

Background:

In one nearby town, the townspeople fear The Academy, and hate all those in it. They've heard stories of the horrors that lurk in it.

As the students proceed throughout the school, a malleable prophecy is carved for each of them. They are given a prophecy, a riddle, of what will become of their lives later on. Many of these are ominous death omens. They must do whatever they can to change their fate to something they desire. In some cases, the more they fight, the more they are pulled towards their inevitable doom.

The prophecies may contradict one another. One may say that this student is destined to be the number one Hunter, while another says another student is. This causes the students to form a fatal rivalry with one another.

Yunip's personality influences Yilla. Yilla begins to find that she's an energetic, bubbly person. Soon, as she becomes less shocked by what's going on and adjusts, she's eager to adventure, and craves for blood. However, while Yunip still mostly reacts to shocking events with morbid giggling, Yilla is still surprised from time to time, but with morbid fascination and interest.

DNA and such biological concepts do not exist in this world. Instead, each soul is a result of the energy machine of the world needing actors to move its energy around. When the world requires energy to do something, to work out a ritual, it moves the beings to do what is needed. In fact, this explains the desires and actions of every single being in the world. Every action, thought and desire can be explained in traditional ways, but these ways can be mapped to the needs- the gradient flows- of the world, as a whole, too. It's also how the prophecies are told. It is not clear whether the change in prophecies is because there is noise when measuring the prophecies, or because each being has the ability to go against the world.

There are several theories for how this system works. One is the belief that free will is one and the same with the desired 'choices' of the world. The reason a being would desire to do something- even if that's to go against something they desire- then whatever action they ultimately commit is the 'choice' of the world. The actions committed may or may not be favorable to each individual. There is no responsibility imparted to each individual; whatever goes, goes. Another belief is similar to that one, but says that only actions favorable to each individual are true 'desired' actions of the world. This belief has sub-beliefs too; some claim that only cooperation between every, or many, individuals thus means the world is heading towards a favorable state. Others say that such cooperation is impossible; the world must make sacrifices. Yet another belief is that the desires of the world and the desires of each being are separate, meaning there is a constant struggle between what the world wants and what each being wants. Without the structure of the world, each being has no home to live in. Without the beings, the world has no body. And so the two sides clash until they reach compromises that favor both of them as best as it can get. Conflict would come up again and again until the best compromised is reached. In this story, there is no final consensus as to which theory is correct. It is left as a wandering mystery.

As Yilla becomes adjusted to her new environment, she begins to realize what she- and her demon- truly want. She reveals how Unclean ones were never given a choice. In many cases, an Unclean one's demons aren't discovered until the Unclean one is a young child, sometimes even when they're 12. By then, they are too old to be simply executed, although, for the safety of society, several have been. Following the word of their doctrines, the priests and the churches and temples offered mercy to the

Unclean, in exchange for their free will. The Dictator does not believe in the preservation of all in society. War and conflict, he claims, are inevitable if there is to be freedom for each individual.

Revise Yilla to be more cutthroat and eager (like Naruto). She's still shaken, but she's not trying to adjust to learn how to speak up. Rather, she's instinctively does that (she always talks back to the priests and priestesses back when she was a slave, resulting in severe punishment), but is often confused about how to act, taking in everything with morbid fascination like a young, demented child. Yilla may not always be confident about what she's doing, but she is determined to rise up and take her revenge, and to unleash her love for sadistic killing and blood. She has never felt ashamed of that; what she must contend with are those who are more determined that she is to become the world's most feared killer, and also those trying to pull her into the Light.

Superego: what society says is right/wrong. Ego: how one chooses if one's own morals or society's morals are right

There was another Chosen Light whom many priests supported as the 'true' Chosen Light after Yilla was identified as a strong candidate. This girl was Yilla's master, around the same age, who treated Yilla with much more respect than the others. Slaves were forced to repent constantly and have humility, as their demons imbued them with wicked thoughts. But this girl, Tara, did not want Yilla to constantly sacrifice herself for her. The Dictator seeks to also extinguish Tara, and sends Zhar and Yilla after her.

The world has a dark morbidity, set in a France-like setting. Dark metals- shadowy purple, gold, red and green- adorn the cities. Clowns parade everywhere, speaking in riddles and laughter. These jesters have a wicked side to them. Penny farthing cycles- called "oom"- are seen throughout. Chocolate is a national delicacy, especially those rich in secrets. Buildings are casted in Baroque black iron, and quiet lanterns light up the constantly solemn night sky. Daytime is rare, and there are several moons. The fashion is darkly colorful, a mix of Gothic, Baroque, Renaissance and medieval.

