

Pathway to the Truth

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Parallel lines are alike. They run side by side together, reaching the same goal in the exact same form. However what if the lines show paths of similarities, but the one who walks them are different? They reach to the same ending, but each path holds obstacles that although alike at first, are different to who the path is walked upon by. (Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!)

Pathway to the Truth

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1. The Beginning

DISCLAIMER: I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Ah ha. Jumping onto the bandwagon of a FeMC for Persona 4~

In all honesty I think if they remade Persona 4 in the same way of Persona 3 Portable it would be pretty interesting.

I hope you all enjoy this first chapter of the fanfic!

Blue.

The color takes her off guard immediately and her eyes widen as she takes in her surroundings. Her ears pick up the sounds of an engine. A car?

No.

Upon closer observation she concludes she's not in any ordinary car, but inside a limousine. Her back presses against blue cushioned seats that stretch over the right side of the limo, stopping at a seat identical to the one she is occupying across from her.

To the left she spots a bar, it stretches just about the same

length as the car and displays various bottles and glasses that shine under the dim blue light provided above.

She remembers that blue was a soothing color. It was calming to the eyes which would explain why she hadn't started panicking as her eyes continued to study the inside of the limo.

Her observation stops when the sight of fog outside the window beside her meets her gaze.

"Welcome to the Velvet Room."

Her head turns again, finally making out the figures that rest across from her.

She must have failed to notice them when she let herself study her surroundings.

A man resting across from her slowly lifts his head as his elbows continue to rest upon the small blue table in front of him. She takes notice of his extreme long nose and his pointed ears, an image of an elf comes to mind as she stares.

Though she doubts he is one as he stares at her with his large eyes.

More of a goblin...If anything...

The other figure she finally notices is that of a woman.

The woman rests besides the man with a blue uniform with

the same shade as the blue around. If the man looked unworldly, this woman mirrored that image in a much more pleasing way to the human eye.

She's beautiful; platinum blond hair carefully styled in place, pale skin, and golden eyes that hold a hint of amusement as she looks back towards the one who stares from across the vehicle.

"Ah," the man breathes a greeting after a long moment of silence, "It seems we have a guest with an intriguing destiny."

A chuckle soon follows as the man introduces himself at last, "My name is Igor...I am delight to make your acquaintance."

His words sound pleasant, but for some odd reason she cannot shake a certain unease that falls on her as she nods to him.

The man, Igor, grins at her.

She learns what this place is, the Velvet Room, a space between dream and reality. Was she dreaming? The question doesn't seem relevant suddenly as Igor speaks of a 'contract' and how it seems related to her future. She sits in silence only to look confused as Igor stares at her.

"...Your name?"

"Oh!" Her voice finally echoes through the space for the first time since she's awoken, "Yui...Yui Narukami."

Igor takes a moment to cast a glance to the woman to his left, the grin remaining as he chuckles. "Now...Let's take a look into your future, shall we?"

A hand is set in front of him and a glow shines through the dim blue, a deck of cards rest now in front of him.

She recognizes them as tarot card and tilts her head in curiosity as the small man lets out a deep chuckle, "Do you believe in fortune telling?"

Her voice emerges out of her mouth again, "No. Isn't...A reading done with the same cards, but depending on that person's future the result of the cards shown are different?"

Her understanding of the mechanics are vague and she has only known about it as a 'silly trick' the girls back in the city squealed over.

Yet her simple answer brings a wide smile upon Igor's face.

"Ah, yet life itself follows the same principles, yes?" She muses over that statement and watches him flip the first card.

Upon the surface of the card is a tower being struck by lightning as two figures are falling out.

Igor's voice snaps her out of her trance, "The Tower is in the upright position," he muses over, "Representing the immediate future. It seems a terrible catastrophe is imminent."

She watches as Igor flips up another card, "The card

indicating the future beyond that is..."

The card is upright, just like the tower, only this time what looks like the moon has been printed onto it. It doesn't seem that far fetch to assume that the tarot card's name would be The Moon.

"-This card represents 'hesitation' and 'mystery.'"

Again, Igor looks amused as she looks up and back from the card to his face.

"This..Is interesting."

She opens her mouth to ask, but he continues to speak.

"It seems you will encounter a misfortune at your destination, and a great mystery will be imposed upon you. In the coming days, you will enter into a contract of some sort, after which you will return here. The coming year is a turning point in your destiny...If the mystery goes unsolved, your future may be forever lost."

His words provide no comfort at all to her and she resists the urge to shiver.

Her future...Lost?

"My duty is to provide assistance to our guests to ensure that does not happen."

Relief washes over her instantly upon those words and she

smiles as the cards disappear with a sweep of Igor's hand. He nods towards the woman, "Ah! I have neglected to introduce my assistant to you." Her eyes turn to face the woman as Igor continues, "This is Margaret. She is a resident of this place, like myself."

The woman speaks, her voice expertly sound to that of a secretary.

"My name is Margaret. I am here to accompany you through your journey."

She can only give a nod before Igor cuts her off from speaking a greeting in return to the woman, "We shall attend to the details another time."

Details? There was..More?

"Until then, farewell..."

She opens her mouth as more questions come to mind. Why did she come? What did Igor mean by 'details' and 'another time?' Was this all a dream? It felt...Too real...

Her eyelids begin to close and the blue turns to black as slumps in her seat.

The faint memory of blue lingers as she can feel herself drifting off into the abyss of sleep.

She jerks up, hand nearly slamming onto the cold pane of the

window on her right as the rattle of the train car slowly causes her to wake from her groggy state.

Yui Narukami was the only passenger in the car, the scene of clear skies and land free of cement and steel buildings met her gaze as she ran her fingers through her light silver-gray hair.

Her bangs swept back to the left as she leaned a bit deeper into the cushioned train seat.

"Right...Going to Yasoinaba.."

The dream she had earlier still clung to her memory, almost making her forget why she had been on a train in the first place.

Yui looked up at the sky, the blue above didn't match the blue in her dreams that seemed much darker thanks to the lights of the limo.

A goblin like man with such a long nose smiling to her as he showed her cards upon the table that read her future...

A beauty by the name of Margaret who spoke with a smile, yet didn't reach her cold gold eyes...

Dreams were something the brain came up with to convey some message to the dreamer. Did her dream have a meaning? Was she worried of her year stay in her mother's old hometown of Yasoinaba. This had to be the very first time

Yui left the city...

The teenager dug into her jacket's pocket to take out her cell phone, the cold device lit up to show the last text sent to her.

-Meet us outside Yasoinaba Station at 4PM.-

The name accompanying it was Ryotaro Dojima, her uncle.

Yui's mother had given her a very vague description of her uncle. A detective who was a bit rough around the edges, but a good man.

His daughter, Nanako, was in elementary school and had just turned seven years old. Her uncle's wife had died when her cousin was very young and Yui's mother seemed to skip over that part before telling Yui to be sure to take all her clothing with her.

Her fingers rest on the phone's key pad as she stared at the text.

She had stayed alone for as long as she could remember.

Parents were workaholics, her father always running around to get to meetings and her mother always yapping away on her phone in her warmest yet professional secretary like tone reserved for all clients calling for her. Never did they pay mind that their teenage daughter might have wanted a say in her arranged living plan with a family member.

The sound of the intercom began to spark, "Arriving to

Yasoinaba Station. Arriving to Yasoinaba Station. Will all passengers please take all luggage and begin to move to the exit. Repeat, arriving to Yasoinaba."

Yui quietly stood up and began to reach up to the overhead compartment for her duffel bag, "Looks like I'll have to make the most of it..."

Still, the memory of her dream clung to her brain.

...Was it really a dream? The details were too realistic and the sound of the limo's engine were as clear as Igor's odd daunting voice as he read her future.

"...I don't believe in fortune-telling though," she muttered quietly to herself as she began to move towards the designated exit. Her mouth pulled into a frown at her very words as she stepped out onto the platform.

The sight of an empty station greets her gray eyes as soon as she began to head towards the entrance.

"Inaba is such a tiny town," her mother's words rang out, "I'm sure you'd be surprised Yui. There's a reason why I like the city so much. The country's sides too peaceful for me and too quiet...The hustle and bustle of the city is just right. Just be sure not to get too bored in the head to do anything funny."

Yui's eyebrows arch down as her mouth sets into a frown as

she goes down the steps, the heel of her black shoes hitting the stone pretty hard as she recalled those last few words.

Did her parents really see her as a possible troublemaker?

She had always been a good girl...Even so far as just allowing them to dump her off to the nearest family member when they went overseas for the year.

She sighs and looks around, her bag's strap tight in her hand. Her cell phone is pulled out again and the time flashes as 4:01.

"Hey! Over here!"

The voice of a man manages to snap her head up from the tiny phone and look over to her left.

A tall man stands with his arm up next to a white car, she recognizes him the instant her eyes pause onto him. He's aged a bit from the pictures her mother has in their thin family photo album, but there is no mistaking it.

Ryotaro Dojima smiles to her and extends his hand out for her to shake. The smile looks a bit forced onto him as her hand firmly grasps his and shakes, the lines on his face are too tight as if he's always frowning. All the same, Yui nods to him in greeting as he looks her up and down.

"Well you're more beautiful in person than in your photo," he finally says causing the teenager to blush at his words, "You

look just like your mother, save for your hair and height, but still...How tall are you anyway?"

"I'm about five six," Yui admitted as she tucked a strand of hair behind her ear and tightens the grip onto her bag, "And you're too kind...I don't look nothing like my mom..."

All that she had from her mother was her face.

Defined cheekbones, almond-shaped eyes, and straight hair that was cut to the length of passing her shoulders by two inches with her bangs swept to the left side. Her body was tall and slender, something she had gotten from her father, as well as his gray eyes and a lighter shade of his gray hair.

To be called beautiful was a bit of a far cry for her and she watches as her uncle laughs a bit at her reaction before shaking his head.

"Well either way," he told her, "Welcome to Inaba. I guess you already know, but I'm Ryotaro Dojima. I'll be looking after you."

Yui nodded, "I know. You're...My mother's younger brother. She's told me a bit about you. Thank you for taking care of me."

She bows quickly only to hear him chuckle nervously, the man obviously isn't used to formalities and she quickly straightens up as he shakes his head.

"No need to be so formal! You might not remember, but we've met a long time ago. I had to change your diapers you know."

Yui coughed at his remark, the warmth in her cheeks return and she laughs nervously. What sort of family member, a male especially, brought that up? The teenager stops her chuckling as a small head peers from behind Dojima's legs.

The girl has dark brown hair tied in two pigtails, her eyes aren't looking at Yui and concentrate hard onto the ground.

Dojima notices this and moves aside which causes the girl to make a sound of protest. He isn't amused and lightly taps her on the shoulder to urge her forward in front of him, "Come on Nanako, introduce yourself to yur cousin."

So this was her younger cousin...

Yui's mouth slowly turns up into a smile as Nanako finally lifts her eyes to meet her face, "...lo..."

The shy greeting makes Yui's smile widen and she rests her hands onto the tops of her jeans at the knee as she bends a bit to appear shorter to look closer to her younger cousin's face. "Hi Nanako," she quietly greets her, "I'm Yui. It's nice to meet you." Nanako's face turns a bright pink and she ducks back behind the protection of her father's legs as Yui straightens up.

"What're you so shy for?" Dojima loudly teased as he looks behind him, "You were all excited earlier abo-OW!" There's a

sharp intake of breath and a hiss when a loud smack is heard. Yui quickly covers her mouth to stop her snicker as her uncle gives his daughter a hard glare. The little girl had quite a strong hand and she looks to him with an equally annoyed glare.

"Well," Dojima quickly clears his throat, "My car's over there. Let's get going."

She nods, her smile still plastered widely on her face as she follows after him. She opens the door and sets her duffle bag to the floor before climbing into the back. Nanako jumps right in and takes a moment to stare at her.

Yui stares back at her in return before giving the girl a quick wink. Nanako immediately turns pink again and looks away just as Dojima turns the keys into the car's ignition.

I think this is about a good start. I apologize if I missed a few odd grammar mistakes and spelling. I apologize. I'm still trying to be a bit careful so it's not exactly repeating what was seen in the game. I might throw in a bit of scenes from Persona Golden and from the anime.

But yup, it's the start of Yui's journey!

Yui is a bit more emotional than Yu, a bit more friendly, but she's still a little stiff on her emotions. Her height is barely hitting the point of Yosuke's height, making her the tallest of the IT girls.

I hope you stick around for more! Thank you for reading and review please if you want. Looking forward to seeing you all soon again!

2. Settle

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

Here's another chapter! As mentioned before in the last chapter I will add a few scenes from the anime and Golden as well as trying to add in a bit of my own writing. Mainly because I know a bit more of Persona from the anime, but at the same time there are many events from Golden that I enjoyed.

I am a bit unsure if I should add Marie. As she is an important character in Golden, but is only included in Golden. I might add her later, I'm still unsure. If you all wish for her to appear in the fanfic I would really like to hear some feedback about it. Hope this chapter is acceptable and please enjoy!

All possible missed grammatical and spelling errors I have missed I apologize in advance!

The drive was relatively quiet for the most part, Yui only responded appropriately to Dojma's questions.

Many of which just asked how her trip was and how were her parents.

Her answers ranged from a simple, 'It was fine', to an uncertain sound of her laughing nervously saying she couldn't answer as she and her parents barely spent time together. The only other sound was from the car's radio that began to speak about the Mayumi Yamano scandal.

Yui frowns a bit at this, it had been everywhere. Even in the televisions that were stacked on top of one another at the city's train station.

It had even spread all the way out to here...

Dojima glanced behind as they stopped at a red light, "Ya know," he began startling her a bit, "I know it's probably not...Something you wouldn't have wanted. Your parents leaving you behind, but...I'm sure you'll enjoy Inaba. I'm glad you're staying. I'm sure it'll be fun."

"...I'm looking forward to it." Yui smiled, grateful that the man had finally spoken more during the ride, "And, again thank you for taking me in Uncle." He lets out a bit of a chuckle, the silence falls upon them again until Nanako makes a quiet sound of discomfort.

"...I have to use the bathroom..."

Yui looks at her younger cousin, "Ah uncle?" Dojima points off to the side towards a rather conveniently placed gas station.

The car comes to a halt after a few minutes and the little girl struggles to unbuckle herself out, "H-Hold on."

Yui helps her to which Nanako mutters a quiet thanks before opening her door.

"Hi! Welcome to Moel!"

The gas attendant rushes over and greets them loudly as Dojima comes out of the driver's seat. The teenager unbuckles her seat belt slowly before opening her own door and steps out.

The smell of gasoline hits her nose and she makes a bit of a face as she peers out from her side to find Nanako standing a few feet away looking rather confused. "It's in the back to your left!" she can hear the attendant call out to her, "You know which way's left? It's the hand you don't hold your chopsticks in!"

"I know...Geez..."

Yui's face twitches a bit into a smile as she begins to walk her way around the car as her eyes watch her younger cousin head in the direction of the bathroom. "So you heading out?"

"Ah no," Dojima glances towards Yui as she finally comes to view, "We just came back from picking her up at the station. My niece. She's from the big city."

Yui glances at the two men before bowing a bit to which the

attendant laughs as Dojima shakes his head at her formality. "Regular's fine." The attendant makes a salute before heading around to place the pump in. "Now's a good time as any for a smoke..."

Yui watches her uncle leave before resting her back against the side of the car. All she can do now is wait...

Her eyes roam a bit around them, earlier she had seen a good number of houses. Here she's seen a small row of stores lined up close by the station a few blocks away. A bus stop is right across from where she stands.

Compared to the city, this was a very small town...

"Are you in high school?"

The attendant's voice breaks through her musings and she cautiously moves around until she's standing behind the car until she finds the man. "Yes I am." He smiles to her, "Does it surprise a city girl to see how little there is out here?"

The teenager looks out again before shrugging. "It doesn't seem so bad...My mother made it sound a lot smaller..."

"There's so little to do, I'm sure you'll get bored fast. You'll either be hanging out with your friends or doing part-time jobs."

While other girls would probably cringe at the limitations of a small place, Yui didn't.

It sounded nice actually.

She didn't want to depend on Dojima so the idea of getting a part-time job was nice. Heavens know when her parents would remember her and spend her an allowance. In the city the schools she attended strongly were against the idea of their students working. If she could get a part-time job here, it would be enjoyable perhaps...

