Chapter 1 - Dismantling  
  
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"Hati-hati dijalan! Pulanglah lebih awal!" (Iris Rain Umbrella)  
  
Dismantling: 7 Days Before  
  
Di Pusat Venus Fountain Plaza, ada patung Dewi yang menakjubkan berdiri.  
  
Ia memiliki tubuh yang langsing, berkulit putih seperti sutra, dan sosok yang hebat. Hari ini, Dewi masih menunjukan senyum lembut diwajahnya, diam-diam mengamati kerumunan disekitarnya.  
  
Oval City pernah terbakar oleh api peperangan. Ketika sebagian besar kota rusak terbakar, hanya patung Dewi yang secara ajaib bertahan tanpa mengalami banyak goresan. Sejak hari itu, patung dewi menjadi simbol harapan dan kebangkitan, dan telah dilindungi sebagai aset kebudayaan yang paling penting bagi negara kami.

Beside the 170 centimeter tall goddess statue, the fountain is blooming flowers of water, in rainbow colors. On the dark tea-colored benches that were placed around the fountain, old men chat with each other, children play around, and lovers proclaim their love for each other. The harmonious scene looks like it came from a painting.  
  
—it's indeed similar.  
  
I hear a squeaking sound start, and I adjust the pupil function of my visual system. After focusing on the white goddess statue, I sigh lightly.  
  
The goddess statue looks like Professor. Professor is the top researcher of robots, Doctor Wendy von Umbrella, Ph. D. I'm proud of her: she has a tall figure, beautiful, luscious, black hair, and wears glasses with a sleek, silver frame that suit her very much.  
  
While thinking of Professor's shapely form, I stare blankly at the goddess statue when the sweet sour smell of circlet cigarette floated over. I start to turn the angle of my neck, confirming the source of the fragrance.  
  
The person who sat on the bench, smoking a circlet cigarette, is a middle aged man wearing a dark blue suit. He is reading today's copy of Oval Daily; but just now, he started to peek at me every now and again. I use a gentle smile to greet him, and he shyly shifts his gaze.  
  
Circlet cigarettes, by the way, are a product used for smoking cessation. The shape is as suggested by the word 'circlet', and the size is about the size of a circle made with thumb and index finger. When people get one out to smoke it, the ring-shaped cigarette immediately straightens, and then the tip of the cigarette can then be lit.  
  
Although it is a replacement for tobacco that was made to occupy the mouths of smokers who are trying to quit, recently more and more smokers are buying it because they like the scent. The most popular circlet cigarette is the type that combines two circlets into the shape of the number 8. This type of cigarette can be split into two halves, half of it to smoke, and the other half to hold the ashes.  
  
I know about all of this because Professor Umbrella loves this type of circlet cigarette.  
  
— Mnn.  
  
I shift my gaze to the goddess statue again, and suddenly start to ponder. The goddess statue looks very similar to the tall professor. However, I just have this feeling that it is lacking 'something'. Every time I see it, I would have this uncoordinated feeling in me.  
  
When this meaningless question surfaced in my mind, time's up.  
  
— In five minutes, you will be unable to reach home by the scheduled time.  
  
The inorganic, electronic voice of my mental circuit starts urging me to hurry home.  
  
— Alright then, it's almost time to go.  
  
With my back to the plaza, I start to walk home quickly. The shopping basket in my right hand is stuffed full of the ingredients for today's dinner, and a glittering silver La Bier fish is tied to my back, causing the pedestrians who pass by to turn their heads around when they see it. Their surprise is only natural, since they're seeing me carry a huge, one meter long fish while I'm only a hundred and fifty centimeters tall myself. But after they notice that I am actually a robot, they showed an expression that suggested understanding.  
  
Differentiating between humans and robot is very simple. The ones that have a round antenna on their ears (It looks really like an earphone) are robots, the ones who don't are humans. "It's the robot from the Umbrella residence!"— a voice clearly projects into my auditory system. So, I smiled back at the person. Though robots used in families is not uncommon, since Professor is a famous person, I get noticed sometimes when I walk in the streets.  
  
