminate voice.

"Holy Crap!" a girl said.

"And I thought Yosuke-senpai would pull it off," another girl said.

"Dude, it's terrifying… I can just imagine someone like him sitting across from me on a train!" a guy said.

The video screen lit up with a large "WARNING!" in red, highlighted by lightning. Underneath it said, "New Challenger" In yellow as several smaller "Warnings" in red crawled in the background. "All right people, we have a new challenger! A last-minute sign-up. She says she's king of the TV world and she's one cute and sexy minx! It's Miss Teddie!"

The spotlight flashed on Teddie's human form. Everyone looked at him. He was skipping out in a blue dress with white socks and black shoes. He had on a blonde wig with a blue hairband that had a knot on top.

"My love!" he said, putting a finger to the side of his mouth in a girlish fashion, and moved the finger and made his hands look like he was holding a pistol, "is a WEAPON!"
Everybody cheered as they felt the impact of Teddie's "shot."

"She's so cute!" a girl said.

"She's totally awesome!" another girl said.

"I'd hit that…" a guy said.

"Oh, man," Yosuke said. "This can't be good."

"Hi, Everybody! It's me… Teddie!"

"Who did your makeup, Teddie?" Asked quickly.

"Nao-chan did! I wish to thank her beary much!"

Naoto was offstage, looking at Teddie, feeling self-conscious and self-consciously waving.

"We're tabulating your votes," On the video screen, there was a bar increasing as more votes were processed. There was also a percentage number that increased.

He then asked Kashiwagi, who replied this had never happened in the history of the school holding the cross-dancing pageant.

"LADIES and GENTLEMEN! We have the results and Kashiwagi-sensei has confirmed that what we have is unprecedented. The winner of the Cross-dressing pageant is… MISS TEDDIE!"

"I WON?!" Teddie said excitedly.

"It seems a lot of girls and several boys voted for you."

"And now…The prize for being the hottest girl is that both of you will be the judge for the REAL pageant,"

"You're just judging on our performance…if we're staying within the rules. It'd be unfair for the students to judge this pageant and not the other one. Which is too bad… Because I know you'd use your best judgment in deciding MY performance."

"Hm-hm-hm!" Teddie chuckled darkly. "I'm beary happy. That is why for the first time the Miss Yasogami Pageant will have a swimsuit competition."

"A swimsuit competition?!" Chie said.

"What is he thinking?!" Rise said.

"That bear needs to be disappeared," Yukiko said.

Kashiwagi started laughing. "My mature charms will win the day!" Then she calmed down a bit and said, "I brought my own swimsuit, of course."

"I brought my own too," Hanako said.

"What's with these people?!" Chie said, speaking for everyone in their group.

"H-Hey, l-let's not do this…" Yukiko said.

"What's that? Getting cold feet? Wise of you to back out of a fight you can't win," Kashiwagi said.
Then she said to Rise, "You call yourself an idol… But you're just jailbait with no brains, no guts, and especially no figure."

"What?!" Rise said.

"There's no way their type would be crowned Miss Inaba. Why not let them just back out?" Hanako said.

"Typical…"

Chie and Yukiko were becoming angry. "Oh, and I suppose you think you're going to take the crown?! You little… snoring pig!" Chie said.

Hanako laughed, "Snoring? What're you talking about? Your face is as foul as your mouth and your brain's as rotten to boot."

"We went through hell because of you…" Chie said. "Th-that's it! Now I'm PISSED!" Chie said.

"Oh? Are you gonna challenge me? It's useless… Don't waste your energy…" Then she paused for effect. "Let this be a warning to the others, too. You're going to lose. Now's your last chance to run away."

"Run away?! Why the hell would we run from someone like you?!" Chie said.

"Well… We did kinda run away last time…" Yukiko said.

"That's what I'm saying! We gotta stand our ground and get our revenge for that!" Chie replied. "How can we cower and hide when they're picking a fight?!"

"Y-yeah… We'll take you both down in one strike!" Yukiko said.

Kashiwagi chuckled. "Brave words… From a toothless lioness…"

Yukiko looked at Kashiwagi. "WHAT?!!"

"Let's face it…the only thing you have going for you is that your family owns a ryokan. Your looks and your brains may wow the sheep, but you don't have what it takes to be competitive…"

"All right! Let's begin!"

Meanwhile on the other side of the stage, looking out at the audience, Rise looked out and said, "This is so weird. I put posters up all over town and yet all I see are classmates."

"You wanted a big crowd? Is that it?" Yu, who changed back into his school uniform, said.

"It's okay, this is fine…” She said, trying to put a positive spin, yet not looking at Yu.

"SERIOUSLY?!!" A guy in the crowd said.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! IT'S NOW TIME FOR OUR MAIN EVENT! THE MISS YASOGAMI PAGEANT!"

Everyone cheered. Yu, Yosuke, and Kanji were in the audience.

"Our first contestant needs no introduction…as no introduction COULD do her justice. It's the Sensei from Class 2-2! Noriko Kashiwagi!"
There were many cheers. "Ohh…you love me…You really love me…" she said.

"Voting for me is voting for your future…" she said with false cheer.

"Thank you, Ms Kashiwagi. Our next contestant, from Class 2-1 is that beauty whose beauty knows no bounds and shows us that real women have curves. Ms Hanako Ohtani!"

Hanako came out to the stage. "Hey guys!" she said. She got some cheers, but not as many as Kashiwagi.

"Do you have anything to say to the audience?"

"Yeah! Vote for me! You could do worse!"

"The fun's beginning here, but it's not over yet! The judging continues! Can you hear the crowd go wild?!" The announcer said. "Now, for our next contestant, Ms Chie Satonaka of Class 2-2! Come on out, Chie!"

Chie came out in her winter casual outfit of a green winter jacket, white shirt grey striped shirt blue shirt combo, green shorts, and green boots. She was wearing her heart pendant.

"H-Hi! My name is Chie Satonaka!" she said, trying not to be nervous.

"Tell us a little bit about yourself."

"Um? I'm kinda shy and reserved…and I'd have to say my favourite food is…pudding…"

"You big liar! It's steak!" Yosuke yelled from the audience, causing Chie to groan and grimace.

"So, we have the shy, reserved type…nice to know that the standards haven't lost their averageness."

"Next up, another contestant from class 2, Ms Amagi Yukiko!"

Yukiko walked out in her red long-sleeved dress over her black shirt, black knee-high socks and black boots, and her red scarf with the pink and white trim on the end.

"H-Hello, my name is Amagi Yukiko," she said with a nervous smile. "Um, my family runs the Amagiya Inn. If you ever find yourself in the area, please give us a visit. Our hot springs are open to the public year-round, so whenever you're in the mood to enjoy them, please drop by…"

Everyone cheered.

"…A familiar face. From Class 1-2, it's Ms Rise Kujikawa!"

Rise stepped out. She was wearing her orange dress over her white turtleneck shirt, black stockings, and brown boots.

She looked out amongst the crowd and saw how excited they were to see Risette. Especially the guys.

Then she turned her microphone on and while waving both her hands, said. "Hi-hi! My name's Rise Kujikawa!"

A lot of people cheered. "I haven't been in town very long, but it's a great place and I'm 100% thrilled to be here! So sorry I'm not working as an Idol, but Risette is gonna do her best!"
There were a lot of cheers and Yukiko and Chie sweatdropped.

"I thought Rise-chan was Risette," Teddie said.

"The real Risette in the flesh! That was wonderful. Thank you Now...our last student contestant. Also in Class 1-2 it's the woman where the word 'mystery' is not only her hobby but applies to her as well, it's Ms Naoto Shirogane!"

Naoto walked out wearing her white Victorian shirt with the collar up, blue ribbon tie, blue waistcoat. Blue plaid pants and brown shoes over her dark grey socks. She wasn't wearing her beanie cap but was wearing blush of bashfulness.

"...I-I'm N-Naoto Shirogane."

Silence.

"It's hard to believe I'm up on a stage at a pageant like this..."

Naoto was disheartened...but she maintained her shy, polite attitude. "This is beyond my wildest imaginings... I-I really don't know what to say..."

"Wh-Whoa..." Kanji said after pondering upon her performance.

Then people cheered. Teddie continued, "Please keep in mind that if you anger me, you will be at a disadvantage..."

The girls on the IT sweatdropped. "For starters," Teddie said. "Ms Chie-chan, do you have a boyfriend?"

Chie blushed. "Wha-?! T-Teddie, you...!"

Moving on, Teddie said, "Miss Yuki-chan, have you ever smooched anyone before?"

Yukiko was embarrassed. "Huh...?! S-stop it!" she hissed.

Ignoring her and moving on, Teddie asked. "Ms Naoto, where are you ticklish?"

"I-I beg your pardon?" Naoto said with a blush.

"Ehem! I have more questions..." Teddie said. "Can I stay at your house next time, Rise-chan?"

"What kind of a question is that...?" Rise asked.

It went on like this for a while until finally, it advanced to the swimsuit portion of the contest.

Kashiwagi came out in a black one piece that was secured around her neck and black strappy heels.

"Hello..." she said, putting her hand on her hip and winking seductively. "It's best to start off with a woman."

Kashiwagi grumbled and took her place in the back. The other judges gave their more favourable scores to her, and so Kashiwagi averaged a 3.8.

Next came Hanako. She was in a pink bikini that had a slight tutu or skirt to it and was wearing red
heels. She tried to pose and wink the same way Kashiwagi had.

"I'm all woman, Senpai. Just remember that..." Hanako said.

Hanako ended up averaging a 2.8, however, these scores were only the judges' opinions, and had no effect on the actual voting.

Next came out Chie, wearing a green bikini with a #3 Button clipped to the waistband. (Kashiwagi and Hanako had #s 1 and 2, respectively.) She went up to the front and said, "Uh ha-ha-ha...hi..." nervously.

"OOOHhhhhh!" Yosuke said.

"You sound like a dirty old man..." Kanji said.

"He once WAS a dirty old man..." Yu said.

"Chie-senpai is cute, I will admit..." Kanji said.

The judges all gave Chie an average of 3.3.

Yukiko went up next. She wore a red bikini in the same style as Chie's green bikini, tied around the back. She spoke in her microphone, blushing.

"I'm... S-Sorry..." she said nervously.

"Oh, no...it's truly a pleasure..." Yu said, clasping his palms together and bowing.

"Why is she sorry for? This is totally great!" Yosuke said.

"Wow, Yukiko-senpai...She's exactly how I imagined she'd be in a pageant like this."

Then Rise came out in a bikini that used jagged stripes that were two shades of pink. She looked out at the audience. All the guys and Yuri girls were expecting her to say something. Hell, even her fans overall were expecting her to say something.

Finally, she set her eyes and knew what she had to do.

In her hand was a cordless microphone, so she said, pointing to the audience. "Hey there, it's me! Risette!" which brought the house down.

"Wow, Kanji, she is so awesome!" Yosuke said.

"Huh?" Kanji said.

The judges gave Rise an average of four.

"Next up! We have Naoto Shirogane!" Kanji gulped.

The spotlight popped on where she would be, but she wasn't there.

"Yeah, uh...I can't do this..." she said, blushing hard and looking down. She was wearing a blue bikini that was in the same style as Chie and Yukiko's.

"It'll just be for a few moments and then you can put your yukata back on."

"Sorry..." she said,
Naoto shook her head. "Show us your stuff!" he said in the microphone.

"I'd love to, but I'm not feeling well…" she said as she left the wings to go backstage.

"Our first dropout!". She had been reluctant most of the way on this and so it was no surprise that her nerves got the better of her.

The judges gave her a zero.

"Oh well, Kanji, sucks for you, huh?" Yosuke said.

"Yeah, but she tried her best and in the end that's what matters," Kanji said, smiling now that all of his things were straightened out anyway.

"Great. Now wipe your nose," Yosuke said as Kanji's nose was bleeding.

"Heh, Shirogane's leaving is fine by me. The fewer rivals I have to crush, the better," Kashiwagi said.

"So, Partner, who are you going to vote for?" Yosuke asked Yu.

Yu considered his options. On the one hand, there was Chie, who managed to rock in her bikini… but her lie about her favourite food hurt her. He did think Yukiko was quite attractive as well, but she was too nervous. As much as he wanted to vote for Naoto, he doubted she'd get much more than a few sympathy votes.

"And now, we have the results. The envelope, please?"

The announcer received an envelope on a pillow that in kanji script that said, "#1 Girl."

"Anyway, the winner of the Miss Yasogami pageant is…and I had nothing to do with it, for the record." The spotlight was moving back and forth. "NAOTO SHIROGANE!"

Everyone was stunned. Rise gasped in surprise.

"Her androgynous charm seems to have won most of the girls' hearts. Now I'd like to give her the award, but it seems she stepped outside…"

"Naoto won and she didn't even finish? That Rocks!" Chie said as she laughed along with Yukiko.

Kashiwagi looked incensed.

"Grr…How could I lose a BEAUTY PAGEANT?!" Kashiwagi growled incensed

"Ms Kashiwagi…I can't believe this…” Hanako said, starting to cry.

"Neither can I! Oh Hanako, I know how you feel!" Kashiwagi said as they both hugged to give each other solace.

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[October 30th, Class 1-1 Yasogami High, Inaba/]

With the beauty pageant out of the way, the team decided to go back to the empty classroom 1-1.

"Well, at least that's over." Yosuke sighed leaning down on the table.
"Maybe that'll teach you to stop pulling stupid shit senpai," Kanji said leaning back on his chair.

"Well the festivals not over yet, there are still some more events before it ends." Naoto pointed out before noticing Yu giving her a strange look. "What is it?"

"Naoto can you bring out Archer for me? And Rise can you set up a bounded field to keep people out?"

"Sure," Both girls said confused with the request.

Rise with Casters help erected the bounded field and the red cloaked Archer appeared in a swirl of blue flame.

"What do you need?" he asked gruffly.

"I awakened a new Persona under the Death Arcana recently, he's an Assassin and well…. He wants to talk to you." Yu told him. "It seemed kinda personal."

"Alright bring him out." Archer shrugged without concern.

"Come on guys lets give them some space," Yu said standing up and leading the team out of the room. When he was the last one Yu summoned the card and crushed it before leaving and shutting the door behind him.

From a swirl, of blue flames appeared the Assassin question. He was wearing a red hooded cloak with bandages covering his face completely concealing his identity.

"So what is it you wanted to talk about?" Archer asked the Assassin who stared at him in silence for a few seconds.

Then he undid the bandages concealing his face and pulled down the red hood Archer's eyes widened. Even with the White hair and tanned skin from the overuse of his Timer Alter magecraft, he knew this man, this Assassin. It was impossible to mistake him for anyone else. This was Kiritsugu Emiya, the magus killer, the man that he, Shirou Emiya had called father.

"Shirou I-" Kiritsugu was cut off as a reinforced fist ploughed into his face, sending him crashing through desks and into the wall where he fell onto his behind, thankfully the wall wasn't too damaged but the cracks were visible.

"Damn you Kiritsugu Emiya" Archer spat his name like a curse at the man who looked up at him from his position, mild surprise on his otherwise emotionless face, tears rolling down Archer's cheeks. "Damn you to hell, you infected me with this ideal, the ideal of being a hero, it's like a disease, one that infected me completely."

Assassin used the wall as a support to slowly get to his feet, before meeting Archer's eyes once again.

"When I was a child, I wanted to be a superhero," Archer said the phrase in a way that he mock emulated Kiritsugu's own voice. "Everything about my past life burnt up in those flames, my memories any family, you were all I had, so naturally I was going to try and emulate you when you said words like that, I wanted to live up to the ideal you weren't able to accomplish yourself. Everything I have is borrowed, fake. These ideals, even my humanity is something I got from observing others and how they reacted!"

Kiritsugu remained silent, watching as Archer's feelings, which had been held in his soul for so
many years poured out from the doorway of his heart.

"It was inevitable I suppose," Archer said wiping the tears from his face. "I learnt about you as I pursued this path, the man feared as the Magus Killer. At first, I denied it, that this Magus Killer was the same man I knew, the one I looked up to was this murderer, this pragmatist who didn't just dip his hands in blood but took a fucking swan dive into it!"

"One to save ten, ten to save a hundred, a hundred to save a thousand." Kiritsugu said simply "It's the most efficient way to save as many as possible. Sacrificing the few for the many, saving everyone is impossible, a fantasy."

"Fool! How was I to even conceive of that! I had no dreams of my own, no life goals, only you and that stupid ideal of a Hero of Justice, a stupid dream, an ideal that can only betray you as it did to me!" Archer yelled furiously "In life, I was a machine listlessly moving forward and emulating the humans around me and in death, I became nothing but a killing machine fighting against my own ideals time and time again."

"I know that no words I speak can change anything." Kiritsugu finally said moving towards Archer "To me, you were a symbol of hope that allowed me to believe that I hadn't abandoned everything for nothing, because I was still able to save one person at least. I should never have taught you magecraft, never passed on the ideal of a 'hero of justice'. My actions have trapped you in this endless cycle of bloodshed and war along with me, there is nothing I can do to atone or express how sorry I am for what I did to you. When I see a solution, I take it no matter how bloody it is, but you, you see the bloody option and try to find alternatives even if it is the best option, the way I see it, you came closer to being a hero of justice than I ever thought possible."

Kiritsugu found himself tacked to the ground, receiving another punch to the face. Archer had one hand holding his front while his fist punched again, but Kiritsugu did nothing to stop him, as each punch grew consecutively weaker as the Archer's tears flowed from his eyes quicker and quicker until finally, the punching petered out, with Archer's sobbing becoming the only sound in the room.

[-][-][-][-][-][-][-]

With the group date café being a for the entire festival Yu, Chie, Yosuke and Yukiko had lots of free time and wandered around as a team after Archer and Assassin had concluded their business. Neither feeling very chatty about it and no one respectfully inquired.

Suddenly the whole team found themselves startled, all of a sudden they looked at their surroundings and found themselves in a hallway near the stairwell.

"Hey, how did we get here?" Chie asked the question that was on everyone's minds.

"Yeah, we were walking around the festival looking up some stuff together." Yosuke said, "But I don't remember coming here."

Yu looked around and saw behind them an empty space, he swore that was where Margaret had her fortune telling booth, so why was it gone? Had she closed up and returned to the Velvet Room early?

"Hey, what's that your holding senpai?" Kanji asked pointing to Yu who was surprised to see himself holding a box of some kind with a horn protruding out of it.

"That's a phonograph cylinder." Naoto stated. "It's a device for recording and reproducing sound, this model looks like the kind invented by Edison."
"Clearly trash then." Tesla grumbled. "it's probably useless which is just as well, we don't need anything invented by that DC obsessed fool."

"Hey, there's a note." Chie picked up the piece of paper which was attached to it."Let's see, to Yu Narukami and his friends, this device is a one-of-a-kind one use mystic code type device which is capable of restoring lost memories, specifically those which were lost due to corrections of distortions in time. There may however be side effects to please use it in a safe place. Signed E T E…. who the hell is ETE?"

"And what should we do with this thing?" Yosuke asked.

"Should we turn it on?" Teddy put in.

"I say we do it maybe tomorrow after school," Yu suggested before breathing in and out deeply before setting the device down on the ground. "I kinda have something important to tell you all."

Noting their leader's serious tone they all fell silent and paid attention.

"Well, I have good news and well other news."

"So what's the good news?" Yosuke asked.

"The good news is my stay in Inaba's been extended, I'll be staying in town until the end of May next year," Yu told them with a smile.

This got a round of cheers from some of the group, Naoto however while pleased wasn't too cheerful.

"And what's the other news?" She asked bluntly.

"Well, my parents called and then emailed me more details, they arranged a marriage for me so I'm now engaged."

"WHAT?!"