Now friends...Her stomach suddenly felt heavy at the thought.

"Oh speaking of part-time!" Yui again is cut off from her thoughts, the man sure was chatty...

"We're actually looking for part-time help right now."

Yui blinks a bit in surprise as the man walks away from his place and stands in front of her. His hair is long and shaggy, a dark gray. The hat with MOEL across the top overcasts his face with a light shadow making it hard for her to distinguish his face very well.

The only thing that stands at the moment is his height. She had to look up at him as he looks at her with a smile.

"Give it some thought," he tells her with a cheerful tone, "We don't mind if you're a student."

She looks down to see his hand is extended out to her, "...I'll..Think about it," she tells him quietly before reaching out with her own and shakes his. His grip is firm and she returns it

as strong as she can allow herself to. The man lets go and waves to her, "Well back to work for me."

He chuckles and flashes a wide smile before returning to the gas pump just as Nanako hurries back to the car.

Yui smiles towards her and steps forward, only to let out a hiss of pain as a sudden throb pulses hard in her head. She stumbles a bit and sways as one of her hands rests against her forehead quickly.

Her eyes close instantly and she tries to rub at a temple with the tips of her fingers to urge it to pass. When it's gone her eyes slowly open to see Nanako stare up at her with wide eyes filled with worry, "Are you...Okay?"

Yui gives her a shaky grin at her concern, "You didn't get...Car sick did you?"

"No..It's gone," the older assures her, "It went away just like that." Nanako stares at her, unconvinced, "...Well..If you say so." Yui shrugs as Dojima returns, "Huh? What's wrong?" The two girls stare at him and shake their heads to which he frowns.

Perhaps Yui was just tired...That was understandable...Right?

Store bought sushi.

That was her dinner. No correction, that was their dinner.

Yui stares at the small plastic box of sushi with a poker face as she hears Nanako struggle to open the bottle of orange juice that was placed upon the table. She's torn a bit to help her cousin or to let her be. Just as she opens her mouth the bottle cap finally loosens and Nanako smiles at her accomplishment as she pours her drink into the glass in front of her. Yui sighs in relief before turning to her own drink, a glass of Tap Soda, as Dojima lifts his drink.

"I know this was suppose to be your welcome dinner, but uh...I'm not much of a cook." Yui shakes her head as he nods to the glass in his hand, "Let's have a toast." Nanako eagerly raises hers while the older girl half timidly raises her glass. They all take a sip of their drinks on cue before picking up their chopsticks.

"Well, even though it's for a year," her uncle told her, "I mentioned this before, but getting stuck here because of your parents...It's rough being a kid. It's just me and Nanako here, so it'll be nice having someone like you around. So long as you're here, you're part of the family so make yourself at home." Yui smiles a bit and nods while a soft giggle comes, "I know...And I will."

Her uncle smiles, a smile that's a lot less forced than from the station. That in itself made Yui grow warm as she begins to move her chopsticks to pick up a piece of sushi.

A family huh...

The phone suddenly rings making them all freeze.

"Ugh...Who's calling at this hour?" Yui and Nanako look at him as he begins to stand up. Hands whip out a cell phone and he turns his back to them.

"...Dojima speaking."

Yui turns her head to Nanako before turning back to Dojima. The man nods a bit, quietly muttering to whoever is on the other line.

"Got it I'm on my way." Yui turns away and her shoulders fall down as she spots the look upon Nanako's face at the sentence. Her posture seemed to have fallen, eyes averted towards her sushi, and her mouth drawn into a tight quivering line. She has seen this look many times before, in her own face...

"Look like I made the right choice to skip the booze..." She looks up to Dojima as he sighs, "Sorry, but I gotta go take care of some business. Go ahead and eat without me." Yui's teeth grit hard against each other as her eyes do a side glance towards Nanako. The girl is now standing up, her eyes wide as if she wants to say something.

"I don't know how late I'll be. Nanako, you help her out, okay?"

Yui keeps her eyes on the retreating figure of the man as he can hear Nanako sigh, "...Okay."

The front door opens and Yui can hear Dojima sigh loudly,

"Nanako, it's raining out. What did you do with the laundry!"

"I already brought it in! It's dry!"

Yui finally turns away from the direction of the front door as Dojima calls out he's leaving. The door slams shut and silence falls on the two girls. Nanako sits back down and begins to carefully pick up her sushi as Yui looks down at hers before looking back up to the young girl across.

"...Your dad's a detective right?" A nod as she swallows, "Uh huh. At the police department. It's always like this."

There are no hints of anger or sadness in Nanako's answer. It's spoken as a fact and Yui finds it a bit hard to make herself eat. Nanako reaches out to the television remote that rests upon the table and presses the power button. The TV turns on just as the weather channel ends its current segment.

Yui manages to catch tomorrow's weather as rainy before it quickly switches to reveal a commercial.

A bright building with red letters spelling 'JUNES' upon the roof appear. The store is a bit familiar to her, a department store...

Nanako makes a quiet sound of happiness at the sight as a woman's voice comes on air, "At Junes everyday is customer appreciation day! Come in and experience it for yourselves!" The commercial begins to flash a few shots of Junes as the woman happily speaks, a perky melody follows after.

"Everyday's great at your Junes~"

"Everyday's great at your Junes~"

The little girl's happy voice causes Yui to watch her sway happily in tune to her words before giggling. This had to be the first time she's seen the girl sound happy as she looks at her older cousin, "You're not hungry?"

"A-Ah n-I mean," Yui quietly fumbles over her words as she quickly picks up her chopsticks and sticks a piece of sushi into her mouth. Only to force herself to swallow to realize the piece contains a considerable amount of wasabi.

After dinner Yui and Nanako decided to go to bed, though the decision was made when Yui gave her younger cousin a long stare after they cleared the table. The little girl had returned to her seat to stare at the TV screen until she turned to meet the older girl's stare.

Obviously Nanako had been left alone for far too long...

Yui sighed as she rested herself onto the futon of her room as she looked around.

Compared to her old room, the guest room of the Dojima household was far bigger. There was a desk, a closet, an empty metal bookcase, a couch, and a television all fit perfectly into the space. She stretched a bit before allowing herself to fall onto the top of her bed to quietly sigh, "A whole

year..." Inaba did not seem all that bad...

Uncle Dojima seemed very nice, except his obvious inability to notice that perhaps work didn't need to come first. Was it a family tradition to blow off dinner to leave for work? Her mother did it a lot...Maybe it ran from her side and her father was just one of the lucky few men who had the same work ethic...

Nanako seemed shy around her. Yui felt a bit of affection towards the girl, she seemed rather cute and seeing her little cousin blush from her was adorable. Although...The expression she saw upon her face when her father left...That was a face she knew all too well.

All the same the two were her new family here.

Her mouth opens up into a yawn as she can feel her eyelids slowly droop, "...A year here..." Black covers her vision as she feels her body slowly sink into the heavy feel of exhaustion.

DO YOU WISH TO LEARN THE TRUTH?

The voice that suddenly echoes through her head urges herself to open her eyes, was she dreaming again? Instead of blue or the sight of her room though Yui can only see a shadowy figure not too far away from her surrounded by fog.

THEN TRY YOUR BEST TO CATCH IT.

This voice is not like Igor's...

While that goblin like man's voice was a bit distorted this one was spoken in a much deeper tone.

Yui guessed it was male as the shadow seems to be taller than her and the voice is after all spoken in a very deep tone. Her eyes flutter a moment until she manages to right herself up from the ground. The shadow is gone...

All around her is fog and she squints a bit, struggling to peer forward. The only visible object in front of her is a dark red and black path that goes straight on. Yui stands there, staring, "Truth.."

Her feet slowly begin to move forward, the only direction available to her at the moment.

The voice earlier spoke of truth, who was it though. What truth? Her footsteps echo through the space as she begins to pick up her pace to that of a brisk jog. She isn't sure how long she goes down the path, it seems endless and her breath slowly begins to come from her mouth as she hurries.

The end. If there is an end, there is an exit right?

SO...YOU ARE THE ONE PURSUING ME...

A new figure stands before her now. The voice is not clear, distorted between high and low pitches and from where she stands she cannot tell what is the appearance of who speaks

to her. Unlike the earlier voice, this one makes her shiver in fear.

HM...TRY ALL YOU LIKE...

Yui gulps nervously her hands suddenly grasp something. A handle of a long sword, a card begins to form and her fingers reach and smash it. A light bolts down from the sky and strikes where the shadow is.

HM...IT SEEMS YOU CAN SEE A LITTLE, DESPITE THE FOG...

Again her fingers reach to smash the blue card in front of her. Her actions unguided, automatic like a robot. Again a bolt of light strikes the figure.

I SEE...INDEED, YOU POSSESS AN INTERESTING QUALITY...

"What...Do you mean?!" Her voice rings out as her body moves forward. Her body is moving without her permission!

Her arms swing the sword down, but she hears nothing from the figure when she strikes.

Did she miss?

BUT...YOU WILL NOT CATCH ME SO EASILY...

Yui can see the card again and her hand is already reaching out to crush it. This time the lightening strikes just a foot away

from the figure, "I missed..." The voice seems to have laughed and is growing amused.

**IF WHAT YOU SEEK IS 'TRUTH,' THEN YOU SEARCH
WILL BE EVEN HARDER...**

**EVERYONE SEES WHAT THEY WANT TO...AND THE
FOG ONLY DEEPENS...**

The words confuse her and her arms raise the sword as she charges forward. The blade strikes through the figure and she jumps back. Her body...It was as if her body knew what to do. It needed none of her thoughts to attack. But why? More questions form into her head as the voice laughs.

WILL WE MEET AGAIN...?

AT A PLACE OTHER THAN HERE...

...I LOOK FORWARD TO IT...

"I have no clue what you mean!" Yui yells as the fog suddenly thickens, "H-Hey, wait a second!"

She steps forward only to be halted by something. It's a hand that grabs a hold of her arm that prevents her from wandering anywhere closer to the fog.

Just as her head snaps back, Yui can feel her eye lids droop again. "Not...Again..."

Thus ends another chapter. Da-da-dahhh! Please review and let me know what you think.

Both Izanagi and Izanami appeared in front of Yui this chapter. However Izanagi was the first voice and Izanami is the second. I think you faced Izanami in the game due to what the figure says. The key words being that the shadowy figures says everyone sees what they want and the fog deepens as well as looking forward to something. Izanagi on the other hand is encouraging Yui to go after the truth.

In the anime Yu sees a figure in his dreams that tells him the same thing.

Well I hope you enjoyed this chapter, please let me know if I should include Marie and her story along for the ride and any other suggestions. Thanks again and see y'all soon!

3. Yasogami High

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

"Hm...?"

Her eyes squint a bit as she pushes herself up, a knock is at the door, "..Yea...?"

"Breakfast is ready!" Yui lets out a loud yawn in confirmation and begins to get up from her futon, letting out a sharp intake of breath as she feels a sore spot on her back.

"Ah..."

Had she slept on the wrong side?

Her fingers grip the side of her head and she makes a soft groan, "Another dream..."

Two dreams in a row in just one day. Both containing the oddest settings and made her head swarm with questions.

Yui shakes her head as she opens her closet, that would have to be put off later. The task right now is to get dressed. The

Yasogami uniform hang on two hangers as she tossed them lightly onto the surface of the couch as she began to change out of her sleeping clothes.

After a good few minutes she stood in front of the mirror behind the closet door to take in her reflection.

The white button shirt's collar was tucked underneath the black uniform top, the fuku carefully pressed down as the yellow neckerchief was tied as neatly as she could. Her black thigh highs covered a good portion of her leg. Overall the uniform seemed fine...Save for her skirt.

The silver haired teenager tugs at the black and white pleated skirt a bit, trying to cover more of her leg. It wasn't that short, a good length that reached the tips of her fingers.

Yet her height made her self conscious...

She sighs and stares at her reflection again, "Guess it'll do..."

She makes a note though to try and get a much longer skirt. For now this will do, her whole body was covered so no need to worry of getting in trouble. Yui quickly rakes the teeth of her hair brush through her hair before hurrying out of her room grabbing her school bag to meet with Nanako and Dojima for breakfast.

Her younger cousin carrying a plate of eggs, the table set for only two people. Yui raises an eyebrow a bit at the sight before glancing to Nanako who greets her. The older girl

decides not to ask where her uncle is, guessing he didn't arrive home before sitting down at the table.

Two plates holding one slice of toast and another with an egg cooked sunny side up with bacon on the side fall into her line of sight. "Did you cook breakfast?" Nanako nodded, "I can toast bread and cook sunny-side up eggs in the morning. Dad can't cook so I buy dinner."

That takes Yui off guard a bit. She cooked breakfast all by herself and bought dinner? Yui stares down at her food before looking up, "Hey. How about...I cook you dinner this time?"

It's now Nanako's turn to look confused, "Ah no it's okay. I'm used to it."

Yui smiles, "I'm pretty confident in my cooking skills...I can cook. What do you want?" Nanako looks down, a light pink glow on her cheeks, "Um...Well...Maybe I don't know...Why don't you decide? I don't mind anything at all."

Yui nods, "Alright. I'll try to surprise you."

A small smile forms on the little girl's face, "You're starting school today right? My school's on the way so..."

Nanako's smile grows a bit bigger, "Let's go together."

"Right."

The two girls quickly eat their breakfast, silence between them again. By the time Yui finished Nanako already took her

plates and hurried to place them into the sink. It seemed the little girl was very independent. Having being able to cook breakfast alone and seemed to know just what to do after without the older girl's assistance Nanako demonstrated she did not need to be fussed over.

Though Yui frowns a bit at the thought of Dojima, where was he? Did he stay out all night and didn't try to check in at all this morning?

She quietly sighs as she gets up and heads to the door with Nanako, grabbing their umbrellas as they begin to walk out.

The two finally reached the destination of parting ways, Nanako pointed outwards to the right, "You keep going straight from here," she informed Yui, "My school's this way. Bye." She gave her cousin one last smile before taking the path the opposite direction.

Yui nods and watches as the little girl began to make her way down the path towards the elementary school. When she was a good yard away Yui turns back to the direction Nanako pointed, gripping her umbrella's end tightly before taking in a deep breath and stepping forward.

The closer she came to the school zone of the high school, the more students began to appear.

Many carried umbrellas and Yui saw the occasional unlucky schoolmate run after a friend to find shelter.

It seemed as normal a school as any...

The bottom of her skirt hit the tops of her thighs to which she paused to look down. Though it was the school appropriately length she did not feel comfortable. A longer skirt was most definitely-

"W-W-WHOAAAAA!"

A flash of orange, yellow, and black whizzed by her eyes startling her and she cringes at the sound of a heavy thud and the sound of metal falling over onto the concrete.

"Ouch..."

She slowly walks forward and stops a moment as a male student grasps the front of his crotch while letting out groans of pain.

That looked painful...

Although a part of her wanted to help, it might be best to leave him be...

Yui quickly faces forward and keeps walking until she reaches the gates of Yasogami High School.

It appeared like any normal school. She stands there a moment, studying the building before hurrying herself inside. The first thing she needs to do first, she reminds herself as she closes her umbrella and shakes it before setting foot completely inside, is to find the teacher's lounge.

If memory served her right, her teacher went by the name Kinshiro Morooka...

The man is unbearable.

His very glance in her direction as soon as she steps inside makes her entire body cringe.

"So you're the new transfer huh?" There's a light scoff as he staggers over to her, "Come on we ain't got all day!" He brushes by her and storms down the hall towards the classroom. The struggle to keep herself from saying anything or turning back is hard, but she manages to follow him all the way to the right classroom.

"Awright, shut your traps!"

Yui's ears ring unpleasantly as Morooka speaks and she quickly turns around to grab the chalk to begin to write her name down. The sooner she's gone from the front the better, it's routine by now for her...

"I'm Kinshiro Morooka, your homeroom teacher from today forward! First things first! Just 'cause it's spring doesn't mean you can swoon over each other like love-struck baboons!"

Yui stands perfectly straight, her face as blank as possible as she begins to try and block out Morooka's voice.

What should she try to make for dinner tonight for Nanako?

The girl bought dinner so a home cooked meal would be a new surprise on things for her. Yui could try to make a simple meal, one she could try and teach the girl later on if she wanted.