In lighter parts of the cities, thin silver metals connect together colors of various forms and white pearl faces. They look like a playing card come to life. Flowers and small gardens are present everywhere, but not densely packed; rather, they are sparsely spread throughout.

The clowns are the prophets. They tattle off these riddles to the students. Mimes shift in and out of the scenery.

The Academy is a powerful fortress, constructed by steel that gleams gold and silver. Its officers are tough and sadistic.

Yilla and Tara have a romantic subplot. Like Yilla, Yunip is interested in someone from the opposing side; a boy who 'lacks conviction'.

Zhar is constantly hitting on men aggressively, and getting attacked in self-defense. She never gets with anyone in the entire story. In this regard, Zhar and Axel are very similar to one another. However, they have no interest in each other.

Zhar has the aloofness of a sleazy rebel, but among her troops, she is a stern and serious leader. She shifts between these two demeanors, with the commonality that in both, she is charismatic and brutish.

Yilla has short, blond curly hair. Her skin is very pale, with red in some areas, as if she's blushing on her body.

Kreeya, too, has very pale skin, but instead of red, she has purple hues. Four deep scars are etched upon her face. She has long purple hair and twintails.

Johnathan has a crew cut, is heavily built and has yellow eyes.

Yunip has blonde hair, is large, and dresses richly

Axel is lean with brown hair, and his eyes glow opal, though he can adjust how much they shine in order to conceal himself. Most of the time, they are extremely dim. The light is used to suddenly stun the enemy. His pupils are not seen.

Tara has winterblue hair and green eyes

Yilla prepares herself mentally during training for her first Gall Game. One of the prisoners on her own team, however, is Tara. She is under a disguise with the name 'Savannah' and claims to be just a lowly soldier, so no one suspects she's the other proposed Chosen Light. The two recognize each other, and Yilla instinctively chooses to protect Tara. During one of the key positions, the captain tells Yilla that, given the circumstances, it's a better strategy to sacrifice Tara in favor of protecting more prisoners. All, except Haldern, are in favor of this plan. Haldern is the only one in opposition not because he cares for Tara, but because he believes, based on the rules he was taught, that it is a better strategy to protect her. Yilla is lost, and for a split second, she makes the decision to protect Tara, sacrificing 3 other prisoners, and causing her team to eventually lose her very first match. Yilla doesn't like being ordered what to do and to follow rules that others say is good for them, but bad for her. In order to not be ousted (she already faces extreme pressure as the Chosen Light), she lies and claims she was just following Haldern's logic. Haldern, taken aback, grows a little bit more respectful of his teammate. Axel and Yunip do not participate in the sport. Axel claims it's 'too much work' and 'pointless', because he can use that time to feast on innocents instead of training and fasting (which improves his concentration at detecting the location of jewels).

A few more games are played, with Tara being on the opposing side in one or some of them. Tara and Yilla bond closer, with Yilla fearing that she may not be up for the villain life. But in order to give up the villain life, she must suppress her demon, and thus give up freedom and become a slave again - this is the only path an Unclean one can walk to benefit the world and save it from their demon (even the Holiest One, who is not a slave, sacrificed something that meant the world to him). Tara doesn't agree with this, saying there must be some other way (there isn't). Eventually, Tara escapes, and is revealed to be a candidate for the Chosen Light. Many strongly scrutinize Yilla's actions, wondering why she protected Tara so intently. To prove that she's not righteous, Yilla takes up the task of hunting down Tara. She also has to balance work, sport and school, causing stress. The taste of blood starts to become associated with work, nearly causing her to lose her passion. But her supportive friends help her through her dilemmas. In later parts of the story, the students have to balance out committing genocides and finding a date for prom.

Though the Gall Games are played with prisoners and criminals to present themselves under a sarcastic veil of righteousness, sometimes innocent civilians who have never fought before are labeled as 'soldiers' by sadistic game organizers.

Yilla's demon does not tell her its name in the beginning. Yilla learns that when she releases her demon, she coughs up a lot of blood and grows extremely weak. Without it, she is just an ordinary soldier. The Academy wants to use her demon to win a crucial upcoming battle, but Yilla fears this may kill her.

Descriptions of food are prevalent throughout the story. These foods resemble French desserts, and desserts are even eaten as a main course. Dark chocolate and coffee comprise much of the tastes, styles and smells.