[|-|-|-|-|-|-]

AN: Cliff hangers amrite? To be honest I'm not happy with his chapter but I really wanted to get it done and as such the quality has suffered for which I apologise.
[October 30th, Class 2-2, Yasogami High, Inaba]

"Aannnd done!" Chie said, putting the last desk in place and slumping down over it. "Oohhh! I'm spent…"

"Okay, cool. Well, that's over with…" Yosuke said, looking pleased everything was back to normal. "You guys wanna grab a bite?"

"Great!" Rise said, clapping her hands together. "The Prince of Junes treats, right?"

"Yeah, keep dreaming." Yosuke said giving her a 'no way' look. "Actually, since you guys won the pageants, you should treat us." He looked at Teddie as he said that.

"You cad! You can't ask a bear maiden like me to pay! Don't make me shoot you with my love!" Teddie said.

"And don't call yourself a maiden…" Yosuke retorted.

"Well, calling it a day right now would blow, wouldn't it…?" Chie said to Yu.

"It sure would," Yu replied.

"Big Bro!" Nanako cried as she walked into the room with Dojima in tow.

"Hi Nanako, did you have fun at the school festival?" Yu asked.

"Um-hm!" Nanako replied. "I got Yakisoba noodles cup. I even got to dance and see a haunted house and a fortune teller!"

"Uh oh." Cu Chulainn gulped.

"What-? You saw the fortune teller?"
"Yeah, and the fortune lady knew you."

"She said you were a man… manly…" Nanako said, trying to recall what the fortune lady said.

"She was strange. Forget it," Yu said not liking where this was going.

"Manwhore!" Nanako said as it occurred to her. Everyone was stunned. "She said that you were a manwhore!"

"Ouch." Cu Chullain said in a hurt tone.

"Ahem!" Dojima interrupted with a loud cough. "I need to be at the Prefectural office early tomorrow morning, so I'm heading out and hitting the sack early tonight. Can you keep an eye on Nanako for me?"

"Sure, no problem," Yu said as Nanako ran over to him.

"I appreciate it," Dojima said as he turned to leave before halting. "Oh, Shirogane can I talk to you?"

"Of course Dojima, what is it?" She asked as Dojima came and spoke to her about something in hushed whispers.

After a few moments, they separated and Dojima began walking off.

"if you have any insights about that can you please call me?" He requested walking off.

"Night, Daddy…" Nanako said, waving goodbye to her dad.

"Night…" he said, raising his arm in response.

"Well, we'd better head home…" Yu said.

"What?!" Rise said, disappointed. "Don't tell me you're leaving already!"

"We should be leaving…" Yu said politely, trying to put a positive spin and ending things for the day too soon.

"Big Bro Yu, I don't wanna be a problem. I'll be fine alone," Nanako said, believing she had interrupted some time that for Yu and his friends only.

"It's okay…" Yu said, ruffling Nanako's hair slightly.

"No, Nanako, I didn't mean it like that!" Rise said. "You're never a problem."

"Hey, Nanako," Yukiko knelt to be eye level with Nanako, "How would you like to stay with me tonight?"

"What did you say?!" Teddie cried.

"How would you like to stay at the Inn tonight?" Yukiko repeated her offer trying to Nanako.

"Party at the Inn!" Rise said.

"You cool with that, Senpai?" Kanji said.

Yukiko was taken aback, realising she may have stepped into something. "Huh? Actually, I was…"
"Sweet!" Yosuke said, double high-fiving Rise. "We're staying at the inn, Dude!"

"I only meant-!" Yukiko was cut off by Teddie jumping into the conversation.

"Can I hard boil eggs in the hot springs?!" Teddie asked.

"Very well, then. I should probably tell my Grampa…" Naoto began dialling her grandfather to inform him of what was happening.

Yukiko sweat dropped and then tried to object but stopped when Nanako spoke up.

"It's a slumber party!" Nanako said happily.

"Well, I guess it is now, Are you up for it?" Yukiko asked with a smile.

"Can I?" Nanako asked.

"Sure."

"Yay! We're all spending the night!" Nanako cried joyfully.

"All right! Well, I'd better go home and pick up a few things!"

"Let's continue this party at the Amagi Inn!"

"YEAH!" Everyone said, raising their fists in the air, except for Naoto who was talking to her grandfather.

"I'll swing by home first and then I'll…" she said.

[October 30th, Amagi Inn, Inaba]

"Thanks for having us!" Everyone said in unison.

Yukiko wasn't with them, as they were already at the Inn.

"You're most welcome," Ms Amagi said, bowing towards them.

"We'll all be staying tonight," Chie said.

"Sorry we're such a large group," Yu said apologetically

"It's fine," Ms Amagi said, reassuringly. "We've been expecting you."

"Oh, hey guys," Yukiko said, walking up to them.

"Wow!" Teddie said. "You're like the blistering hot lady of the steamy hot springs!"

"Actually, I'm just a waitress," Yukiko explained with a smile before looking at Nanako. "Do you mind, Nanako? I have a huge party to look after." Indeed, Yukiko was not dressed in her casual clothes like the others, or even in her pink Kimono. She was dressed much like her mother, Blue Yukata with a maroon obi, that had pink trim and no adornments on her hair.

"No, I don't mind at all," Nanako answered not bothered at all.
"It's okay, Yuki. Don't worry about that big party. I can look after them. Join your friends."

"Are you sure you're okay with that? They're a handful." Yukiko asked.

"I'll be fine, now go on." Ms Amagi shooed her daughter away.

"Come on guys I'll show you all to your rooms," Yukiko said leading them down a hall.

"You know," Rise hung back to talk to Yu. "Yukiko is sorta cool like this."

[Male guest room, Amagi Inn, Inaba].

The room the boys had been given was quite spacious considering there were only four guys. There was a cabinet, a dining table, an entertainment area with a TV and a phone. A small shrine area with a framed photograph was there. There were doors leading to a closet that was now a sleeping area and the dining area as well.

"So they're not gonna put us all in one room?" Teddie asked.

"Of course not!" Yosuke said impatiently.

"I wouldn't care if they were closer, but they're beary far away…" Teddie complained as he began rolling on the ground.

"This place looks pretty packed tonight, I bet that's why they put the girls on a different floor," Yosuke stated as he sat facing Kanji at a table.

"Poopy-poopy…" Teddie continued complained as he began rolling the other way.

"You know, man, it's been crazy how many times we've slept under the same roof the past six months."

"The tent, the hotel, and now the inn, too," Yu said swirling a cup of green tea in his hand like it was a glass of wine.

Yu had changed into a white and blue-striped evening Yukata, with a light blue robe over it. He was barefoot as well.

"Dude…You can't just go around acting like this is your room…" Yosuke said.

"Excuse me," Everyone turned to the door and saw Yukiko kneeling there. "I just wanted to let you all know your dinner is ready.

[Male guest room, Amagi Inn, Inaba].

With dinner finished, Yukiko's mother lead Nanako away to keep her entertained while the group talked business Yukiko finally could join with her work done for the evening. Rise set up a bounded field to keep people from listening and everyone focused on their leader.

"Alright, so now that we're alone can you please tell what the hell's up with this arranged marriage?" Kanji asked impatiently.

"Hey Naoto, isn't there anything we could do about this?" Rise asked the detective.
"I'm afraid not," Naoto replied negatively shaking her head. "His parents have legal authority over him until he's twenty, there's nothing we can do."

"Well do you at least know her name?" Chie asked.

"Yeah, Olga. Olga Marie Animusphere." Yu revealed to them with a sigh.

"Animusphere, I've heard of them," Yukiko said putting a finger to her chin. "They're one of the top ten families in the Clock Tower they're responsible for the Astronomy Faculty."

"That's true," Archer stated materialising leant against the wall. "But how do you know that?"

Yukiko gained a look of shock on her face before looking downcast.

"I guess considering everything it's fine if I tell you, I've already slipped up any," Yukiko said with a sad tone.

"Yukiko?" Chie was concerned for her close friend.

"You see, a long time ago the Amagi's used to be a mage family who specialised in summoning. However, within the last few generations, our magic circuits began to atrophy at a rapid rate, even bringing in fresh blood did nothing to stop it." Yukiko explained before taking a breath and continuing. "My great grandfather on my mother's side was the last real mage in our family. We were the Second Owners of the land we owned which included what is now Okina city before we sold it off to the government and then we passed on Second Ownership of Inaba to the Nakamura family who we had good relations with and they've been administering Supernatural activity in the town ever since."

"You mean Aika's a mage?" Chie asked astounded.

"Yes. I know I should have told you all, but I'm just so used to keeping this a secret that I guess I forgot I'm sorry." Yukiko apologised bowing her head shamefully.

"Hey relax its cool we understand right guys?" Chie looked to everyone for support,

Everyone voiced their understanding nodding and giving her reassurance.

"Back on topic, so do your parents know that this Olga is some bigshot mage?" Yosuke asked.

"Yup, that's the best part apparently my parents don't work for the government that was a lie, they work for the Holy Church," Yu revealed piquing Archer's interest. "Apparently the Animusphere family is working on some secret project and needed some help from the Church and family has been negotiating with them and recently I became a piece in these negotiations to give the Church a stake in this project."

"Wait, as in the Catholic church?" Yosuke asked.

"Yup that's them," Archer spoke up. "They mostly hunt heretical Magi and Dead apostles it's a surprise that they'd work with a mage family on any project considering they and Association hate each other's guts."

"I'm sorry, I know that the Church and Mages Association hate each other, but what is a Dead Apostle?" Yukiko asked confused.

"Hmm…. You don't know? they're vampires." Archer told her with a raised eyebrow. "True
"I fought many Phantasmal Beasts in life," Gawain said materialising. "And I have never heard nor seen any being like a vampire or heard of Dead Apostles or True Ancestors."

"Nor I," Diarmuid stated.

These statements caused Archer to look at both of them strangely which earnt him strange looks in return.

"Well… anyway. Naoto do you remember getting us to have those tests at the hospital?" Yu asked changing the subject.

"Yes," Naoto said cautiously.

"Well the Church has been watching us since the beginning, they know about the Holy Grail and have been keeping an eye on us. So when we went to the hospital for those tests they did some tests of their own without us knowing." Yu told them seriously "According to my parents, we all have developed magic circuits. I don't know about the rest of you but I didn't have them before now I have them, high amount and quality too which is how I became my parent's bargaining chip."

"We all have magic circuits now? But how?" Yukiko asked. "I was tested for them at birth just in case and I definitely didn't have them. Before."

"Caster." Rise called her Persona who appeared with a serious look on her face. "Can you check me for magic circuits?"

"Of course master." With that caster set to work closing her eyes and placing a finger upon the back of Rise's neck. A few seconds ticked by before the fox-eared woman opened her eyes again this time with a confused look upon her face. She took her finger off Rise's neck who shivered slightly as if cold. "That's strange, the magic circuits are definitely dormant and unused, but I feel the supply of Prana from with my master. But if the circuits are dormant where has that power been coming from?"

"You couldn't tell?" Rise asked with concern.

"No, when I tried to trace the source of the prana I was getting it was like trying to grab smoke, it just kept slipping through my fingers so to speak." Caster replied with a shrug.

"Ugh, more questions and no answers, just what's going on here anyway?" Yosuke asked with a groan.

"I'm bear-y confused," Teddie said with a downcast look.

The group was all silent the confusion keeping anyone from saying anything until they all heard a buzzing noise coming from Naoto. She pulled out her phone which was vibrating.

"Sorry." She apologised looking over her phone and tapping it a couple of times before looking astonished. "So quickly? That was fast."

"What was?" Chie inquired as curious as everyone else was.

"Ah, remember when Dojima took me aside earlier? Well apparently, he wanted me on standby because there had been another murder." She quickly cut off any questions. "Not related to our killer. The victim recently awoke from a coma in the hospital, he was placed there by one Shuji
Ikutski, who worked for the Kirijo Group but apparently committed suicide in November of two thousand nine. His name was Sho Minazuki and he was killed by a gunshot to the head and his body was found just off the trail in the forest. But it seems they've caught the killers already and they've already confessed."

"Wait they confessed just like that?" Kanji voiced everyone's confusion. "Why would they confess so easily?"

"Well apparently they were remnants of a doomsday cult, you know the one that got big early last year?"

"Oh yeah, I remember them," Yosuke said. "They fell apart when their 'fall' didn't happen and their messiah Takaya Sakaki disappeared right?"

"Correct. Apparently, Shuji Ikutski was important to them somehow and this was just cleaning up after him." Naoto told them.

"Sheesh, what's happening to this town?" Yosuke asked with worry.

"Well, there's at least one mystery we can solve." Yu changed the subject once again revealing the strange phonograph device from earlier.

"It's that thing, are we gonna use it?" Chie asked looking to everyone.

"We were given it for a reason," Naoto said seriously. "I think it's time we found out why."

Yu looked to everyone before activating the phonograph. The record was clearly spinning but no sound was coming out it. Just then all of them heal their heads as a splitting pain forced them to the ground. The pain grew worse and worse and just as it felt like their heads were about to split open darkness took the team.

[-]-[-][-][-][-][-]

*It passed by like watching a movie. Yet it was all real.*

…

*Being trapped in that school. Meeting Rei and Zen.*

…

*Dodging the FOE's.*

*Fighting the Queen of Hearts. Meeting SEES for the first time.*

…* Exploring the other labyrinths and getting to know their fellow Persona users.*

*Meeting Blavatsky and Edison.*

…*

*Having fun at the festival.*

*Seeing Rei get taken by the Clockwork God.*

*Finding out Zen was actually Chronos an avatar of Death.*
Confronting the Clockwork God.

Watching Edison, Blavatsky and Tesla make the device to restore their memories.

Leaving it all behind.

[-][-][-][-][-][-][-]
The whole team groaned as they woke up.

"Ah, my head."

"Did anyone get the number of that bus?"

"My brain feels like its gonna explode."

They all crawled back to their sitting positions dizzy from the experience. Yu looked and watched the Phonograph crumble to dust. It's function now used up.

"I remember it all now," Yukiko said rubbing her head. "SEES, the labyrinths. Rei and Zen."

"What happened to Arisato and the others?" Yosuke asked.

"I've seen Yukari she plays the Pink Ranger in Featherman," Chie said.

"But I have some bad news," Naoto said. "Shinjiro and Arisato are both dead."

Everyone gasped at this news.

"Shinjiro was murdered in Two thousand and nine, while Arisato died of heart failure in twenty ten. I read about both in the news but dismissed it at the time." Naoto continued "But knowing what I know now they have to be related to the Dark Hour."

"I guess SEES ended the Dark Hour for good, but it cost him everything," Chie said sadly.

"I remember Mitsuru told us, that the Kirijo's and Nanjo's stopped pursuing magecraft and the Root." Yukiko said "That's how the Kirijo's were able to get away with experimenting with Personas and Shadows without bringing the Grand Servants down on them. The Grands only intervene to protect Persona users if the Supernatural world threatens them like Mages."

"We need to know more," Yu said. "We could use the wish to bring back Minato but we need context, there might be more to his death than we know."

The team all thought carefully about this before there was a knock upon the door. Rise took down the bounded field and Yukiko's mother opened the door.

"Mom? What's wrong?" Yukiko said seriously.

"They're here again…Those TV producer guys…" Ms Amagi said.

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Everyone decided to follow Yukiko but stayed indoors and watched the scene from inside.

"I've already said we're not interested…" Yukiko said with annoyance to the TV producer whom she was confronting.
She was wearing her regular pink kimono that she wore when she was working or running an errand at the Inn. She decided to make things look official when she turned them down for the third time.

"I'd drop the attitude if I were you…" the host said. "…Heiress to a doomed and cursed inn,"

"Doomed and Cursed," she repeated hollowly.

"Everybody knows, this was the in that Mayumi Yamano stayed in before she was killed and strung upside down." The host said.

"You've lost customers because of that haven't you?" one of the goons said.

"It makes an awesome angle for a tv show." The producer said "One girl's battle to save her families cursed and doomed inn. Good right?"

"I don't find it interesting at all," Yukiko said closing her eyes to keep her anger in.

"I'd love to have you starring in the lead role." The host pushed on getting close to Yukiko "We can do a few steamy scenes's with you in the hot springs. Waddya say?"

"I'm not interested."

"Do you know what you're passing up?" the producer exclaimed, "Just think of all the exposure the inn's gonna get with this!"

"Don't you wanna see this place succeed?" the goon in white asked.

"You're a smart girl I expect you to make a smart decision." The producer said, "Right now traditional inn just means old."

"With nasty food in tiny portions." The goon in white added.

"You've gotta learn to sell yourse-

"ENOUGH SCOUNDRELS!" A voice boomed cutting into the conversation.

They all looked and standing atop the producer's van was a familiar looking vigilante.

"Harassing young women for your own twisted desires is beyond despicable!" he declared his mask shining in the moonlight. "Whenever people need help I will be there for I am. SPACE SAMURAI Y!" The man promptly struck a ridiculous pose like a cheesy superhero from an American comic book.

"Got off our van you lunatic!" The producer yelled. "We're just trying to make TV here!"

"I can see through you clear as day scoundrel!" The vigilante yelled back "You are nothing but a simple pervert!" he then stomped the roof. "Now prepare for just-woah!"

Suddenly the van began slowly moving. It began picking up speed as it approached the hill which leads down from the Inn, where it began going faster.

"Oh shit, hey get back here!" The producer yelled as he and his crew began chasing their vehicle.

"Ha this will teach you not to park properly!" The vigilante cried back victoriously "OW! owowowowowow!" he then began smacking his on the branches of the trees which hung just above
the roof of the van, snapping them all with his head he did so.

Then van picked up more speed with the crew chasing behind and out of sight. Yukiko couldn't stop herself and burst out laughing at the sight. Returning inside she eventually got her laughter under control.

"Hey." She looked at Yu when she sure no one was around to hear them. "Thanks but I had it under control.

"I know, I just couldn't resist." He said with a smile.

"Well, you should be a bit more careful." She said picking a leaf and some twigs out of his hair and tossing them through an open window.

Hidden away elsewhere Semiramis and her new comrade were talking.

"Well, it seems your chosen master is dead." She pointed out. "It seems your plan is ruined."

"Not quite." The other person said. "This is a setback, but I suppose I'll have to do it myself."

"You will become the master?" Semiramis questions sceptically. "Can a servant like yourself even become a Persona user?"

"You find that with my patron, anything is possible, plus servants are human too technically."

"Well, at least one problem is dealt with," Semiramis said looking down at the fading body of Passionlip, who had been stabbed through the heart multiple times. Blood was leaking out of her mouth and pool on the ground joining the much larger puddle producer by the fatal wounds in her heart.

"Sen…pai." She called out weakly before fading away into motes of golden dust.

"We only need to be patient. The path to the Holy Grail will only open in the last stages of this war. Then we can take it for ourselves and begin our own war."

Chapter End Notes

AN: So yes. Dead Apostles and True Ancestors are not a thing on this world. And ORT isn't on Earth either. A cyber cookie to anyone who can guess why. Also for why Zelretch is still a Dead Apostle the fact that he's Zelretch should be enough of a reason.
Don't Save Anymore

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Persona or Fate or anything in the nasuverse, any resemblance to any other Persona 4/Fate fan fiction is coincidental and plagiarism is not intended. No flames please, constructive criticism only.

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[4th November, Junes, Inaba]

"I watched the Midnight Channel last night as agreed upon," Naoto said. "To think that a master of deduction and evidence would strain her eyes over an urban legend to this extent…"

"Could any of you tell who it was?"

"Yeah, from a fuzzy picture like that? No way could anyone tell who it is," Kanji snorted.

"How about the regular TV? Has anyone become famous around here lately?" Yukiko asked.

"I can't think of any offhand…" Naoto said. "I suppose there was that politician who visited to quell the rumours of the fog. His statement was read on TV. But the chances of him being the next victim are slim. He returned immediately to Tokyo after."

"Hmmmm…" Teddie said, lost in thought had a frown on his face.

"Hm? What's the matter…?" Yosuke said. Then he remembered. "Oh yeah, they stuck you with the midnight shift for falling asleep on the beds in Housewares. I told you to use the TV in the Electronics Department, right? Did you remember to check it out?"