After walking about ten minutes from the Fountain Plaza, I arrive at the Umbrella residence. Looking at the blue, ivy-covered door, I say: "Certification number HRM021-α, Iris Rain Umbrella. I'm back." After the electronic voice says "Certification complete, please enter", the big door opens silently.  
  
The Umbrella residence is a grand mansion. There is a courtyard here the size of three station squares, and it is a large residence comparable to mansions of administrators. The red brick outer wall makes people understand the grandeur of the history and traditions of the Umbrella family.  
  
After entering the mansion, a luxurious hall can be seen immediately. The sunlight entering from the skylight passes through the chandeliers, giving out a colourful radiance. The carpet spread on the floor is similar to the style of the ones in old castles. Large paintings are hung on the walls. Each is worth enough to provide a luxurious life.  
  
Passing through the corridor with the exquisitely shining floor, I first place the fish in the freezer. I feel much better after that, and I start to walk towards the west-most room on that floor— the research room. The research room is stuffed full of materials and tools, the clean but chilly space is like a snowy field on a winter day.  
  
Sitting on the creamy white bed near the wall, I first check my status meter.  
  
Battery level 82.50%, waste in body 1.73%. The energy level is more than enough for labour, but Professor had ordered me to recharge. So I will charge.  
  
After sterilizing the long, thin tube with a chemical twice, I open the lock on my wrist, showing the connection plug. If I made a mistake in the steps, the black machine oil might splatter all over the room, so I must be quite careful.  
  
I insert the tube into my right and left hand in succession, then pressed the switch on the machine. Electric power and additional lubricating oil slowly flow into the connection plug on my right wrist. At the same time, the tea-colored waste in my body is sucked out of my left wrist.  
  
The introduction manuals for robot maintenance usually say that the system is similar to humans using IV drips. Really though, the system excretes and cleans the body's internals, so it is more like artificial dialysis than IV drips.  
  
I look up while charging my battery, staring at the metal sheeting on the ceiling. The mirror finish reflects my whole body.  
  
There's not technically much difference in gender in robots, but I appear to be a girl. My age is set at fifteen. I have blue eyes with delicate eyebrows and maroon, slightly wavy, shoulder-length hair. The length of my limbs is similar to Professor's, and my face is that of a beauty, just like professor— I know it is so because Professor is always praising my cuteness - it's not just my opinion.  
  
The maid costume that I am wearing was designed in a fairy tale style. A maid's headdress lightly waves on my head, while the cutting of the apron emphasizes the curves of my breasts. The peach coloured dress tightens at the waist, while the dress itself is quite loose, and would make people think of a wedding dress. Where did Professor buy such a lovely maid's costume, I wonder? Even now it's still a mystery.  
  
After twelve minutes and one second, the process of charging finished. Battery level 99.93%, body waste 0.02%.  
  
—Alright, target level achieved.  
  
I jump down from the bed, leaving the research room. My destination is the kitchen, because I have to prepare dinner.  
  
In the large kitchen that is not inferior to high classed restaurants, I start to make a Bill La Bier stew pot. There's a lot of pots, sinks and gas stoves here, but I would always cook at the left side of the kitchen. Professor is very rich, and she could even hire over ten, or even over twenty chefs, but she didn't hire any up till now. Not only a chef, she didn't even hire other maids, and I have to handle the whole large Umbrella residence. I could only use all my effort, diligently finish the chores like cooking, washing the clothes and sweeping the floor.  
  
I quickly cut the La Bier fish, and lightly pick up the pieces of peach-coloured fish.  
  
—200.0025 grams.  
  
While referring to the recipe searched from my mental circuit, I finish the preparations of making the Bill Labier stew pot. By the way, "La Bier" is a fish very similar to salmon, while "La Bier" is actually the name of a person. I'd heard that a fisherman called La Bier caught a large La Bier fish long ago, then he needed an entire night to finish the whole fish. His way of cooking is was to cut the fish into big pieces, then stew it with the spices— that's the origin of the La Bier stew pot. It sounds like a simple dish, but if you want to cook it well, there's quite a bit of technique involved. For instance, you have to accurately handle the fire and patiently scoop out the foam.  
  