Oh maybe-

"-introduce this transfer student."

Yui blinks out of her thoughts right on cue.

"This sad sack's been thrown from the big city out to the middle of nowhere like yesterday's garbage-"

Did he just...

"And she's just as much of a loser here as she was there, so you boys better not get any ideas about hitting on her!"

Oh for the love of...

"Tell 'em your name, kid, and make it quick." Yui's mouth twitches and instead of opening it her head snaps towards the teacher, "You calling me a loser?"

There's a collection of quiet gasps in the room at her words. Her grey eyes keep in contact with the teacher as his face disorts into pure anger. There's a slight point at the top of his head she can make out a vein, "That's it! You're on my shit list, effective immediately."

Was she suppose to be intimidated by that? He should be on

hers for speaking as he did!

Her expression still remains cool as Morooka continues, "Now listen here missy," he tells her and slams a hand down on his desk, "This town is miles away from your big city of perverts and assholes, in more ways than one. You better not even think of getting involved with the boys here! They ain't gonna go with a girl as easy as you."

Yui feels her mouth twitch again, but before she can say something a new voice quickly breaks through the possible fight that would start.

"Excuse me! Is it okay if the transfer student sits here?"

Yui turns her head away from her homeroom teacher to see a girl with short hair in a green jacket raise her head high and nods towards the empty seat next to her. The question seems to snap the man out of his little rant "Sure. Take your seat already!"

Gladly...

Yui holds back and hurries over to the seat, sitting down quickly and resting her school bag on the side. The girl beside her smiles in sympathy, "We call him King Moron," she tells her quietly, "He's horrible..."

She breaths in relief, she is not the only one to not get a feel of dislike towards the man. "We just gotta hang in there for a year."

"Yeah," Yui breaths as she sits up properly as there are a few more whispers that meet her ears. Many of which talk about how it seemed it was her bad luck to be stuck in class.

"Shut it all of ya! Listen up homeroom's about to begin!"

Yui flinches along with the girl next to her before closing her eyes, just a few hours.

She'll live.

It's routine...Her eyes wander over to the windows and she tilts her head in surprise. It had only been raining just moments before and now...There was fog...Just like the one in her dreams.

There had to be a God up in heaven, it was the only reason that Yui could come up with by the time lunch rolled around.

She must have done something to anger whoever was in charge and they had decided to give her the worse teacher she had ever had. The man didn't go over any class regulations for the first half and instead began to rant about everything possible that was wrong in 'this generation.'

The bell had been her savior as it placed an end to half of Moroo-King Moron's-lectu-No rant.

His voice rang in her ears as she finally moved out of her seat and made her way out of the classroom like the other few

classmates did.

The lunch break was lengthy to give her enough time to head off to the library and settle down behind a computer. She clicked on the internet and typed in 'Dreams' into the browser. The monitor hummed slightly as many searches came up. Again she typed in something into the browser.

'Blue in dreams?'

She clicked on one link and began to read. Apparently seeing blue meant thoughts, ideas, dreams, and the ability to convey them. A sign to 'tap into the vast mysteries of life.' Well...Igor mentioned the future through her reading, so it made some sense.

She clicked back into the browser and typed in a new phrase.

'Fog in dreams?'

The links came up as quickly as the first and she clicked on the very first link her mouse icon landed on.

It meant confusion, the question of 'Where in my life I look for clarity?' came up on occasion to the sight of a fog in ones dream. A symbol of loss and emotional confusion, it came off as a sign of insecurity, uncertainty, and doubt. Yui frowns, was her moving to Inaba and worrying over her relations with her two family members was what sparked it? Or perhaps it was her previous dream and Igor's words.

'Goblin man in dreams?'

The search engine only came up with books and she couldn't help, but laugh a bit lightly at the result. Well...At least she was special to have Igor appear, even when she wasn't sure what he was. The warning bell rang making her jump a bit, "No.." She closed her eyes and hung her head as she sighed, "...Returning to hell..."

Dejected she exited out of the window before dragging her feet back towards her classroom, she wouldn't mind being lost in a fog just for a small bit if she could avoid returning to that class...

Ah sorry if this chapter is a bit too short or too rushed.

In all honesty I myself did search up the very phrases Yui used in this chapter and all I can say is that I tried my best. Credits to the websites, and for the short explanations that were looked up.

Thank you again for reading!

4. Murder They Said

DISCLAIMER: I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

And off we go with a new chapter!

"Paper cranes, paper cranes..."

The mantra had come to mind as soon as Yui had returned back to her seat. She had repeated a good series of words and was now on the tenth chat. The images of origami cranes filled her mind as she struggled to stay focus on whatever Moroo-King Moron-said.

The girl to her right seemed just as deprived as she was and struggled to stay quiet. The girl in front of her classmate sat up perfectly straight and held no facial expressions of being bothered at all whenever the teacher went off topic.

Yui had spared one glance behind her and was surprised to see the boy from earlier that day with the bike sitting behind her. He seemed completely out as his head rested on the desk and didn't seem to care at all.

By the time the bell rang to let them out Yui let out a sigh of

relief.

"That's all for today. Normal lectures will start tomorrow." Around her students began to push their chairs and begin to move. She herself arched her back a bit and stretched her arm out a bit, stopping when the intercom rang out.

"Attention, all teachers," a woman's voice called out, "Please report immediately to the Faculty Office for a brief staff meeting. All students must return to their classrooms and are not to leave the school until further notice."

Moroo-King Moron-turned around and faced them all, "You heard the announcement. Don't go anywhere until you hear otherwise."

Yui narrowed her eyes, but kept her mouth shut as the man staggered out of the classroom.

The sounds of sirens in the distance alerted all of them, a few boys dashing to the windows.

They sounded...Very close...

The windows were too foggy anyway for any of them to see...So what point was it to try to peer out? She looked down, her hair falling off the side to curtain a part of her face. Did this mean she couldn't try to get some food to take back home? Maybe there was a chance for her to slip off the path towards home and make her way towards some sort of shop to retrieve some ingredients.

However, what if Nanako arrived home sooner and would be waiting alone?

The image of her younger cousin alone made Yui sigh and tucked a strand of her silver hair behind her ear as she sat in her seat to wait. She'll think of something...

"Hey did you hear?" One of the boys by the windows spoke a bit too loudly to his friends, "I hear that paparazzi's looking all over for that announcer."

"Oh yeah. You mean Mayumi Yamano, right?" Yui moved her head slightly as the boys continued to talk. "I heard some guys spotted her at the shopping district."

By now the first boy seemed to realize he could whisper and spoke something to his friend, Yui could only make out quiet mutters until his friend spoke, "Are you serious?!" His friend looked over towards where Yui was situated towards the girl who sat diagonal from her.

He hurried over and waved nervously towards the raven haired girl, "Hey, Yukiko-san. Mind if I ask you something..?"

Yui watched as Yukiko turned her head to look at the boy with a curious expression as he began to speak again, "Is it ture that announcer's staying at your family's inn?"

"I can't discuss such things."

The answer was delivered quickly that it startled the boy to

laugh nervous, "Oh I guess not..." The boy returned back to his spot next to his friend, perhaps to continue gossiping. The short-haired girl walked over towards Yukiko, "Sheesh, how much longer is this gonna take?"

"There's no telling..."

"I shoulda left before the announcement came on..." Yui couldn't help, but eavesdrop again as the short-haired girl smiled. It would seem the two were friends with how comfortable they were able to communicate towards each other, "-Didja try and do that thing I told you about the other day? You know, that thing about...Rainy nights?"

Her raven haired friend blinked and shook her head, "Oh...No, not yet. Sorry." Her friend only smiled and shrugged, "Ah, that's okay." Yui at this moment took out a random sheet of paper and began to fold. "It's just, I heard a guy in the class next door yell something like, 'My soul mate is Yamano, the announcer'!"

Her fingers were quick and the form of a crane began to form until the intercom rang again.

"Attention, all students. There has been an incident inside the school district. Police officers have been dispatched around the School Zone. Please stay calm and contact your parents or guardians as soon as possible, and quickly leave the school grounds. Do not disturb the police officers. Head directly home."

"Incident?!"

The classroom buzzed with life suddenly and Yui couldn't help, but blink a bit at the sudden excitement she felt around her. As she was from the city, she didn't seem so fazed as her new classmates were. Crime was very common and everyone took caution, however here in the country...It didn't seem such the case.

Yui pulled out her phone and pressed Dojima's number.

The ringing over the line continued until she hit the automated voice mail and she hung up. At the very least he would notice the missed call...

The crane in her hand was carefully tucked into her school bag as she began to stand up, "Hey new girl, are you going home by yourself?" Yui looked to the side to find the short-haired girl and her friend wave to her, "Why don't you come with us? We oughta stay close by each other huh?"

"Um...Sure." The girl smiled, "Oh, nearly forgot! I'm Chie Satonaka. You know I sit next to you, right?"

"Of course," Yui nodded, "You saved me earlier today...Thanks." Chie grinned, "Aw it was nothing!" Her grin turns into a smile as she looks towards her friend, "And this is my friend Yukiko Amagi."

"It's nice to meet you...I'm sorry that this is so sudden..." Chie makes a quiet sound of protest at her friend's words, "C-

Come on, don't apologize like that. It makes me look like I got no upbringing."

Yui couldn't help, but feel a bit amused as she watched the two as they began to walk, "You know you're pretty tall-"

"Hey what's up Chie!"

The three turned to see a boy with orange headphones appear behind them, Yui recognized him as the student that sat behind her. He looked...Scared for some reason. In his hands he held a DVD case and upon further notice she saw his hands trembling a bit, "This was...Really...Awesome. Like, the way they moved was just amazing to see..."

Yui looked back and forth between Chie and the boy as he took in a deep breath and bowed, "And...I'm really sorry! It was an accident! Please just have mercy until my next paycheck!" He shoved the case to her and started to make a break for it only to have Chie case after him.

Yui and Yukiko stood there in silence as they watched the girl trip him forward and deliver a sharp kick to his lower stomach as she demanded to know what happened to her DVD.

There was a quiet gasp as she opened the case and Yui suddenly felt...Sorry for the boy.

"What the?! I can't believe this! It's completely cracked you tool!"

Yui peered a bit to see a disc displaying a spiderweb on its shiny surface. "NOOO! MY TRAIL OF THE DRAGON!"

"I...Think mine's cracked too..C-Critical hit to the nads..." Yui watched as the boy weakly groaned, imitating exactly same position of pain from that morning. "A-Are you all right?" Yukiko's weak concern was stopped by Chie's light scoff, "He's fine, Yukiko. Let's ditch him and go home!"

The short-haired girl huffed and turned on her heel before storming out of the classroom with her friend right behind.

Yui stayed behind a moment, sympathy in her eyes. He looked like he was in a lot of pain...

Though...It would seem best to leave him be...

She quickly bowed to him before following after the two other girls, Chie spurting out angry rants about the boy while Yukiko nodded.

"So you're just here for a year huh?" Chie mused as the girls began to leave the building, "And it's only because of your parents' work...I was hoping for something juicier than that."

"Chie don't be rude," Yukiko gently scolded her friend as they walked, "Don't worry about Chie...She's a bit curious for her own good."

"Oh come on it's not like you weren't curious either," Chie

lightly teased before Yui shook her head, "Oh no it's fine...I'm used to people just speaking about my conditions for transferring quite often."

She took a moment to study Chie and Yukiko closely, especially their jackets, "Doesn't...The school staff say anything about your uniforms?" Chie shook her head, "Oh no. As long as you're wearing the whole uniform, they don't care what sorta changes you add in."

Yukiko nodded, a slight smile on her face, "I especially don't mind that I get to wear my red cardigan so often. It's a nice. Didn't they let you do that in your old school?"

"No we had to have the uniform as is and set to fit regulations," Yui replied as they began to approach the school gate, "Maybe...I should try to do something different..."

"Oh yeah!" Chie eagerly agreed, "You should try doing something with your hair too, it's long enough to do something. Maybe we should go shop-"

"You're Yuki...Right?" The three stopped suddenly as a boy from behind the school gate emerged from the side, "Y-You want to go hang out somewhere?"

"What...? Wh-Who are you?"

The boy wore a completely different uniform, black pants and a black blazer with a red and green checkered shield on his left, possibly the school emblem of where he went. He wore a

matching tie of the same shade of green as the symbol. The only other feature Yui found on him were his eyes and , no pupil to be seen clearly as he stared right at Yukiko and his mouth was quite prominent...He looked like a fish...

"What's up with him? What school's he from?"

She and Chie turned to watch two male students go by them, trying to speak quietly as they observed the situation.

"Never mind that, he's going for Yukiko-san? Man, you'd think he'd at least wait until she's alone to make his move..."

His friend laughed, "I bet you a can of TaP he gets knocked out." By now the pair had begun to be out of ear shot, but Yui managed to hear the last few words, "No bet. Haven't you heard how difficult the Amagi Challenge is?"

Her attention returned to Yukiko and the boy, noting that Chie was starting to look a bit tense, "So...Are you coming or not?" Yui immediately tensed as well, the tone he had used was by no means friendly. Yukiko looked frightened and backed a step back until she was close by Chie.

"I..I'm not going..." The boy seemed to make a move to come closer, but stopped as Chie and Yui moved closer around Yukiko. Even if the two didn't look strong, Yui looked intimidating by the cold gaze she had begun to form as Chie began to raise her hands up into fists.

"...Screw you!" The boy snarled at them before taking off

down the street. The three watched as he ran and only relaxed when he was out of sight.

"W..What did he want from me...?" Chie and Yui stared at her for a moment, "What did he want? Yukiko it's obvious, he was trying to ask you out on a date!" Yukiko could only blink and tilt her head, "Huh? Really...?"

Yui sighed and shook her head as Chie sighed as well, "You really had no clue? Sheesh...But then again, that was way over the top. It was creepy how he called you Yuki all of a sudden." Yui started to open her mouth only to shut it when the sounds of rickety metal came to her ears.

"Yo, Yukiko-san," the boy from earlier appeared with his bike, "Turned down another lovelorn fool, huh? Man you're cruel...You got me the same way last year."

Yui studied him up and down as Yukiko tilted her head in confusion, now that he wasn't jumping up in pain or hurrying off by her, she could look at him carefully now. He was tall. If anything it would seem he was about the same height as her save for a few centimeters on his part. Just like Chie and Yukiko who wore something to differentiate themselves in uniform he did as well.

A pair of bright orange headphones were around his neck and his uniform jacket was open up at the collar to reveal his shirt underneath it. His hair was a light brown color and the image of a deer popped up to mind as Yukiko finally spoke, "I don't recall doing that."

"Whoa you serious? So then, you wanna hang out sometime!?"

"I'd...Rather not." Chie lets out a quiet snicker as Yui watched the boy's face droop down to a pained expression, "That'll teach me to get my hopes up..."

Perhaps not a deer...Maybe a hare?

He sighed before mounting his bike, "Anyways, you two better not pick on the transfer student too much." Pushing off the ground he sped off before Chie could smack him, "We're just curious is all!"

Yukiko shot Yui a small smile, "I'm...Sorry for dragging you into this..." She shook her head, "Oh no it's fine...This has to be the most interesting first day for me actually. Nothing wrong with that." Yukiko smiled as Chie looked around, suddenly noticing a small group of students standing around.

"C'mon, let's go. Everyone's staring!"

Chie and Yukiko were good company.

Although, Chie took up most of the chatting as she and Yukiko opted out of just listening or chiming in a few words here and there.

Yui had learned a bit about Inaba from a few searches she made before coming, but hearing Chie happily explain about it

made what she read a bit boring. The girl took pride of where she lived even when an outsider only saw empty spaces and only little houses together.

Yukiko on the other hand seemed humble about her living here, especially as she was the daughter of the owners who ran an inn, the Amagi Inn. It cleared up exactly who that boy from the classroom asked her that odd question. The raven haired girl didn't seem all that excited about talking about the inn though as Chie went on about it. The words 'pride of Inaba' and 'hidden' treasure' were thrown as she smiled to her friend in pride.

"It's a great inn! It's been going for generations, and Yukiko here is going to take over someday. Their inn actually attracts a lot of visitors to Inaba. It pretty much keeps this town going."

The girl shook her head and laughs a bit, "I don't think that's entirely true."