"How rude! I made a promise with Nanako and I'm serious about living!" Teddie yelled before becoming serious again. "From what I saw… wasn't the person on the TV pretty small?"

"I dunno… It was too blurry to make out any details, including how tall or short they were." Chie commented. "It was probably just a dream or your imagination. Either way, though, did you sense anyone in that world?"

"Nope. No one's come so far," Teddie answered

"Then we might have to wait one more night and see…" Rise sighed.

"Yeah, I guess so…" Yosuke said reluctantly backing down from his deduction. "Good thing it looks like the rain will keep up all night. Don't forget to check again later on."

"Senpai about that girl called Marie…" Naoto began before being interrupted by the loud cries of a man.
Everyone looked just in time to see a man trip and crash into Yosuke spilling a large drink all over both of them as they both went to the ground.

"Ah jeez, sorry about that." The man groaned unhappily.

"It's ok, it happens." Yosuke groaned equally unhappy.

"Man, my luck sucks." Both of them said in unison.

The man had fluffy light red hair tied up in a ponytail. His eyes were green and he was wearing a lab coat outfit, with white trousers, boots and even a pair of gloves on his hands.

"You too?" Yosuke asked as he picked himself up and even helped the guy up.

"Yeah, I'm here looking for someone because my I pissed off my boss somehow." The man sighed "She even forced me to use my vacation days, she said 'just use your vacation days and do something useful for once you slacker'"

"Sheesh, and I thought I had it rough at work. But being forced to use your vacation for work…" Yosuke said with empath while nodding his head. "Anyway, I'm Yosuke Hanamura."

"Oh right, sorry. I'm Romani. Romani Archaman." He greeted a little bit more cheerfully. "You can call me Doctor Roman or Roman if you like."

"Doctor. I told you not to wander off." A familiar monotone voice said. The source of which was Aika Nakamura.

"Sorry, Aika but I heard but about the food court here and wanted to try it," Romani said apologetically.

"Well, you found him quickly at least," Aika said pointing at Yu.

"Wait, you're Yu Narukami?" Romani asked excitedly.

"Yeah, that's me," Yu confirmed.

"Sweet, at least some of my luck must be changing." Romani cheered.

"Alright, so what the hell do you want him for?" Kanji asked fixing Romani with a glare which caused him to freeze.

"Yukiko told you about me being the Second Owner right?" Aika said more than she asked. "We need to go to the restaurant so we can talk 'business'."

"How'd you know that?" Chie asked suspiciously.

"Oh, Aika's family keeps watch over the Inn just in case," Yukiko explained waving off Chie's concerns.

With no further reason to stay everyone stood up and followed Aika out fo the Junes Food Court and to Aiya's.

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As soon as they filed into the restaurant they saw that it was empty. Aika's father flipped the sign to closed and shut the door, locking it for good measure.
Everyone took seats. Yu, Romani, Yosuke, Rise and Naoto were sat the bar. While Teddie, Kanji, Chie and Yukiko were sat some tables nearby. The Nakamura's had activated the buildings bounded field for good measure.

"Ok, so like I said my name is Doctor Romani Archaman. I'm the head of the medical department for the Chaldea Security Organization."

"I've never heard of such an Organisation before," Naoto stated keeping her eyes on the Doctor.

"Yeah, that's because Chaldea is a secret organization dedicated to the preservation of the human race. With the intellectual and financial resources of the world behind us, we work by blending Magecraft and Technology to achieve some pretty cool stuff." Romani explained. "We use Masters to summon Heroic Spirits as Servants to try and resolve issues that might lead to the extinction of the human race."

"Wait, wait that's a lot to take in a once. Servants?" Yosuke paused before he got a look of realisation on his face. "Did you say extinction?!"

"Relax, we observe the future and if there's a threat to mankind's survival we intervene to resolve the problem," Romani explained as he began eating a bowl of noodles. "Far as I know there's nothing to worry about right now. So we're just recruiting masters. You guys know what masters and Servants are right?"

"Yes, Archer gave us the rundown," Naoto confirmed. "But why do you need servants?"

"Well, that saves me some time." Romani mumbled "Well, in order to affect humanity's future you have power beyond normal humans and servants are the easiest way to resolve those problems mostly because Servants are way more powerful than humans and can with things that normal humans, even Mages can't. Our summoning system called FATE is similar to the one used by the Holy Grail but different so it has fewer restrictions than the Holy Grail."

"Ok, so why did you want to talk to Senpai for?" Kanji demanded impatiently.

"Well, remember my boss sent me here?" Romani asked. "She's Chaldea's director. She took over after her father who founded the organisation committed suicide. Kinda weird, he fought a Holy Grail war back in two thousand and four just to get the funds he needed to found the organisation. Man the director was distraught when she found him if it wasn't for Lev I think she'd have fallen apart."

"He fought a Holy Grail so he could get what he needed to fund an organisation with such a lofty goal only to commit suicide?" Naoto stated rubbing her chin thoughtfully and narrowing her eyes.

"You think he was murdered?" Yu asked her knowing what she was thinking.

"It's only theory since I don't know the details." Naoto admitted, "But it definitely seems like a possibility."

"But who'd wanna murder the director and why?" Romani wondered aloud pausing in the consumption of his noodles.

"Well, who is the current director?" Naoto inquired.

"Oh, right, she's your fiancé to be Olga Marie Animusphere," Romani stated pointing at Yu.

"It's not a coincidence is it," Yu said,
"Nope," Romani answered with a pop on the end of the nope. "You see the Holy Church had one the seven contracts which compels Atlas Academy to help whoever holds it and the Church let us borrow theirs in return for a stake in Chaldea. We needed a way to shield Chaldea form the Mages Association in case something ever happened to Marisbury the former director and Olga the current director. Because they were both Chaldea's owners if they died everything would be left in limbo, but if someone important enough to the church got married to her then ownership would transfer to them and thus give the Church the stake wanted, in this case, you. The Association won't risk war with the Church over Chaldea."

"So that's what this was all about." Yu sighed slightly annoyed.

"Yeah, it was really lucky that you got tested in the hospital last month or so," Romani stated. "You developing Magic Circuits was just what the director needed to kill two birds with one stone."

"Wait, we got tested in the hospital?" Chie wondered.

"Yeah, I told you about my parents having people in the hospital remember," Yu told her. "They did it when Naoto wanted us to get that check-up. So if they're working with Chaldea it's not that surprising."

"Right, also do you remember having a blood test done before coming to town?" Romani asked blowing on some noodles which were particularly hot.

"Yeah, how'd you about that?"

"Well, it was a test to check if you had any master affinity," Romani explained through the noodles he was eating. "These negotiations between Chaldea and the Church have been going on for years now. Master Affinity is needed to contract with servants under Chaldea's FATE system."

"So I was a pawn to them even before now," Yu said with rare annoyance. He'd never really gotten along with parents this was a new low for them especially considering the arranged marriage.

The room was silent for a moment. Romani gave an awkward laugh before continuing.

"You see, when we first checked your master affinity before you came here, you have zero affinity. So we passed you over. But since the examination method isn't foolproof its policy to double check. So when we got round to double checking you suddenly had a one hundred per cent affinity for becoming a master. So naturally, we sent recruiters out to find you and talk to you."

"But they died." Aika suddenly put in causing everyone to jump.

Romani thumped his chest as he suddenly began choking on his noodles. Fortunately, he was able to swallow them.

"They were killed?" Naoto inquired now curious. "Come to think of it, I did notice a pair of men in black suits heading to the shopping district a couple of months ago, but I was busy with the case so I didn't really take notice."

"I tried to warn them to leave, but they refused to listen," Aika stated shuddering at the memory. "Then 'he' came and killed them both. The Grand Assassin."

"Well, that explains it after we lost contact with the recruiters. The Director let out a loud scream." Romani told them. "Everyone heard it, turns out their heads had been put her desk with a warning not to interfere attached to one of them."
"Woah." "Sheesh." "Brutal." "That's gross." "I'm gonna have nightmares." "Grizzly"

"Ok, so back on topic, the Director sent me here to get a feel of what kind of person you are," Romani stated. "I have degree's in psychology and stuff so she thinks I might be able to get a good read on what kind of person you are. She wants to know if you and she can live amicably at least or if she'll have to take…..measures, to protect herself."

"Well she doesn't need to worry about that," Yu stated, he may not like having to marry this girl but there was no reason for him to take it out on her, his parents were the only ones to blame.

"Well, I'm glad to hear that, the director may be stern but I think she's also got a vulnerable side if you know what I mean."

"So what else can you tell us?" Naoto inquired.

"Well, most of its classified because the rest you don't have master affinity, which is kinda weird given the circumstances. But I'll tell you what I can." Romani replied.

So the questioning of Doctor Roman began. Some fears and suspicions were allayed, but not all.

Eventually, the team ended the meeting with Doctor Roman following Yukiko back to the Amagi Inn where he'd rented a room for a while. He'd given everyone his number before he left.

"I'm beginning to realize now that I'm looking at this case differently than everyone else does," Naoto said.

"What would make you think that?" Yu asked.

"I realise now that the first thing I should have been concerned about upon learning about that letter was securing your safety. But I wasn't… so how can I call myself your friend, when my top priority feel like I am what Rise accused me of in July…just playing a game," Naoto said with regret.

"I don't see it that way," Yu said before pausing, suddenly a sensation came over like he had been submerged in water. In the back of his head, there seemed to be a single point of heat.

There was suddenly a loud sound in his ears, like the flapping wings of hundreds of birds. It grew louder and louder until.

"….was still dormant within me…I wasn't considering the things that I should have. The people who care about me, as well as my own self…The detective, the child, the woman… The "me" who existed before them…I am… simply myself. I'm glad to have met you…"

Thou art I…and I am thou…

Thou hast established a genuine bond…

These genuine bonds…shall be your eyes to see the truth.

We bestow upon thee the ability to create Norn, the ultimate form of the Fortune Arcana…

He had completed Naoto's social link? But how? What was going on here? The bond had indeed grown tighter but how could Yu not recall what he said? Indeed the sun did seem much lower than
before, had he been talking the detective princess so long? But why could he not recall such an important conversation?

"See you later Senpai," Naoto said splitting off to walk home, leaving Yu slightly stunned at what had just happened.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

[4th November, Dojima residence, Inaba]

Later on when Yu arrived home he had gotten into a conversation with Nanako about buying a new Kotatsu, to be honest Yu was only half into the conversation he was still concerned about the fact that he'd been able to hold an entire conversation with Naoto and have no memory of it like the time had been stolen from him. So felt a small relief when he heard the front the door opening.

"It looks like Daddy's home now. Welcome back da-!" The little girl paused her greeting at the serious look on his face.

"This was in the mailbox it's for you," Dojima said, handing an envelope he had been holding to Yu.

"Thank you…" Yu said.

He looked at it and saw why his Uncle was concerned…there was no return address, To Yu Narukami was written on the front of the envelope.

Yu looked at his uncle who gave him an intense stare. It seemed he was far too curious about this letter to just let it go. With no other options, he opened it, though he had a suspicion of what it contained.

On the letter were the words, If you don't stop this time someone close will be put in and killed.

"Why don't you tell me a little more about this?" Dojima commanded after reading the letter over his shoulder.

Yu looked worried at his uncle and then looked at Nanako, who gave a small gasp of worry and was clutching her jumper with both hands, and then he looked back at his uncle.

"All right, if you'd like to talk somewhere else, that's fine." Dojima said sternly "We'll be back later…"

"But, Daddy…" Nanako said.

"It's ok we're just going out for a little talk," Dojima told her putting his hand on her shoulder reassuringly.

"Just sit tight, we'll be back," Yu said reassuringly as he joined his uncle.

"Okay… I'll be waiting," she said.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]

[4th November, Interrogation room number 2, Inaba police station, Inaba]

"Look, I think of you as a member of my own family. For that reason, I probably should have done this a whole lot sooner."
"Look, Uncle…" Yu began.

"You're gonna tell me everything, starting with what you're involved in right now" Dojima cut him off with a stern tone. "To how you got in this mess. Not start talking!" he demanded.

Things had gotten serious now, Yu could not think of any lie that his uncle would believe so seeing no other option he decided to go with the truth, though he had a feeling Dojima would not buy a word of it.

"O-okay. Listen, I also think of you like family, so fine, I'll come clean. I'll tell you everything I know."

"Good to hear…" Dojima said, his face still looking stern.

Yu paused for a second on how to phrase it.

"You're right, we are involved in this case… but well…once people have been kidnapped, we rescue them. We do it by going in the TV."

"'Go inside a TV?'" he repeated with disbelief.

"Exactly," Yu said. "There are these Shadow things and we fight them using Personas and-"

Dojima suddenly slammed his fist on to the desk, normally Yu would have jumped but he had other things on his mind.

"Look, I know I'm never gonna be your real father, but I thought I had earned enough of your trust to tell me the truth. Guess I was wrong…" Dojima stated with a disappointed tone not even bothering to look at Yu.

"Uncle, there's a TV in here I can prove to you what I'm-!" Yu said as he started to stand up. If he showed his Uncle and Adachi his ability it would definitely make them believe.

"SIT DOWN!" Dojima yelled,

Yu did as he was told, he felt there was no choice right now, Dojima and Adachi would hold him down or even handcuff him if he kept trying.

Then his uncle stood up.

"Take this to the Lab," he ordered Adachi handing him the envelope and heading to the door.

"Uncle, please!" Yu said, stood trying to reason with uncle again.

"You're staying here for tonight," Dojima told him as he left the room.

Yu sat down sighed.

"Hey, it's okay," Adachi said. "That's just Dojima's way of showing he's concerned about you. You know what I mean, tough love and all that stuff…"

Adachi nervously laughed as Yu didn't look at him. Yu felt like he failed.

"Well, uh…" Adachi laughed even more uncomfortable. "I'll just be outside this door. If you need anything just give me a holler okay?"
Adachi left the room and closed the door. Yu sat there in the dark. His phone had been taken away by Dojima when they'd gotten there so he could not call anyone.

Suddenly the unplugged TV nearby crackled to life. Yu stood up and walked over to it and gasped at what he saw. There was a clear image of Nanako on the screen.

"Nanako," Yu called out the name of the young girl on screen.

[4th November, Road to Dojima residence, Inaba, Japan]

Naoto was hurrying, she'd called a taxi to take her straight to the Dojima residence as soon as she'd seen Nanako on the Midnight Channel. She was currently on the phone to a panicking Chie.

"Wasn't that Nanako on the Midnight Channel just now?!" Chie said, panicked. "How could it be her…?!"

"I know what you're thinking, but, Nanako does fit the pattern. She wasn't seen…but she was heard."

"What?!" Chie cried.

"Do you remember the politician who visited a local school, and made the news several times? In those interviews, he always quoted a student and spoke very highly of her. The child became well-known while remaining anonymous… That girl was Nanako! A reporter who took interest in this story dug a little deeper and released her photo and interview using her real name in tonight's evening paper. This is a small rural town. Her identity must have been circulating for some time."

"I should have realized it much sooner… But I was hung up on the idea of people who were 'shown' on TV… It didn't occur to me that this would qualify…"

"I'm on my way there now, but Chie you mentioned that in the past that the image only became clearer after the victim had been put in the TV." Naoto reminded her ominously.

"I'm here I'll find out, apparently, Yosuke is on the way to the police station with Kanji and Teddie. He tried calling Yu's cellphone and the landline but got no response." Naoto told her "Kanji said he saw Dojima driving Yu in his car in the direction of the police station."

"Alright, I'll join them right away! And I'll let Yukiko and Rise know!" Chie said before ending the call.

The cab came to stop, Naoto paid the driver and stepped, she was surprised by the sheer thickness of the fog. Walking closer to the house she saw that the front door was open and a white van was parked out front with its back doors open. Naoto thought she could see a few shapes inside the van but ran inside.

"Nanako, Nanako are you here?"

A spark of realisation struck Naoto so she quickly got back into the waiting taxi and ordered him to take her to the police station. She quickly began calling again, she had to tell Dojima and the others as quickly as possible.
4th November, Interrogation room 2, Inaba Police Station, Inaba

"Please, Uncle! Let me out of here! Is anyone there?!" Yu said in a panic, banging on the door with both fists. "C'mon Adachi! Open the door!" No response, even though Yu had been pounding for a few minutes. "Dammit! She's in danger! I have to help Nanako!"

He could easily simply smash the door to bits with his powers but doing so would draw undue attention and no doubt get him into even more trouble.

"Hey! You can't go in there!" Yu heard Adachi say.

"Uhh!" Kanji said. "Enough outta you!" Yu heard Adachi yelp.

"Grizzly! Grizzly!" Teddie yelled.

"Don't open that door!" Dojima ordered.

Yosuke suddenly burst through the door. Yu was surprised, Especially seeing Kanji had Adachi in a headlock.

"Yu!" Yosuke said.

"Hey! What's going on?!" Yu asked with surprise.

"WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?!" Dojima demanded pushing past them and getting into the room "What are you punks doing here?!"

"It's Nanako. She's gone missing!" Yosuke said to Yu causing both him and Dojima gasp.

"What do you mean 'missing'?"

"Here… Let Naoto explain. She's been to your house."

"Shirogane?! You there? What the hell's going on?!" Dojima demanded.

"I'm at your house right now. The front door was open and Nanako isn't here. I believe out killer has her, surely you must have known, Dojima The case isn't over yet!"

In frustration, he tossed Yosuke's phone on the desk, pulled out his own cell and dialled another number.

"This is the KJ Customer Service Center. The number you have dialled is unavailable right now. The phone may be switched off or is outside the service area."

"Nanako…" Dojima said his daughters name as he put his cellphone away.

"Dojima…" Adachi said, having extricated himself from Kanji.

"Is this true?" Dojima asked Yu. "Has Nanako really been…?"

"I'm… I'm afraid so, Uncle…" Yu said, trying to maintain his calm.

"Why?! Why Nanako?!"

"It's because that politician was at her school and the evening paper…" Yosuke said.

Dojima quickly pressed a button on the desk phone.
"W-what are you doing?!" Adachi asked.

"Traffic Division, Ohta Speaking." The on-duty officer answered.

"There's been a kidnapping! Get your men on it immediately! Start with checkpoints! Along the highway!"

"Checkpoints!? Umm, could you explain the situation a little more—"

"Quit griping and get to it! The victim's a seven-year-old girl...My daughter!"

"Your daughter? Wait...What about the scene? What makes you think this is a kidnapping?"

"Th-That's...Look, this could be connected to that multiple murder case!"

"Connected...? But we caught the killer. How long has she been missing? Have you received any notices or ransom letters?"

"N-No, but...Dammit, there's no time for this right now!"

"Um, a-alright...I'll try contacting each of the departments..."

"Even if you tell 'em this is connected to the murders, we can't prove it." Adachi pointed out "And everyone on the force thinks this case is over and done with...Wh-Where are you going!?"

"I'm gonna look for my daughter," Dojima answered getting his jacket on. "If this is connected to that murder case, the top brass won't accept the facts until it's too late. I'm not gonna wait for those clowns!

"But do you even have any ideas or leads on who took her!? If they used a car, there's no way-"

"Shut up! That's why I'm hurrying!" Dojima yelled before running off.

"Augh, Dojima's run off half-cocked, now what am I gonna do?" Adachi griped.

"Adachi we'll go look for her, too! So please...let him go!" Yosuke begged.

"Huh? You know I can't..." Adachi was cut off as Rise, Chie, Yukiko and Naoto burst into the room.

"So what's going on!?!" Chie yelled.

"Hey if I let all you guys in here then I'll be in trouble" Adachi whined. "Besides, we don't even know if this thing's—"

"Quit your bitching! Now ain't the time for that shit! The hell are we sitting here for when this guy's family's in danger!? You gonna own up if something happens!? Huh!?!"

"Kanji!" Naoto silenced the boy.