In the large city of Nocturne, its residents are unlike normal people. They migrated to the city to feast on blood and flesh, which is forbidden by the Church and its gods. Popular activities include lynching and 'death parties'. Not all of its residents fully pledge themselves to the Dictator; in fact, many do not. The city is not run by the Dictator, but is more of a free, anything-goes type of place where sin runs rampant.

According to the Church, the gods used to battle one another for their selfish purposes. However, something happened that made them all cooperate with one another. Their temples were all united into an entity deemed the Church. With their strength, they defeated the demons, who were dissenting gods and spirits who did not agree with this new order. In cooperation, they form a hive-mind with no individual thought, one that logically follows principles to benefit the greater good. Sacrifice is a huge theme, and those who sacrifice themselves are considered Saints. The Church claims that the demons found a way back into the world by possessing the souls of newborn children. These newborn children, they say, are special few who have the grand task of committing the ultimate sacrifice: leading lives of servitude, often ending with short lifespans and painful diseases. Though these children are said to be 'honored', in actuality they are looked down upon and feared, as whatever action they do to benefit themselves- a natural thing to do- it is said to be the will of a demon. The Unclean ones die with the demon trapped in their body, and no one knows what happens to them after that. The Church claims they go to Heaven- but no one knows for sure. Perhaps the Demon rages inside of them still, angry and vengeful that they suppressed them, and subjects them to an afterlife of inescapable, eternal dream-like torment... Inside of their mind, they are imprisoned forever...

The Yamolnin play an important part in the story. Their technologies and art are everywhere, but their world remains a mystery. Yunip can break into it and allow it to be attacked, but she cannot see what it looks like.

The ruling authority for the good side is the Church. Unbeknownst to all save a few, its leader, the Holiest One, is an Unclean. In order to keep the world stable and prevent the deaths of many, he has to sacrifice his own loved ones- his fellow Unclean- to suppress his demon and grant him powers that keep the strongest demons imprisoned. This is the only way anyone can amass enough strength to combat the strongest demons. By keeping his demon suppressed with sacrifices, karma grants him a polar reactionary strength that is released (like heat from chemical bonds) that keeps his demon chained down. His sacrifice is the only thing strong enough in the world that can do this. This sacrifice is so strong because of the many friends he had to kill for the greater good. Sacrifice is relative to each person, so those Unclean who are more emotionally sensitive and commit actions that touch upon these sensibilities will obtain more 'merciful karma'. Unlike the other Unclean, whose sacrifices do not grant them enough power to escape their bonds, and are merely enough to keep their demon down, the Holiest One's merciful karma spills over as strength. His greatest powers come from his sacrifice of his loved woman, an Unclean. The gods saw that to stop the strongest demons, they had to focus on granting strength to one individual. The best generator of energy was an Unclean one, but one who had

to show he had enough loyalty and self-sacrifice to responsibly carry this energy within him. Seeing the Holiest One passed the greatest tests, they used what remaining power they had to keep his demon - who was one of the strongest demons, too (a god, in fact) - chained down, and since his merciful karma did not have to be wasted in keeping his demon in, it spilled over and became a power. Merciful karma that spills over is proportional to how much energy it takes to seal a demon, so the stronger one's demon, the stronger one's power from merciful karma is. It is also proportional to how much the host's sacrifices mean relative to their how much they want their desires.

If many Unclean ones were to make their own choices, then too many would choose to unleash their demon, which would cause many to die. This is why the Church forcibly sends the children into servitude. Instead of killing the children, they see it as a way for them to give themselves to the gods, living out a proud life of sacrifice. They are also against murdering innocents, so servitude is the better option in their eyes.

The Academy is housed within a gargantuan cathedral. It used to be a temple, until it was taken over by the Dictator. Now it still stands in mockery of its former purpose, being used as a barrack and training ground for murderers.

The prophecy that the Chosen Light is given is unclear. Prophecies can be told in 3 ways: by priests, by jesters/clowns, or by dancers. When priests tell them, their words are still mysterious, although they are not playful like the jester's prophecies. Some believe the Chosen Light is meant to stop the strongest demons once they escape from their prison, which would happen when the Holiest One dies. Others believe that humans must become 'like the gods' and unite into a hive-mind, where there would be unquestioned self-sacrifice and constant Gnostic prayer. Cooperation would reign supreme. Some believe that this can only happen once the strongest demons are defeated, while still others think demons will always exist, which is how sacrifice can be meaningful, and so this hive-mind is meant to protect humans from demons.

