

XLII

"I'm honestly surprised," Chinatsu mumbled, "that you've decided to undergo this sorta treatment. Sure it works," she said, "but it's difficult. Learning to control something as volatile as *insanity*, even *psychopathy*, is dangerous and extremely challenging. However..."

"However what?" Raizo laughed, leaning back in his chair. He glanced briefly at his watch. *I hope Kasumi's not waiting too long*, he thought. *I told her I'd just be a few minutes, so I bet she's waiting right outside*. He looked around. Classes had ended, and he was seating in front of his teacher's desk as she typed away on her computer, filling in documents.

"Well, let me put all of it this way," Chinatsu explained. "When and if this treatment works, you'll be a living superweapon. From my knowledge of your capabilities, as well as the general results of this treatment...well, let's just say there'll be a *shit ton* of governments who'd love to toss you an offer or two for some 'quick jobs,' if you catch my drift."

"Danger money?" Raizo inquired. "Doesn't sound too bad"

"God, you sound like a real psychopath," Chinatsu laughed. "I kinda like that. I used to take on that sorta job all the time, so I guess it's a little bittersweet for me to think that one of my students may end up doing that crap."

"Huh. Wait, weren't you the head of security at Lemon before becoming a teacher?" Raizo asked, confused.

"Yeah," Chinatsu nodded. "Listen, kid. I'm twenty-fucking-eight years old. If you think I've only had two jobs, you'd be sorely mistaken. I never finished high school, y'know?"

"What?" Raizo cried. "Then how are you qualified to—"

"I can both tell and show you more about any fighting style than any given university grad, and I can put together AND dismantle a puppet in the time it takes any 'professional' to complete their fucking blueprints. And I learned it all on my own. I think I'm fucking qualified to teach you," Chinatsu answered with a smirk.

"Can't argue with that," Raizo sighed. "So, like, were you a contract killer or something?"

"Oh, don't make it sound so *nasty*," Chinatsu giggled. "You're hurting my pure-ass little heart. I dropped out of high school at age 16, and worked for half a dozen years as a... 'caretaker for the shadier parts of the world,' you see. I accepted a few 'quick jobs' and whatnot, and then got...err... 'politely requested to stop.' So, taking my expertise, I applied for a job as a security officer at Lemon. I worked there for four years, and I ended up getting promoted a ton and landed myself a job as head of security. Then I essentially got bored 'cause I didn't see anymore frontline action, so I quit and became a teacher. And this is my second year here."

"That was...very descriptive," Raizo mumbled. *Wait, so she was a hitman like Satomi?* he wondered.

"Oh, and before you get confused," Chinatsu added, "I wasn't like your little doll Satomi. I wasn't a *hitman*, I worked for governments only. Made a few enemies while I was at it. You get the idea," she laughed. "I swear, they show up here every little while to try and put a bullet through my head."

"That a fact?" Raizo chuckled. "Well that's—wait, what's that sound?"

"Fucking ballsacks," Chinatsu cursed. "Helicopters. Military grade. Speak of the motherfucking devil, I suppose."

"You're *kidding me*, right?" Raizo asked.

"Chinasu, get the hell out of there!" Marie cried, bursting into the room. "They're gonna kill you!"

"You say that every time," Chinatsu replied casually. "Who gives a fuck? I can shoot a guy or two without losing my lunch."

"I'm pretty sure you can't fight a hundred operatives on your own," Marie replied flatly.

Raizo glanced over to the door. Kasumi peeked in nervously, looking around. He sighed and motioned for her to come over. She obediently entered the lecture hall, running over to his side.

"Fuck, wait, why're *you* here?" Chinatsu asked, looking at the girl.

Kasumi tilted her head in confusion, as if to say she herself didn't know either.

"Oh, forget it," Chinatsu mumbled. "A hundred, eh? I guess this is where I fucking die," she laughed casually.

"You're taking this surprisingly well," Marie sighed.

"Big fucking deal. It's just death, nothing much," Chinatsu shrugged.

"Maybe I should start buying you goth loli clothes," Marie replied sarcastically.

"Please don't, I think the principal's just gonna get off to that shit even more. Fucking weirdo," Chinatsu mumbled.