"I know how you feel, but if you don't tell me what's going on, there's really nothing I can do..." Adachi told them

"Ah, so you agree to release him once we explain the situation? Very well, then." Naoto sighed and took a deep breath preparing to explain what they knew.
"N-No, that's not what I meant..."

"Now. Consider that the front door to the house was open. I examined it, and found no trace that entry had been forced..."

"You mean...Nanako opened the door herself?" Chie asked.

"Precisely. The culprit didn't sneak in. He came boldly up to the front door and pressed the doorbell." Naoto told her.

"Like how it was for all of us..." Yukiko said with realisation.

"U-Umm...For all of us?" Adachi looked even more lost now

"Indeed, when I got to the house Nanako was gone.

"Our killer can most likely monitor us when we go into the TV world so he knows us and our secrets, that's how he knew who we were and where lived."

"Ok, you said this guy was someone that Nanako opened the door for. So what kind of person would that be?" Rise asked.

"Our killer is using a delivery truck," Naoto told them. "And if it were a local company, it'd be the same deliveryman every time so he's not a "stranger" to Nanako. She must've received packages from him during the times she was home alone, meaning we wouldn't know his face..."

"That would explain how your kidnappings happened so fast." Yu pointed out "He must haul the TV with him in his truck."

"And how he was able to hide in plain sight, you wouldn't look twice at a delivery truck no matter where it was parked."

"Hey, Adachi is this turning on any lightbulbs for you?" Chie inquired turning to the detective who backed up a bit.

"Well it's a lot to process right now-" Adachi paused suddenly as if struck by a revelation and suddenly withdrew a pocketbook from his jacket. "You know you guys might be onto something. Dojima never closed the investigation and I remember hearing about one of the suspects in Ms Yamano's murder he's a delivery man now. But I think he was a city council secretary before or something like that." Adachi began flicking through the pages of the book before settling on a page

"A secretary, that's Taro Namatame." Naoto realised.

"That's the dude who had an affair with Ms Yamano." Yosuke pointed out.

"All we know about him is his occupation, but I'd say that's enough of a lead to tell us where to go next. The address is not far from here!"

"We have to get out!" Yu yelled.

"If there's been a break in the case, I'd better hurry to the crime scene," Adachi said I'll just have to hope nothing happens here while I'm gone...I didn't see anything." With that Adachi ran away.

"We owe you Adachi," Yu said vowing to make it up to the detective who would no doubt get chewed out for this.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]
Dojima was in his vehicle. He was trying to find any sign of Nanako, he was driving extremely recklessly through the near-empty streets but he cast that aside, All that mattered right now was Nanako.

"Hang tight, Nanako, I'm on my way…" Dojima said aloud.

"What now?!" he wondered as his cellphone began to ring in the custom made holder. Then he recognized Adachi's number on the screen but answered regardless. "Adachi, I can't talk…"

"Dojima! We need to talk! Where are you?!" Adachi yelled.

"I've almost made it to the highway! If this isn't urgent-!"

"I figured it out! I think I know who the perp is!" Adachi said, getting in his car and buckling himself in his seat. "Your suspicions were right all along! It is the delivery guy!"

Dojima noticed a delivery truck about to pass him on his right going the opposite way and then something started to click in his mind as he processes what Adachi was telling him.

"The ex-City Council Secretary! Taro Nametame!"

Time seemed to crawl as Dojima as he recognised the driver of the truck in the opposite lane. Namatame was driving that truck, so without further thought, Dojima immediately put on the brakes and spun around giving chase.

"Let's leave finding Nametame's vehicle to your uncle and Adachi for now!" Naoto suggested as they all hastily crammed into a taxi that had been called.

"Take us Junes!" Yu ordered the driver as the last person crammed in. "Hang on, Nanako."

The taxi driver seemed to have sensed to the urgency in Yu's voice and was driving as fast as he legally could to the Junes As they got closer, the driver preparing to turn on the road through Samegawa, they all heard a loud crash and saw a plume of smoke coming further ahead.

When they got closer they saw a delivery truck and police car had both crashed and run off the road, another police car was parked just behind it.

"Stop the car!" Yu commanded as he spotted Adachi running out of his own car.

"DOJIMA!" Adachi yelled as he ran out of his car and towards his boss.

Dojima had managed to crawl out of his car and was on the ground, blood coming from a not so small gash on his head. "Hang in there, Boss…"

"Uncle!" Yu yelled worriedly running over to Dojima.

"Yu…" Dojima was weak from his injuries and yet was not surprised that his Nephew wasn't still locked up. "Did you find Nanako?"

"Please send an ambulance immediately." Naoto was calling for an ambulance for Dojima.

"What the hell?! What happened?!" Yosuke asked as he was getting out of the taxi.

"Find Nanako! And Nametame!" Dojima said to him. "Look for them! They have to be here!"
"Okay…” Yu replied standing up to go over to the truck.

"Wait a sec! We've gotta preserve the crime scene!” Adachi objected.

"Just allow me to take care of that…” Naoto said as she put on evidence gloves.

Naoto and Kanji joined Yu at the truck.

"Yosuke, pay the taxi." Rise told the boy.

"Oh come on Really?!" Yosuke protested. "C'mon! I'm not your stinkin' Sugar Daddy!"

"It's unlocked," Kanji commented as he opened the passenger's side door to find the cab empty.

"He's gone!" Yu exclaimed.

Naoto took a cursory look in the cab of the truck.

"He left something…” Naoto gasped spotting something upon the floor.

"Look!" Chie said, pulling the rear cover on the back open. "There is a TV back here!"

"I found a diary…” Naoto said. "It looks like it belonged to Nametame… It says here that he stumbled upon a whole new world. I have no choice now but to save others,” she read.

"Save us…That's crap!” Kanji growled.

"Look here! It has all the victims' names and addresses." Naoto said reading on.

Indeed, the diary contained all of the names in there. It read:

Mayumi Yamano: Staying at the Amagi Inn

Saki Konishi: Konishi Saki: Konishi Liquors, Inaba Central Shopping District, North End

Yukiko Amagi: Lives at the Amagi Inn

Kanji Tatsumi: Tatsumi Textiles. Inaba Central Shopping District, North End

Rise Kujikawa: Marukyu Tofu, Inaba Central Shopping District, South End

"Mayumi Yamano, Saki Konishi, Yukiko Amagi, Kanji Tatsumi and Rise Kujikawa. It lists all of his victims, including his failed attempts from the third case on down and Mr Morooka's address, is not part of this list."

"Amazing, that basically proves that it's him," Adachi said with relief.

"Listen to this last entry: 'I can't believe a small child appeared on the TV. I have to save her. I'm the only one who can do it.'” Naoto said continuing to read from the diary.

"Is he talking about…Nanako?!" Rise asked.

Yu noticing something in the back.

Yu looked at what he had found. It was a pink envelope. Yu opened it and sighed. In it was a ring made with small pink beads and a larger blue bead and a letter.
Dear Big Bro. Congratulations on getting the highest test score! ~Nanako  It read.

Yu picked up the ring and felt like breaking down when Yosuke interrupted.

"Yu?" Yu turned to look at his friend. "It's your uncle."

"What is it?!" Yu asked the paramedics.

"Yu… Please find her…" He reached out and clenched the shoulder of Yu's jacket. "Nanako is what makes life worth living…" He grunted clearly in pain. "You can save her, you have to save her, Please save my little girl…"

"I promise I'll save her," Yu vowed gently grasping Dojima's own hand.

[-][-][-][-][-][-]
[6th November, TV World, Inaba]

After heading full speed to Junes the team entered the TV world. Fortunately, it had not taken Rise long to locate the dungeon and they wasted no time entering it.

"It's like a storybook version of Heaven," Rise commented as she looked around.

The realm Nanako's mind had created was similar to a Western castle with columns and flowers, and large beanstalks, which stretched upwards. It was like a child's image of Heaven.

"Mom?! Where are you?!" Nanako's voice asked echoing throughout the dungeon. "Mom, why did you go? And why didn't you take me with you?"

"Right heaven? That explains it" Yosuke commented.

"Look! Up there!" Yukiko said, pointing at something in the distance.

There was a man in a green outfit running up the stairs with what appeared to be a little girl in a pink jumper dress with a white turtleneck.

"Nametame!" Naoto yelled upon seeing him.

"That Bastard!" Kanji growled.

They ran after him.

Nametame was running and Nanako was behind him still being held b him. She had a hard time breathing, but Taro didn't care to know why at that moment. All he cared about was saving Nanako.

He turned to look at the teenagers and the Junes mascot running after him. He was anxious now… more people who didn't understand his mission…

He stopped and put his arm around Nanako's neck, only to secure her. He turned around and said, "Did you follow me here?"

"Nanako!" Yu yelled.

"Big Bro…" Nanako whimpered.
"So then, you're Taro Namatame!" Naoto stated.

"Who are you?" Nametame asked Naoto.

"Wait a minute…" a look of realisation came across his face with manic glee. "You're the ones I already saved!"


"Do you honestly think that?" Yukiko seemed confused

"Yes," Nametame said, stroking Nanako's hair in a creepy fashion.

"Get your hands off her! Nanako doesn't need your help!" Yu yelled incensed.

"Stay back!" Namatame yelled as Yosuke, Yu and Naoto suddenly ran up to try and take Nanako from him, taking Nanako into his arm and ran.

The rest of the Team followed only to be cut off as something crashed in front of Yu, Yosuke and Naoto forcing them to stop, even as Namatame vanished up the stairs with Nanako.

"Man, what the hell was that?" Yosuke wondered as the smoke cleared away revealing a golden hand Shadow.

"It's a shadow!" Rise cried analysing it with the mirror. "It's a Luxury Hand it's even stronger than the ones we fought before…"

"But where the hell-" Kanji was cut off as another crash forced him to dodge back, another Balance shadow had crashed in front of the group.

"What's going on, why is it raining shadows?" Chie cried.

"It's not just world balances either, look!" Yukiko cried.

Suddenly from seemingly below the path many Luxury Hand shadows emerged. Numbering in the hundreds they looked like a great moving river of gold.

"This is bad," Rise said looking into her mirror. "They resist everything but physical attacks."

"And there's a friggen army of them, it'll take us ages to blow through 'em all." Kanji cursed with annoyance.

"If it's an Army you need then perhaps mine can be of assistance." A loud voice boomed from with Yu, he sensed it coming from the Hierophant, his bond with Dojima.

"Iskandar!" Yu crushed the Arcana in his hand and out a swirl of flames a large man appeared.

He had a mane of red hair, wore bronze armour, with cuffs and greaves with white-furred fringes, that left his arms and thighs unprotected. Draped around him was a thick red mantle with a fluffy white fur collar. It was luxuriously decorated and looked like a curtain which belonged on the stage of a theatre.

He sat atop a sleek and powerful black steed.

As he was taking in the sight of the man, Yu found himself being lifted up and into the horse.
"Greetings my master. I am Iskandar the King of Conquerors and I am a persona under the Hierophant Arcana in the Rider class!" He declared bombastically.

"Alexander the Great eh?" Drake said with a smirk on her face as she materialised herself. "The guy who kept going and conquered the known world in his time. Ruling from Greece and Egypt to the borders of India. Captain Francis Drake at your service."

She took off her hat and gave a slight bow.

"The woman who sunk the Sun and circumnavigated the world!" Rider spoke loudly. "Would you care to join my army? I could use such splendid sailors for when I reach Okeanos to see what lies beyond it. There would be much plunder in it for you I'm sure, and endless adventure of course."

"You really know how to speak my language." The pirate laughed heartily. "But I gotta say no, I made a promise to stick by the lassie. Maybe some other time?"

"A shame, but better than the last rejection I got from heroes." Iskandar shook his head before focusing. "Well, I suppose we should get to the task at hand. I'll help carve a path!"

Suddenly a gust of wind began billowing around the chariot forcing the others to shield their eyes. Rider was suddenly engulfed in a sphere of light that expanded outward rapidly before it engulfed the whole path.

When everything settled down everyone opened their eyes and saw that they were now not in the storybook version of heaven but in an endless hot desert with a large cloudless blue sky above them, leaving the distant horizon visible.

"A…desert?" Naoto said with an awestruck tone.

"It's a reality marble," Archer said appearing just behind her. "It's a type of magecraft that summons one's inner world to encroach upon the real one. Rin would freak out at a non-magus being able to summon one."

"Hey, this is really cool and all but we're still outnumbered!" Yosuke exclaimed pointing at the horde of golden shadows who seemed disoriented but were quickly recovering. "There are thousands of them we'll use up our energy fighting them all."

Rider didn't answer merely smiled when suddenly the ground began to shake beneath their feet. They also heard the loud clanking of armour which caused them to turn around and see, for as far as the eye could see, thousands upon thousands of soldiers walking in formation towards them, weapons drawn.

"Behold! My endless armies! Their bodies utterly destroyed, and their souls offered up to the current world as heroic spirits of old, and yet still, these valiant warriors pledge their loyalty to me! Breaking the rules of space and time to fight by side once again!" Rider spread his arms motioning to the entire army. "My bond with them is my ultimate treasure! My path to kingship! The ultimate noble phantasm that I possess! Ionioi Hetairoi!"

The army of soldiers cheered as they came to a stop just behind the team.

"Holy Crap, they're all servants!" Rise exclaimed as she looked into the analysis her mirror provided her.

"Wait, Servants and not Persona's?" Archer asked incredulously.
"Yeah, they're not too powerful individually but still..." The idol trailed off still trying to get over her disbelief.

"Alright men, let's clear a path ahead, wipe them out!" With that Iskandar let out a battle cry and Yu felt the horse lurch forward, charging towards the shadows.

The sound of clanking metal increased as the army followed suit. Spears came down like rain upon the shadows, who to their credit tried firing wind, fire and ice spells at the army. But the soldier's shields held as they quickly dashed to close the gap. Each death caused a shadow to burst into a large pile of golden coins. Before long the thousands had been reduced to hundreds and the hundred to ten and then one and finally none.

Rider let out a cheer of victory which the army echoed with a great roar. With a second flash of light, the reality marble faded away and the team found themselves back in heaven, minus the shadows and the piles of gold they had left behind. Drake was about to point this out but Iskandar merely stated that it was safe in the Hetairoi and it could be divided up later.

"Alright, then let's hurry up and catch up Namatame," Yu ordered Rider urged his horse onwards.

Nametame kept running with Nanako until he reached the top of the stairs where a large circular platform was, he ran into the centre of it before realising he didn't have anywhere else to go that wasn't going to end with him and Nanako falling off.

"Taro Nametame!" Naoto yelled as the team finally caught up to him. "Someone's been shoving people on the Midnight Channel into this TV world, and you're the one who's behind it, aren't you...?"

"Yes, that's right."

"Tell me, what made you do this?" Naoto asked.

"On rainy nights the TV talks to me. It sends me signs showing me who wants to be saved." Nametame replied. "And so I do it."

"It talks to you?" Yosuke asked sceptically

"Look, if I didn't put you inside the TV World, what do you think would have happened to you?"

"What are you getting at? You think you helped us face our True Selves?!!" Rise said.

"That's insane!" Yukiko said. "What you did nearly got us all killed!"

"Yes. I know." Namatame looked down at this.

"Dude, this guy is freakin' whack!" Kanji growled.

"I was just trying to help! I just wanted to save you!" Nametame replied.

"Enough of your crap!" Yosuke having had enough. "You weren't trying to save anyone! All you wanted to do, you maniac, was murder people!"

"NO! The murderers are you!" then he paused. "I know what your plan is. You want to kill this little girl..." he patted Nanako who whimpered.
"What the hell are you talking about?" Naoto asked.

"But you CAN'T 'cause I'll save her!" He laughed maniacally again. HE lifted Nanako up! "Just like the rest!"

"Let her go!" Yu demanded.

"That's right, I'm a hero!" Namatame yelled raising Nanako into the air a red cloud covering them both. "I'm a knight in SHINING ARMOR!"

"Big Bro, I can't breathe!" Nanako said weakly.

"Nanako!" Yu yelled the little girl's name.

The area was dark except for the redness in the centre where Nametame and Nanako were, the blackness heading towards him.

"What the hell is happening?!" Yosuke yelled.

"It's his power! It's attracting a bunch of Shadows!" Teddie cried.

"Shadows? But why?" Yukiko wondered with confusion.

The haze eventually faded away revealing a stoic figure with deathly pale skin, and golden eyes like those of a shadow self, she wore heavy jet black armour that gave her a vicious look.

"No," Gawain said despairingly as he materialised. "It can't be."

Iskandar faded back into spirit form to watch the proceedings, he said nothing as he realised just who this person was.

"It can and is." The persona replied disdainfully to Gawain. "Gawain."

"ARTHURRRRR!" Lancelot yelled with madness only a berserker was capable as he materialised himself.

"Lancelot." She spat his name with disgust, "Another traitor who stands before me."

"Wait, did he say Arthur?" Chie asked, "As in-"

"Yup." Archer appeared popping the end of the up. "She's King Arthur, technically Arturia but the King Arthur still."

"Shit, King Arthur was a woman?" Yosuke cried before shaking his head. "Man history is weird."

"That's the least of our problems, right now senpai!" Kanji yelled summoning Berserker.

"Rise, how strong is she?" Yu asked trying to remain calm, even though he could feel the power rolling off of her.

"Really strong, those shadows have boosted pretty everything except for Luck and Agility to the A+ rank." Rise cried nervously.

"Shit, she was strong on her own without that power boost." Archer groaned before projecting Kanshou and Bakuya. "Alright, I'll-" Archer was cut off as Lancelot roared and ripped the married blades from his hands and charged at Arturia.
"You offer yourself first Lancelot?" Arturia asked as she locked her sword with the pair he had. "very well then, I'll punish you as you should have been punished."

Lancelot pushed hard, rapidly attacking with both blades, but Arturia easily blocked the strikes despite their increasing speed. The pace of the battle quickly picked up until it reached the point where their arms and weapons became blurs of colour. She didn't stay on the defensive for long and feinted. Lancelot fell for it which caused Arturia to exploit the opening and press her attack forcing the berserker onto the defensive.

Lancelot tried to strike again only for Bakuya to shatter in his hand like glass. Saber took quick advantage of this and drove her blackened holy sword straight through his chest. Yu gasped and clenched at his chest as he shared the pain from Lancelot. Saber then knocked Kanshou away and lifted the knight off the ground and quickly used his body as a meat shield against the cannon shots that Rider fired at her, hoping to catch her off guard. Inflicting more pain on Yu as the shots hit Lancelot.

Rider clicked her tongue before giving Arturia a cheeky smile in response to the glare she gave.

"Filthy pirate," Arturia growled disdainfully.

"That's 'Vice Admiral' filthy pirate to you." Rider quipped insolently.

The Saber merely roared and lifted her sword then flung the Berserker at Rider who was unable to dodge in time and hit with the force of a cannonball, causing both Yu and Yukiko to feel pain. Lancelot promptly faded away into motes of black dust receding back into Yu's soul.

"Lancer go!" Diarmuid needed no more prompting and quickly leapt into battle locking spear and sword with the Saber.

"It is a shame, to face the legendary King of Knights under such circumstances." Diarmuid strained out as she suddenly broke the lock and began attacking only for him to back up try to use his spears range to his advantage.

Unfortunately for him, she avoided his strikes slid into his guard. He was able to retract his spears to block her attack, but she pressed hard against him, causing him to bend backwards slightly.

"I'm afraid your tricks won't work on me Diarmuid of the Love Spot," Saber told lancer casually revealing his identity.

"But how?"

"We fought in a Grail War once before, and unlike other heroic spirits I retain my memories from them." She answered casually. "So for example, I know exactly what this spear does!"

Suddenly a massive burst of wind blinded Lancer causing his guard to lower just slightly and before he knew it Gae Buidhe was ripped from his hands. She abruptly spun around to look at Namatame who was still holding Nanako and tossed the spear forcefully at him. He flinched and cried out only for the spear to seemingly freeze in the air before him.