"Either way," Yui suddenly spoke up, "It's pretty amazing from the sound of it. Back in the city the idea of an inn isn't possible. It's mostly hotels, many of which don't seem to hold a chance against your family's inn from what Chie's saying."

Yukiko blushed lightly as Chie stopped, "Hey, what's that?"

The three stood not too far away from a small crowd of people who blocked the path, police officers stood by and kept them from entering into another street. A few bystanders

that were the closest to the group was a pair of housewives who seemed marveled to what was occurring.

"And that high schooler left school early, and as she came down this street..."

"Wow! Who could imagine THAT hanging from an antenna?"

Yui glanced around the area before resting her eyes on the top of the roofs. The TV antennas around did not have anything strange hanging off it...The housewives continued, "I wanted to see it too."

"Oh, you got here too late...The police and fire department took it down just a moment ago."

"Well, I think it's terrifying. I can't believe a dead body showed up around here..."

"W-Wait," Chie stuttered as the girls seemed to be taken aback with what they heard, "Did...Did she just say a dead body?" Yukiko swallowed loudly as Yui tried to piece together the information. So the 'that' being referred to earlier was a dead body, that had hung in one of the TV antenna around the area? A chill seemed to pass among all three until footsteps stepped close. "Hey, what're you doing here?"

Yui turned to the direction of the voice and felt her unease disappear at the sight of her uncle, "We're just passing by," she quickly answers before Chie or Yukiko could. The man doesn't look amused and quietly sighs, "Figures...That damn

principal. We told him not to let the students come through here..."

"Psst hey..." Yui glanced at Chie who looked at her with worry, "Do you know this guy?" The taller girl nodded, "Yes. He's my guardian, my uncle."

The detective sighed again, "I'm Detective Dojima, like she said, I'm her guardian. Uh...Well...How should I say this...I hope you get along with her." Yukiko and Chie exchanged looks before nodding, "Don't worry about a thing sir!" Chie answered, "We're gonna get along just fine."

Dojima's mouth twitched before stopping to stay in its neutral flat line, "But you three really ought to stop wandering around and head straight home."

"Uh wait Uncle Dojima!" Yui quickly called out making him stop for a moment before he returned to his place at the crime scene, "I'm...Making dinner tonight so-" Dojima cut her off, "We got some food already in the fridge. Just cook what you can for just you and Nanako. I won't be home until late."

The silver-haired teen's shoulders seemed to fall a bit and she nodded, "Got it..."

Dojima nodded and began to move again, only to stop as a younger man dashed right by him and headed towards the side of the street where the grass was. The sounds of retching were heard loudly and the girls all cringed at the sound.

Her uncle on the other hand, looked completely annoyed. "Adachi! How long are you going to act like a rookie? You want to be sent back to the central office!?" A few faint sounds of the man hurling a few more times were heard until a weak apology was made, "S-Sorry..."

Dojima sighed loudly before resting a hand on his face, "Just go wash your face. We're going to go around and gather information so hurry it up!" The younger man from before hurriedly shook his head and ran past the girls as Dojima turned and left back towards the crime scene.

Silence fell on them as they watched the two men disappear.

"Hey...Yukiko," Chie quietly spoke up and looked towards her friend, "Why don't we go to Junes some...Other time?"

"Good idea," Yukiko nodded as she looked to Yui, "Will you be okay Yui-chan?" Yui nodded, "Yeah, don't worry. Just get Chie and yourself home safely." Chie nodded, "Alright then, we're taking off then. Starting tomorrow, neighbor, let's do our best!" Yui nodded and waved as the two girls went off in a different direction together, they seemed very nice.

Yui sighed, taking one last glance in the direction her uncle had disappeared to before turning on her heels and heading home. She could only hope her uncle had been right about what was in the fridge.

I'm on a roll for now. Things are still progressing slow, but

it's progressing~!

Again, thank you all for reading and I hope you enjoyed it!

5. Didja Hear?

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

Da-da-dah! New chapter update! It's a tad longer than the others, mainly because I hope to speed the progress up a bit. Pardon all missed errors I have failed to fix. Read on my friends~!

Upon arriving home Yui noticed that Nanako sitting right in front of the television, "Welcome home."

"Hey." Yui slipped off her shoes before entering, "Did...You just get home?" Nanako nodded, "Uh huh. The teachers told us to go straight home today." She turns her head back to the TV's direction to which Yui sighs.

It seemed...She shouldn't try that much to grab the girl's attention.

The television had taken any that the older had hoped to get.

Setting her bag down by the couch her legs carried her into the kitchen. She opened the door of the fridge open and

peered inside, *"Well...I know what I'm going to try and do tomorrow."* The fridge was empty, save for a carton of milk, eggs, and a few other edible foods there wasn't much she could try to make.

Reaching out she pulls out the milk carton, *"Oh good, it's not expired. Thank goodness..."* She sets it back inside and studies what she has. They had a good amount of eggs too, so...Perhaps an omelet? She nodded to herself, yes that would be best for what they had.

"Nanako, we're having omelet tonight okay?" Yui calls out as she closes the fridge door. The little girl blinks in surprise and looks at her, "You're really going to cook dinner?" Yui nods, "Uh huh...You want to help me?" Nanako looks down before perking up and nodding, "Uh huh!"

"Great," Yui smiled relieved that Nanako seemed eager to leave the television before hurrying into the kitchen.

She showed Nanako how to carefully scramble the eggs together and helped her chop the vegetables she wanted, guiding her hand carefully to not chop her fingers. Despite the occasional silence, the experience made both girls smile. She prepared three omelets however, two were for her and Nanako's of course, the last was for her uncle. She carefully covered the plate before setting the warm omelets down onto the table.

"Let's eat!" Nanako cheerfully said and took a forkful of her food before happily giggling, "It's really good!" Yui nods as a

small grin forms onto her own face and she ate her own dinner.

"I'll try to cook dinner every night," she suddenly told Nanako, "Tomorrow I'll go to the store and some groceries. You don't need to worry about buying dinner anymore okay?" Nanako stares at her for a moment. The expression is a mix of confusion and awe, "O-Okay!"

The teenager smiled as Nanako seemed to finally warm up a bit to her. The two ate a bit more, exchanging the occasional giggle when they accidentally met each other in the eye or talked of any possible items Yui should buy when she left to Junes the next day. It was around seven when Nanako began to slowly grow quiet suddenly as she shot a glance towards the clock, "...I wonder if Dad's not coming home again tonight..."

Her words made Yui tense suddenly, should she tell her? No...It wouldn't be best. She can only stare at Nanako as she turned her head to face the television.

All the merriment on the girl's face had vanished as soon as the thought of her father came. Yui closed her eyes a moment, a faint tug of her heart went out to her younger cousin. She herself had never had much time with either of her parents. A jingle from the television brought both their attentions onto the screen.

"Our top story this evening concerns a bizarre case in a quiet suburb," a news anchor with dark gray hair came onto the

screen, "Around noon today, a woman was found dead near the Samegawa River in Inaba. The deceased has been identified as Ms. Mayumi Yamano, a twenty-seven year old announcer at the local television station. The initial results of the Inaba Police Department's investigation have revealed-"

"Ah!" Yui jumped at the sound of Nanako's gasp, "The Inaba Police Department! Th-That's where Dad works!" Her face fell from surprise to one of concern, she bit her lower lip a bit and her eye lids drooped halfway. The look could be found on small animals...Puppies actually...

"...I met him when I was coming home," Yui told her quietly making her cousin perk up, "He's alright." She didn't add how Dojima blew off her words of making dinner and would return home late, or not at all.

Nanako only nodded before quietly sighing.

"...I know. That's his job, so this stuff happens."

"The body was found hanging from a large television antenna atop a local resident's roof," the news anchor's voice donned on, "Authorities are uncertain as to why the body was in such a state. With the cause of death also uncertain, police continue to investigate whether the death is an accident or a homicide. A thick fog common to the area has slowed their progress, and plans to fully canvass the area are delayed until tomorrow."

Mayumi Yamano...Her affair with a local councilman's

secretary had been on the news just the other day...

Yui shook her head as Nanako continued to speak, "They found her on the roof? That's scary..."

A certain commercial suddenly flashed onto the screen making Nanako perk up instantly, "Oh, it's Junes!" The woman's cheerful voice came up again, repeating the same line as yesterday.

"Everyday's great at your Junes~"

"Everday's great at your Junes!" Nanako swayed happily in time of the little chime before giving Yui a look, as if waiting for something...

"Your Junes~" Nanako jumped a bit as the smile remained on her face, "You memorized it already? I'm the best one in my class! *Everyday's great at your Junes!"*

The little girl repeats the melody over and over, happily swaying in time to it.

Yui can't stop the smile forming on her face as she watches her younger cousin. The little chime of the department store served as a little ray of light for the girl after hearing such a scary news story. Yui's eyes moved a bit towards the TV, her mind wondering just why she had thought it was suddenly important of her to remember that Mayumi Yamano had appeared yesterday on the news.

The next morning Yui got up early before Nanako.

She set herself to work and began to cook the girl's and her own lunches all the while maintaining the kitchen work of making breakfast.

By the time the little girl had come down the stairs she was greeted by eggs and bacon arranged in a smiley face and a bento packed carefully of onigiri, some vegetables, and fruit. "Sorry if it's not much," Yui told her as she sat down, "That's all I could do with what we had left."

Nanako stared at the bento before smiling a little to Yui, which was all she needed.

Yui paused and touched the collar of her white button shirt that kept poking up from under the uniform as she stood by the stove. It had bothered her this morning and as a neat person, it irritated her despite her face remaining its normal neutral expression. The images of Chie and Yukiko from yesterday popped up and she tugged at the collar, it went over the edges of her uniform's collar and she smiled a bit.

There, her own style.

"Um...We should go now," Nanako called out to her as Yui quickly came out of her trance. "Oh right sorry!" She turned off the stove and took the hot pan off the burner it had been on earlier to an unused one. The omelet for Dojima still remained on the counter with a note as Yui and Nanako left the house.

Just like yesterday, the two girls walked until they reached the same spot on the street where Nanako had to go the opposite direction as her. The girl gave her a much more cheerful farewell and actually turned around to wave to Yui before hurrying off ahead.

And again like yesterday, the more Yui walked the more students began to appear on the road towards school with her.

"LOOK OUT!" She jerked towards the left side of the road as a blur of yellow, black, and orange sped straight on until- "AHHHHH!" Her eyes closed as she watched the blur hit right into the trash cans and bags outside of one house with the bike's bell ringing and a painful cry as something hit the ground with a thud.

Yui cringed and opened one eye to spot a pair of legs waving around in the air as their upper torso remained stuck inside a trash can. The sight resembled a turtle stuck on the back of its shell, though in this case, the student was stuck in the trashcan and was rolling left and right as he struggled to get out of it. "Someone...Help...Please?"

She wasted no time to run over and quickly grasped the top of the can to get the boy to sit up.

"Hold on," she told him and successfully yanked the can from over his head, "Ah!"

It was the same student yesterday who ran into the pole!

He grinned up at her, "Oh man you're a life saver!" He quickly got up, dusting himself and grabbed his bike up, "Thanks so much um...Oh yeah, that's right. You're the transfer student, Narukami right?"

Yui nodded, reaching out to toss the banana peel on his shoulder back into the can.

"The name's Yosuke Hanamura. Nice to meet ya," the boy continued after laughing a bit at the sight of her calmly discarding the piece of trash he had missed. "Likewise," Yui replied, "...Didn't you run your bike into the pole yesterday too?"

Yosuke blinked before letting out a loud laugh, "Oh man ah...You were there?"

"Yup. Saw you go straight smack into it," Yui lightly told him to which he laughed nervously.

"Say, did you hear about the incident yesterday? They found that announcer lady hanging from an antenna," Yosuke shook his head as a worried expression came onto his face, "You think it was some kinda warning? There's no way something that weird was an accident..."

"You might be right," Yui replied as she stares at him, "But the police are still investigating though right? So...It's too soon to jump to any sort of speculations." The other nods, "Still...It's sorta messed up. Dangling a dead body over a roof like that..."

His face contorts to one of disgust, "Then again...It's messed up to kill someone in the first place." Yui shudders a bit, "Agreed." Yosuke nods only to stop as his watch comes into view, "Oh crap, we're late!"

"...Come again?" Yui peers at his watch and her heart nearly doubles over at the sight, "Oh no!" The image of King Moron comes to mind and she shudders. She isn't up for another one of that man's 'lectures' and god forbid if she was stuck in detention with the man!

"You wanna ride?"

Yui blinks as the Yosuke turns his bike forward, "It's a little squeaky, but it should be fine!"

The silver-haired teen stares down at the yellow bike and weighs her options. If she rode with Yosuke it would save them both a good amount of time, but the risk of crashing was a high probability. On the other hand she could run on ahead and make it barely by a miracle of being on time by one millisecond.

"...The bike it is." Yosuke grins and mounts the seat, "Hop on!"

Yui gulps nervously before sitting behind the boy and keeping her legs close all the while keeping one hand on her bag and the other holding the fabric of her skirt that dangled a bit off the edge of the seat. She needed a longer skirt...A very long one... Pushing off Yosuke began to pedal, wobbling at the

extra weight causing Yui to tense and grip the back of his uniform tightly with her fingers as they rode.

"Oh come on," Yosuke laughed as he felt her stiff against him from behind, "It's not that bad. We'll be fine."

"I trust your words, but I do not trust this old bicycle," Yui quietly hissed as she let out a quiet squeak as they rode a bit too far left, *"Hanamura-san, my life is in your hands...I do not want to die from a bicycle crash!"*

In a twist of fate, both of them arrived to class on time.

It was quite the sight to see, the new transfer student with the boy who had crashed his bike twice in two days straight running down the halls to their home room. Chie looked up and blinked at the sight of the two, but said nothing as they hurried to their seats just as King Moron appeared.

Yui wiped the bit of moisture from her brow and breathed as quietly as she could as her teacher began the lesson.

At least this time the day went by a lot faster than yesterday to which she was grateful for. The lesson was easy to understand and grasp, her old school had covered it so instead of paying attention for the first part she instead carefully folded paper cranes under her desk.

By the end of the day she was the proud owner of a family of ten paper cranes in one school day. Yui nodded a bit at her

accomplishment before arching her back as her arm stretched up. At her side she could hear someone come closer to her, "Huh? Whoa. That's a lot of origami..."

"Oh..Hanamura-san," she greeted before looking at her little cranes, "Oh...It's...A habit."

"Yeah, well to each their own huh? They're pretty good though," he smiled, "Anyway you getting used to this place yet?" Yui nodded to which the boy whistled, "Wow that was fast...There's not a lot out here compared to the city. It's got...That special something you can't get anywhere else."

Was it just Yui, or did his tone sound a bit flat on those words?

It sounded a bit close to what her mother used when she looked back at her childhood in Inaba...

"The air's clean, the food's great...Oh you wanna know the local delicacy?" Yosuke continued, "It's grilled steak! Like that's special huh?"

Yui shrugged, "Well, to each their own right?" Yosuke laughed, "I see what you did there ha. Oh! I know a place where you can get it cheap. Wanna come? You helped me out this morning, so it's on me. Who knows, it could be a date~"

"What about me huh?" A very familiar voice cut in as a familiar girl in green stormed up to the two, "No apologies? My 'Trail

of the Dragon?' Oh sure, you treat the new transfer student. Well too bad, she's way out of your league Yosuke."

The headphone wearing teen softly groans, "Hey now...She helped me out this morning, it's not like that okay?" He sighs, "And you always come around when I'm talking about food...It's like you got a food tracker on me or somethin'..."

Chie ignored him and looked towards Yukiko who was starting to stand up, "Hey Yukiko, don't you think he should treat us?" The raven haired girl looked their way and shook her head, "I'll pass for today. I don't want to gain any more weight. I need to help out at the inn today anyway."

"Huh," Yosuke stared at Yukiko, "You're already in training to take over the family business?"

Yukiko sighed, "No, it's not like that. I'm just helping out when it gets busy. I should go ahead, good-bye." Yui watched as Yukiko left the room. Her eyes widen a bit at the sudden look of disappointment suddenly came onto her face.

Was...She upset?

"We'll we oughta get going too," Chie announced to which Yosuke made a soft sound of protest, "Wha? I have to seriously treat two people?!"