Classes:

Fencer: promotes to Imperial (more strength) or Legionnaire (more defense)

Cavalier: mounted, heavily armored. Ride upon feral lizards, wolves or horses. Promotes to Dragoon (winged riders) or Paladin.

Arquebusier: Gun wielding soldiers who also specialize in flash grenades. Long-range, operate ballista-like weapons that do AOE and splash damage. Promotes to Musketeer or Chocolatier

(Promoted Unit)- Chocolatier: Those who feast upon the forbidden chocolates. They fire shadow bullets. They reach trances that allow them to communicate with the Yamolnin

Hunter: Mountain men. Wield axes and bows. Promote to Grizzly or Berserker

Spies: Promote to Assassin or Detective

Jester: The mages of the world. Able to summon otherworldly, hellish creatures and control puppets. Jesters who have delved too deep into the dark arts are rumored to become clowns; but no one knows where clowns have truly come from. Some say that are beings that have existed since the ancient times. Several sub-classes, such as mimes, exist. Promote to Supreme Jester (or clown???)

Apothecary: creator of various potions, poisons and recipes. Also dabble in the dark arts, traps and chemical bombs. Expert merchants. Promote to Seer or Plague Doctor

Priest: call upon the will of the gods to send blessings or curses down upon the world. Female priests are also called Nuns or Priestesses. Corrupted priests/nuns bastardize prayers in the name of sin, and many of them serve under the Dictator. Promote to Bishop, Exorcist or Gnostic

Dancer: those who 'become one with the cycles of the world'. They are able to change the currents of fate itself, and tell prophecies. May also be adept in drawing/painting/sculpting, composition, conducting, instruments and singing. Unlike the jesters, who interpret them through riddles, the dancers tell what they feel through the visual arts, and it is up to each individual mind in the audience to say what it means to them. Experts at dodging, concealing themselves and acting as spies too, but not at assassination. Promote to Danseuse/Danseur, Loure, or Jazz

Tinkerer: Constructs steampunk machines and bombs. Promotes to Machinist or Stitcher (stitches body parts together)

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Skip to scene, draft:

The theater roared in laughter.

“Come on, Yilla, hurry up, we’re gonna miss the show!” Yunip exclaimed.

“Oh! Geez, I’m coming right now!”

The tiny, curly blond haired girl shuffled through crowded rows of spectators, all intensely focused on the spectacle before them. A clown was on stage, clutching a shrieking, disembodied head. The clown, squinting his totally black eyes and pursing his ruby mouth in, inspected the screaming head. He spoke:

“Nate, nate, NATE. Now just what is the problem with you today?”

The head let out one final bellow, and went from a surprised scream to a frown. It darted its eyes throughout the room, and finally answered, “Horace, you know I hate crowds. They make me lose my head.”

“You don’t even have a body!”

The crowd roared again. “THAT WAS A KNEE SLAPPER,” someone yelled out, clearly drunk or with a bad sense of humor.

Yilla finally found a seat. “So Yunip,” she whispered, “What’s this all about?”

“It’s a straight man, silly man routine. The clown’s silly, while the disembodied head is the straight man, always annoyed at his partner’s antics. The clown makes the head speak, like a ventriloquist does to his dummy.”

“Uh, hmm. Where did the head come from?”

“From audience participation.”

Yilla’s face turned white.

The clown had finished his routine. “Thank you, folks! I couldn’t have done this without your help. You really keep me on my toes!”

“Mines too!”

The clown gave a confused look at his partner. Suddenly, from the bottom of the still-bleeding neck, crawled out a set of disfigured toes.

“WHOOOOAAAA!” The audience gasped. And then laughed again.

Yunip turned to her friend, “Yilla, I wanna go! This looks fun!”

“Wh- what? Are you crazy? How the hell would they put you back together?”

“It’s all just an illusion.”

“Really?”

“I think.”

Yilla felt a presence looming behind her. “Hey Ladies, am I late for the party?”

Axel jumped from the back, into an empty seat next to Yilla. “So this is the famous Horace the Clown, huh? Yawn, nothing I haven’t seen before. Hey, why don’t we go get some raspberry mousse?”

Yilla smiled, “You know, the sight of blood kinda makes me crave some raspberry, right now.” Yunip nodded, and the three left their seats to go walk to the nearest bakery.