As this happened Chie fell to her knees and cried out in pain as Assassin became visible just inches away from Namatame, the spear had gone through his side, into his heart and exiting through his neck. The sight caused Namatame to quickly back away with Nanako still in his grip.

"Apologies, I failed." Li Shuwen groaned before vanishing and returning to Chie's soul to recover.
"Holy crap that hurt." Chie cried out, as Yukiko checked on her.

"At least Nanako was unconscious and didn't see that," Yukiko said trying to look on the bright side.

"Yeah" Chie agreed still wincing at the shared pain. "And that creep has nowhere to run, we just need to get past her."

They looked to Arturia who now had Diarmuid on the defensive. Having been surprised and forced to switch a single spear style, he had no breathing room as she advanced and kept slashing at him. Lancer knew that he could just keep defending so he took a chance and made an attempt to attack.

This proved to be a fatal mistake, as Saber's strength and speed outclassed his and she disarmed him, sending Gae Dearg flying away. Before the spear even hit the ground, her sword was within Lancer, dealing a fatal blow, the pain of which Yosuke shared.

Diarmuid was barely able to mumble an apology before he too faded away back into Yosuke's soul.

With him out of the way Saber looked to the group and was about to say something before she was shot with an arrow from Archer, then another and another until the impacts kicked up smoke blinding her vision. Before she could say or do anything she quickly raised her sword and blocked a surprisingly powerful strike. That surprise faded however when she saw the attacker was Heracles.

"Berserker," Saber growled derisively.

Archer stopped firing at Saber as soon as Berserker engaged Arturia. The Son of Zeus didn't wait and immediately pressed his advantage. His skill with his weapon easily matching hers. He was aggressive but careful enough not to leave any openings.

The exchange became more and more intense. Eventually, Berserker resorted to using his Nine Lives technique. The nine consecutive slashes broke through and hit her. As they id nine black streaks shot off from her and exploded individually away from her.

"Were those Fireworks?" Yosuke asked with confusion.

"Rise, please analyse her more closely," Naoto asked quickly.

Rise nodded and looked into her mirror which showed Saber on its surface after a few seconds it gave a warning about her.

"It's the armour!" Rise cried causing the team save for Kanji to look away from the fight and to her. "The Armour is what's boosting her power."

"I thought it was her absorbing all those shadows?" Chie cried confused.

"She didn't absorb them, she fused them with her armour, giving a powerful boosting enchantment which raises all her Stats. But that's not all, the shadows themselves have independently made her armour way more durable. We can't damage her properly until we destroy it."

The mirror displayed Saber's Stats: **Strength**: EX **Endurance**: EX **Agility**: A **Mana**: A **Luck**: C **N.P:** A++

"Archer do you have anything that could help?" Naoto asked.
"No, not without causing some serious collateral damage," Archer answered shaking his head.

"Alright, let me take a swing at it." A voice requested from deep within Yu, it was coming the Justice Arcana.

"Alright, come forth Sakata Kintoki!" Yu cried crushing the Arcana in his hands.

Out of a swirl of blue flames a tall muscle-bound man appeared, he had blonde hair, sunglasses, an open white shirt, golden necklaces around his neck, golden bracelets around his wrists and finally a golden belt and buckle around his waist, securing his black trousers. In his right hand was a huge Masakari axe that clearly could not be held with the strength of a normal person.

"Hey, can you get him to hold her still?" Kintoki asked Kanji

"Yeah, I can do that." Kanji affirmed with a nod.

"Alright, then brace yourself, cause I gotta use my Noble Phantasm and its gonna hurt," Kintoki explained.

"Berserker!" Kanji yelled, needing only say the word for his Persona to understand what he needed to do.

Heracles changed his aggressive stance and backed off. Arturia saw the opening and lunged in to attack, only for Heracles to quickly avoid it and get behind her. He then dismissed his Axe-Sword and grabbed her by both arms and hauled her off the ground and locked her firmly in place.

"Let me go you beast!" She yelled and began thrashing to get free, forcing berserker to use more strength to hold her steady.

"Alright, now kidnapping kids isn't golden in my book. So take this…" Kintoki burst into a sprint and leapt into the air ignoring the bursts of mana Saber tried to use to stop his. "Golden Spark!"

His axe struck her chest directly and suddenly both her and Heracles were consumed by a massive and extremely bright, bolt of lightning. Cries erupted from both Arturia and Kanji, the latter of whom who despite being ready for the pain couldn't help but cry out.

Eventually, the smoke cleared, Kintoki leapt back to just before the group. The enemy Saber appeared, as did Heracles who had dropped her and backed off. Her armour had visible cracks in it which continued to spread and spiderweb all over before finally it completely shattered like glass, released all of the shadows who simply exploded into the same haze which they usually did upon death. Now with no armour, all Saber had to wear was a black gothic dress with no shoes upon her feet.

"It worked, her stats have all dropped." Rise cried out looking into her mirror which showed Saber's new stats.

**Strength: B  Endurance: B  Agility: D  Mana: A  Luck: C  N.P: A++**

"Alright, we can beat her!" Chie cried hopefully.

However, the expression on Saber Alters face looked different. If she had been angry at being manhandled before. Now with her armour gone, she looked absolutely pissed.

"Don't celebrate just yet. I still have some residual power from that armour left, and I'll use it to boost my Noble Phantasms." She declared furiously gripped her sword with both hands. The blade then blazed with a black aura which seemed to be three times larger than the sword itself.
"Oh no, that's an Anti-Fortress Noble Phantasm and she's given it even more power!" Rise exclaimed fearfully.

"That ain't golden," Kintoki mumbled before vanishing back into Yu's soul.

"Everyone get behind me!" Archer ordered as he ran to the front of the group.

No one argued and did as he told them, huddling do they were behind him. The red-cloaked Archer let out a breath and his hand flashed briefly.

"I am the Bone of my Sword." He chanted before opening his eyes and thrusting his hand out before him.

"Excalibur Morgan!" Saber cried unleashing the furious black light at them.

"Rho Aias!" Archer yelled, causing a shield in the form of seven flower petals made from red light to appear.

As the black light barrelled towards them, Archer was too sure if the Aias alone would be enough. But as if summoned Heracles appeared a few metres outside the shield, he gave Archer a nod before turning to face the attack and spread himself out to absorb as much of it as possible.

"Heracles," Kanji spoke his Persona's name, who turned to him and gave a smile before focusing on the task before him.

The blast hit, but the son of Zeus remained defiant, doing everything he could to take as much of the blasts power as he could. Archer was thankful, it bought him precious time to reinforce the Aias. Not only that but when the blast finally consumed Heracles and hit the shield causing the team, save Naoto and Yu to cover their eyes. It only shattered two layers instead of three as he was expecting.

It was then that Yu and Naoto noticed something. The Fog had suddenly become much thicker than before. The former thought he heard something coming up behind him and looked up just in time to see a silhouette jumping high over him. Both he and Naoto looked to each other with mutual surprise on their faces.

Then the beam rose higher, going up and over the shield. Yu saw in a scant few seconds as the black light consumed the silhouette which gave an unintelligible shout as it was destroyed. With it gone the fog cleared, returning to normal. With that, the blast of energy came to a stop. Archer dismissed the Aias but gasped loudly for air while clutching his bloody hand.

"Is it over?" Yukiko asked opening her eyes.

"We're alive." Yosuke sighed with relief falling onto his behind.

"Guys Heracles doesn't have any more lives left, I can't bring him out again for a while," Kanji told them hurriedly.

"Don't worry," Yu said standing up and putting a hand on his shoulder as he walked past Archer and to the front to face Saber. "We'll take it from here," he summoned the fool Arcana and crushed it. "Right Gawain?!"

Gawain materialised out of a swirl of blue flames. As he did so the perpetual sunlight of Heaven seemed to shine brighter upon him as he drew Excalibur Galatine with a flourish.
"Indeed, it is time I stopped despairing and started taking responsibility for my mistakes," Gawain said seriously. "My king, I cannot change the past, but I can and will use those mistakes to prevent myself from bringing ruin to others."

She merely growled and lunged at him. He met her halfway and locked swords. This didn't last long and quickly turned into a fierce exchange of strikes parries and blows. As the fight went on, Arturia found herself losing ground.

"The perpetual sunlight of this place, I see." Her blade was consumed by black light and became three times larger. "Then I can't afford to hold back."

Excalibur Morgan clashed with Galatine. The attacks fiercer, as Gawain still skilfully parried her blows, despite the increased power behind her blade. Yet she was determined to give no more ground and steadied her defences and redoubled her attacks, yet Gawain remained firm, thanks to his Numeral of the Saint, in this perpetual sunlight his power had increased threefold and due to the nature of the dungeon would not wane as the sun would never set.

"We took you for granted, we all did," Gawain said as his sword met her in an attempt to break her guard.

"Yes, you did!" She snapped back furiously, as she parried a blow and made to attack only to narrowly avoid a feint. "You, Lancelot, Mordred and that bastard Tristan. The king does not understand the hearts of men." She said this last sentence in a mocking tone. "What would Tristan know? What would any of you know? I carried the weight of an entire COUNTRY upon my shoulders." Her attacks became more vicious but Gawain remained unphased and easily defended against them. "What would any of you know what I sacrificed for Camelot, for Britain and the people. Merlin told me when I drew Caliburn from the stone, that to be King is to longer be human, so I suppressed my own feelings and humanity for the sake of everyone and it STILL wasn't enough! You ALL always wanted more! Demanded more! Never once did ANY of you spare a thought for me, for how I felt! Your oaths of loyalty were hollow, you swore to serve me yet when I needed your loyalty the most you thought only of yourself. I forgave Lancelot and YOU disobeyed me for your own revenge helping destroy all that I built!"

Throughout this rant her attacks on Gawain's guard grew stronger and stronger until finally he stopped blocking and parried her blow causing the black aura to vanish, pressing his own attack.

"Indeed, and I shall always regret that immature selfishness," Gawain confessed sadly. "I know that Lancelot and the others have their own regrets too."

Arturia deflected his attacks before jumping back out of his range and gripped her sword with both hands.

"Enough talk, let us end this!" Arturia yelled as the black aura returned to her sword.

"EXCALIBUR-"

Gawain tossed his own sword into the air where a miniature sun appeared, it landed back in his grasp as a ray of sunlight. The miniature sun floated overhead, a large magic circle with a sun symbol in the centre appeared under him.

"EXCALIBUR-" Gawain pulled the sword over his head.

"MORGAN!" Arturia brought her own blade down sending the black light at her knight.

"GALATINE!" Gawain did the same and the fiery energy of the sun surged forth meeting the
light of the famous Holy Sword head on.

Yu watched the clash of energies and saw that Namatame was breathing heavily, clearly exhausted. He took the chance and poured as much power into Gawain as possible. It worked as Galatines attack seemed to increased in power while Excalibur's black light seemed to shrink before it.

Then it happened, the flaming light of the Sword of the Sun consumed the light and surged forward swallowing Saber as well. Her screams could be heard even through the roar of the fire as could Namtame's as he shared the pain and as such released Nanako who was caught by a swift Archer who scooped her up and ran quickly back to the team.

"Nanako!" Yu fearfully fusses over her, her eyes were closed but fortunately, she seemed to still be breathing, albeit with difficulty.

Gawain watched, as his blade returned to its normal state and the magic circle vanished along with the fires of Galatine. Arturia appeared, her hands at her side, a disbelieving expression on her face.

"You've won, congratulations." She said with a sigh before focusing an apathetic stare on him. "Know this Sir Gawain, your King forgave you long ago, despite your disobedience."

"And what of you?" he asked with curiosity.

"I am not the King you revere. I am Arturia Pendragon the human being who resides deep within her heart. You could say I am something like her shadow. The abundance of shadows allowed me to overpower her and suppress her Ego, my Ego. But now without them and masters Prana, I have run out of power." She stated matter-of-factly. "Take your victory, but know that as I return to the depths of her heart, that while the King forgives, as you look into the green of her eyes, I will be looking out, deep within, in a single small part holding these grudges, as humans do."

"I understand, and I am sorry. We were selfish, all of us." Gawain said with sadness. "I only wish that we had seen the truth sooner so that we could share and help carry your burden."

Surprisingly instead of a snort, she let out a sigh of disbelief.

"Good grief. It is no wonder that she, that I, still consider you all my good friends." She gave a half smile before turning completely black and bursting into the shadowy haze that all shadows did when they were defeated.

Yu meanwhile took Nanako from Archer, who then went and picked up Namatame, lifting him up in a fireman's carry. From there the team made their back to the entrance and to Junes. The police were called and Ambulances were ready to get both Namatame and Nanako to hospital. The former so he recover before being questioned and stand trial for what he had done.

[6th November, Inaba Hospital, Inaba]

"Because Nanako is still so very little, her other self didn't appear like it did for everybody else…I feel so bad that she had to see those Shadows go crazy like that." Teddie said sadly.

"Dude! Those Shadows were really freakin' intense! I can't believe that bastard put her through that! Damn him!" Yosuke cursed.

Namatame was in a small hospital room at the moment, unconscious and getting an IV. There were press and police downstairs. News had spread like wildfire with the press after he had been brought
"I wasted so much time trying to get Nametame to explain his motives!" Naoto growled, pounding the wall with her fist, shame and regret in her voice. "If I hadn't done that we may not be here right now, Maybe then…we could have gotten to Nanako sooner!"

"You didn't know its ok," Chie tried to reassure her.

"It's not okay!" Naoto retorted. "My top priority should have been Nanako's safety! But instead, what did I put first? Solving this damn case! So you're wrong it IS my fault that Nanako's in here!"

"Move on, that's enough of your pity party," Kanji spoke up.

"It's not that easy…” Naoto sniffed.

"Right now you're just standing here whining and licking your wounds. You think that will help Nanako get better? She needs us to believe she'll pull through this," Kanji said, and then he put a hand on Naoto's shoulder for support. "So stop thinking about yourself and get it together, will ya?"

"I'm sorry," she said, a small smile playing at her lips. She opened her eyes and said to Kanji, "Thanks, you're absolutely right."

"Naoto," Yu spoke her name causing the detective to turn to him. "You tried your best to save Nanako. I was there, I saw it for myself. So thank you." Yu was giving Naoto a small smile. "I'm glad to have you by my side."

"Anytime."

"Okay, this touchy-feely shit is bringing me down even more! The last thing Nanako would want to see is all of us down in the mouth." Yosuke said leaping to his feet.

"Yeah! You're totally right!" Yukiko said.

"Damn right!" Kanji grinned. "Nanako's got the heart of a fighter. We just gotta believe in her!"

"That was cool!" Rise said with a smirk. "I can't believe you made that line up yourself…"

"Huh?" Kanji said, stunned. "What the hell does that mean?!

"Hey, pipe down!" Yosuke whispered harshly. "Don't go making a scene at the hospital, Jeez!"

"For once he's right…" Chie said self-consciously.

[21st November, Path to Yasogami high, Inaba]

Just over two weeks passed since Namatame's arrest and Nanako's hospitalisation. Yu had visited Dojima and wound up tightening his bond with Adachi at the same time.

"Is it me or is the fog even thicker today?" Chie asked as she walked to school, with Yukiko, Yosuke and Yu.

"Yeah, it is… and it's a lot colder and thicker too," Yukiko said.
Yosuke was looking at his cell, surfing the 'net when he gasped.

"What's going on?" Yu said.

"Check it out. It's some article on Taro Nametame. Looks like the murdering bastard regained consciousness this morning," Yosuke told them.

"In an official statement that he gave to the police, he says that he regrets his actions and that he was mainly motivated by fear. Whoa! It's like he admits he did it." Chie cried.

"Hey, guess what?" Yu said. "I got a call from the hospital today. This afternoon, Nanako will finally be able to have visitors…"

"For real?!" Yosuke and Chie asked in unison.

After hearing the news that visitors were allowed, the team had quickly headed over to the hospital to visit both Dojima and Nanako.

"Go easy on her," Ryotaro said from his wheelchair with a small smile. "She's still weak. Don't expect any long conversations just yet."

"Dojima…" A young nurse came in. "Are you back here again?" She sounded bemused.

"Yeah…well, I just…" Dojima found himself at a loss for words. "I understand that you're worried about your daughter and you wanna see her, but you still have a great deal of resting and recovering to do."

"Yeah, okay…" The man conceded rubbing his head sheepishly.

"Sorry! I'm right on it!" Adachi said beginning to push Dojima's wheelchair. "I'll take him to his room right now."

"Hey, what are you doing?! Don't push me around like I'm some old geezer!" Ryotaro protested.

Everyone was either laughing or smiling at the scene.

"Careful, Dojima you sound like an old geezer, too!" Rise teased.

Eventually, the group were forced to leave the room by the nurse and were walking out to courtyard when Adachi had caught up with them and brought them to the cafeteria.

"About that Nametame, some new facts have turned up recently, and well, it's making things a little more twisted…" Adachi said after finishing the coffee he was drinking.

"Can you tell us what the new facts are?" Yu asked.

"I don't know… it's still kinda top secret stuff, but…" Then he said, "I guess I could tell you guys… We were going through his diary and uncovered some weirdness around Ms Yamano and that Saki girl…" Adachi seemed to look right at Yosuke for that last part. "Nametame was one serious pig! He made some not so subtle advances on her, you know, we're thinking that may have been the reason he offed her."
Yu and Chie looked at Yosuke with concern as his hands were balled into fists and were shaking with rage, his face twisted in a grimace of anger.

"I should have killed that creep!"

Adachi flinched back, surprised at Yosuke's reaction.

"Well… Okay… Gotta be going now…" Adachi took his can of coffee and left.

"Yosuke…are you okay there?" Chie asked.

Yosuke looked at Chie in slight surprise and then said, "Yeah, it's all good… I'll get there."

"Don't be worried, you can cry in front of us," Yu said with a smirk.

"Hey, I'm not a freakin' girl!" Yosuke said as Chie and Yukiko chuckled.

The team were walking back home through a residential area when they stopped and looked around at the thick fog that had been blanketing the town.

"I wonder what's up with this fog." One housewife said to another as they stood just outside the gas station.

"I know a person whose child has been bedridden because of it." The other said. "I wonder if it's really poisonous."

Suddenly a man inn a gas mask ran up to them. "Run! Evacuate immediately!" He screamed hysterically "This is poisonous gas! It's loaded with viruses! You'll die if you breathe it!" He then took off running, only for the gas station attendant to come and talk to the pair and reassure them.

"What's with him? Creep." Rise said with a raised eyebrow.

"That might have even an extreme example, It's true that people are getting increasingly suspicious of this fog." Naoto said.

"It's not just here, either. People everywhere are talking about the fog." Yosuke said.

"It really is hard to see anything in this fog, though. It's just like on the other side," Rise said.

"Wha-?! G-Guys, put on your glasses!" Kanji yelled after putting his on.

Everyone did as he said and put on their glasses they used in the TV World. Once on, everything they saw became clearer.

"Whoa… It's all clear…" Yukiko said in amazement.

"Wh-What the hell is going on?!" Yosuke said.

"These glasses are meant to help us see through the fog in the TV world." Naoto mumbled putting her hand to her chin. "But putting that aside, no glasses would improve one's visibility in a fog, under normal circumstances."

"Could this mean the fog from over there is leaking into our world…?" Chie asked.
Everyone looked her stunned.

"Huh? Y-You guys think that's it?! I-I was kinda expecting you to ignore it as me being random again." She nervously chuckled. "I-It's just a thought… Haha…"

"This being the fog from the TV World would make sense" Naoto realised before looking to Yu. "But how can that be possible?"

Yu knew what she wanted and idly scratched the back of his right hand which had been itchy ever since they beaten Namatame.

"The fog aside, Naoto I take it you've done the research I asked?" He inquired.

"Yes, I'm afraid if what you told me is true then your conclusion is likely correct." Naoto told him.

"Wait, conclusion about what?" Yosuke asked looking between the two.

Yu took a deep breath and stopped scratching his hand, which began to bleed a little bit.