"It's fine," Yui quickly told him, "Besides, I actually have some grocery shopping to do." This news made Yosuke's eyes widen suddenly, "Shopping? Oh actually I know just the

place!"

"THIS IS THE CHEAP PLACE?! There's no grilled steak here!"

The place Yosuke had lead Chie and Yui was exactly where the silver-haired teenager wanted to go originally, Junes. It was an ordinary department store as she had suspected and like any department store had everything she needed in its supermarket section.

The three were now sitting the food court with Yosuke giving them each a drink as well as a small helping of takoyaki, "Yeah, well, once you hopped on the free loading train, I had to change my plans. Besides," he turned towards Yui, "You needed to go shopping right? You find everything?"

"Yes," Yui nodded, relieved at the sight of the plastic shopping bags that rested in a seat between her and Chie, "You're a life savior." Yosuke seemed to glow at the sudden compliment only to have Chie scoff, "Still it's no reason to take us to your place."

"Dude, this isn't my place or anything," Yosuke quickly told her before looking at Yui, "Oh right, well just like you I was the new transfer student six months back. A location opened up and my dad was assigned to manage it here."

That explained a lot actually...

"Well...It's nice to know I've met another city-dweller," she joked earning a grin from him to which Chie rolled her eyes over.

"Careful Narukami, the more you do that the bigger his head's gonna be until it explodes," she whispered loudly to her making the boy look at the two.

"Hey, I'm right here," he pointed out while sighing, "Sheesh, why you always have to do that Satonaka?" Chie huffed, "Actually, hey, why is it you two came in at the same time this morning. Everyone was like literary burning holes into your backs."

Yui coughed a bit on her drink as Yosuke's eyes widen, "Oh c'mon! All we did was just show up together, if we hadn't rode my bike we'd both be late and getting an earful on King Moron," he quickly explained as Chie shrugged, "Well, it wouldn't surprise me if things go a bit off hand for now," she points out.

"This town seems very fond of making rumors," Yui interjected as Chie sipped her drink, "But other than that, it's hard to believe Junes only been open for half a year already. Thing is, I haven't been to the local shopping district much since. A lot of stores are starting to close and...Oh..."

The girl gave a glance to Yosuke who rolled his eyes, "Oh come on, you don't think Junes needs to take all the blame can you?" There's a sigh as Yui looks between the two before Yosuke's head turned in one direction, "Hey...It's Saki-

senpai!" The boy jumped up from his seat and made his way over a few tables towards a lone girl in an apron by herself.

"Saki-senpai?" Yui asked Chie quietly as they kept an eye on the two, "She goes to our school?"

"Uh huh. Saki Konishi, she's a year older than us," Chie quickly explained, "She works part-time here over in Junes and her family owns the liquor store in the old shopping district. By the way, Yosuke seems a little sweet on her if you know what I mean."

The girl winked to which Yui took in this information for a moment before making a quiet 'oh' sound as Chie nodded, "Uh huh!"

Two pairs of footsteps head towards their table and Yui looked up to come face to face with Saki.

"Are you the transfer student? Oh, did you hear about me already?" she began to ask as she stood by Yui's chair, "It must be nice to have someone else from the big city to talk to huh?" Saki spared a glance over her shoulder to Yosuke who stood off a bit as he watched them.

"I don't see Hana-chan hanging out with a lot of people," Saki continued, "He doesn't have a lot of friend's so I hope you two get along well. Hana-chan's a good guy, but he can get nosy sometimes. You gotta tell him right to his face when he starts to annoy."

Yui looked around Saki to watch as Yosuke's face seemed to switch from happiness to worry at what the older girl said about him. The silver-haired teen smiled up to the older girl and shook her head, "Nah, he's a great guy." Saki smiled and laughed lightly at her words, "Wow, you're so nice!"

Chie snickered a bit, "Oh yeah...He's such a great guy." Yosuke threw her a dirty look, "Hey now." Saki smiled to both of them before nodding to Yosuke, "Well my break's just about to end. Back to work I go..." The older student waved to Yui, "I'll see you later then!"

"Oh wait sen-"

Saki had already begun to disappear back into the building by the time Yosuke spoke before jumping back into his chair with a slight laugh, "Saki-senpai say I'm annoying, but she's even noisier than me. She has a younger brother, and she treats me pretty much the same way..."

"Ooh, so you don't want to be treated like a brother huh?" Chie's face wore a grin as Yosuke's face suddenly turned a light pink, "Wah! Wait a sec! Dude it's not like that! Naruk-" The smirk on the other girl's face made him shut up and look down, "...Women."

Chie snickered, "Well I got something to fix that lovesick heart of yours," she drawled, "Ever heard of the Midnight Channel? You're suppose to look into a TV that's off, alone, at exactly midnight on a rainy night. While you stare at your own image, another person will appear on the screen...And they say that

person's your soul mate!"

A long pause fell on the table until Yosuke spoke up, "For a second there...I thought you'd be saying something useful. How can you be excited over a childish urban legend?" Chie glared, "Childish? You don't believe it do you?!"

"Well duh," Yosuke replied with a bewildered look on his face, "You except me to believe it?"

"Well it's raining tonight! Let's all try it out-then you'll see!" Chie declared as she looked between the two. The way she spoke caught both of them off guard to which Yosuke frowned, "Hold on a sec, try it out? You haven't even tried it yourself!"

Yui nodded in agreement to which Chie stared at her in surprise, "You don't believe in that stuff Narukami?"

"Well...It might sound fun, but the idea of finding your soul mate?" Yui quietly answered a bit afraid at how confused Chie looked at her sudden siding with Yosuke on the topic of the Midnight Channel, "The idea of predicting your future at all is slim. What happens happens you know."

"Aw...Wow Narukami, you're pretty down to earth huh?" Chie complimented as Yosuke began to speak, "Anyway, you remember yesterday's 'incident' right? You think it was murder?"

His face grew amused and a toothy grin formed, "Ooh, what if

the culprit behind it was still lurking around? Heehee..." Chie's face this time turned in bewilderment, "Oh and you say I'm the childish one. You shouldn't joke about stuff like that!" This stopped the boy with his little snickering before glaring at her, "Oh hush up."

Chie scoffed lightly and shook her head, "All I'm saying is, you guys better try it out tonight."

"Ugh, fine," Yosuke agreed and slumped in his chair, "If it makes you calm down I'll do it. Narukami, you gonna do it too right?" Yui shrugged, "Well...I guess. If all of us are doing it, reasonable to try and see right?" Chie happily jumped up, "Yes! Ha ha!"

Yui couldn't feel excited at all about this, something in her gut just seemed to try and warn her, to brace herself.

Pretty much progressing as fast as I can to get us started in the starting point of the roller coaster ride~

I really hope you enjoyed this update and look forward to the next chapter!

6. Swallowing Up

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

I apologize in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

Yui spent most of her time that night doing her assignments on the counter while cooking considering the work load wasn't all that much compared to her old school's. The lessons were easy and she naturally managed to pick up the pace in class, despite a few rants. Nanako stood by her on top of a stool by the stove keeping her eyes on the boiling water in the pot with a look of interest in her eyes.

This had to be her first time seeing food prepared like this and was simply in awe with sight of Yui carefully handling the food with ease.

"How do we know the pasta's ready?"

The older girl peered at it, noting how the water surface didn't start to foam thankfully and Nanako stirred it on occasion with a wooden spoon. "Just a few more minutes," she replied,

"The box said it'll finish in a good eight minutes."

Nanako nodded in confirmation and began to stir again as Yui turned her head back to watch over the sauce in the other pan and reading a textbook in the other. She was one the second page when Nanako's voice piped up again.

"Isn't it weird to do that?"

She blinks, "To do what?"

"Read and work?" Nanako pointed out, "Aren't you worried you'll set the book on fire or spill something on it? What if you drop it?"

"..Well when you put it that way...I think it'd be best to put it to the side," Yui slowly spoke as the realization hit her. It was an old habit that was very bad, it had started when she was young and followed her into her teen years, until Nanako pointed it out. It never did hit her that her book could be damaged by her proximity to the kitchen. She always kept it away from the food, but there was always that weird moment when water sometimes hopped out of the hot pan and a possible drop of a messy sauce that could hit her.

Also...she wasn't going to be a bad example to Nanako.

The two stood in the kitchen in silence before Nanako spoke again, "So...I..Uh..."

"Hm?" Yui looked at the girl expecting her to continue

speaking before her voice went an octave higher, "C-Can I braid your hair?!" Nanako realized her question before turning a little pink, "Uh...N-Never mind. I-"

"Sure."

Nanako's head snapped in her direction to which Yui laughed a bit at how wide her eyes and mouth had gotten at her answer. "It's not that long, but you can play with it...Just don't try to cut it." Nanako shook her head quickly, "I-I wouldn't do that! A boy in my class did that to this one girl and the teacher told us doing something without a person's permission is very bad."

Yui nodded, "Uh huh, but I'm fine with you ever want to play with my hair Nanako. I could even help you comb yours if you want." This made the girl look back at the pasta and shake her head, "Nuh uh. I'm okay..." Again silence fell onto them, at least...There had been a bit more progress.

The pasta finished a few minutes later and Yui carefully distributed the pasta shells onto three plates along with a helping of tomato sauce and a few bits of vegetables on the side to which Nanako had agreed to arrange in an odd shape on top of hers. She set all three plates down on the table and knelt as Nanako sat across from her. The little girl looked at her for a moment before taking her fork and taking one shell into her mouth.

"Oh it's so good!"

Yui smiled a bit as she watched Nanako take in bite after bite of her food, "Careful now. Chew and swallow," she quietly told her cousin as she took a sip of water from her glass. It wasn't until five minutes in that Yui noticed Nanako's eating slowed at the sight of the untouched plate at the head of the table.

"...I wonder if Dad's staying late again." Yui turns her head towards Dojima's share before frowning, "Did he call?" Nanako sighed quietly, "No. He always says he will..."

The sounds of the door suddenly opened, alerting both girls. Nanako quickly stood up as Yui's back straightened and her head snapped right towards where the front door would be.

"Oh! Dad's home!"

Dojima entered the living room, his face a bit less...Worn. There were some light circles of shadows under his eyes and his hair looked a lot more ruffled then when Yui had last seen him. It looked like he had slept in the same clothing too from yesterday with how wrinkled his shirt was and how loose his red tie looked.

"Man..What a day," he greeted the two and fell onto the couch, "Did anything happen while I was out?" This was directed to Nanako whose face pinched up in displeasure, "No. You're late again..."

"I'm sorry...I've been busy at work," her father weakly told her before pausing to sniff the air, "...Why's it smell so good in

here?" His eyes fell onto the table top and blinked, "...Did you cook this Nanako?" The little girl shook her head and looked towards Yui who stared at Dojima.

"...You can..Save yours for later if you want," she weakly told him as his eyes settled upon her. The man didn't seem so pleased when she had insisted she would make dinner for her and Nanako. Instead he looked at her in surprise, "You can cook?"

So he assumed she didn't know?

"Well...Yes," she replied as she reached over and lifted the plate towards him, "You...Want to eat now or later?"

"I'm more tired than hungry...I'll save it," her uncle quickly told her with a shake of his head as Nanako sat back down on her little pillow, "Hey. Can you put the news on for me Nanako?" Yui heard her cousin sigh and press the button before grabbing her fork up again and spearing a pasta shell with a bit of force. Any other night it would be comical, but Yui decided to divert her attention to the television screen instead.

"Next, more details in the developing story on the incident in foggy Inaba," the same anchor man as before appeared with the same monotone voice as he began to recount of the events that happened the day before. Yui saw Nanako's head turn to the screen as the report continued.

"It is confirmed that Mis. Yamano had been involved in an affair with Taro Namatame, husband of enka singer Misuzu

Hiiragi. The police plan to investigate this relationship and question any personnel involved with them. In addition, we now bring you an exclusive interview with the local student who found Ms. Yamano's body."

A deep sigh caused Yui to look as her uncle looked more distressed at those words, "An interview with the kid...? Where the hell did they find her?" He sighs again and leans his head back on couch before Yui looks again at the television.

The screen has changed and her eyes widen when she recognizes her school uniform as a report with a mike began to question the student onscreen.

"What did you think when you found her?" The reporter's voice is loud, a bit obnoxious to Yui as she listens. "Well...I only..." The student's voice was distorted and her face pixellated to hide her identity, but Yui can tell it's poor quality.

"What went through your mind? Could you tell she was dead? Did you see her face?" The reporter begins to ask a bit more and the student on screen fidgets a bit uncomfortable as she hesitates.

Yui stares hard onto the screen, the station failed to really try and censor the student's whole features. The hair is her start and as soon as Yui squints she recognizes the person. Someone she had just met today down at Junes.

It was Saki Konishi.

"Don't you think it's scary that someone was killed on a foggy day?" That makes Saki squirm uncomfortable, "Huh...? K-Killed? I..."

The reporter realizes his mistake, she was not informed that the woman she had found dangling in the air wasn't alive when she had found her. "Oh...D-Did you see anyone suspicious around here?" he quickly questions her hoping not to make her seem distressed.

"...No...Not really..." The tone used is flat, almost dejected at the reporter's slip up. The reporter continues on, "We heard you found it when you left school early. Did you have some personal business to take care of?"

This makes Saki tense and she shakes her head, "That's..." Yui's face is completely blank as she thinks just how annoying that reporter is just as the anchor man reappears onscreen. It seems the station also agreed with her and had returned back to its normal anchor man in order to stop the interview right on time.

"-a tragedy that occurred near the local shopping district. Many store owners are raising concerns about losing customers as a result..." Behind her Yui can hear Dojima yawn and mutter something. He sounded a lot quieter...

A new man joined the screen, much younger than the anchor man, with a laugh, "It really is a bizarre case, isn't it? I mean hanging someone upside down from an antenna? I'd have to say it's a warning or a sign from the culprit." The anchor man

nodded in agreement, "Yes, but so far no one has come forward to take credit for the crime."

Again a yawn and a mutter. She can pick up the words 'prank calls' before her uncle becomes quiet again.

Yui looks over at Nanako and watches her cousin who stares at the screen. Her expression is just as blank as hers, but the little hand holding her fork is gripping a bit hard. "We'll be right back after these messages!"

An all too cheerful melody cuts the mood and Yui sees Nanako's hand relax as the Junes commercial comes onto the screen.

"At Junes, everyday is Customer Appreciation Day. Come see for yourself, and get in touch with our products! *Everyday's at your Junes~*"

"Everday's great at your Junes!" Nanako sings right on cue with a smile on her face. The commercial has done its magic again and made her forget all about the scary things she saw.
T

he girl stops and stares longingly at the TV, "Hey Dad...Can we go to Junes sometime?"

Yui turns her head and stops as she finds her uncle slumped in his seat, eyes closed and mouth opened slightly to let out a quiet snore. Nanako keeps quiet as if she's waiting for her Dad to answer before looking at him, "No?"

"...I think he's asleep Nanako," Yui informed her as a louder snore came out of the man to which Nanako's face turns into an expression of disappointment, "Geez..." Yui lets out a quiet grunt as she took a pasta shell from her plate with a stab.

The two began to quietly move around the room as they cleared the table, Yui covering Dojima's food again as Nanako urged her father to lay on his side on the couch while draping over his sleeping form with a pink blanket. Yui went towards the stairs and stepped as she spotted Nanako begin to sit back down at the table and stared at her. The stare worked and Nanako looked to Yui before sighing.

"One more show?"

"No," Yui told her quietly and her cousin went up to her before taking the first few steps on the stairs first with the older following close behind.

Yui stood up in her room and quietly paced back and forth as the clock on her wall ticked loudly along with the light taps of rain coming from outside.

She had spent the last few hours keeping awake with homework and reading the few books she had taken with her. The time now was 11:56 and she stopped at her window to pull the curtain back.

Outside was pitch black.

It was only thanks to the street lights outside that she was able to see the marks of raindrops hitting her window. No one was in the streets tonight and she let the drapes drop back into place, swaying.

She turned around and began to move towards the small television in her room and stared at it.

The time now was 11:59...

The silver-haired teen leaned in a bit closer, her reflection staring right back at her as she listened to the clock ticking. As soon as the minute hand moved one last time, Yui braced herself.

...Just a black turned off television screen...