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It was a good cake. Yilla licked up the final smudges of red splattered on her lips, and breathed a sigh of satisfaction.

“Yilla,” Yunip said to her friend, “You seem to be pretty happy. You seemed paler than usual during the clown show.”

Axel butted in, “You know, for someone who likes killing things so much, I was surprised at how eager you were to leave the show.”

“Yeah... About that... I DO like killing things. Just not when I’m in danger of being killed.”

“So you’re definitely not a masochist then?” Yunip replied.

“Er, no.”

Axel laughed. “That’s what a lot of sadistic people like you say when they start at The Academy. But once they start getting into battles, some of them flip-flop pretty quickly.”

Yilla giggled. “I don’t think I’d ever enjoy the feeling of getting stabbed. I fucking hate knives.”

Axel grinned. “Well, I don’t think they ever really enjoy that either. It’s more about being into the moment. All that adrenaline rushing in, the danger of facing an opponent so strong, so challenging... Pushing yourself to your limits and feeling something you’ve never felt before. It’s why the audience was so excited, even though everyone’s seen the disembodied head routine. All parents in this city take their kids to see one. People want to *experience* what it’s like to lose your head. The novelty of it all.”

Yilla twirled her crescent spoon, not really interested in anything Axel was saying. She was thinking back to her homework assignment: to commit genocide on an entire village of endangered frog-people. Most people already started committing genocide on their assigned population last month, and Yilla hadn’t even traumatized a toddler by killing his parents yet. She thought to herself: I’m gonna have to pull an all-nighter for this one.

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Skip to scene, draft:

“ATTENTION!”

The students all straightened up, out of fear of being flogged.

“You are all gathered here today because you want to be winners. To achieve glorious victory. To crush your enemies one by one. I am here to get you started. The sport of Gall Hunting has been a proud tradition of academies everywhere for centuries. It is not the same as carrying out missions to slaughter innocents or heroes, because Gall Games don’t really contribute much to the overall cause. Instead, each Game is played for an audience. There are two types of Games: Exhibition, and Field. In Exhibition, we gather up prisoners of war or crime (‘criminal’ often means those who lack conviction in the Dictator’s twisted world) in an arena, and our Academy’s Supreme Jesters imbue the jewels into their guts. Prisoners are assigned to each team. The goal of each of the two opposing teams is to hunt down the prisoners on the opposing side, slay them, and rip out the jewels from their innards. At the same time, each team wants to protect their own prisoners from being killed. Prisoners are able to fight, but can only be given weapons chosen from the limited inventory that each team chooses to bring in at the start of the game. The combined ‘values’ of each item must not exceed the cap. Prisoners are also not assigned- after given a list of each one’s war records, each team takes turns voting to choose prisoners. For ties, the team captain makes a decision. It is wise to choose a prisoner to counter prisoners that you know the other team has chosen. The prisoners who survive are put back in jail, leaving with their lives. If they do not cooperate, other prisoners are threatened. In Field, the games are played on large fields, in real life, spanning many miles. The Supreme Jesters telepathically scan them and broadcast them back to the audiences watching back in the arena. The ultimate goal of Gall Hunting is to obtain all the jewels of the other side.”

Yilla beamed up eagerly, unable to contain her excitement. Madame Tigress- the Unclean one who managed to beat all odds and become a professional Gall Huntress. One day, she wanted to be just like her.

The instructor rattled on, “Given that the Boastful Leader thinks it’s impractical to kill off our own soldiers, players will receive penalties if they deliver fatal blows to their opponents (those games belong to another school sport called Elimination I do not recommend anyone to sign up for, as it’s impractical. Eliminators call Gall Hunters ‘weak’ while Gall Hunters call Eliminators ‘stupid’). Occasionally students will play Elimination to settle feuds they have with one another once and for all). Each team has 10 players, each assigned a position. There are Predators and Guards. Predators are focused on killing, while Guards are focused on protecting their own prisoners. Scouts aim to track the opposing team. There are more specific types of Predators, Guards and Scouts that can be assigned optionally, but I will not delve into them right now. Also, there is a hierarchy of command, with captains and vice captains barking out orders and also a voting system that can override orders. Of course, these roles are not rigid, so Guards can also take up Predation if the situation arises, and vice versa. Hybrid roles are common. Positions are there to give each player an idea of what they’re supposed to do. There is no set number for each role group in a game. For instance, a team may choose to have all Predators on their team during a game if they decide it’s the best strategy.”