"Naoto did some checking for me, we've concluded that based on the evidence, Namatame is NOT the killer."

There was a moment of silence from the group before they all collectively yelled.

"WHAT?!!"
The Final Phase Begins

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own Persona or Fate or anything in the nasuverse, any resemblance to any other Persona 4/Fate fan fiction is coincidental and plagiarism is not intended. No flames please, constructive criticism only.

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[21st November, Residential Area, Inaba]

"Not the killer?! But he-"

"-Summoned his Persona for the first time in that world when we caught him." Yu cut Yosuke off with a loud yet serious tone. "Think about it, all the fanfare and then the shadows merging with her, why did that happen? And remember the bunker?"

"Right, the killer's Persona attacked us then and was concealed by the fog." Rise pointed out. "So if Namatame was the killer, why didn't his persona use the fog in the fight?"

"That's not all, the killer's persona showed up in the middle of the fight," Naoto said.

"Wait, when? I don't remember seeing them." Chie asked with confusion.

"It was when Archer was using Rho Aias to shield us from her Noble Phantasm." Naoto explained "Yu and I managed to open our eyes during that, and we noticed the fog getting thicker, then something leapt over our heads."

"And then Saber raised Excalibur and sent the blast over the shield, presumably because she saw them coming." Archer finished crossing his arms and leaning against a wall as he materialised.

"It annihilated the killer's Persona all in one go, and that was after taking down Heracles and a few minutes against the Aias." Yu recounted.

"Sheesh." Kanji gulped.

"It's not that surprising, the' kings holy sword was a thing of legend even before she wielded it," Gawain commented.

"She isn't considered a top class heroic spirit for nothing." Archer chimed in.

"So we're back to square one, what do we do now?" Yosuke grumbled.

"Now, we wait for Namatame to be able to talk and get his side of the story, he has to have done these kidnappings for a reason," Yu answered with a nod.

"And if we know why, we'll be one step closer to knowing who the killer might be." Naoto agreed.
"At this point, even the smallest clue could be a big hint."

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Yu found himself seated at his desk in class. But something was off. For one he was alone. Secondly, the sun was setting, nearly halfway below the horizon. No, it was more than that, he couldn't really hear any sounds of life at all. No birds, no insects, never mind anyone else in the school.

"You need to stop." Yu was startled by the voice and shot up from his desk and whirled around to see a blonde, blue-eyed 12-year-old Caucasian girl wearing the Yasogami high uniform seated just next to him.

"W-what? Who-"

"You can me Abby." The girl smiled brightly at him before adopting a more serious expression. "You need the Persona of the Jester, you cannot defeat the culprit without it."

"But, the Jester is empty, there isn't a persona there," Yu told her, he was sure of it, it had been empty since it first manifested when he bonded with Adachi.

"It's not good to lie to others, but more importantly to yourself." She lectured him with a stern expression on her face, she kept going cutting off any retort he might have. "Ever since you began to see more and more of who he truly was, you've had an inkling that he might be the culprit, but you treasured your bond so much that you suppressed those feelings."

Suddenly the Jester Arcana manifested itself in front of Yu, spinning gently in the air. Ten it flew off towards the blackboard and burst to reveal a humanoid figure who was very deeply shrouded in a black aura, so much so that no details could be made out aside from being humanoid.

"She's right of course," Yu said to the silhouette. "I rejected you, because of what you meant, what you represented about me. I...I hate my parents. I can accept that now, these feelings. So can you give me another chance?"

The figure seemed to grin and then stuck out its hand, Yu took it and felt a surge of power. The wind seemed to pick up throwing desks around before a jolt of power shot through him. He then felt the pact had been complete. The figure returned to the Jester Arcana which settled inside of Yu. He could feel it, another soul from beyond within him.

"There's one more thing," Abby said, unaffected by the display. "I spoke to Alice."

This got Yu's attention and he whipped around to face her.

"I can go anywhere, even to the place where the dead are," Abby explained. "She told me, that she wants you to forgive your parents for what happened and move on from her. They did what they did to protect you, as a wraith, she was draining the life force from you, even if she didn't want to hurt you."

Yu felt himself fall and sit on the teacher's desk. he sighed as he looked at Abby. A million things flew through his mind before his thoughts settled down.

"If it's Alice asking, then I can forgive especially knowing the reasons," Yu said with resignation. "However, Alice is just one part of it all, they abandoned me with one uncaring relative or another
until I came to Dojima. They never listened or talked to me unless they wanted something. Now they just decided my future because it benefits them. They don't know my favourite food, my favourite colour, they don't know anything about me. There's so much that I just can't forgive, so much that I hate them for, I'll have to live that."

"Well, that's the best we'll get I suppose." Abby sighed. "Well, the Holy Grail war is reaching its climax, but your journey has so much farther to go, but please don't give up, remember its always darkest before the dawn."

"The way you talk, have we met?"

"No." Abby giggled "At least not yet, I'll be watching over you until we do though, so make sure you don't give up."

She placed her hand on his cheek and then, with a start Yu found himself sitting upright in his bed. Outside his window the sun beginning to rise over the town. The dream he just had, was already beginning to slip away, however, he remembered some important parts, the jester, he needed it and had accepted it, making a contract. Now he knew what he had to do. Talk to Namatame and then, confront the real killer.

[3rd December, Inaba Municipal Hospital, Inaba]

Having gotten a call from Adachi, Yu rushed to the hospital with the gang in tow. However, when they got into Nanako's room, they didn't find the little girl in danger, but instead her sleeping soundly along with two others in the room. It was Romani and Aika.

"Man, we got here just in time." Romani sighed before flopping into a nearby chair. "Oh hey, you don't have to worry, I managed to stabilise her. Medical magecraft is my speciality after all."

"Oh thank goodness." Rise sighed, the others all agreeing with her giving him thanks.

"Thank you, for saving her," Yu said gratefully looking over at his cousin.

"No problem, I am a doctor after all." Romani smiled. "You should also thank Aika if she hadn't given me a ride I might not have made it on time."

"I hypnotised the hospital staff and Dojima, as far they're concerned nothing happened," Aika stated.

"Hey, didn't Adachi give you the call, where the hell is that guy?" Kanji asked looking around outside the room but not spying the cop anywhere.

"Well, he wasn't here when we got here, but he did appear and take Dojima back to his room after Aika hypnotised him," Romani stated rubbing the back of his head.

"He just popped up to take Dojima back to his room? He never checked on Nanako?" Naoto inquired.

"He might've been here and left before us," Romani answered with a shrug.

"Forget Adachi, we need to talk to Namatame." Yosuke pointed out.

"Nanako's going to be ok, I'll be back later," Yu said before turning to leave the room with the
The team headed to the secure ward where Namatame was being held. With hypnotism, it was simple to get past the guard and a bounded field ensured that their conversation would be private.

Namatame sat in his bed. His eyes widened at seeing them.

"Nanako survived," Yu told the man. "If it weren't for Romani then she really would have died because of you and my feeling would be much different than they are."

"Namatame. There's something we'd like to ask you." Naoto began.

The man silently waited for her to continue.

"It's tempting to think that you were the culprit behind this entire case. And to be honest...there are many in this town who hope you are. But we are here to learn the truth. So please...answer our questions."

"Is "saving" killing people?" Yu asked.

"No...If nobody saves them, they'll be killed...That's why...I put them in there..." Namatame replied.

"Did you kill those two girls?"

"They were killed...I couldn't save them..."

"Who'd you throw in first?"

"Huh...? Me?" Yukiko exclaimed as Namatame pointed at her.

"Then tell me if my estimation is correct so far. After discovering the Yamano and Konishi incidents, you realized an appearance on the Midnight Channel meant certain death. Thus, to "save" her from that fate, you kidnapped Yukiko Amagi...You couldn't let her be killed, so you threw her into the TV, preventing the killer in this world from reaching her." Naoto stated recapping events. "And you repeated the process, as more individuals appeared on the Midnight Channel...It all falls into place. His body is weak, but his mind is sound. He's trying to tell us the truth..."

"Yeah, but if the stuff he's saying is true..." Yosuke trailed off.

"So it was the real killer who murdered the first two victims..." Rise finished. "Just like we thought.

"Indulge us in a few more questions."

"Why the warning letters?" Yu asked this was a critical piece of evidence that he needed to get out of the way.

"Letters what are you talking about...?" Namatame asked confused.

"I was sent two warning letters, the first said "don't rescue anymore" And the second one said, if you don't stop this time, someone close to you will be put in and killed," Yu told him.

"Hold on that doesn't make sense." Rise chimed in. "Why would he tell us to stop saving them if he
thinks he's trying to do the same thing."

"Yeah and now that I think about it the way those letters were written is kinda messed up too."
Kanji "I mean, wouldn't the killer own that shit and say 'I'll throw them in and kill 'em.'"

"That proves it, he's not the killer that we were after, he only summoned his Persona for the first
time recently, and his mentality doesn't match the warning letters," Naoto said rubbing her chin
thoughtfully. "Alright Please...Tell us everything you can...Calmly and slowly.

"You're willing to listen...to my story...?" Namatame asked with surprise.

"Yes, you might have an important clue that could identify the real killer," Yu said. "So please start
from the beginning."

"...All right..."

Soon after my affair with Mayumi became common knowledge, I returned to my parents' home, as
if to run away from the scandal...And I started drinking heavily to drown my anxieties...I hadn't
been able to reach Mayumi at all, and that didn't help, either.

She'd been disgraced on all the afternoon shows and forced to resign from the program she was
on. I caused her so much trouble...I wanted to at least apologize to her, but I couldn't even do
that...I lost the will and energy to do anything...Then one day, the rumour I heard some time ago
came back to me. Since I had nothing better to do, I sat down blankly in front of the TV and
watched my own reflection and all of a sudden there was Mayumi on the TV screen.

Mayumi inside the TV looked as if she was calling to me for help. When I reached out unthinkingly
to touch her. My Arm disappeared into the TV as if I had dipped it into a pool of water.

"I was so shocked that I lost my balance and nearly fell face-first into the TV. I was so scared. I
couldn't understand what just happened. I thought maybe I'd gone insane. In the end, I decided to
think of it as just a dream, and I went back to the city the next day after finishing work. The next
afternoon, when I got to work...I was fired on the spot, as I expected. That wasn't what broke me,
though..." Namatame cast his downward pitifully. "It was Mayumi being found dead. And not just
that, but it had happened in my hometown."

"I was dumbstruck, but later on...I remembered the image of Mayumi I'd seen that night. "Was it
not a dream...? Could it really have been an SOS from Mayumi...?" I hadn't touched another TV,
because the first time was so terrifying, but I decided to try it again...And I confirmed that none of
it was a dream. So that image...Was it something Mayumi showed me, calling for help?... That's
how I felt."

"And eventually...you learned of the Midnight Channel," Naoto concluded.

"I remembered that when Mayumi was alive, she was chasing a rumour about some bizarre TV
program. I'd heard about it before, but I thought it was just an urban legend." Namatame continued
his explanation. "But then Mayumi appeared on it, and later turned up dead. The more I thought
about it, the harder it became to believe that the two events were unrelated. Soon after that, I came
back to Inaba to answer the police's questions. I'd lost my job, and I wanted to know the truth of
Mayumi's death for myself. Then, on another rainy night, someone else appeared on the Midnight
Channel...It was a girl. She looked like she was calling for help, just like Mayumi. The first thing
that came into my mind was, "Maybe this girl will be the next to die..."

"And that was Saki-senpai..."
"I'd been following all the news about Mayumi, so I noticed right away that she was the girl who found Mayumi's body. And if my hunch was right, she'd be the next victim. I didn't want her to die the way Mayumi did. So I desperately kept watching...I was consumed with the idea of rescuing her. Then...little by little, her image on the screen came into sharper focus."

"It became sharper...?" Chie wondered.

"...How did you find out it was her?" Yosuke asked seriously.

"After I came back, my father couldn't bear to see me in such low spirits and gave me a job with the family business. I met that girl when I delivered a package to the liquor store..." Namatame answered sadly. "After agonizing over it, I decided to meet her and told her to be careful."

"You used the business as a cover in order to get around town and get into contact with the people who appeared on the Midnight Channel," Teddie exclaimed. "Beary clever."

"That same night on the TV, She looked as if she was being engulfed by some black shape. She was writing in pain." Namtame gripped his blanket tightly with anger before releasing a sigh. "The next day, they found her dead."

"I knew she was gonna be murdered, but I couldn't save her. I blamed myself, thinking there must have been something I could've done...There was no one who depended on me. Nobody at work...Not even my wife. Mayumi was the only one who accepted me for who I was. But she was murdered, and the same person killed another girl...I was...I was beside myself...I couldn't forgive myself for doing nothing!"

"You really did love Ms Yamano..." Chie realised.

"Yes, from the bottom of my heart..." Namatame confessed. "Before I was married, my wife made it big in show business. I was happy for her, but it put a strain on our relationship."

"...I think I can kinda relate." Rise said with a sigh.

"It was around that time when I met Mayumi...She was interviewing our candidate for the next election. She was a big-name announcer, but she only worked with local stations, and her attitude towards work was similar to mine. We both came from Inaba, so she was easy to talk to...I knew it was wrong, but I couldn't help getting intimate with her. She...gave meaning to my life." Namtame continued his confession. "Soon after Saki was found dead, yet another girl appeared on TV...That was you."

"That was when you made the connection, that people who appear in the Midnight Channel will die, but if you knew that then why didn't you try and talk to the police?" Naoto inquired. "Even a crazy lead is better than none."

"I tried after Saki's body was found." Namatame insisted. "But the guy on the other end said that it sounded like a fantasy, that if I really thought something was going to then I should give her shelter somewhere safe. Then after he hung up the Midnight Channel came on and I saw her again." He motioned to Yukiko. "The image of her on the TV seemed to smile at me, and it came to me. That maybe the other side was safe, or at least better than being killed and I figured I could just let her out again once things had calmed down."

"You gotta be kidding me you-" Chie was cut off as Yu suddenly held his arm to silence her.

"Narukami?"

Yu was silent for a few moments, pieces of evidence put themselves together in his mind. Leading
to a single conclusion. But more flashes went past his mind's eye, of the times they shared together. Part of him a small but dark part didn't want to do it. Yu pressed on regardless.

"Amazing, that basically proves that it was him," Yu spoke the words exactly.

"Wait, proves what?"

"Who?"

"I'm kinda lost here Senpai."

Naoto, however, caught on to what he was saying and gasped with shock.

"Are you saying what I think you're saying?" She asked looking to him with shock as the gears in her head began to turn.

"As a cop, he could easily keep track of the investigation and all he had to do was get lucky, and be the one to answer Namatame's call," Yu stated logically. "I've hung out with him more than a few times, and I've seen glimpses of his true self no matter how well he hides it, putting all those pieces together he probably directed Namatame to do all this for kicks," Yu explained with a sigh.

"It makes sense, he'd be able to get close to Mayumi Yamano and Saki Konishi and no one would think twice about it." Naoto realised as she began putting the pieces together. "And he's had his Persona since the beginning maybe even longer, after all, they attacked you in the bunker, but not only that they killed several officers in the Port Island Police department and destroyed the security footage as well as the equipment just before they went in and attacked you."

"Ok, hold can you guys please clue the rest of us in!" Yosuke demanded frustrated at being unable to follow the conversation.

"Yeah, who is?" Teddy inquired.

"It's Adachi," Yu revealed simply causing the others to gasp with shock.


"That can't be...I mean, he said he came to escort Ms Yamano and..."

"What...? Was he at your inn when the announcer was staying there?" Naoto inquired cutting Yukiko off.

"When Ms Yamano was staying at our inn, the media were swarming all over it. That's when Adachi arrived, saying he had been assigned to guard her...He told our waitress that fame could be rough..." Yukiko explained.

"Guard her...? He didn't spend the night there?"

"Huh...I wonder if he knew Ms Yamano..."

"I dunno about that, but I heard he did call out to a girl in my class," Kanji said. "I found out this afternoon. But I thought, y' know, that's just how cops are, so I didn't think it had anything to do with the case..."

"Detective Adachi also questioned Saki, the one who found the announcer's body, on numerous occasions. I heard it was because there was so little information about the case at the time, but..." Naoto said. "It's certainly unusual to question someone with as strong an alibi as hers multiple
"Then you think he had something else on his mind?"

"And that "something" is what connects those two victims to Adachi-san...? Come to think of it...We've been running into that guy a lot, in all sorts of places. And every time, he'd tell us what the police were doing before saying "Oops, I said too much" and claming up." Yosuke realised, his eyes widening. "Was that all to throw us off the trail...?"

"Nah, I bet he was leading us on," Kanji growled. "He was playing us for suckers."

"It would be no problem for him to drop that warning letter into your mailbox, either..." Rise pointed out. "Not to mention the fact that he can destroy any evidence that might point to him."

"There's only one way to confirm this, we need to talk to Adachi," Yu said firmly.

The team turned and began to head to the door, only to stop as Namatame called out.

"Wait! Your hand!" Namatame pointed at Yu's right hand, which upon inspection had a rather strange red circle on it glow with power. "Then, you're in the Holy Grail War too?"

"You know?" Naoto inquired

"Saber returned and spoke to me when I was recovering on my own." Namatame explained "She told me about the war, the Holy Grail and how it can grant any wish. When she told me, I was elated, I could bring back Mayumi and Saki, but then I remembered what I'd done. All damage I've caused. I'm not worthy to try and get the Grail, but you. You can, you have to stop the killer from getting it."

"That mark, what does it mean? Do you have one?" Naoto interrogated him.

"Yes, here, see," Namatame revealed his own right hand and showed one half of a mask, not dissimilar to the symbol that appeared in the circle Yu first summoned his Persona's. "Saber told me, that these seals, are part of a key. They only appear when the end phase of the Holy Grail War begins, it was triggered when we fought. These seals when put together become the key that opened the pathway to the Holy Grail. You can't get to it without them all."

"Which means, Adachi probably has the last one." Naoto sighed. "Which means conflict is inevitable."

"Take mine, and beat him, I know you'll do more good with the Grail than I could." Namatame insisted. "And Saber too, I know her power will serve you well."

"Wait, what do you mean Saber too?" Chie asked

"I don't understand all the details, but heroic spirit personas can be transferred to another person, because of the nature of the system and their contracts with us," Nametame explained. "She wants to help make up for what we did, not just because of her wish."

"My king," Gawain spoke gently materialising beside Yu.

Arturia appeared after a few seconds. Her skin a healthy colour, her eyes a gentle green, and her armour and dress a sky blue colour. She had a shamed look on her face and looked away from her knight.
"Sir Gawain, what you saw was…"

"Completely natural," Gawain stated firmly, causing her to flinch.

"But-

"We knights thought only of ourselves back then. Never realising the immense burden you put onto your own shoulders." Gawain said sadly. "You always did try and do everything yourself without troubling others, but that's what we were there for to help you share your burden if only you'd told us of it. Humans are meant to share their burdens with friends and comrades after all."

"Merlin told me when I pulled out Caliburn, that to be a King was to no longer be human," Arturia replied still unable to face him.

"Then Merlin was a fool," Gawain stated harshly causing Arturia to gasp and almost turn to face him. "He may have been a powerful mage, a wise sage but he was far from infallible. To be a king is to no longer be human, that is nonsense. You have people who care about you, who finally understand your reasons."

A rumble of agreement came from Lancelot who materialised next to Gawain, nodding his head.

"So please, don't turn away. Let us carry this burden together, not just as your loyal knights, but as your comrades."

Both Lancelot and Gawain each held out a hand towards her. Finally, she let out a choked sigh. Her arm raised towards her eyes and brushed something away before she turned around and placed her hand in theirs with a smile.

"You have learnt to use your words Sir Gawain." She laughed.

"I have had much time to practice," Gawain replied with a smile.

"Now, then, master." She looked at Namatame who nodded.

"Please give me your hand." He requested, Yu obliged and put his right hand in Namatame's own.

