

XIV

Satomi walked out of the women's washroom. "Any luck?" she asked Raizo who was already there waiting for her.

"No, as expected," he replied, "though I don't see why two girls would be in the men's washroom."

"Oh, you never know what sorta fetish plays could be going on," Satomi laughed. "Incidentally, would you like to fuck me in the men's washroom?"

"Get help," Raizo answered flatly, walking away.

"H-hey! I was just kidding!" Satomi cried, chasing after him.

"Didn't sound like a joke from my end," Raizo said. "Besides, we should be taking this seriously. I have no idea where those two are, nor do I know what they're up to but I get the itching feeling that this is gonna be a pretty mediocre 'mystery,' if you can even call it that."

"What makes you say that?" Satomi inquired.

"Just a hunch," Raizo answered with a sigh. "Say, do you hear that?"

"Hear what?" Satomi asked, confused. "Are you...feeling okay?"

"Yeah, I'm fine," Raizo replied. "I just hear the sound of metal clashing somewhere."

"Oh, I almost forgot, you have some sorta animal-like hearing, don't you?" Satomi laughed. "Pretty useful for things like this. Or for fighting when you can't see. Or for sex with the lights out—"

"I'm gonna stop you right there," Raizo said, annoyed. "Let's move."

"Yes, sir," Satomi said, giving him a casual salute.

Running out into the courtyard of the school, Satomi called out to her owner. "Mistress!" she cried.

Hikari, turning around, immediately ran over to her. "Oh, thank God you're finally here!" she cried. "You must have heard my calls for help, correct?"

Satomi looked away in embarrassment. "Err...well, *about that*...we're here to bring you to class..."

"Oh, sure, but you heard me and came to my aid!" Hikari said.

"Erm...no, Raizo heard the sound of clashing metal so he figured that you were stuck in some sorta sticky situation," Satomi answered. *I can't tell her that Raizo thought she had "gotten herself into another mess!"* she thought to herself.

"O-oh, is that so?" Hikari said, averting her gaze. "W-where is he now, then?"

"Informing the teacher," Satomi told her. "Now, what the hell is going on? And where's your sister?"

"I'm right here, thank you," a voice called.

Turning in the direction of the sound, Satomi saw another girl. She was a little taller than Hikari and shared many of her features. Satomi gulped. *Yep, she thought, that's definitely Elizabeth Oshiro.*

"Mistress, I suppose I can join in now?" another voice asked. Another figure approached Elizabeth's side. Satomi bit her lip. *She looks like Elizabeth...just with longer hair...and taller...damn.*

"Yes, I suppose," Elizabeth answered, "though I was hoping Raizo would be here instead."

"Tis' a shame," the girl, Elizabeth's puppet, nodded.

"Oh well," Elizabeth sighed. "I'll finish up my little 'talk' with my sister. Please take care of this puppet, Koharu. And be careful," she added, reaching to her waist and pulling out a handgun. Her puppet, Koharu, handed her a thin sabre. "Let's dance, dear sister."

"Damn you," Hikari mumbled, reached to her own side. She drew forth a gilded, decorated rapier. "Fine then! Let's fight it out!"

Satomi groaned. "Damnit, *really?*" she complained. "Fine," she said, pulling out her own pistols. "I just have to hit you a few times, right?"

"Tis' not so simple," Koharu answered, reaching beneath her uniform top and pulling out a little sphere. "Witness the power of the ancient relic!"

"You mean a little round stone?" Satomi laughed. "Yeah, *such power!*" she cried sarcastically.

Koharu clicked her tongue. "You know nothing, vermin!" she shouted, tossing the relic into the air. With a snap of her fingers, crystal formations shaped like wings sprouted forth as the relic grew in size. Landing once more in Koharu's hand, the puppet smiled. With a few simple hand gestures, the relic once again glowed, surrounding her hand. As the light slowly dissipated, Satomi jumped in shock. "Wh-what? Your hand, it's—"

"Yes, my hand is a blade," Koharu answered with confidence. "It can be a drill too, or a mace. Tis' any weapon I desire and more," she said, raising the blade towards Satomi. "Even a gun."

