I wanted to know everything about them. Everything they knew, everything they felt. How they saw the world. And they taught me so many things. But despite the way they shared their lives with me, despite how much I loved them, I was separate from them. Different. Alone.

Asako Reina searched the bookshelves, looking for an empty journal to write her thoughts in. Instead, she found mementos of her life on the mainland.

Tablets written in ancient languages, still waiting to be deciphered. Scholarly works written by an obscure alchemist hailing from the Dragonfly clan. Poems exalting the pursuit of knowledge, no matter the consequences.

What a fool you are, Reina. To research a past that deserves to be forgotten. They have failed the test of time. They will not get a second chance.

Notebooks filled with endless speculations and multiple narratives. Condemnations by her lord for wasting her clan's resources. A letter from sympathetic monks, offering to fund her research…in return for certain "favors".

A book written by a monastic order, describing the Path. "Humans are ignorant, greedy and self-centered. They are not yet divine beings, worthy of respect and reverence. But we will secretly nudge society…and save humanity from themselves."

Your monastic order is one long con. Their Path is no salvation at all. Merely an endless road that offers hope…and little else. But as soon as the leaders admit this, they will lose all their power and wealth. So they will never admit it….not even to themselves.

An encoded note from her monastic order - her last communication before the trip: "Shiba Yohana unknowingly follows the Path that we uphold. Protect Yohana with your life."

Humans, gods, oni…it doesn't matter. All life lacks purpose. There is no higher calling, no real point to existence. WHY DON'T YOU ACCEPT IT? *Treat this life as mere enjoyment - to wake, play, dance, and…die. That's what the past did, you know. The past that you worship more fervently than the spirits themselves.*

"There is no journal." Reina sighed. She gave up, as she always did when faced with difficult challenges.

Then she looked through the window.

Reina gazed wistfully at the ocean. Calm, silent, orderly. The water kami does what is needed, and no more. It does not have to worry about the things humans have to worry about. It instead has to worry about much greater, worthier things.

I love humanity not for what it is…but for what it can become. And my purpose in life is to help humanity reach that destiny.

If I fail, so be it. But I will not forgive myself if I don't try.