"I Taro Namatame herby forfeit my rights to fight for the Holy Grail, and grant my key and my Persona to Yu Narukami." The red marking on Namatame's hand vanished, art the same time Arturia transformed into a card which floated just moving from his hand to Yu's as the mask half appeared within the circle.

The Card burst and Arturia appeared again.

"Under the Arcana of Judgement, in the Class of Saber I Arturia Pendragon accept this new contract, with my Holy Sword I shall light the way to the Holy Grail for you." She vowed as a small gust of wind blew through the room before settling down.

"Alright, just one thing left to do now," Yu stated.

"Yeah, we have to go confront Adachi and put an end to this," Yosuke said clenching his fists. "That scumbag is gonna pay."

Outside of Nanako's room, Romani and Adachi were talking. Aika stood a short ways away waiting for Romani to be done.
"Well, I'm happy you were able to save Nanako," Adachi said with a smile. "You're one hell of a doctor."

"Haha, thanks," Romani said rubbing the back of his head. "I don't get compliments too often, my boss is always saying what a slacker I am, but I work hard, wish she'd cut me some slack."

"I hear that." Adachi nodded with agreement. "One time, Dojima-ACK!" The detective suddenly flinched as something cut his right hand, and the glove he'd wearing on it fell off.

"Nice mark Adachi." Yu complimented him. "Looking for the one Namatame had?" he then held up his hand revealing his mark which had both parts.

"Tch!" Adachi clicked his tongue with annoyance and sneer appeared on his face. "Damn brats."

"Get away." Aika suddenly grabbed Romani and moved his away from, Adachi, retreating behind the Investigation team.

"What's going on?" Romani asked totally confused.

"You're the killer Adachi," Yu said matter-of-factly. "You wrote the letter, and you egged Namatame on into trying to 'save' people when you got his phone call, didn't you?"

"Two for two, clever," Adachi confessed with an annoyed growl.

"It was you?" Everyone looked to see Dojima standing there off to the side between them all. "You did all this?"

"I was the best in the academy and look where it got me," Adachi stated angrily.

As Adachi began his rant Yu watched Naoto silently project a knife and then reinforce it. Yu nodded at her and Naoto readied herself.

"Adachi!" She yelled getting his attention "Think fast!" She threw the knife at him with lightning speed.

He flinched back as the knife began approaching him, aimed squarely for his head. However, suddenly a familiar figured shrouded in thick fog appeared ad deflected the knife embedding it into the solid wall nearby.

"Damn it." Adachi cursed.

"What the hell is that?" Dojima asked with shock.

"It's his Persona," Yosuke explained.

"You should have kept a tighter leash on it ya punk," Kanji said.

"Yeah, if you hadn't let her attack us in the bunker and come in the middle of our fight with Namatame it might have taken us longer to figure out he was innocent." Chie declared.

"Yeah, well not a lot of things go my way," Adachi responded. "Anyway, I'll be going now, but follow if you dare you brats!"

With that, the fog became thicker and soon shrouded everyone's vision. The sound of retreating footsteps echoed through the hallways.
"Adachi!" Dojima yelled as the rookie escaped.

"I'll be waiting for you, morons, don't take too long. I want that wish, don't make me come for keys." Adachi taunted as he was gone.

In a few seconds, the fog cleared away, revealing the empty hallway. Adachi and his Persona had already escaped.

"What the hell was that? And what did he mean by wish?" Dojima demanded.

Before anyone could say anything Aika stepped in and Dojima's eyes glazed over.

"Don't worry." She said looking at Yu. "He'll only remember Adachi confessing and running away, but not the other stuff."

"Thank you."

"That would've been really complicated to explain," Yukiko said.

"So, do you guys need anything from me?" Romani asked. "This looks really bad, I'll do whatever I can to help."

"Don't worry about it. Come on." The team gave chase and entered a room which they heard the door to slam just a few seconds earlier. They burst in only to find the TV rippling and shoe vanishing into the screen.

"Damn it, he got away," Kanji yelled.

"We should all go home and rest up, tomorrow we'll go after him," Yu told decisively.

"Senpai, please don't go on alone." Naoto pleaded with him. "I understand that it must hurt since you seemed to have a personal relationship with him."

"Maybe that's why I can feel some sort of presence coming from the TV kind of like yours." Rise theorised. "He might be calling out to you."

Rise paused before realising something and continuing.

"Wait, never mind! Forget I said that! We're all going together, okay!?" She yelled

"Promise us," Yosuke demanded.

"I promise I won't chase or fight him alone," Yu replied. That gained satisfied nods from the people around him.

"Alright, we should get some rest, tomorrow is gonna be a big day," Naoto stated turning away to leave.

"Yeah." "Sounds good." "Let's go." "I'm beat."

And just like that, the team departed from the hospital heading home to rest up.

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Instead of heading home, Yu found himself sat upon the ground just near the corner of the bookstore with Marie by his side. He'd found her waiting outside the Velvet Room. So he greeted her and she began walking and listening to him before seating themselves not far away.
"You want to go and see him?" She asked having listened to his story.

Yu nodded silently in response.

"But you promised your friends, you wouldn't chase him or fight alone." She pointed out.

"And I won't," Yu said finally. "He's calling out to me, if he goes into a dungeon I won't follow, but I know he'll be waiting, I just have to talk one more time."

"And what if he doesn't come to you?" She asked, "What if he wants to fight?"

"Then I'll leave, but I just have to know if he really is beyond saving."

"If he really is your friend, then go. But remember your promise to the others." Marie said firmly. 

"I will, thank you." Yu stood up and walked away.

Marie also stood up and watched him go, heading towards Junes. She stopped just short of the door to the Velvet Room. She whipped around when she thought she heard fingers snapping but saw no one. Then she fell to her knees.

"W-what is this?" She groaned, gripping her head which felt like her brain was on fire.

Yu was too far away to here her as information flooded like a tidal wave into her mind.

"N-No, this can't…..I'm not!" She cried, tears falling from eyes as the pain throbbed as more information kept coming. "D-damn it!"

Yu arrived quickly in Junes electronic department. Nobody was around and so he quickly snuck into the TV world. Rise wasn't wrong, so Yu followed the presence and found himself back at the apartment building that he Yosuke and Chie had found when they first met Teddie.

"Are you sure about this?" Cu Chulainn asked. "You know as well as I do that this isn't going to go the way you want. He was never the person you thought he was."

"I know," Yu answered softly as he began making his way up the stairs. "It's stupid, foolish and its never going to work. But still, I need to turn this page myself, so I can face without any regrets."

Eventually, Yu came to the floor, and following his instincts entered the room which belonged to Mayumi Yamanno in this world. The room seemed empty as he looked around. But he knew Adachi was here.

"This is a problem." A familiar voice said from behind him as he felt something pressed against the back of his head.

"Why didn't you bring the rest of 'em?" Adachi asked "You're such a party pooper. You couldn't even bring your wannabe detective friend?"

"I need to talk to you," Yu replied simply.

"To...what, change my mind?" Adachi sneered. "Don't kid yourself."

The feeling of the gun vanished Yu turned around to find the space empty. He looked around and Adachi sat on a stool.

"Your whole gang should be here. You know, work together, beat the bad guy." He taunted
mockingly. "Friendship, effort, victory...You guys love that stuff."

"I believed in you," Yu stated sadly.

"Oh really." Adachi scoffed before sneering at him more. "Just what was it about me that made you want to believe in me so bad?"

"Well?" He demanded after a silent pause. "I don't have anything to say to YOU. If crimes could be solved by appealing to morality, we wouldn't need the police! The person you believed in was a version of me who only existed in your head. You decided on your own to believe in me, and that decision betrayed you. Why complain about it to me?"

"I had to be absolutely sure," Yu said shaking his head. "That there really was no going back for you. Now I can do this without any regrets at all."

"You say the dumbest shit." Adachi snorted. "It's people like you, who come to be alone, naively thinking you can 'turn me around,' that piss me off the most." He drew his gun again and pointed it at Yu. "What do you think will happen if I shoot you?"

"You won't shoot me," Yu replied unafraid and ignoring the protests of his Persona's within.

"Wow, very optimistic! Is your brain rotting or something?"

There was a bang, and Yu felt the bullet brush past his ear, he could smell the acrid scent of burning gun smoke.

"Do you get it now?" he asked. "Let me tell you something when you beat Namatame, my Saber got a whole of information. I need you and your friends, alive. I'll take the key off you and when I do I'll drag you eight to the Holy Grail, there I'll throw you all inside it where you'll be sacrificed to power it. That's right, it needs you idiots for energy so I can make my wish. So I need more than just your part of the key. The grail will burn you up like fuel, mind body and soul and that wish will be all mine."

"To get a wish, I need to-"

"Sacrifice me and your little friends, or this war 'll never end." Adachi chuckled. "Now get lost I won't miss next time."

It didn't seem like a threat...But Yu don't think that could talk to Adachi anymore. He knew now that his relationship with Adachi has changed dramatically. Then he felt it, another Arcana, the true bond of his with Adachi. The Jester was still there, but this was new, and truly was empty. No soul connecting from beyond.

"Now choose, go back to your friends and bring them all here...Or you can die now."

Before Yu could speak, he included Arturia and raised Excalibur where it clashed with another sword. There Adachi Persona was, shrouded in fog, their sword fixed against his.

"Damn it, can you please cool your jets for once," Adachi complained.

"That sword is..." Before the persona could finish Yu channelled power into the sword. A bright golden light enveloping the blade.

"Gah, you crazy son of a-"
But there was no blast, just a massively bright light, which blinded both Adachi and his Persona. Allowing Yu to run away and escape.

"Adachi, I'll be back and you will pay for what you've done," Yu called back to him.

"Come and try and you lousy brat!" he yelled after him.

Yu ran back to the entrance, the revelations whirling inside his head. However before he could use the exit, the whole world seemed to whirl around him. Then suddenly he was in his room in the Dojima household again. He quickly ran to the window and found the sky was normal, clear and starry, he wasn't on the other side anymore. But how? When he looked, he thought he a girl with a stereotypical witches hat atop her head tip said hat at him before vanishing and his reflection returned to normal.

Yu sighed and fell onto his backside. He needed rest.
Yu felt surprised as he found himself sitting in a chair a circular table. As his mind woke up he realised that the each of his friends was sat near him, Yosuke and Teddie to his left but with a space for one more between him and them, Chie and Yukiko to his right, with Kanji, Naoto and Rise were sat on the far left. They all began to stir and as well while he took in details of not a room, but rather a large field of flowers with a blue cloudless sky above them.

"Where...are we?" Yu wondered aloud.

"What the hell? Flowers?" Kanji said groggily rubbing his eyes.

"What is the place?" Yukiko wondered.

"What a pain in the ass." A familiar voice said causing the whole team to snap to attention.

"Adachi," Yu said upon hearing his voice noticing his presence directly opposite himself, how had he noticed the murderer until now?

Yu prepared to fight, but realised, his personas were all quiet. He tried calling on the Arcana but nothing happened, not even the sensation of prana flowing through him.

"Bastard!" Yosuke made to stand up but found he couldn't "Hey, what gives? I can't stand up."

"Me either, I'm stuck!" Kanji growled fighting against some invisible force that held them all in their seats much to Adachi's amusement causing him to make mocking gestures only riling the two boys up more.

"Please, calm yourselves there is no need to be alarmed, all will be explained." A new voice cut in as a man appeared in the space between Rise and Adachi. He was wearing a red business suit and was sat in a wheelchair.

"This is all just a dream." A new man appeared, with long silver hair and a white cloak appearing on Adachi's other side. "For this meeting to happen, I linked all your minds together and brought you here into this dream."

"Now that you all know each other's identities we can explain things and began the Inaba Holy Grail War in earnest." This voice belonged a wizened old man wearing black robes. He looked familiar to Yu-
"Hey, I know you," Chie yelled pointing at the old man. "You're the guy that bumped into me at the start of the year, the day before Narukami came to town, you shook my hand and then vanished."

"Hey, he did that to me too." Yukiko said, "The same day as well but I was taking a break outside the inn."

"Me too, on my way to school that morning," Yosuke stated.

"I think I remember knocking into him outside my ma's shop around that time," Kanji recalled.

"He appeared to me in my world sometime before you guys came to me, I tried to find him again but he was gone," Teddie stated. "I thought I just imagined it so I never mentioned it."

"The same for me, I was leaving home that day to help on another case, and I presume the same happened to you as well Rise?" Naoto inquired switching into detective mode.

"Yeah, security never found him after he somehow got backstage after a concert." Rise confirmed. "What about you senpai?"

"Yeah, met him and shook his hand, when I got off the train and came to town," Yu confirmed looking at the old man questioningly.

"I met him too, time sounds about right," Adachi commented, the sound of voice causing the others to glare at him.

"Well, that was me connecting you to the Throne of Heroes, I needed to do that otherwise this War wouldn't have gotten going properly." The man replied with a shrug. "Anyway, I am Kischur Zelretch Schweinorg, just call me Zelretch most people do."

"And I am Merlin, the Magus of Flowers." The silver-haired young man introduced himself.

"Merlin, the court wizard of King Arthur." Yu realised recalling him from the legends.

"And my name is Stephen, I am a programmer of sorts." The man in the Wheelchair introduced himself. "The Three of us together helped to establish this Holy Grail War the Hybrid System with which it is fought."

"Hybrid system..." Naoto parroted rubbing her chin before a look of realisation crossed her face and turned to stare at the three men harshly. "What have you done to us exactly?"

"Wait, what do you mean done to us?" Chie asked the detective.

"Archer and I tend to have talks when I'm home, ever since he awakened, he's told me a lot of things, one of them being that Heroic Spirits do NOT become Persona's naturally." Naoto explained "Normally they are summoned as Servants in Holy Grail wars, which are beings separate from normal humans, Persona's however from what Archer says and my research are a manifestation of a Persona User's personality, from our Minds and Souls. But the Heroic Spirits who have become our Persona's have their own thoughts and feelings and desires separate from us, but personas are, part of us, ourselves, you can't expect me to believe that shoving Heroic Spirits no matter how like or close to it is healthy at all."

Naoto's bombshell had caused most of the team to become rather nervous, looking at each other and then focusing the trio for an explanation. Yu, however, noticed that Adachi looked rather calm as if he didn't care at all.
"Please, keep calm," Stephen said soothingly. "I can assure you that although we have imposed the Heroic Spirits over your natural Persona's that you are in no danger, between my programming and Merlin's magecraft, we made sure that the process was seamless and without any adverse side effects, I'm sure you've noticed your increased strength, agility and durability in the real world. Your existences are similar to Pseudo-Servants which are heroic spirits summoned by using a human body for their vessel to act as a Servant. So please rest assured, your souls and minds are in no danger."

"Alright, that seems to make sense," Yukiko said with relief.

"Yeah" Chie Agreed.

"Alright, how long are these guys gonna stay with us?" Kanji asked, "I'm not in a rush to get rid of my partner, but don't they have better shit to do?"

"Well, as part of the contract for this Holy Grail War, after the War sis concluded they are obligated to stay with you for the rest of your lives just like your natural personas would," Merlin replied dreamily.

"Hold on, Senpai, how many personas do you have now?" Naoto inquired.

"Twenty three since last night," Yu answered without a beat causing the rest of the team to gasp while Adachi merely clicked his tongue and look away.

"Twenty three?" Naoto breathed before glaring at the men again. "You can't seriously expect me to believe that having that many Heroic Spirits inside one person is in any way healthy or safe."

"Calm down." Zelretch sighed. "He was chosen for this, he has the Wild Card ability, which lets him change Personas. He was more ready for this then the rest of you were."

The team looked unconvinced and looked at their leader with concern.

"Alright, so what's the point of this war?" Yu asked changing the subject "Why go to all the trouble of creating a wisher granter, partnering us with Heroic Spirits and setting this whole thing up?"

"Simple, Persona users tend to be in the middle of a great cosmic wager between two entities, Philemon and Nyarlothep." Zelretch began to explain. "Philemon is to see if humanity will eventually become enlightened, or will succumb to their vices and ruin themselves as Nyarlothep thinks."

"So all of this, Saki, Ms Yamano they died for some stupid bet?!" Yosuke yelled angrily. trying and failed to stand up.

"Well it could be far worse" Zelretch stated with a shrug. "After all back in Ninety-Nine it got to the point where he Earth's rotation stopped, destroying everything on the surface of the planet, a new timeline had to be created to give humanity a second chance."

This caused everyone to freeze up, barely able to believe it, it sounded so absurd and yet, it didn't seem like a joke.

"It was only after that whole mess with Philemon coming out on top, that they decided should they ever do this again to keep it small and well that time is now," Merlin said nonchalantly.

"Of course, things right now would also be smoother if he would've added to the agreement that the bombastic abomination would play fair for once and not interfere like all their previous plays."
"True, but his rule-breaking gives our side some leeway as well." Stephen pointed out.

"Yeah, but not as much as I'd like," Zelretch grumbled. "Anyway, back on topic, if you want all this to end you not only to have defeat Adachi, but you have to make a wish on the Holy Grail and to do that you need to energize it."

"And how do we do that?" Teddie asked suspiciously.

"Simple, the winner has to sacrifice the losers to the Holy Grail," Zelretch stated bluntly and with a smile as everyone gasped with horror.

"Indeed, the Holy Grail must be powered, and the easiest most straightforward war to do that is with eight competitors souls," Stephen began explaining. "You see all those competing in the war are unique in that you are Persona users and thus your souls have a great deal of potential energy enough to this Holy Grail of ours which can grant any wish at all."

"You're saying that even if I win, I'd have to sacrifice my friends," Yu interjected, calm anger in his voice. "There's no way I'd do that no matter what the Grail can give me."

The team all nodded and yelled in agreement only really quietening down when Adachi rather loudly clicked his tongue receiving glares from them.

"That's all well and good, but Adachi, on the other hand, won't hesitate to throw you all to the Grail," Zelretch said. "Plus he's just as strong you are, remember when you bent the street light Kanji, or Narukami when you shattered the concrete to save Ebihara and then jumped back onto the rooftop? He has all those abilities too in addition to his Persona, so even if you defeat him he can break out of prison and try again and again."

"We won't sacrifice each other but we can't just do nothing either," Naoto said going over the situation. "

"Plus, even if we win our Persona's stay with us for the rest of our lives, so Adachi would still have his powers even if we found a way to use the wish without sacrificing everyone." Rise pointed out.

"Wait, you said that sacrificing people was the easiest way, not the only way." Naoto realised as she looked Stephen dead in the eye. "That implies that there's another way right?"

"I told you the easiest method to attain a wish," Stephen stated. "If there is another path then you must discover that truth for yourselves."

"Naoto, what are you getting at?" Yosuke asked curiously.

"Rise is correct, but if we can find a way to power the Holy Grail some other way then we can use the wish to take Adachi's powers away making him just a normal human again." Naoto said, "We can do that right?"

"As we said the Holy Grail of Inaba is a true omnipotent wish granter capable of granting any desire, so yes such a thing is easily within its power," Merlin confirmed.

Any other comment stopped by an amused snort from Adachi.

"Look at you cocky brats, all making plans as if I've already lost." He laughed madly. "You morons don't even know how strong I am, plus the TV World loves me, it's on my side you have
got a chance in hell of beating me, so if I were you I'd spend less time planning what your gonna wish for and more time picking out tombstones."

"Alright." Merlin cut into the tense situation with all subtlety of a battering ram. "This meeting is concluded, there is nothing else that you can't figure out ourselves, good luck." He then tapped the ground with his staff and like that team and Adachi vanished, leaving only himself, Zelretch and Stephen.

"Welp it's done," Zelretch stated with a smirk leaning back into his chair. "I made the adjustments just like we discussed."

"When the World Arcana is awakened it will begin putting out the signal, attracting Its attention, to Mr Narukami," Stephen said calmly bridging his hands.

"Excellent, and with that Humanity's future should be secure, at least in this world," Merlin agreed nodding his head.

