2455 Floodgates  
  
The usually calm river had swelled, the turbulent grey waters climbing high up the desolate shore. The shore itself had become a muddy mess, with its usual liveliness gone. A large area was cordoned off by police tape and hidden behind a scattering of vehicles parked in front of it, with a small crowd of passerby freezing in the rain behind the tape to satiate their curiosity.  
  
The blinking lights of police sirens gave the scene an ominous, anxious hue.  
  
Climbing out of his car and raising the collar of his jacket to prevent the rain from seeping in, Sunny looked up with a dark expression.  
  
The sky was heavy and dark, shedding tears with no reprieve. That was not what attracted his attention, though.  
  
The idle onlookers crowding behind the police tape did not worry him, but the body had been found close to a bridge. There was a second crowd on that bridge now, busy snapping photos with their phones — from there, they had а perfect vantage point to the body laying on the edge of the water.  
  
'...Damn ghouls.'  
  
It could not have been a coincidence that the body had been dumped here. Either the Nihilist dropped it off the bridge, or he simply wanted people to appreciate his work. If it was the latter, he had found a highly receptive, enthusiastic audience.  
  
Catching a patrol officer who was rushing past, Sunny pulled him back.  
  
"Which asshole…"  
  
The cop turned around with an angry expression, but then paled and took an involuntary step back.  
  
"D—detective Sunny, sir! You… you're here?"  
  
Sunny glared at him for a few moments, then nodded toward the bridge and said in a low, even tone:  
  
"Are you blind or something? Yes, I am here. So, grab a few friends and go clear the pedestrian section of the bridge off, then block it. Bastard, do I need to tell you how to do your job?"  
  
If there had been any evidence left on the bridge, it was for sure destroyed by now. Someone deserved to be fired for this negligence, but Sunny knew that nobody would.  
  
The cop trembled, then saluted and swiftly disappeared from view.  
  
Shaking his head, Sunny climbed under the police tape and headed to the crime scene while putting on black latex gloves. There was a particularly large group of people crowding near the water, blocking his view — he knew that the body was there.  
  
As he was approaching, he could hear them talking in hushed voices:  
  
"Did you hear? Sunny is coming back today."  
  
"Who?"  
  
"Oh, right… you're new. You wouldn't have met him yet."  
  
"But who is Sunny, though?"  
  
"Fool, don't you know anything? You can cross anyone in Mirage Police, but you must never, ever cross that guy. He's fully insane, and not in a good way."  
  
"Sunny, Sunny… w—wait, do you mean him? The Devil Detective?!"  
  
"Ah, so you do know about him. Well, I guess there's hope for you, still. Don't anger the Devil, man."  
  
"Oh, come on… most of the stories they tell about him have to be lies. I bet I can take him, if push comes to shove."  
  
"Damn, you turned out to be a moron. Listen… that one time, back in the day when he was in the Organized Crime Division, the boss of the Red Frog gang put a huge bounty on his head. So, twenty or so thugs cornered him in an underground market at night, all armed with knives and baseball bats. Do you know what happened next?"  
  
"W—what?"  
  
"A proper bloodbath is what happened. I was one of the first officers to arrive at the scene, so I saw it myself… when we opened the doors, it was like a slaughterhouse, man. He took them all down — a bunch died on the way to the hospital, the rest were crippled for life."  
  
"Twenty men? Come on… no way…"  
  
"Shit, I was there, okay? He just walked out of that carnage, looking like a demon from hell, gave me a nasty glare, then got into a car without saying a word and drove straight to the bar where the Red Frog headquarters were. The next day, their boss surrendered himself to the police with a box full of evidence… well, what was left of their boss did, at least."  
  
Ignoring the whispers, Sunny unceremoniously pushed his way through the crowd of people. The cops grew silent when they saw him, moving to make way.  
  
Noticing someone he knew well, Sunny asked in a somber tone:  
  
"Where's the medical examiner?"  
  
The man coughed a few times.  
  
"Detective Sunny, sir… welcome back!"  
  
Sunny just stared at him, making the man shiver.  
  
"I asked you a question, didn't I?"  
  
The cop lingered for a few moments, then sighed and gestured to the river.  
  
"There is minor flooding in several areas further downstream, so lots of our guys are delayed by traffic jams. They'll be here soon… but we have a bit of a problem, sir. The water keeps rising, you see. The body was already found halfway in the river, but if it is not moved soon, the current might just carry it away. The other detective has been waiting to…"  
  
Sunny cursed and waved the man away.  
  
Walking through the mud, he approached the corpse. It was indeed laying on the very edge of the water, already submerged halfway. All Sunny could see were the dead man's legs and the lower section of his torso.  
  
Leaning down, he grabbed one of the corpse's legs and dragged the body out of the water.  
  
A ghastly, bloated face was revealed, missing both eyes.  
  
'Shit…"  
  
Just as Sunny was about to take a better look, an easygoing voice resounded from behind, making him stop.  
  
"Hey! Hey, buddy, what the hell are you doing? This is a crime scene, for fuck's sake. Who let a random civilian wander in?"  
  
The voice was unfamiliar and female.  
  
'So, this is the dead weight, then.'  
  
Exhaling through gritted teeth, Sunny straightened аnd turned around, looking at the woman with a chilling expression.  
  
Well, or at least he had planned to.  
  
Instead, he froze for a moment… then slowly looked up.  
  
And then a bit more up.  
  
His eyes widened a little.  
  
'What… the actual hell? This is the washed-out mom?!'