"Ha..." She stood up and began to head towards her futon, Chie was-

A light began to glow in her room making her stop. Her head turned and her eyes widened as the screen flickered with static as if she had turned it on. "What?" Her feet padded on the wooden floor softly as she rushed back to standing right in front of the screen.

The static turned gray and then yellow, slowly merging to create a picture onto the screen.

It was girl, wearing the Yasogami High School uniform, that came onto the distorted screen. Yui's eyes widen as she

stared longer. The face was slightly blurred, but a few features jumped out to her the longer she watched. The girl was in...A store?

She looked around confused and suddenly the static began to form faster.

It disrupted the image and Yui could only make out flashes of the girl, running and frantically looking back out. She looked frightened...

Yui stared before gasping at the sudden throbbing pain that began in her head.

I AM THOU

Her eyes widen as the sound of a voice echoed in her head, the throbbing increased tenfold and she let out a quiet groan of pain as her hands flew to the sides of her head and gripped it.

THOU ART I

Her legs began to tremble as she tried to step back from the television, only to be stumbling back towards it. "What's...Going...On!" Her teeth gritted against each other as she tried to force her body to obey her.

THOU ART THE ONE

One of her hands left her head and began to extend towards

the television screen.

The girl on the screen was still looking back, her face was starting to clear for some reason. Yui could only spot that her expression was still one of fear through her half closed eyes as she kept trying to move back. More pain was her reward and her fingers barely reached the surface of the screen.

WHO OPENS THE DOOR

"Ah!"

Black and white swirls began to form on the screen as her fingers phased through. Her whole body was trying to phase through the screen! Her arm had gone through by now and her shoulder was slowly following after. The sensation she could feel as her arm hung out from wherever the television was trying to swallow her through was heavy. It felt like she was diving straight into a pool of water.

Her free hand caught hold of the side of the television as her eyes squeezed shut as her face started to fall in.

All her strength flowed towards her last remaining up, her right arm that had been gripping the side of the black box with desperation. Urging herself to push back out she let out a quietly cry as her body flew backwards.

"OW!" The back of her head came into contact with the low table in the middle of the room and she let out a series of quiet grunts of pain as her hands flew to the back of her head

as she huddled on the floor. That...Hurt...

Her eyes narrowed towards the offender that was seated upon a high stand, "The hell was that..."

"Huh? You fell through the TV?!"

Yui nodded, "Yeah," her face remained serious after she finished her piece of what happened to her last night, "The only reason I didn't fall in completely was because my TV was too small."

The silver-haired teen looked a bit frazzled as she recounted her night. Her eyes looked a little baggy from waking up continuously at the sudden feeling of being swallowed up by the darkness and the throbbing at the back of her head despite the soft pillow underneath.

Nanako had given her worried glances when they walked to school and even patted her lightly as if to comfort her before hurrying on off to school. Yui could only guess that the girl had at least heard her yell and fall out, concluding she fell out of her bed from a night more most likely.

Not being partly swallowed by the television.

"Huh," Yosuke remarked as he and Chie looked at each other, "You sure you weren't tired? I mean, no offense, but you looked like you went through hell." The tall girl turned her head towards him, eyes staring just at him with her mouth in a flat

line.

"That's because I kept waking up after to avoid it," Yui icily hissed. Yosuke shuddered and held up a hand as he leaned back a bit, "Okay, okay I'll back up on ya..." The boy sighed as Chie looked at him, "Oh...I'm guessing you heard the rumor huh? That Saki-senpai found the body?"

Yosuke glanced her and looked back down, "She looked down yesterday...She doesn't seem to be at school today either."

Yui glanced at him, studying him carefully.

His arms crossed over his chest and his stance looked a lot more hunched than usually. His own eyes looked a bit red from obvious lack of sleep as a frown eased his features into a tight expression that brought out the worry from his heart out to the open. The boy was very worried about the older student, and his heart was definitely on his shoulder when she was brought up.

Yui shakes her head, "Anyway, back on the topic," she begins only to be cut off as a chair scrapes against the ground. Yukiko grabs the handle of her school bag and begins to stand. Chie also notices and looks at her friend, "You're still helping out at the inn today too?"

Yukiko turns, a sigh escapes her lips as she looks to them. Now that Yui looks at her, it looks like she and Yosuke weren't the only ones having trouble sleeping...

"Things are really out of hand right now...I'm sorry..." She bowed slightly before walking slowly out of the room. Her shoes dragged themselves across the floor and before she reached the door Yui spotted a bit of a stumble before she disappeared.

"Is it just me...Or do Yukiko-san seemed way stressed out today?"

Yui looks to Chie who looked just as worried as Yosuke had been with Saki-senpai, "I guess they're running her ragged."

The three glanced back towards the door.

The girl had continued to disappear during breaks and didn't return. Surprisingly King Moron did not hold her accountable for her odd times of absences, but he did give her desk a long glare before continuing on with whatever he was talking about. If Yui had to guess, being the next in line for a long running inn had its benefits.

She gives the door a hard glance before looking at Chie and Yosuke, "...Anyway. That's how my night went. How about yours?"

"well I saw a girl just like you did!" Chie immediately answered, "But...Did that mean my soul mate's a girl? What's that suppose to mean?" The girl sighed, "I mean, I couldn't tell who it was, but it was definitely a girl. She had on our uniform, had brown hair about shoulder length...And-"

"Wait hold on a sec," Yosuke cut in, "I think...That's the same person I saw! Yeah the screen was all blurry, but I got a small glance of her. What about you Narukami-chan? You see the same girl?"

"Yeah, but I saw a her a bit better," she replied, "I saw her uniform, her hair...About everything about her save for her face. I saw flashes of her expressions though. She looked...Scared." Chie and Yosuke shared a glance at each other, "We all saw the same girl? Does...That mean we have the same soul mate?"

Yui refrained from saying anything. Was the idea of finding a soul mate that important? They didn't even know if the channel was even valid. Her face fell suddenly, oh...She did sound very down-to-earth...Like a pancake in the ground.

"Either way," Yosuke looked towards her, "Out of all three of us, dude, your story has to be the weirdest. Seriously? Voices and getting sucked in by your TV? You sure you weren't that tired? Again, you look like hell. Maybe it was a nightmare and you just passed out right after whatever you saw showed up."

"The part I liked was when you got stuck!" Chie happily laughed, "Because it was too small...Man! That's pretty realistic!"

"...It wasn't a lie."

The words died as soon as Chie gasped, "If it was bigger you'd-Oh right! I almost forgot! My family's been talking about

getting a bigger TV." If Yosuke was a hare in her book, Chie was a puppy...No wait. That was what Nanako was right? No...That didn't seem right...Maybe Chie was a bigger dog. A Golden Retriever who was happy to jump up around and change the topic of the conversation as fast as she could probably run.

Yosuke takes interest in the new topic change as Yui quietly sits in her seat, not exactly pleased at the lack of attention spans. "Well flat screen TVs are in these days," he told her, "Hey. Maybe you could check a few out? We've just stocked up pretty well in our electronics department this month."

Chie's smile grew and she nodded, "Oh yeah! My parent's don't know anything about electronics, and I've gotta see my kung-fu movies on the big screen!" She made a high pitched sound of a martial arts fighter and raised one of her legs and her arms up in a pose.

"...Is that suppose to be the crane?" Chie immediately grinned towards Yui, "Oh you recognized it? Have you ever seen any movies that I might know of? I could recommend a few later if you want!" A certain teenager with orange headphones, who had met his fate two days ago with her imitated kung-fu, could only sigh and shake his head.

"Hey. You're gonna scare her one of these days," he pointed out before chuckling, "Although, Narukami-chan could come along. I bet we got a few big ones that you can fit into." The snicker that followed earned him a long stare, "H-Hey scary eyes are a no-no!"

Yui continued her staring, not blinking at all as she leaned a bit forward in her seat towards him.

Yosuke nervously gulped and backed away a bit, "Hey! Stop that!" he demanded as her expression continued to be directed at him. Chie snickered a little, but not too loudly so she wasn't in the line of fire. "It's a good joke! I mean, come on I had to," Yosuke weakly reasoned and was backed up against another desk as Yui got up from her seat which made the stare disturbing as she walked over and stood in front of him.

A smirk formed as he began to make weak sounds of protest.

"Now's it creeping the hell out of me! Okay, okay! I'm sorry! I won't do that again! " he finally yelled, "Stop it Narukami-chan! It's freaky! Blink already!"

7. Into TV Wonderland

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

I apologize in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

"Wow, this is huge!" Yui's eyes even widen a bit at the sight of the large flat screen that dominated a good section of the display. "And...Whoa...That's a lot of zeros," Chie muttered as her eyes fell on the price tag, "Who buys something like this!?"

"Dunno, rich folks?" Yosuke replied nonchalantly, "Not many people here shop for TVs. This is why this section's usually empty. We don't have a lot of clerks around." Yui glanced around again, he was right...

Compared to the other departments of the store this one was empty.

The only people were just the three of them and even when a few workers had come into the area they left right away. "Well on the bright side looking's always free," Chie added as

she and him walked up to the big screen.

Yui watched quietly as they extended their hands out and heard faint light taps, "Looks like we can't get in," Yosuke announced as they faced the tall girl with Chie giggling lightly. "Which proves it was just a dream~ It's pretty funny all the same."

The silver-haired girl only stared at the television, they were still laughing at her...

"Besides, flat screens are so thin," Yosuke added, "You'd just end up on the other side..." Yui narrowed her eyes at him making him laugh nervously. The staring was the one thing he didn't want to remember and in all honesty Yui was starting to look annoyed.

Well she acted like she was annoyed. If it was one thing they learned about the silver-haired girl was that she didn't speak much, her entire being was similar to Yukiko about how she spoke. It was rare for the other to speak at all so far, but she didn't seem too afraid of allowing her face to express her thoughts especially with her anger. Yosuke was pretty sure the staring tactic scared him right just as bad as any horror movie.

There was no way anyone could do that for that long without making some move of wanting to blink!

"Anyway," he quickly spoke towards Chie, "What sorta TV you guys are looking for?" Chie lightly scoffed, "Cheap of

course. Anything's better than this one with its infinite zeros, what do you suggest?" Yosuke grinned before leading Chie away towards a smaller model.

"Well Miss, might I suggest this one?"

His tone had taken a lighter pitch, cheerful, and he presented the television with a sweep of his hand. It seemed he had taken on the 'salesman' persona pretty fast as Chie inspected it, "It's the newest model, just released this spring."

"Hm...Oh crap! This isn't cheap! That's still a ton of zeros!" Chie pointed to the price label, "Come on Hanamura, you gotta be kidding me. Hey, you got connections. Give me a discount!" Yosuke cringed a bit and made a face, "Uh you know I can't do that right? Sheesh..."

"Oh c'mon. Pretty pretty please?" Yosuke shook his head, "Sheesh I shoulda asked what you meant by cheap first." He pointed towards a further display, "How about over here? It's a little old and smaller, but still..." Yui could hear their voices fade a bit as they moved, the sounds of the stores song drowning out a bit of their conversation.

She had remained in the same spot in front of the large television.

If her TV was as big as this...Then she really would have gotten sucked in...

She shakes her head, ridiculous...

Her eyes keep staring at the black screen though. Her right hand lifts up and she presses it lightly against the glass. Her reflection faint as she stared back until her hand pressed a bit harder. This time her hand did slip through the barrier and a small circle of light begins to form from where her hand had sunk in.

She tries to move her hand from wherever it now is, but she only feels air and luckily this time she wasn't begin forced inside so she could experiment. Feeling a bit braver she slowly leans forward allowing her entire right arm to submerge deeper into the screen. She notices the circles of light grow larger as she moves more of her arm inside and she quickly uses her left hand as support, gripping the sides as she waves her arm.

Nothing, but air...

"Hey Narukami-chan what sorta TV do...You..."

Yui's head turns towards where the two other people in the electronics section are, Yosuke's eyes are wide and his mouth slowly drops down as he stares at her.

"W...Wh...WHA!"

"Huh? Wha-OHMIGOD!" The two students ran over as they stared at the sight. Her entire right side sinking into the television screen which results in more black and white light rippling through the surface. It would seem the more of her body she urged inside the more it increased.

Yui waves her arm to where it hangs in the air, still nothing.

"Y-You gotta be kidding me," Chie whispered as she stared, "It..Your arm...It...You really stuck your hand through the screen?"

"Oh man," Yosuke's voice raises slowly as he keeps staring, "This...This is for real? That's..That's some magic trick man! The hell you're doing it?!"

"...I told you," Yui replies as she stares to lean in a bit further, "I just..Stuck my arm in." She stares at the spot for a second before withdrawing her arm back and quickly putting her head through this time.

Chie lets out a loud gasp as Yosuke lets out a yell, "The hell! Don't do that! What're you doing?! Are you nuts?!"

"G-Get back out here! Oh man this is freaky!" Chie's voice joins in to Yosuke's distress. However Yui senses that they will not try to take her out of the TV by force.

Her eyes squint as she tries to see what's around her, her fingers back outside grip the bottom of the TV for support as she tries to look a bit more carefully. It's just space around her so far...A large amount of it. It's hard to see though...

"It's pretty roomy inside here," she finally tells them.

Her voice echoes out from the screen and she can feel Yosuke pace back and forth behind her, the wind making her

skirt move a bit as he speaks. "What do you mean 'inside'?!"

"What do you mean 'empty space'?!"

"Are you both just going to just speak after one another?" Yui asks as she now has both her knees on top of the display stand outside and leans more. A good half of her upper body is leaning over the TV outside to inside. Still she cannot see clearly and the sounds of Yosuke and Chie panicking is faint with her new distance.

"I..I don't think my bladder can handle all of this!" Yosuke announces making Chie hiss at him in disgust, "What do you...Are you gonna pee your pants?!"

"I've been holding it all day okay! I haven't had the chance to go!" Yosuke weakly protests, "Besides unlike you girls who can handle it a long time. I can't...Aargh! I can't...Hold it in anymore!" Yui hears faint sounds of him running away, only to return back. "Oh crap! Customers!"

"What!? But...She...She's stuck halfway into a TV here!" Yui immediately makes herself tense, crap...She tries to slowly get out. One of her legs slowly uncurling back onto the floor as she can hear Yosuke and Chie panic outside. "H-Hold on I can-"

Two bodies slam into her rear causing her to loose her grip on the edge that was her support. "WHOA!"

Yui used to read a lot as a child.

Mainly because she had no choice in the matter and her activities by herself in the house when she was younger was very limited. She didn't like playing with dolls and pretending how to cook was boring, so reading was the only thing that was left.

She dared not try to draw...

One book she remembered very well was a story called Alice in Wonderland.

It had to be her favorite for a good few years until she could expand a bit more of her reading material as she got older. The story was still dear to her as it had been one of the biggest books she had own as a child and the one that her mother actually read a few pages too before leaving off for a late night at the office.

One scene in mind returns to her.

Falling.

Alice had fallen through a rabbit hole into a whole new world.

The sensation described was much better on the page than the one she was experiencing now.

She held back a scream as her body plummeted downward at an alarmingly fast right and she lets out a grunt of pain as her back hits solid ground. "Ow..." That was twice she had gotten

hurt today...

Weakly getting up she crawls a bit before pushing herself up as she hears two other people above, "...Oh crap!" She runs out of the way as Yosuke slams hard on his back on the floor before turning over only to let out a scream of pain as Chie landed onto his back.

"Oh..Oh! Sorry! I'm sorry!" Chie jumps up and runs away as Yosuke groans in pain.

"I landed...On my wallet...And I...Ow...I became your landing point," he moans as he slowly stands up. His hands rest on the middle of his back and he struggles to crack it only to cringe and slump forward, "Shit..That hurt..."

"I-I'm sorry," Chie stutters as she glances around them, "Where...Where are we?" Yui glanced around, all around them was fog however she can make up a few shapes it looked like...A TV station? She wasn't sure as the fog clouded her vision, she was lucky that Chie and Yosuke wore bright shades of green and orange for her to spot them through the haze, "I can only guess," she finally speaks, "That we are in the television."

Silence is Chie's answer as Yui tries to move forward as Yosuke groans and his footsteps begin to move forward. The two don't even notice how close the sounds were until, "H-Hey! W-Watch it!"

"I-I can't see okay!" Yui weakly objected as she stumbles

back as Yosuke quietly groans, "Damn, I can't see anything through this fog..."