When he heard no response he looked up and saw both men had vanished abruptly leaving without a word, in their place was a teenager, a rather familiar teenage girl wearing a stereotypical witch's hat, a pair of glaring red eyes focused on him, a keyhole in her forehead contained an eye which glowed an eldritch purple. This girl was Abigail Williams.

"Merlin." She spat his name furiously and a tentacle wrapped around his neck appearing from the ground. He didn't worry, after all, this was just a dream, his real body was safe in Avalon far out of even her reach.

"Hello, Abigail." He croaked out as the tentacle lifted him from his chair and closer to her. "Is something...the matter?"

"You three...tricked me." She growled, he felt the tentacle tensing around his throat as she spoke.

"We told you what you needed to know...glrk...and we never told you anything but the truth." Merlin croaked out as the tentacle squeezed his throat.

"I watched over him, his journey through the singularities, the remnants, the lostbelts and beyond." Tears began to stream from her eyes "I saw what he became, because of what you insisted I help you do, all so he could become what you, Stephen and Zelretch needed him to become."

"I assure you...it was all necessary." Merlin tried to assure her, only to receive a squeeze upon his throat, the tears were gone wiped from her face and replaced with look of pure hatred, even the eye within the keyhole seemed to be glaring at him, no wonder Stephen and Zelretch bailed on him, its eldritch purple gave even him shivers. "Humanity needs a Me-GLRK!"

"Stephen and Zelretch might be out of my reach." Abigail cut him off, squeezing his throat to silence him, her tone becoming menacing "But I promise I will wait until the end of the world, and when you are finally released from Avalon I WILL be waiting for you, and when that happens you'll beg, you'll pray for death by the time I am done with you."

With that threat, Merlin was released, and Abigail vanished. He coughed and rubbed his throat as air filled his lungs once again.

"Well, that's something to look forward too, I suppose." He laughed nervously, slightly more intimidated than the threat of Vivian finding him.

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Now fully rested the team had gotten together and met at Junes before entering the TV World. They had all gone over and confirmed that the dream they shared last night was real. The fact of the Holy Grail and what it would cost to use it haunted them, but for now, they put it out of their minds. They one goal, to bring Adachi to justice.

To that end, they followed Teddie's nose to a familiar place. The apartment building where Yu, Yosuke and Chie first found themselves in this world. As Yu silently expected he led them right to the room where it began, the room that no doubt belonged to Mayumi Yamano.

"His scent is definitely in there," Teddie stated with a sure nod.

"He's right, his prana trail leads there." Rise confirmed looking into her mirror.

"I had a thing for her and then that bitch went and had an affair." Adachi's voice drifted out of the room.

The Team pushed in and saw Adachi standing there looking out of the window.

"So you finally came and brought your friends this time?" Adachi asked, "Do you have any idea how annoying you all are?"

"Wait, this time?" Yosuke wondered before it hit him and he gave Yu and look. "Dude you promised you wouldn't chase him without us!"

"I needed to try and talk to him, but it's obvious that he's far beyond talking down now," Yu answered unapologetically.

"Well look at you working it out." Adachi snorted in a mock congratulatory tone. "Well does catching me even matter anymore? After all these two worlds are about to fuse together, will anyone care what I did when that happens?"

"What are you talking about?" Naoto demanded as Archer appeared next to her glaring at the killer before talking to Rise who began to use her mirror.

"This world is going to become our world and the humans will all turn into shadows," Adachi explained apathetically.

"Is that possible?" Yosuke asked.

"There's no way a creep like him has the power to do that even with a persona," Chie said definitely.

"He's not lying." Rise said causing everyone to look at her. "The worlds are fusing, and I don't detect a reaction from the Counter Force. It seems that Alaya doesn't seem to be reacting and Gaia is ignoring it altogether."

"If Gaia is ignoring it, then he can't be responsible." Archer stated firmly, "Something much more powerful is at play here. Gaia wouldn't let a human do what he wants something else, much stronger and more in tune with nature must be behind this, but what could it be?"

"And he can't be using the Grail to do it even if it is powerful enough to do it." Yukiko pointed out.

"We'll figure that out later." Yosuke interrupted pointing at Adachi. "You were the one who threw
"Ms Yamano into the TV didn't you?"

"You really wanna know the truth?" Adachi chuckled "I guess if the worlds gonna end there's no harm in telling you. It was an accident. I told her to meet me out in the lobby because I wanted to ask her something. But when we met, that bitch went berserk on me."

Yu was about to ask what happened next, but Rise let out an audible gasp. "Caster!"

The fox eared persona needed barely another word before she materialised and kicked at Adachi only for her foot to pass right through him, his whole form flickering like a broken TV.

"Hold on, that's just a projection, his real body is somewhere else." Rise stated glaring at the killer.

"Bravo, bravo, I'm impressed, little girl." Adachi mockingly clapped, his laughter grew more and more maniacal, as the projection vanished and a large hole ripped open in the wall, forming a portal with red and black lines in it.

"He's definitely in there, I can sense his presence he's taunting us." Rise declared.

"Come back here!" Kanji growled giving chase

"You're not getting away!" Chie yelled joining Kanji through the portal.

The rest of the team followed readying themselves for any traps he might have set. However, what they saw was not what they expected. Kanji and Chie had both frozen in place and were looking around at the destroyed ruins of the shopping district.

"Guy's something feels different here, unlike our shadows I think he has complete control over his world." Rise said.

"I like here." Adachi's voice came from above and they looked to see him sitting on the destroyed rooftop of the Moel gas station. "This place seems to have taken a real shine to me, it's like I'm the king of the world, I can go anywhere I want and the shadows just leave me be."

Suddenly a creature wielding two long-barrel revolvers emerged behind Adachi. Its face was shrouded in a cloth sack, with only one ominous white eye to see its surroundings. It also wore two long chains across its left and right shoulders, forming a cross.

"Danger danger that's a very powerful grizzly." Teddie cried just before it fired its guns sending power blasts of magical wind at them, barely deflected as Archer materialised with Rho Aias, both his blades were at the ready.

"Shit it's The Reaper" Archer clicked his tongue with annoyance.

"What's The Reaper?" Naoto asked as Kanji summoned Heracles.

"It's like a counter guardian, expect to keep the universe in order, as a shadow it's much weaker the original lucky for us, but it's still really powerful despite being a fake."

"Come on kiddies, catch me if you can, the only real challenge will be making it to me alive." Adachi taunted as he vanished.

"We've got things handled over here." Naoto stated as Heracles roared and leapt the Reaper, tackling it, Archer projected a bow and began taking potshots from a piece of rubble nearby.

"She's right, you go after Adachi." Kanji agreed and began focusing on the battle.
"Got it, thanks," Yu said before running after the others who seemingly didn't get far before Yosuke tripped over a piece of rubble.

They all looked to see a familiar building, even catching sight of a sign declaring the place.

"Wait a second."

"This place..." Yukiko paused, her voice sad almost heartbroken at the sight, "is my Inn."

Adachi's voice came from inside the building, they all looked through a pair of shattered glass doors, they saw him sitting on a seat looking down at a TV screen with Ms Yamno's image on it.

"This hick town was so damn boring I had to whittle away my hours watching TV." He complained, "I watched her every day and developed a little crush on her, but not anymore." He tapped the TV screen and the team found themselves watching an interaction between an alive Mayumi Yamano and Adachi, clearly, the day of he did it.

"Who exactly are you?" She asked taking a step back towards the television which sat on a stand, clearly creeped out by Adachi who had a strange look on his face. "And what's this something important?"

"This whole story about the affair it's all a lie right?" the past Adachi inquired.

"That is absolutely none of your business!" She yelled defensively.

"Then you're telling me it isn't a lie." Adachi's tone became low with suppressed anger. "And here I had a thing for you, but I didn't know that in the end, you're just another stupid bitch..."

"What's wrong with you? D-Don't make me call for help!" She threatened.

"Ugh, shut up, shut up, shut up. I think you need to see what it's like to fear for your life...It'll get your head straight."

Before she could say anything Adachi rushed her, grabbing her by the collar of her shirt and slammed her into the TV Screen, where she promptly fell right through the screen into the Midnight Channel, she screamed as she completely left the world.

"She fell in..." Adachi chuckled before laughing manically. "Ha...hahaha...Wow...So people can go completely inside..."

"It's a good thing for me that nobody was there in the middle of the night," Adachi said with a smirk from his chair.

"This happened...in the lobby of our inn?" Yukiko asked as they came back to the destroyed Inn of Adachi's dungeon.

"I learned about the Midnight Channel through some rumour. You hear a lot of fishy stories like that on the force. But it was pure coincidence that I touched the screen and discovered my power. I burst out laughing when I found out. I knew right away that this was going to be interesting!"

"So you used Ms Yamano to test your power." Yu accused him.

"Not at all" Adachi denied standing up from his chair "You see I'm far more of a gentleman than that. The bitch had betrayed me with her affair so and I was simply trying to teach her lesson."

"You're a real scumbag you know that!" Chie yelled furiously when suddenly another Reaper
appeared from behind them. It pointed its guns at the group but was hit by a roundhouse kick from Assassin.

"I'm gonna fill you full of holes!" Yukiko vowed summoning Rider to do battle.

Rider blasted the Reaper with a pair of culverin cannons, only for it to shrug off the attack and blast both Persona's causing Yukiko and Chie to cry out as they felt the pain too.

"You're wasting your time fighting back!" Adachi cackled. "This town will soon be swallowed by the fog, this will be the only world you'll know!"

"We'll handle this, you guys get after him." Chie cried and focused on the fight, Assassin and Rider both kept moving dodging shots from the Reaper.

The rest of the team kept moving, they followed after Adachi and before they knew they were on the other side of the one-way mirror of the interrogation room in the police station.

"Isn't this…" Yu didn't get to finish as Yosuke suddenly pressed up against the glass.

On the other side was Saki Konishi, Adachi sat opposite her.

"Saki it's me!" Yosuke called out to her but it was futile she couldn't perceive him, this was the past after all.

"That's enough," Saki said standing up from her chair. "What's going on here? I thought you called me in here for questioning."

"Ok you had a fling with Namatame didn't you?" Adachi asked accusingly standing up and approaching her.

"No" She denied "I barely even know the guy."

"Hey It's cool you can tell me," Adachi said invading Saki's personal space as she backed up into the TV set in the room, his rested his hand near her head and leant towards her, putting another hand on her cheek. "Just do what I say and you can keep your secret."

Her response was to slap him across the face causing him to recoil in pain and anger.

"So that's how its gonna be?" Adachi sighed rubbing his face. "Well if that's how you wanna play" Adachi rushed and grabbed Saki's head and began forcing her into the TV. "Then I know just what to do with you."

It was over even quicker than with Ms Yamano, Saki vanished through the screen and into the TV World. Her screams lasting even less time. Yosuke punched the window and growled as fury bubbled up inside him.

"High school girls these days are such a pain the ass." The past Adachi complained at the TV "This world is going straight to shit." He then stuck his head partway into the screen. "Let me hear you beg a little maybe then I'll let you out." He then pulled his head back into the real world. "Or maybe not I would never walk into a death trap like that." He laughed to himself.

"I graduated first in my class at the academy," Adachi said as the memory ended and they were back in the ruined police station. "But then I got sent to the boonies. I guess the upside to this story is me getting these cool powers."
"You bastard!" Yosuke growled as he picked himself up and glared at Adachi. "You're gonna pay."

"Hey wait a sec, look at it from my perspective." Adachi objected vanishing and then appearing just behind Yosuke. "I had no idea what it was like inside the TV World. I never did it thinking I was killing them." He vanished and appeared between them and the destroyed wall. "And besides those bitches played Namatame like the stupid bastard he is. They got what they deserved." He vanished and appeared standing on the ceiling just behind Yosuke. "I think I've done this world a favour."

"SHUT UP!" Yosuke swung only for his punch to miss.

"Over here." Adachi taunted leaning against a piece of rubble "The pop star over there already said this isn't the real me."

"So, what about Namatame?" Yu asked as the followed Adachi to the rubble of what was Namatame's living room judging by the projection of the man sitting in it with a phone held up to his ear.

"Well after that Saki girl's body popped up he called the cops in the middle of the night to give us his insight," Adachi explained.

"Huh...That's the pattern to the two deaths so far?" Adachi's voice asked clearly from over the phone "And now you're seeing a girl in a kimono on that weird program, and you think she'll die too. Is that right?" There was a short pause before Adachi began talking again. "Mr Namatame...Do you seriously expect us to believe something like that?"

"B-But...it's true!"Namatame objected desperately. "If there's any way the police can protect her..."

"Listen...There's no way the police are going to make a move based on a fantasy story like that." Adachi told him... "It does sound interesting, though..."

"B-But..."

"Oh, I have an idea...If you want to save her that much...Why not do it yourself? Like...You could shelter her somewhere. Someplace where no one could find her." Adachi suggested with barely restrained glee.

"Where no one could find her...?" Namatame said looking at the TV before the idea that would set things in motion hit him.

"Save her yourself...You can do it. I'm busy, so I'm hanging up now. Bye." With that Adachi hung up.

"Too easy wasn't it?" Adachi asked with a smirk as the memory ended and saw him before them again. "Of all the people who could have picked up that call from Namatame it just happened to be me." He vanished and appeared atop the end back end of a wrecked bus which lay with its front end in the ground. "And all I had to do was give him a little push. By rescuing people from this world you convinced Namatame that he was saving them, your good intentions created a game of cat and mouse that would never end...Haha, it was awesome."

"You're a complete pig," Rise stated angrily "A total scumbag."

Suddenly another Reaper burst out f the ground behind Adachi. This time Yosuke and Teddie prepared to take it on. They summoned Diarmuid and Angra Mainyu, the latter of who immediately leapt at the Reaper, clinging to its face and clawing at its single eye like a wild
animal, causing it to flail and shoot wildly. Diarmuid deflected a few shots and leapt into action.

"Leave this battle to us, you two go after him," Yosuke said.

"Thanks, guys." Yu thanked them before giving chase to Adachi who was walking away rather casually.

He came to the ruins of another part of the police station where Adachi waited for him.

"You were the one who put Mitsuo into the TV didn't you?" Yu accused.

"That was his fault, the attention-seeking fatass came to see me too soon in the game, but It had been a while since I put someone in, so I got a real kick out of it at least." Adachi shrugged uncaringly. "The police didn't have any idea who the killer was yet, so they wrote him off as a joke and then they tossed him over to me. I never thought for a second that someone would show up willing to take the rap for a crime they didn't commit. If I let him take the fall and close the case then Namatame would stop saving people, I couldn't let that happen, the game would be over, so I said he passed out during questioning so I sent him home. But I threw him into the TV for fun."

"So that's your reason, it was all a game to you." Rise said with disgust.

"You gotta have some excitement in life, don't you agree? But then you guys put your foot in it again and ruined my fun. Thanks to you, Kubo was arrested again, and everyone acted like he was the true culprit behind it all. Tch...I don't know why they did, that copy cat killing was so bad." He teleported and then made copies of himself. "But I suppose it worked out in the end, though, because good ol' Namatame kept saving people. I guess the guy started to develop some kinda messiah complex, huh? What an idiot. And you guys, you never stopped searching so I guess you never bought it either, out of curiosity what gave it away?" the trio of Adachi's stared at Yu expectantly.

"The fact that Mitsuo's murder of Mr Mooroka was so different from the others, like the cause of death and the fact that Mr Mooroka never appeared on the Midnight Channel," Yu replied as Rise stared hard into her mirror occasionally glancing at Adachi's projections. "And the fact that your Persona attacked us on the trip to Port Island."

"What a pain that was." Adachi sighed rubbing his head. "My Saber was bored with all the waiting around, so I let 'em have a little prana but wouldn't give anymore, in hindsight I should have just gone to an arcade or something but whatever, you all came out alive and Saber's expression coming back was priceless."

Yu and Rise kept walking forward, eventually, they came to the ruins of the Dojima household, Adachi was sat at a Chabudai which was set with empty plates, dishes, bowls, glasses and cutlery. Rise gave Yu a nod, this was the real one. Adachi himself clapped as he approached, Rise staying back.

"Nicely done, I'm surprised you made it this far." He said still clapping before stopping looking over his shoulder. "Seriously kid I'm impressed."

"Alright, enough, why are you really doing all this?" Yu demanded.

"You mean what's my motive? I don't have one, I did it because I could and it was fun." Adachi shrugged. "But I guess, if you really want something, I needed eight sacrifices for the Holy Grail, and every time another one of got a Persona you became a valid sacrifice candidate." Yu merely stared at him and Rise gave him a hateful glare. "You know thinking about it, I don't think this
world is the killer, all this place does is reflect people's thoughts," He then stood up and faced Yu.
"So if that's the case then the 'real' killers are the people from our world including you."

He then began laughing again hen Yu didn't rise to his bait.

"Aren't all a bunch of High School Kids? Shouldn't you be studying instead of wasting your time
with this crap? Study hard, get into a good college, work at a respectable company, marry a cute
girl...Why are you guys so worked up over something you can't stop? Or are you all just a bunch of
lonely losers who can't get a life?"

I think you're the lonely loser." Yu told him causing Adachi to stop and glare at him.

"Don't think for a second you're better than me, cocky brat," Adachi said regained his composure
quickly. "After all you chose to get close to me remember? "Let's find the culprit ourselves! Let's
meet up at the special headquarters today!" Am I right, or am I right? Man, it's embarrassing. How
old are you guys? Ahahahahahahaha! Oh crap, my stomach's hurting. I told you," he threw his
arms outwards and continued talking excitedly confident he was still in control. "I told you, once
your world gets swallowed whole everyone will turn into shadows and there's not a thing you can
do about it, especially when I sacrifice you brats to get my wish."

" But that is your wish." Yu stated causing Adachi to look at him.

"Huh?"

"This world doesn't turn people into Shadows on its own, so the worlds fusing is just one part of
it." Yu pointed out. "Your wish is to turn all humans into shadows."

"HAHAHAHAHAHAHA!" Adachi laughed loudly and clapped as he did so. "That's amazing you
figured it out, yup, the way I see it my wish will be doing all those sad sacks out there a favour, as
shadows they'll see what they want to see, do whatever they wanna do, without having to worry
about what other people think or the consequences to society. They'll all be way better off than
they are now."

Spending so much time with Adachi, talking at Junes, having dinner, hanging out with Nanako had
helped Yu put the pieces together and see through Adachi, to see what he really wanted. What he
wanted was to put an end to suffering in his own twisted cynical way, and yet there was only one
thing he could say.

"You're pathetic," Yu said after a few moments of silence.

"You're so freaking naive brat!" Adachi yelled angrily getting into his face. "That makes you
VERY ANNOYING! EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE IS A WASTE! THERE'S A NEW WORLD
COMING AND WHAT IT DOESN'T NEED IS ANNOYING ASSHOLES LIKE YOU!"

"Fine, let's finish this," Yu stated ready for battle and prepared to summon Gawain. "Rise, stay
back and keep scanning."

"Right." She nodded standing back and installing Caster, gazing deeply into her mirror with solid
focus.

"I'm going to cripple you and make you watch as I sacrifice your little friends to the Holy Grail one
by one!" Adachi vowed clutching his head as power began to gather around him.

"Here it comes, his Persona is going to be summoned and there will be no handicaps this time!"
Gawain warned him.
"I'm ready," Yu answered calmly as red flames burst into being near Adachi, similar to the ones that came when Yu summoned a new Persona. As the figure materialised fog rushed in like it was filling a vacuum until there was a burst and the summoning was finished. The Persona aside from its silhouette was completely concealed by the fog.

"SABER!" Adachi called out as his persona finally appeared.

"GAWAIN!" Yu crushed the Arcana in his hand the Knight of the Sun appeared in his full glory, Galatine ready to do battle.

"Now be a good little boy and die quickly!" Adachi yelled as the two Saber's charged at each other, ready to battle for the fate of Inaba and the Holy Grail.

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