The shaping of a life

Written by Scar

Food was the tired child’s first thought as it opened its tired eyes and licked its parched lips. Despite all the evidence of Britannia’s sovereignty over Area 11, hunger was the true ruler over the streets of the Shinjuku Ghetto these days. No force of men or Knightmares could possibly stir the same feelings of desperation and submission that sank low in the stomachs of less fortunate 11s. Day after day desperate 11 boys would sneak up to the stalls of street vendors and attempt to pocket whatever wares they could before the merchants would notice and flash out their knives. None of them could do what he could however. Whenever he concentrated hard enough, *really* concentrated, everybody around him just seemed to freeze. And it was a total freeze too, they just could not break out of it. At least as long as he kept concentrating that was, and after a few seconds it did start to make him tired. Nevertheless that was always more than enough time to swipe a loaf of bread or a fish from one of the vendors. Theft was keeping him alive and he felt no remorse.

He’d had this power, this *gift* ever since he had had that dream, with the small person dressed all in purple with long blonde hair. The person could have been a child, except for its eyes that showed the aged look of an adult.They had looked each other straight in the eye and made the contract. The contract that insured he would live, that he would not die of hunger alone on the streets. Of course in exchange, he had needed to promise the mysterious stranger that he would fulfill a wish of the small person’s when the time came, but the child had been so hungry, so desperate that he had agreed to the contract without thinking twice. And that had been that, or so he had thought. The next morning as he sat on the street corner drooling at an ice cream cone that a more fortunate Britannian girl was about to push between her lips. The more sharpened that his hunger became, the more he focused his anger at the injustice of a world that put one Britannian on the roadside of the ghetto and another Britannian in the lap of luxury, the jerkier the girl’s movements became as the cone continued its course. Until she stopped completely. And the boy took the ice cream and ran into the alley gobbling it down as quickly as it could.

And that had been that, as rough a lifestyle as it may have been he survived. His fellow Britannians turned up their noses at the beggar they saw staring at their food and wallets, and the 11s were too proud to accept one of their oppressor’s race into their society, no matter how similar his pathetic situation seemed to their own. Until one night he dreamed again and the small person had returned. This time there was no proposal only a firm and uncompromising order. “It is time to come with me now and fulfill your contract. From now on you will be known as Rolo.” “Rolo… “, replied the boy, sounding out the word in his mind. He had never had a name before, as he had never had known any family or for that matter anybody who cared enough about him to call him anything but scum. As unfamiliar as he was with this strange person, he immediately felt a bond with the stranger. A bond that was created through a new feeling of identity. Immediately he opened his eyes and saw that the small person was standing directly in front of him, unblinking and betraying no emotion what so ever. Oddly enough, Rolo was not surprised in the least to see the small person from his dreams, almost as though he had always expected him to be there after he had awoken. “You may call me V.V., said the stranger, “And my desire if for you to come with me and serve Britannia. That is your end of our contract to fulfill.”

Many miles and hours passed as Rolo and V.V. traveled to their destination in a dark limousine that had pulled up to the alleyway to pick up the strange pair. Rolo was unable to see the driver or the outside through the tinted windows of the vehicle and so contented himself to fall asleep on the leather seats. When V.V. finally woke him up he found that he had been removed from the car and bound into a chair with firm chains wrapped around his legs. Immediately Rolo noticed that the straps were held fast by a shiny metal lock. V.V. stepped back next to a large burly sitting in chair that was within arms reach from Rolo’s sitting position. The man had nothing at all distinguishing about him; he was dressed completely in dark blue with a shaved head and a dark expression that told Rolo nothing good was going to happen in the dark room. But then the large man moved his hand slightly and Rolo saw had been clenched in the thick muscled fist. *A key.* “Rolo,” said V.V. in his commanding voice, “That is the key to you bonds, and if you do not wish to starve in here then I would suggest you take it.”

Automatically Rolo reached for the key but the large man pulled away the key before it could be taken. Confused, Rolo withdrew his hand. “V.V., I thought you said…,” “No Rolo. *Take it,”* replied V.V. “Oh, of course,” Rolo almost laughed. He should have known that he should be expected to demonstrate his power. No sooner then had the man returned the key within reach, and then Rolo had stopped his movements and took the liberty of grabbing the key to his chains and removing them. As he relaxed his focus the muscular man settled back into the chair with his arms crossed and V.V.’s impenetrable mask shivered a bit for once as he betrayed a slight smile, confirming Rolo’s suspicions that this was nothing more than a test to see if he had developed his power at all since V.V. had left him back years after their first encounter. “You’ve done an excellent job Rolo, especially considering your lack of any formal training in Geass whatsoever.” “Allow me to clear up any misconceptions about the power that I gave you,” said V.V. upon seeing Rolo’s confusion at the word, “It is known as Geass, or the Power of Kings, and you are not the only one to be gifted with it by any means. Britannia uses many individuals such as you to help complete its goals. However understand that not all Geasses are the same, in fact most vary considerably. Despite your belief that your Geass merely stops the movements of people around you it in fact stops time itself within a controlled distance. Now I need you to follow me.” V.V. walked out the room through a door into a passageway that was too dark for Rolo to see into it. Throughout the entire explanation the muscular man had never so much as blinked.