From the moment I pick up the kitchen knife, twenty seven minutes and twelve seconds have passed, and my job is done. I store the remaining food in the freezer. Professor doesn't have many visitors, so these leftover portions will probably go to waste in the freezer. With the large amount of ingredients bought and the large kitchen, the Umbrella residence is usually that wasteful.  
  
As I complain in a small voice, an electronic voice rings in my mind.  
  
— Professor Wendy von Umbrella has returned.  
  
"She's back!"  
  
I rush out of the kitchen, passing through the hall, and violently pull open the doors to the outside. My dress fluttering in the wind, I start to run to the forecourt.  
  
— Professor! Professor!! Professor!!!  
  
The person passing through the gate, is a tall, black haired woman wearing a jacket that is light like a swan, and looks incomparably beautiful although it doesn't seem like she has any make up on — my Professor walks over to me slowly. And then, she waves suddenly to me.  
  
Not caring about the battery loss, I run with all my strength to the professor. I am running with the speed of a hundred meters in nine seconds, and emergency brake three meters in front of Professor. I am not sweating, or even panting, but my body is giving off heat like a steaming stove, as if my body has been lit up. The image of Professor swirls in my mental circuit.  
  
"Welcome back, Professor!"  
  
I open my arms while beaming, welcoming the return of Professor. While I am somewhat over-reacting, this is just a way of showing my love for Professor.  
  
Professor looks at me, with a gentle smile. She puts out the fire of her circlet cigarette and keeps the ash tray. My olfactory system detected a sweet sour smell after that.  
  
"I'm back, Iris. Have you been a good girl today, too?"  
  
That is a somewhat deep, cool and quiet voice for a female. The silver framed glasses on her nose makes her wise face even more striking.  
  
"Yes! Professor's Iris has been a very, very good girl today too!"  
  
"Is that so. What about dinner?"  
  
"It's the same as what I told you, a La Bier stew pot!"  
  
"What a good girl you are."  
  
Professor extends her right hand to me.  
  
— Alright, it's coming!  
  
I happily wait for that moment.  
  
Professor's hand lightly touches the top of my head. She used a gentle, but somewhat rough movement to caress my maroon hair.  
  
This is truly an incomparable happiness.  
  
I look just like a kitten that had been caressed, making satisfied sounds with my throat. I enjoy the pleasure of contact with Professor's gentle hand, and the sweet sour smell of the tobacco that tickles the nose.  
  
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Dinner time has always been the most nervous time for me.  
  
Professor slowly scoops out a piece of La Bier fish from the pot. She continues to use a small knife to cut the fish, sticks a fork into it then swallows it with her rose colored lips.  
  
Because of the chewing action, Professor's face is moving slightly. I stare at her face, slightly worried.  
  
— Professor, how is it? Is it good? Hmm? Is it?  
  
I ask repeatedly in my heart, waiting for Professor to express her thoughts.  
  
"Hmm......"  
  
Professor twists her neck. Then, my mental circuit suddenly cools down. Describing from the angle of a human, that would mean that a chill went up my back.  
  
"E- e- e- errmmm, I- I- I- I- I- is there a problem with it?"  
  
I ask in a rapid fire speed, feeling slightly dizzy. For Iris Rain Umbrella who is proud of her ability of doing chores, being told that my cooking is bad would be the same as questioning the meaning of my existence.  
  
"To be frank......"  
  
Professor raised one of her beautiful eyebrows, saying with an obviously displeased tone.  
  
"To- to be frank?" I waited nervously for her next comment.  
  
However, Professor's mouth slightly curls, a smile surfacing on her face. She says suddenly.  
  
"It's really good."  
  
I am quite shocked, and couldn't help but make an idiotic "...... Eh?" sound.  
  
"Ah...... Eh? Aren't you disliking it......"  
  
"No, it's very tasty. And the handling of the fire is especially good."  
  
"............"  
  
"Oh? What's the matter, Iris? Why are you showing me a tongue-tied expression?"  
  
You can say that Professor is an S. The S in S&M. A sadist. She always uses these simple traps to trick me. By the way, this is already the twenty forth time. The pitiful thing about robots is that they even remember how many times meaningless things like this occur.  
  