"And..There's no entrances or exits either," Chie's voice came up and Yui immediately makes a grab for Yosuke's hand earning a protest from the boy. "H-Hey!" Yui says nothing until she and him are by Chie who now looks clearer in their line of sight.

"We need to stick together," she tells him and lets his hand go earning a light grunt in reply, "Obviously we can't see through the fog, we need to be close so we don't lose each other in it. Chie, are you alright? Nothing broken?"

"Nope, I'm okay," Yui hears to her right and she turns her head towards that direction, "Yosuke managed to break my fall...And uh..Sorry again." To her left Yui can make out the boy grumbling a bit, "No worries, hey a few broken bones and all, but I'm fine too." The silver-haired girl turns that direction and just lightly pats him on the shoulder...Or rather the side of it.

She lightly scoffs, "It's really hard to see...We should...Look for a way out right?" Chie seems to have nodded as a faint sight of light brown hair moves when Yui looks back, "Y-Yeah. I wanna go home. As fast as I can."

"But you said earlier there weren't any exits," Yosuke pointed out as he sighed, "We...Might have to look around for one. Aw man, this fog is really annoying the hell out of me! I can't see you two at all!"

Yui lets out a quiet grunt before reaching out, her right hand grasps Chie's and her left returns to holding Yosuke's. "Huh? Narukami-chan?"

"We should hold hands," she suggests, "Remember, we can't see so we have to stick together."

"...Well as long as I'm not holding Yosuke's hand," Chie spoke up, "I'm fine with that. Let's just hurry up and go!"

"Yosuke you pick a direction," Yui told the boy to her left, "I think there's something your way that looks like a path."

The boy must have nodded because he's tugging her hand and she follows along with Chie who grips hers firmly all the while inching her body closer to the silver-haired teenager.

"Oh man..This wasn't what I was expecting at all," Yosuke's voice echoes a bit as they walk towards one direction, "When I was coming in today I was hoping to sell Chie a television...Not be in one."

"Psh! If only your televisions weren't so expensive!" Chie's voice rises from behind Yui, "Honestly, no wonder no one buys 'em over at your place. It's all one number before a ton of zeros!"

"Hey now look-Huh?" Yosuke stops and the two girls behind halt, "What..The hell?"

"Huh? What's wrong? You see something?" Chie loudly

questions as she and Yui lean from behind him and freeze. Something...Something was slowly walking towards them!

Its steps had a bit of a squeaky sound as it slowly advanced much like a squeaky toy being squeezed. While the fog was thick, the outline of whatever is slowly stalking towards them is coming to view. Ears, a round body, and...A pair of...Glowing...Huge...Eyes...

Chie shudders and her hand grips Yui's harder as it keeps moving towards them until she lets out a yell, "Run!" She lets go of Yui's hand and dashes towards an opposite direction as Yosuke turns and pulls Yui's arm painfully as he tries to follow Chie, "Hold on!" Their hands loosen for a moment and Yui panics a bit slowly feeling her feet stumbling. If she and him let go, she'd fall right there and-

Yosuke's hand quickly tightens back his hold on her hand and slows a bit for Yui to run at a reasonable pace. "This place is too messed up!" he announced as they began to catch up to Chie.

Yui slowly turns her head to see that the creature has stopped, but those eyes were still staring after them.

The three teens ran in one direction, all of them running up stairs and dashing through what looked like narrow open hallways you'd see in an apartment complex. Chie finally stops as Yosuke releases Yui's hand to rest both hands onto his knees as they finally stop.

"Oh..Oh man..." Yosuke quietly panted as Chie looks back, "I..I don't think it followed us," she manages to say at last, "W-What you think was that?"

Yui leans against the wall and slowly slides down it, "I...Don't know," she replies, "It..It was staring at us when we were out of reach." Chie makes a noise and hugs herself, "At least we got rid of that creep. That was scary..."

Yosuke straightens up, looking around, "At least the fog isn't so thick here," he points out, "I can finally see you." Yui nods as she gets up as Chie looks around, "Aren't we...Further away then before?" she asks, "I mean...I don't want to go back right away. We don't know if whatever that was earlier is still there, but..." Yui shrugs, "There's only one way and that's forward for now."

They all look towards an odd doorway at the very end of the hall...

It's red and black.

It resembles the circles from the TV screen earlier when Yui stuck her arm in...

Yosuke gulps as he looks towards Yui, "Yeah...Forward. We got to trust our instincts huh?" She nods and both of them step forward towards the opening, Chie staying behind before hurrying after them, "Hey wait up!"

As they passed through they entered what looked like a

bedroom.

It seemed...Simple. "It's...Lighter," Yosuke spoke a bit of relief on his face, "Thank god...But..Then again outside it wasn't as bad as before huh?"

As Yui and Yosuke slowly advanced they paused in the center of the room and began to look around, freezing as they noticed the part of the room they had not seen first when they entered.

Just going through the door the first sight was just a simple carpet, one person bed, and a large window with a potted plant and curtains. Normal...However when one turned away and looked around the room fully they would be caught off guard.

Posters were plastered everywhere on the walls, posters whose prime focus had their face ripped or clawed off. Paint was splattered on the walls with the red paint splashed over the posters much more than any other colors...

"There's...This isn't an exit," Chie finally spoke as she slowly walked up to the two, "Nothing..." Her head turns slowly as she takes in the sight behind her and cringes, "Yikes. This is giving me more of the shivers...It's a dead end."

Yui stared at the posters as Yosuke took out his phone, "And what a surprise, no service," he announced as he pocketed his phone, "And...It starts to get creepier and creepier the further we go in. Not...That I want us to go back just yet."

Yui stepped closer to the poster she was staring at, its one of the few that doesn't seem as destroyed as the others.

In bold white are the words 'WAY OF THE BALLAD' accompanied by a picture of someone in a pretty kimono, a woman. She feels...As if she's seen this poster somewhere, but where? Who was on the poster? Someone she knew? Yui leans a bit closer and squints. What is left of the woman's face shows an elaborate hairstyle, one that was seen on women who donned the kimono for special occasions. The distinct hair style makes her think harder, where..Where had she seen this?

"AARGH!" The scream is loud and causes Yui and Chie to cry out in surprise, "What?! What's wrong!" Chie cries out as she frantically looks around, "What's going on!"

"I CAN'T HOLD IT ANY LONGER!" Yosuke cried as he ran towards the corner of the room making Yui and Chie stare at him in astonishment. Yui covers her eyes immediately as Chie protests at the boy's action, "Yosuke! What are you doing?! You can't do that in someone's room! Narukami-chan c'mon back me up here!"

"I see nothing," Yui replies as her hands keep her eyes covered, "Besides, what can I do? I can't...Force him to keep it in..." It's a weak excuse, she could join Chie in protest. However she can't stand the idea of seeing Yosuke stand in the corner even with his back turned. "By the way Yosuke, we're not holding hands so try not to get lost in the fog," she bluntly told the boy as he grunts in discomfort.

"Both of you turn around! I can't do it with you two watching!"

"Oh for God's sake, Narukami-chan's eyes are closed and does it look like I care if you piss your pants! Oh my god..." Chie weakly sighs as both girls stand in silence as they wait for...Well something...

There's a frustrated sigh and a zip of a zipper closing, "Screw it. I can't do it! It's all your fault if my bladder bursts!" Yui drops her hands as Chie lets out a sigh of relief, "Well you could've held it longer..." The headphones wearing teen scoffs at her remark before walking back over.

Pausing at...A disturbing sight.

All of them looked towards the far right center of the room. A chair and a bright colored scarf hanging over caused them all to freeze. How it went by their notice until now was alarming, but the entire state of the room was alarming...

"..Dude," Yosuke weakly pointed to the object that had caught their interest, "This chair and rope...This kinda thing is never good...It's...A scarf, but it's...Like..Tied in a noose." Yui forced herself to swallow the lump forming in her throat as she studied what Yosuke had pointed out.

Chie lets out a nervous sound, a whimper, "C'mon," she finally speaks up, "Let's get out of here. M-Maybe if we go back to that place we can find something. Th-That thing might've been gone by now. We gotta find an exit."

"...Yeah, definitely," Yui agreed as her eyes continued to stare at the scarf, a chill run up her spine and she shuddered which made both of them look at her. "Hey...Narukami-chan?" Yosuke quietly walked close to her and poked her on the shoulder, "Uh...You look..Pretty pale."

The scarf swung a bit, taunting, as Yui cringed more. "I'm...Fine. I guess it's finally getting to me. This place that is," Yui told him as Chie began to walk out towards the open doorway, "Come on let's get outta here. I'm sick of this place!" she exclaimed before stopping herself.

The girl clutched her stomach and made a weak whining sound, "And...I really do feel sick." Yosuke and Yui moved towards her, Yui walked around until she was in front of the short-haired girl and placed a hand on her forehead. "I don't think it's that sorta sick," Chie weakly laughed as Yosuke frowns.

"Now that you mentioned it," he suddenly tells her, "It's...It's the same for me too. Is the fog messing up more then our sight?" Yui shakes her head, but stops immediately a bit in surprise at how badly the head shake made her head throb. Could it be the atmosphere of the room? "Either way," she tells Chie, "We should be looking for an exit. You're right about that.."

Just what sort of twisted Wonderland was this?

8. Upward Downfall

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

I apologize in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

"Phew...We made it back." The three had returned back to the first place they had been since entering the television.

The change from light fog back to thick fog bothered them and on a few chances tripped or stumbled when they missed a step or when one person accidentally stepped on the back of someone's shoe.

Either way it seemed they had go back to the area that Yui vaguely still thought looked like a television station.

"Okay, we're back what now?" Yosuke questioned as they looked around, "Still no way out..."

Yui looked up above and frowned as she remembered how they entered, "Do you think we need to climb out?" she suggested as she continued to look up, "We fell in. So that would be an assumption that we must go back up?" Yosuke

groans, "Oh man, you're right. But the thing is how are we gonna get something that tall to reach the sky in this place?"

"You're right," Yui sighed as they both stared up, "What can we do then?"

Chie screamed cut through their conversation and they turned quickly to see her backing away at the sight of something, "What is it?!"

The two stopped as something came closer to them, the shape was...The same as the creature from before!

However as it walked closer to them, it didn't look at all..Scary as before.

It was a blue...Bear like thing.

It had a zipper running all around its head and was wearing a bright red outfit that was a bit like what clowns wore at the circus. It had large wide eyes that stared at them in silence as they all stood there gaping at it. It looked just as confused as they were and placed its arms behind its back and continued to stare back them. It was then that Yosuke finally found his voice, "What...Is that?"

Yui shrugged as Chie continued to stare at it wide eyed, "Hey...Uh," Yosuke cleared his throat, "What are you? What are you doing here?"

"I should be asking you that!"

"Ah! It can talk?!" Chie cried out as she and Yosuke reacted towards its voice with a step back, "Of course I can!" The bear exclaimed as it waved its arms up and down, obviously offended by Chie's remark, "Geez! I am a bear!" The voice coming out of that...Bear suit was male...

"No kidding," Yosuke muttered as he cast a glance to Yui who nodded. Now that they were closer they could see it themselves that he was a bear. Although...Not a normal one that was for sure.

"I've been living here since bear ever!" He point at them, "B-Besides, the question oughta be who are you guys?" Chie huffed and took an offensive stance, "Y-You wanna fight?!"

The bear shuddered and turned his body away, hands over his head cowering in fright at the girl's yells.

"N-Not so loud! D-Don't yell at me like that..."

Yui gently rested a hand on Chie's shoulder making the girl turn to face her, "I don't...Think he means no harm," the silver-haired girl whispered as they stared at the bear.

"What is this place?" Yui asked the bear as she stepped forward a bit, hoping to allow the bear some reassurance that he was not going to get hurt. The question was spoken a bit more politely and it would seem that did the trick.

The bear uncurled himself from his cowering and looked at her, "Well...This place is what it is," he tells her, "It doesn't

have a name. This is where I live..." He takes this moment to regard them all with one glance, could...He see them very clearly? The fog didn't seem to bother the bear at all as it sighed a bit, "If I was you guys, I'd hurry back to the other side."

Yui opened her mouth to speak, but stopped as the bear added something that alarmed her.

"Someone's been throwing people in here. It's a big headache..."

Throwing...People through the TV?

Yosuke steps forward next to her and crosses his arms, "Throwing people in?" he repeats, "What are you talking about?" This makes the bear growl a bit and he stomps at the ground, "I don't know!" he announces as he growls and stomps, "I just want them to think before they go doing things like that!"

The reaction sparks Chie's temper and she storms forward, "What's your problem!" she points to him and he backs away, "What gives YOU the right to yell at us like that?! You scared the hell out of us earlier you know! What ARE you?! Where are we?!"

The bear cowers before running around the teens until he hides behind Yui and stares at Chie in complete fear. Like a child hiding behind his mother from some scary stranger. The analog makes Yui sigh quietly before looking down at the

bear, her hand reaches out and she pats him on the head. It seems to have calmed him a little bit as he starts to speak up again from behind her, "I've already told you...Y-You guys should really hurry back..."

This time Yosuke is the one to get angry and he narrows his eyes at the bear, "What it comes down to it is that you want us out right?" he scoffs, "Well we do too! We just don't know how to get out damnit! That's why we've been stuck here!" The bear finally emerges out from behind Yui and stomps his foot.

"That's why I'm saying I'll let you out!"

"We don't know where the-Wait what?"

The bear taps his foot against the floor and a small tower of three television sets stacked on top of each other appears before the three.

Chie and Yosuke's mouths drop open as Yui's eyes widen at the sight. The two walk closer to the TVs, muttering to themselves in astonishment as Yui began to circle round to the front. The bear follows her and stands behind as he waits for the three to position themselves at the front.

"Okay, now you all gotta go! Scram!" he yells at them, "Get outta here! I'm a very busy bear!"

Yui lets out a small squeak of surprise as she feels a pair of hands push at her back as Chie lets out a few protests, "What

are you doing!? Whoa! Hey!" Yosuke lets out a yell of annoyance as his side hits a television's screen, "Hey! S-Stop pushin' you stupid bear!"

Yui is squished between the two and lets out a grunt of discomfort, "Y-You could just let us go one at a time!" she finally voices only to let out a cry as all three suddenly squeeze through the television screen in front of them.

Before her flashes of gray, black, and white blurr by her as she can feel her body move upward. As they had fallen before downward, they were now moving upward. Her stomach clenched in discomfort and she could feel her legs shaking as she is pushed upward by some force.

It felt like going up towards the highest point of a roller coaster or even a fast elevator heading to the top floor without any stops.

Her face twists in a bit of pain and she groans quietly until suddenly she hits the ground, face flat.

The tile floor of white and green meets her eyes and she quickly sits up on her hands and knees to glance around frantically. Around her are televisions, but with price tags placed on the tops of their screens. Some large and some small while some were turned on to a random television channel.

There was no fog or weird bear.

Everything was clear and familiar, they were back in Junes. She breathes a sigh of relief before looking to her left to see Chie and Yosuke sprawled over each other on the floor. "We're back," she announces to them loudly which causes them to spring up.

"Yes!" The two hug each other and whoop in joy until-

"OW!" Yosuke returned to sprawling on the floor, clutching his stomach and rolling as Chie scoffed, "Don't take advantage of the situation you big perv," she lightly scolds him before standing up. She dusts herself while Yui does the same, offering a hand to Yosuke until retracting it back suddenly.

The other looks at her and she frowns, "...No hand contact." His face turns bright red and he stands up, "Hey! Not so loud!"

Yui looks away and shrugs, "You're the one yelling," she points out to which he lets out a grunt before turning upward towards the ceiling as he notices the announcements are on.

"-fresh produce Junes picked for you this morning as your side dish for dinner tonight? All ages are invited to take advantage of this incredible bargain!"

His mouth drops a bit, "Oh crap! It's that late already?" He glances down, "Ah...Man. We were gone for a really long time." Chie gulps a bit, "Oh yeah...I guess we were in there for quite a while." Yui immediately closes her eyes to calm herself at the awareness of time, she would have to run home and make dinner as soon as she could as an apology for

making Nanako wait.

Maybe she could take some thing to go when she left Junes as extra...

As she opens her eyes her head turns and she stops to stare at something in one direction, "Guys..."

