2457 Crash Course  
  
It did not take long to identify the victim after discovering the tattoo. His data was in the system due to several juvenile offenses — as for the crimes he had been caught committing as an adult, there were none, because the poor guy was barely an adult.  
  
"Gods. He's a kid."  
  
Sunny gave his new partner a dark look.  
  
'...Did she just say "gods", plural?'  
  
Or had he heard wrong?  
  
Come to think of it, his poster girl of a partner looked terribly familiar. He felt like… no, he was convinced that he had seen her in his nightmares, and quite often at that. How could he have dreamt of people he had never met before, though?  
  
Sunny sighed and rubbed his eyes tiredly, feeling both exhausted and incapable of falling asleep.  
  
'Get a grip, damn it… you really are going crazy.'  
  
"Yeah, well. The gangs like tо recruit them young."  
  
He would know. He had been one such underage thug himself, once.  
  
The medical examiner finally arrived, and Sunny beckoned Effie away. Taking off his gloves, he tossed them into a trash bin, missed, then came back with a stifled curse to pick them up and put them into the bin properly.  
  
"Let's go. We're done here."  
  
His unreasonably gorgeous partner… Effie… looked around in confusion.  
  
"Aren't we going to look around some more? Question the person who discovered the body, check for discarded evidence in the bushes, and so on?"  
  
Sunny gave her a disgruntled glare.  
  
"There's no point. The body was either thrown down from the bridge or carried here by the river — in any case, the murder happened somewhere else. The patrol officers will examine the scene and question the witnesses. I doubt they'll find anything, though. The Nihilist is quite meticulous."  
  
He walked over to his car, unlocked the door, and gestured to the passenger's seat.  
  
"Get in."  
  
Effie gave the ramshackle car a dubious look, then sighed and squeezed herself inside. By the time Sunny climbed into the driver's seat, she was already chomping on another sandwich, which seemed to have appeared out of thin air.  
  
Where was she hiding them?  
  
"Wow, partner. I must say… I haven't seen a crappier vehicle in a while. Where did you get it, a museum?"  
  
Sunny started the car, then answered in an indifferent tone:  
  
"Impound lot auction."  
  
This unassuming black car had served him faithfully for the better part of a decade. It might have looked like it had seen better days... and drove like it was dreaming of going to car heaven... but it was still fast and reliable. He trusted it more than he trusted most people.  
  
Effie laughed.  
  
"That checks out. Well, anyway… that psycho, the Nihilist. He's really something, huh?"  
  
The corner of Sunny's eye twitched.  
  
"What he is is a pathetic loser. Nothing more, nothing less."  
  
His new partner raised an eyebrow.  
  
"The whole city is being terrorized by him, and despite that, the whole police force can't seem to catch him. How is he a loser?"  
  
Sunny looked at her briefly, then turned back to the road.  
  
"I am not going to give you a crash course in criminal profiling, but you need to know one thing about serial killers — despite how much the media likes to turn them into some kind of great and sinister figures, fundamentally, they are all pathetic losers."  
  
His expression darkened.  
  
"Most of them are products of childhood abuse, mental or physical — usually perpetrated by their mothers. So, they are either working up to committing some kind of perverse matricide, making up for losing their chance to commit it, or trying to relieve the rush of having committed it. There's more nuance to it, of course, but basically… they're disgusting. Oh, and by the way, they are not only losers, but also cowards. Most serial killers choose victims who are weaker than them and don't pose a threat — women, children, the elderly… you get the picture."  
  
He remained silent for a while, then let out a resentful sigh.  
  
"Of course, that bastard, the Nihilist, does not exactly fit these criteria. There is no apparent pattern to how he chooses victims, which means that they most likely do not serve as a surrogate for the person he really wants to kill. More than that, he goes after everyone and anyone, weak or strong. His killings appear both premeditated and impulsive… so, trying to profile him is all but useless. Hell, we might as well throw the entire book away when dealing with him."  
  
Effie finished her sandwich with a thoughtful expression on his face.  
  
"So, how are we going to find out who he is?"  
  
Sunny turned his head and studied her for a while.  
  
Eventually, he looked away and said evenly:  
  
"We don't need to find out who he is. I already know who he is. We just need to find concrete evidence to put him behind bars."  
  
Effie seemed stunned.  
  
"What? You know who the Nihilist is?"  
  
Sunny looked ahead, his eyes turning cold and murderous.  
  
"...Yeah. I do."  
  
She remained silent for a while, studying him with a strаnge expression.  
  
"How come no one else knows, then? Isn't he supposed to be a complete mystery? "  
  
Sunny smiled crookedly.  
  
"Your second question answers the first. No one knows who he is because no one is supposed to know."  
  
Effie blinked a couple of times, then frowned.  
  
"Somebody is suppressing the information? Wait… is someone covering for him?"  
  
Sunny glanced at her, wondering if she was being sincere or simply pretending not to know. For some reason, he felt inclined to trust his new partner… which was not at all like him. However, she had been pushed onto him by the superiors, which put her true allegiances under question.  
  
Eventually, he shrugged.  
  
"Someone is covering something, that is for sure. As for who and why — don't ask questions about things you are not qualified to learn, гookie. You'll live longer."  
  
She opened her mouth to retort, but before she could, he added in a cold tone:  
  
"Evidence. Without evidence, nothing you and I might think we know matters. So, keep an open mind and follow the evidence — inheriting my suspicions will only cloud your judgment."  
  
Effie gave him a long look, then giggled.  
  
"Wow, partner! You almost sounded like a real detective just now!"  
  
Sunny grimaced.  
  
"What the hell are you talking about? I am a real detective."  
  
She remained silent for a while, studying him with a strange expression. Her mask of carefree nonchalance seemed to crack a little, revealing a hint of the keen and astute person hiding beneath.  
  
Eventually, Effie leaned back and asked something odd:  
  
"Hey. Do you… do you really not remember?"  
  
Sunny raised an eyebrow, confused.  
  
"Remember what?"  
  
She hesitated for a few moments.  
  
"Who you are?"  
  
He frowned deeply.  
  
'What is that supposed to mean?'  
  
"Are you drunk or something, fool? I am Sunny, a detective from the Homicide Division of Mirage PD. Your senioг."  
  
Effie studied him for a few moments more, then smiled sheepishly, seeming perfectly laid-back and easygoing once again.  
  
"Sorry, senior! I meant… you're the infamous Devil Detective, after all! That's all."  
  
'What a weirdo.'  
  
Letting out an amused scoff, Sunny pressed a little harder on the gas.  
  
He didn't mind weirdos.  
  
To be honest, he was not the most sane person himself.