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"Really, Professor! Haven't I said not to make that kind of joke!"  
  
I throw the napkin at Professor angrily.  
  
"Oi oi, that's too much of a waste."  
  
"According to your words, the La Bier stew pot today is the wasteful one! Telling me to buy a whole fish, what are you preparing to do with it!"  
  
Professor casually answered "I'll finish it after two days," and continues to eat. I answer "You always lie......," crumple the last napkin up, throw it, and it hits Professor's arm with a plop.  
  
"Mnn, it really is tasty. Iris is really good at cooking."  
  
Professor comments deliberately, and places another piece of La Bier fish into her mouth. Although I feel somewhat frustrated, seeing Professor enjoying the stew, a note of satisfaction appeared in my heart.  
  
After dinner, Professor goes to the washroom. While cleaning up the dishes, I recall Professor's childish actions, laughing for a moment, being annoyed for a moment, but a smile still surfaced on my face in the end.  
  
Today, Professor is still pretty, likes to bully people, is gentle and stroked my hair.  
  
— Mmm, right now I'm speechless with contentment.  
  
The peaceful night slowly passes, and then it is bedtime. I change into my beloved pajamas with pictures of flowers on them, then knock on Professor's bedroom door.  
  
"Professor, sorry for bothering you."  
  
I walk into the room. As usual, Professor is wearing purple pajamas slightly open at the chest, and is lying on her bed. She has a circlet cigarette in her mouth. The sweat sour smell is mixed with a slight smell of peppermint, and the smell floated over along with the smoke. The slogan used on television is "The taste of your first love," and I think that it's quite apt. That's right— it's the taste of the first love to me. The love between Professor and I— I really want to feel that too, but the only one in love is me, Professor is always calm.  
  
I understand these feelings would only be useless, so it's better for me to be careful.  
  
"Professor, smoking on the bed is too impolite."  
  
"It's not against the law."  
  
"And it could cause a fire."  
  
"I never heard of cirgarettes causing fires."  
  
Professor looks at the ceiling, continuing to puff out smoke. Ah, that's right, 'cirgarette' is another name for circlet cigarettes.  
  
"The total data says that eight incidents occurred this year."  
  
I block Professor's vision determinedly, looking at her from above. The smoke almost burned my eyes.  
  
"How many times had it happened in Oval Town?" Professor continues to smoke.  
  
"...... Zero."  
  
"Then it's okay."  
  
"But you can't use that as an excuse, Professor."  
  
I stubbornly snatch the cirgarette away from Professor's mouth. "Ah, give it back!" Professor sits up, extending her hand to my elbow.  
  
As revenge for Professor making fun of me during dinner, I run around the room while holding the cirgarette. Professor gets up from bed too, chasing me. I hide behind tables and chairs so that Professor cannot catch me. Although it's childish, there's still an undeniable charm to it.  
  
After playing two short rounds of catch in the room, Professor says "It's time for bed" and takes off her silver framed glasses. She stares at me with her eyes like a colourful glass. Professor is a beauty when she wears her glasses, and she is still a beauty after she takes off her glasses.  
  
—Ah.  
  
The goddess statue isn't wearing glasses.  
  
"What is it?" Professor stares at me from the bed. I lightly tilted my head, honestly speaking my thoughts: "Professor is indeed...... suited for glasses and cigarettes."  
  
"Huh? Why are you suddenly saying that."  
  
"No, that's just my thoughts. ...... Then Professor, is it okay?"  
  
This question means, "May I snuggle into Professor's blanket?"  
  
"Be my guest."  
  
Professor lifts up her blanket and waves to me. I say "Excuse me," then nervously lie down beside professor. After that, I curl up my body and raise my head to look at Professor.  
  
We are very close together, and I can see myself reflected in Professor's pupils.  
  
"Good night, Professor."  
  
I bury my head in Professor's large, soft hills. It's so soft and has a nice fragrance to it.  
  
Professor hugs me gently, stroking my hair. Then, she says "Goodnight, Iris" and kisses my forehead.  
  
After changing my status to sleep mode, I enter the world of slumber.  
  
I had a happy day today, too.