"Even a—" Satomi began.

A beam of light shot forth from the blade, causing Satomi to leap out of the way. "Holy crap!" she shouted. Running forth, she fired shot after shot, with Koharu expertly deflecting each and every hit. "What's your goal?" the puppet asked. "Getting too close makes you *easier* to shoot."

"Yeah, but in the time it takes you to unload a single blast into me, I can place over a dozen shots into you. At the end of the day," Satomi said, "it's a loss for you as far as your 'gun' can go."

"Then I'll fight you hand to hand," Koharu answered.

"Fine by me," Satomi said, placing her guns back in their holsters. Koharu swung at her as she entered melee range. Satomi narrowly dodging the hit, bit her lip again. *Shit, she thought, this girl's fast! If not for my little 'third eye,' I think that would've beheaded me...*

"Down, insect!" Koharu shouted, swinging her blade straight for Satomi's neck. *Crap!* Satomi thought.

"Oh?" Elizabeth laughed.

"Damnit!" Hikari cried.

The sound of clashing metal rang through the air as Koharu's blade struck.

"Let's see if your *one* relic can beat me," a voice said. "That is, *all* of me."

Koharu's attack was blocked by another sword, its blade a dark shade of grey with a bloody red grip. Looking to the side, Koharu blushed. "O-o-oh! Raizo! When did you...erm...arrive?" she inquired nervously.

"Just in time, thankfully," Raizo answered, retracting his blade. "Calm down. I don't know anyone who's beaten you so far, so go easy on others while you're here, okay?" he said.

"Oh? But *you've* certainly beaten me before," Koharu answered, returning her hand back to normal and twiddling her thumbs.

"I'm...different," Raizo laughed. "Not sure if that's a good thing, but hey. Either way, no more of that, alright?" he ordered. "We still don't know the limits to your power, nor have we found the full extent of the power of that relic of yours."

"W-well, we still don't know *your* full potential either," Koharu mumbled.

"According to the young miss, I've already hit it, but whatever," Raizo snickered. "What were you even fighting over?"

"I'll answer that," Elizabeth said. "Hikari suggested that she could scrap you since she got a new puppet. But, when I told her to give you to me, since she didn't want you anymore, she refused and spewed a barrage of insults! I am gentle, my dear, but even saints have their limits!"

"Yeah, yeah, whatever," Hikari said. "The point is I'm not letting you have him, and what I said still stands. You still *are* an arrogant brute."

"Why you—" Elizabeth snapped.

"That's enough," Raizo said. "I'll apologize on the young miss' behalf, Lady Elizabeth. She'll regulate herself better."

"Why the hell are you even apologizing?" Hikari complained.

Ignoring her, Elizabeth took Raizo's hand in her own. "Oh, you don't have to say all that *for* her," she said. "I understand you simply wish to improve my dear sister's image, but your efforts are unrewarded." She sighed. "Now Raizo, my dear, if Hikari ever mentions scrapping you again, come right to me and I'll gladly take you in a heartbeat!" she declared, hugging him tightly.

"Y-yeah...thank you, Lady Elizabeth," Raizo said in surprise.

"Now, now, don't be so formal all the time," Elizabeth said with a giggle.

"Alright, let's GO already!" Hikari shouted, grabbing Raizo's arm and pulling him away from her sister. "We're already late, so come ON!" she shouted, stomping off towards the classroom.

Raizo, sighing, followed her and gestured to Satomi to come along. She promptly picked herself up and dusted herself off before marching off behind him.

Elizabeth sighed as Koharu walked over. "Poor Raizo," she mumbled. "Say, Koharu, wouldn't you like to finally make him *ours* instead?"

"I'd be...delighted," Koharu answered in embarrassment. "W-wait, mistress, what are you making me say?"

Elizabeth laughed. "I wonder," she said, heading off in the direction of the school. Koharu, sighing, followed right after her.