All the windows of the lecture hall were smashed almost simultaneously as dozens of armed militants entered the room. Many of them raised their weapons, ranging from knives to guns.

"Oh great," Chinatsu mumbled, pulling a handgun out from beneath her dress. "At least nobody looks up *my* skirt," she joked. The militants opened fire as Marie instinctively dove behind the desk for cover. Chinatsu sighed, almost effortlessly dodging numerous bullets as they flew past her. Kasumi pulled out her shield and blocked the bullets coming her way. Raizo bit his lip. *This isn't gonna end well*, he thought.

Moments later, he heard an agonized scream.

Chinatsu fell to the ground, three bullets lodged in her arm and a fourth on her right shoulder. "THAT'S MY FUCKING DOMINANT ARM!" she screeched. "FUCK YOU GUYS!" she shouted at the militants.

The group entirely hid themselves behind the table, using Kasumi's shield as additional protection while Marie looked over the wounds. "Alright, I can get them out pretty easily," she sighed, "*if* we weren't about to be shot dead."

Off to the side, Raizo pinched his nose with one hand. And yet, despite that, the scent of blood wafted steadily towards him. He virtually felt his own pupils begin to dilate, and he found his free hand twitching uncontrollably. *It's happening again*, he thought. *That's fine.*

Looking around, he noticed the previously steady stream of gunfire had began to dissipate. *Perfect*, he thought. Taking Kasumi's arm, he brought her close and let go of his own nose, taking in the scent of her strawberry shampoo. *That'll probably delay the effects a little*, he told himself. "Alright Kasumi, I want you to act as a guard for miss Marie and Ms. Saitou. Get them the hell outta here. Right now."

"B-but hubby," Kasumi complained, "they'll chase us..."

"Like hell they will," Raizo chuckled. "I'll just have to stop them."

"Hubby, you can't...you'll get hurt...I can stay...and help you," Kasumi pleaded. "I don't want to...lose you..."

"Now, now," Raizo answered soothingly. "Please just listen to me, alright? Nobody's gonna kill me. I'm not gonna let 'em. If they try, I'll just have to kill 'em first, right? Easy enough. Just take them and go. Now. Please?"

Considering it for a moment, Kasumi reluctantly nodded. Raizo turned to Marie. "Please take Ms. Saitou and run. Get as far away from this damn room as possible." He chuckled a little. "I don't wanna stain your dress," he added. "I don't think it'll look much good in red."

Marie stared at him in surprise. "W-what're you gonna do?" she demanded.

"Save the questions for later," Raizo answered. "Go now, or you'll lose your chance. Maybe even forever."

Sighing, Marie took Chinatsu in her arms. "Fine," she said, "but you better live long enough to explain yourself."

"Will do," Raizo winked. As the gunfire all but dissipated, he waved his hand casually. "Get outta here," he ordered.

Nodding, Kasumi raised her shield and dashed out from cover, blocking the few stray bullets as Marie carried Chinatsu towards an emergency exit in the lecture hall. As they disappeared through the door, the militants approached, preparing to give chase.

Still behind the desk, Raizo looked around. The scent of blood was still strong, radiating from where his own teacher had lay moments before, bleeding onto the floor. He smiled to himself. *Just let go*, he told himself. *Let it happen...*

He slowly stood up from behind the desk, delivering a swift chop to it with his bare hand and smashing it in half. Fully removing himself from cover, as if taunting the hundred militants before him, he smirked. "Who's first to DIE?" he demanded. The grey had disappeared from his eyes, replaced with a crimson red. His dilated pupils now resembled those of a reptile.

The militants raised their guns and opened fire, but their bullets were easily deflected by dozens of semi-visible clones bursting forth from Raizo's own being. "Existence is such a fragile thing," he mumbled, stepping forth and placing his left

hand on the sheath of his sword. He pressed his thumb against the guard. "I think I know who dies first. I don't particularly like your face," he told one of the militants. Saying so, his thumb pushed the blade out by the guard. In a fraction of a second, he was beside the militant, his blade held firmly in his right hand. Blood erupted from the militant's neck as he collapsed to the ground, dead. "So...who's next?" Raizo asked.