Rolo followed V.V. into the dark passageway, hurrying slightly because he had lost sight completely of the mysterious child. Suddenly he ran straight into a wall and fell onto his back, rubbing his head in pain. That was when he heard a door that he was unable to see shut with a resolute clang behind him. Without warning bright red lights flashed on in the small chamber that he was in, temporarily blinding him. Amidst all this confusion V.V.’s voice rang out loud and clear from an unseen speaker, “Rolo, understand this: you are about to enter mortal combat with another Geass user. I have already told your opponent what I am about to tell you now. You can choose not to fight, but if one of you two is not dead within the hour then the sealed room that you will fight in will be flooded until you both drown. I have already informed your opponent of your Geass and will now extend the same courtesy to you in order to make it a somewhat equal fight. Your opponent has the Geass of Light, the ability to manipulate beams of light so that they reach your eyes in varying degrees of intensity according to your opponent’s wishes. You will both be provided with a knife so that neither of you is reduced to bludgeoning each other to death with your fists. This experiment will begin now.”

Throughout this entire statement only one thing was one Rolo’s mind; just how pissed he was that V.V. had put him in this insane situation! But before he had the chance to *really* get good and angry at V.V., he found that a new door had opened up in the wall and his leg were carrying him subconsciously through the entryway. The arena he was now in was huge; it was easily the size of two basketball courts laid back to back. Inside this new room he saw what he assumed must be his new enemy. She was a tall, attractive girl who Rolo guessed was probably quite a few years older than him and most likely from the Chinese Federation. As he stared at this fellow human being he began to wonder if he would really be able to murder her… no, he couldn’t. He would ask her if they could work together. And that’s when the lights turned off.

Rolo simply panicked and fell to the floor in confusion. He quickly realized that this must be the power of the girl’s Geass affecting him. In fact, if what V.V. said was true, it might only be him who was unable to see, as the girl was only manipulating *his* eyes. He had to approach this calmly. He reached out his hands and began groping around in the darkness hoping for something to catch onto, and then he suddenly heard the girl’s footsteps running towards him. He had to hurry or he would be stabbed. But shouldn’t he have been given a knife to fight with as well? Perhaps V.V. had given it to him while he slept. Sure enough, when he checked his back pocket he felt a switchblade. Now all he to do was to figure out how he was going to kill this stupid girl. And then the easiness of it hit him so quickly that he could have laughed. This was a test of his Geass after all, and if his enemy was going to comply with V.V.’s sick experiment, then why shouldn’t he? He began to focus like he always did when he was using his gift, until he heard the girl’s footsteps stop. He started the walk towards where he had last heard noise, while keeping perfect concentration the whole time. He began waving his hands in the darkness, hoping to accidentally bump into his target, but could not find her. And as time passed he began to perspire from the effort, and his heart started racing. Rolo’s eyes began to water from the effort, but he still continued to wave his arms out frantically, looking for the girl in the darkness that he had to kill. As his heart threatened to jump out of his throat, Rolo wondered if he really would be able to murder this girl when she was helpless. No matter how much of a criminal he had become in Shinjuku Ghetto, he was still not a murderer! And then he bumped into her and stabbed her viciously.

As sight returned to his eyes and Rolo relaxed his concentration, he felt spurts of blood fly into his face and a pang of regret deep in his stomach. He had nothing against this girl and yet he had murdered her anyway. As the life drained out of the Chinese girl’s angry eyes, a door slid up and Rolo found himself looking at V.V. once again. “Congratulations Rolo, you’ve done exceedingly well.” Rolo pulled his knife out of the girl’s throat and walked straight towards this little demon, stopping time as he went. But then to his surprise, V.V. blinked. “That shouldn’t have happened,” Rolo thought to himself, although it was too late and he plunged the blade deep into V.V.’s forehead. “There you monster, die,” Rolo whispered to himself with satisfaction as blood seeped out of V.V.’s face. And then to his horror V.V. pulled calmly pulled the knife out of head and slid it into his pocket after wiping the blood of with a handkerchief. “Rolo, first let me say that an incident like that was to be expected, but if you ever try something as foolish as that again I shall have you executed on the spot. You are unable to kill me, nor does your Geass ability have any affect whatsoever on me. In any event, our test of how you have developed without any formal training has concluded. The girl you have just terminated now was in the same situation as yourself with no real training, and you have proven yourself the superior. We shall begin teaching you how to use your power properly right away so that you will be able to serve Britannia. Now please follow me, we have a lot of work to do.” Rolo stared at this strange little person, who had given him his gift, his power, his…curse. Could he actually follow him after being setup like he had? In a situation where it easily could have been him who had died instead of the girl who was now a cold corpse that would now doubt be swept unceremoniously by cleaning. It could mean pain, death, and worse. Rolo followed V.V. out of the room.