"Hm? Wha-Oh!" Yosuke stared as well, "That's...That's the poster we saw!" Chie frowns before looking over to where they're both staring, obviously until she notices just what they're staring at.

"You're right. It's the same," she comments, "I couldn't tell because the face was gone, but..It was Misuzu Hiiragi. How could I have missed that? It's been everywhere, uh...About her husband having an affair with the announcer lady who died the other day!"

Yui nodded as she placed her hand to rest against her cheek, "Maybe," she quietly muttered, "That room we saw on the other side, perhaps it can be related to Miss Yamano's death-"

"Stop! Stop right there!" Yosuke immediately cut her off, "Let's not go there okay? W-We saw the noose and ugh...W-We gotta stop talkin' about this now! I'm just...I'm going to erase whatever happened today from my brain. I don't think my poor heart can-"

He shudders and his hands fly to his crotch, "Crap! I still gotta

take a leak! Ah! I'll see you both tomorrow bye!" The boy hopped off as fast as he could all the while crying out the pain of his bladder as Chie shivered and hugged herself, "Yeah," she sighs, "All this is giving me the chills too. I'm feeling woozy too, I'm going to head home now okay?"

"Be careful," Yui called out as the short-haired girl made her way to the exit. She tossed the other a smile and waved, "You too Narukami-chan. See you tomorrow." Yui waved back before taking out her cell phone to check the time. It was a surprise when she finally noticed a text and opened it.

-Hey sweetheart~ It's Mom. Just wanted to say hi and hope you're doing well in Inaba. We're busy, but we hope you're in good health. Bye!-

"...Typical." She fell through a television, potentially stumbled onto a possible suicide scene, and met a talking bear that had shoved Chie, Yosuke, and her through smaller TV screens making her stomach drop from the force pushing them upward. What greeted her was a chirpy text from her Mother, not exactly making an opening for Yui to text back, and probably the very last one at that...

"...I'm going to buy stuff now."

"I'm home!" She takes her shoes off as the bag in her hand rustles as she enters the Dojima household, she stops at the entrance way to see her uncle sitting at the table. Both Nanako and he had a bowl of ramen in front of them.

Dojima turns his head towards her and greets her, "Hey welcome home." Yui nods before moving to the kitchen to set the bag down on the counter before walking over to sit by them. She pauses a bit and holds a hand to her stomach as it starts to grumble uncomfortably.

Dojima gives her a look as she sits properly and holds her stomach, "Hey what's wrong?" Yui shakes her head in hopes to dismiss his worry, but notices he isn't going to before sighing.

"..Cramps."

"Oh..." The man looks away and Yui almost sighs in relief until he looks back at her, "Uh...Look um," he shakes his head and sighs, "Okay...I doubt you'd know, but have you heard anything about a student named Saki Konishi?"

"Saki Konishi?" Yui repeats and frowns, "I...Don't know her except some rumor that...She was the one who found the body?" She isn't going to add anything else to that. If Dojima knows that she had felt like she had seen her on the Midnight Channel last night or even that she met the girl briefly he'd either think she was nuts or press for more answer which, quite frankly, she didn't have...

Dojima sighs and nods, "Yeah...Konishi did find the body. We just got a call from her family, she's disappeared. We got people looking for her, but she hasn't been found yet..." Yui jumps a bit at her uncle's words as the voice from the bear echoes into her head.

"Someone's been throwing people in here."

She frowns, why would she think that and she shakes her head before looking at the TV.

Apparently the news was still covering about Miss Yamano's death and she is almost willing to ignore it until the words 'Amagi Inn' pop out of the anchor man's mouth and her head snaps back up at attention. The image of Yukiko appears in her mind's eye and she listens intently.

"She had apparently been staying there alone. Perhaps she was taking a vacation to recover from her ordeal?" the anchor man muses loudly. The younger man from last night before appears on a new screen alongside the one being recorded from the news station.

He laughs, "Oh yes, the Amagi Inn! Their Hot springs are first rate," he grins, "The manager's teenage daughter also works there, and it's rumored she'll be taking over the inn this spring."

That...Didn't make much sense. If Yui recalled, Yukiko never did give out a final confirmation that she would take over her family's business.

The younger reporter on screen continues on, "If that happens, she'll be one of the youngest managers on record! I should book another trip there!"

The older anchor man's mouth and eyebrows twitch a bit at

the younger man's words. He's not amused that the man had suddenly taken their story off the path, "Moving along...It's time for the weather report. The rain has begun to subside, from now until morning, fog warnings will be in effect in the Inaba region. Visibility will be severely reduced, please be careful if you plan on driving in the area."

"Is the ramen ready yet?" Nanako loudly questions before looking at her Father. Dojima looks at his own bowl and shakes his head, "Give it some more time." The teenager at the table makes a face as she shoots a glare at the two bowls on the table. She had nothing against ramen, it was convenient and was tasty.

However she didn't think of it as a proper meal for dinner.

She blinks before quickly snapping her head to the side and letting out a loud sneeze before shuddering. Dojima frowns at her, "Are you sick? Maybe you're still adjusting to the new environment..." He glances to Nanako, "Hey Nanako, can you get the cold medicine for her?" Her younger cousin nods before getting up from the table and hurrying to the kitchen as he returns his attention towards her, "You might want to go to bed after you take it."

"Hey, what's in the bag?"

The two look to see Nanako holding a small bottle in her hands as she looks at the bag Yui had taken home with her. The silver-haired girl stands up quickly and goes over to open it, "I felt bad coming home late," she tells them and pulls out a

plastic container containing chocolate chip cookies, "So I well...Bought these as an apology. I'll try to get on time to make dinner for you both."

The little girl smiled a bit as Dojima lightly chuckled, "I was wondering why there'd been so much food suddenly in the fridge," he muses as Yui comes back to the table and sets the cookies down while taking the medicine bottle from Nanako, "You don't need to do that Yui. We've lived on take out and on occasions simple cooking. You don't need to-"

"I want to," she firmly states as Nanako giggles.

Dojima looks a bit taken back before scoffing a bit, "Just like my sister...Though, I wouldn't go near her when she said she was cooking. Burnt fried rice once."

Yui had to force herself to smile, resisting the urge to add that the woman still did that.

The medicine did the trick and when she woke up she didn't feel as sick as yesterday. Though she slept past the time she wanted to get up.

Yui stretched and yawned as she came down the stairs, nearly bumping into her uncle who spared her a glance. "You're up. Well, I'm off." She blinks at the odd greeting as the man walks out the door. Nanako slowly walks up to her and sighs, "Dad has to go do something, he got called and he left."

Her cousin turns her head to stare at the door Dojima had just walked out of. Her hand drifts up towards the girl, before it stops and she retracts it back. "Hey, he'll be okay," she quietly assures Nanako before giving her a smile, "Let's walk to school...Okay?"

Nanako silently nods as Yui sighs a bit, nervously biting the inside of her lower lip.

The entire walk to school was uneventful and Yui sighs a bit as she grips the handle of her umbrella firmly as the wind picks up and blows against the back. Her hand falls back and holds the bottom edge of her skirt. She still needed to get a longer one...

She pauses as the sound of sirens echoes behind her, startling the other students around her.

"Another accident?"

The memory of Dojima walking out the house flashes by and her grip only grows a bit tighter.

9. Spark Up Now

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

I apologize in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

After entering the building she had gone off to the office to place a request for a longer school uniform skirt and made her way to her home room, stopping as the intercom came on.

"Attention students. There will be a school assembly being held in the auditorium. I repeat, students. There will be a school assembly being held in the auditorium."

The echo of the intercom chiming off is followed by a few students whispering. Yui glances around and soon follows behind a pair of passing students towards the auditorium. One of the students is wearing a gym uniform instead of the usual male Yasogami uniform and she tilts her head a bit. Seeing the uniform alterations were one thing, but a student not exactly wearing the standard uniform was new...

She's so deep into her thoughts she failed to notice the two

had stopped and she smacks right into the back of the gym uniform wearing student.

"Hey," he narrows his eyes at her as she takes a step back, "You need something?"

Yui shakes her head quickly as his friend looks at her with curiosity, "Uh hey, wait you're the new girl right?"

"Y-Yeah," she finally finds her voice and breathes out as she straightens up, "Yui Narukami. I was...I'm sorry. I followed you because I don't know where the auditorium is. That was a bit rude of me." The blue haired boy laughs, "Wow! You sound really weird you know that right? We're not gonna get mad or anything."

His friend only shrugs, "You could have asked earlier. Though the school isn't that big. You'd find it eventually."

Yui shrugs back, "I rather not get into trouble from being late or lost."

The gym wearing student raises a brow, but says nothing as his friend takes over, "Well it's fine. I mean it's nice to finally see the famous 'city girl' at last ya know." Yui's mouth twitches down, that was her nickname? Well...That was all that was known about her anyway. "You can stay around with us Narukami-chan," the boy continued, "The last thing we need is a headline saying you got lost in the janitor's closet or something."

"I'll keep that in mind," Yui grinned a bit before the three continued on their way towards the auditorium.

As the gym wearing student had commented, it wasn't difficult to find or miss had Yui walked by herself. Upon entering she found an arm wave at her and she nodded towards the two students. "Thanks again for letting me walk with you," she told them as the blue haired student nodded, "No prob!"

His friend just shrugs and nods before they disappear into the crowd as she hurried over to where Yosuke was.

Chie was fiddling with her cell phone as he led her towards the short-haired girl. Yui glanced around when she noticed the absence of a certain red cardigan wearing girl wasn't by the other, "Where's Yukiko?" The brunette sighed and closed her phone, "She can't come," she explained, "Her family called her and she just texted me saying she has to help out at the inn again."

"Again?" Yui frowns as she stares at the closed green phone in the girl's hand, "Didn't she help yesterday? Isn't that pushing it?"

Chie shrugged, "Yeah...But she said she'll be here at least after lunch. Hopefully, anyway you know why they're holding an assembly now?" Yui shrugged as she glanced at Yosuke who was now staring at his phone with a look of worry on his face. "Hey what's wrong?" Chie nudged him a bit making him snap his head up.

"Oh it's nothing," he quietly replied as he returned to his phone, "Just...Saki-senpai hasn't been answering me back my texts. Not since yesterday." Pressing a button on the side Yui saw the screen light up and his frown deepens, "Come on...Please text back..."

She turns her head away as she remembers Dojima's words to her the other night. That Saki had been reported missing...

Her mouth is set into a tight line as she looks up on the stage.

"Everyone," a woman with an Egyptian headpiece stood in front of the microphone, "Please settle down. The school assembly is about to begin. Our principal has something to say..."

An elderly man slowly walked towards the microphone and Yui felt a cold chill wash over her as he quietly sighed, "I...Regret to say that I have a terrible announcement for you all." The principal's head bows down before he speaks again, "Earlier this morning when of our own was found dead today...Saki Konishi."

Immediately a wave of emotions go through all the students and time freezes. Yui can feel her heart and breathing stop together as the words hit her.

Dead.

Today.

Saki Konishi.

Her hands shake and she quickly clenches them into fists as around her people finally begin to move. Around her are the voices of her schoolmates whispering about Saki while a few sobs somewhere in the back of the crowd where the seniors are are heard.

Chie finally whispers a quiet statement of denial as Yui urges her head to turn around towards Yosuke. She wished she hadn't looked...

The boy's face has turned pale, his mouth opened slightly, and eyes wide with bewilderment. The cell phone in his hand is held loose as it seems his entire body was completely frozen from the news. The voice of the principal drawls on, but Yui can only pick out small details.

How the police were investigating and if they were questioned to cooperate with the police in order to help out sort out the details of Saki's death. The idea of Saki being bullied leading to her death is announced to be ruled out and that is all it takes for Yosuke to finally move.

He closes his eyes quickly and bows his head, Yui can see the grip of his cell phone tighten. Her hand raises up, but it quickly drops back to her side.

The principal nods and continues to speak once more. For them all to remember Saki as a dear student, classmate, and friend before dismissing them.

Yosuke is the first to move, hurrying out before Chie or Yui could speak to him. "...Passed away...Today," Chie quietly repeats to herself and looks to Yui, "...I feel sorry for Yosuke."

Yui makes a quiet sound of agreement before they both begin the walk back towards their classrooms.

It's only when they are inside and passing two girls they stop.

"She died the same way as that announcer...That's so creepy..."

"Last time it was from an antenna, but I heard that she was found hanging from a telephone pole this time. It has to be a serial murder case by now..."

The girls move forward as the other two stay in the empty hallway. Chie looks towards Yui who looks back at her with the same worried expression before they turn to hear faint footsteps behind them. Yosuke moves slow, arms crossed tightly over his chest and his head is partly down before he stops in front of them. There is a long pause from the boy before he lifts his head and speaks.

"Did..You watch the Midnight Channel..Last night?"

Chie gasps a bit in surprise. With their little adventure yesterday it left her a bit frightened to think of anything involving the television. "What? No! Why are you-"

"Let me finish!" Yosuke quickly snapped silencing her.

His arms fall to his sides and his face is filled with anger, "Just listen for me okay?! Look, something was bothering me since watching that and I watched it again..." His voice lowers and he bows his head, "And...I saw Saki-senpai on the screen. She was...She looked like she was in a great deal of pain."

Yui watches as the boy swallows loudly as he tries to retain some of his emotions as he speaks. "Remember? There was some guy that one time saying Miss Yamano was his soul mate...And then she turned up dead. People are saying it's the same with Saki-senpai too. It can't..It just can't be some weird coincidence."

Chie shakes her head, "You can't be saying...They might be linked are you?"

"He is," Yui suddenly agreed startling Chie at her suddenly blunt answer, "He's saying that anyone who shows up on the Midnight Channel...Ends up dead. Right?"

Yosuke nods as Chie looks between the two as Yui stares at the boy across from them. He inhales sharply before he continues on, "You both remember right? We saw those posters of Misuzu Hiiragi in that room inside the TV..."

"And you assume the world within the TV is linked to the two murders," Yui finished for him as he finally looked at her in the eye. "Look, we made it into that world once yesterday. Who's to say Saki-senpai and the announcer didn't find a way in as

well."

Her eyes widen, "...You're right. That bear..." Yosuke nodded in agreement Yui frowned, "If what you're saying is right," she continues, "Then, there must be a connection..." The boy nodded again before staring at Yui who nodded, "...Okay."

Chie blinks and finally figures out what that meant before shaking her head frantically, "W-Wait guys. Don't do this...You should just let the police handle this and-"

This angers Yosuke again and his head snaps towards Chie, "You think we can rely on them?! They haven't made any progress on the announcer's case either! And you think if we went up to tell them about a world inside the TV they'll believe us? There's no way! We're just a bunch of kids to them!"

The short-haired girl steps back in shock at his yells and Yui quietly raises a hand to rest on his shoulder, "Yosuke-san...You're yelling." He stares at her before looking back to Chie who stands tense. His chest heaves a bit and his arms are hanging off his sides a bit too far as his hands are now in fists. Seeing Chie startled he quickly looks down, "I...I just need to know why Senpai had to die like this," he quietly tells them, "I can't ignore this...Not with what I came up with..."

Chie looks down as Yosuke continues, this time staring right at Yui. "I'm sorry, but you're the only person who can help me. Meet me at Junes later, I'll be waiting." With that the boy runs off into the open door leaving Chie and Yui alone again.

"...I can understand how he feels," Chie finally speaks after a long pause, "But we can't be sure we'll be able to get out again. What...What can we do?"

"What we can," Yui answers her, "I'll go with him. If what he says is possible...We can't ignore it right? And...He cares a lot about this." Chie sighs a bit and looks down with a torn expression over stopping them or to let them enter back to that world.

Finally she stares at Yui, brown eyes filled with determination, "Fine. But we gotta hurry to Junes. We can't leave Yosuke alone." Yui nods and the two run out of the school quickly.

When they arrived at the department store Yosuke stood in front of the same television as before, holding a large golf club and a huge bundle of rope. One of the ends is tied around his torso tightly. As they approach he grins towards them and winks a bit, "Hey you finally came!"

Yui couldn't help, but lightly looked amused at him. Just how easily did he get away carrying those two objects in the store?

"This is crazy," Chie announced as they stopped in front of him, "You can't be serious. This is too dangerous!"

Yosuke smiled at her and shook his head, "It might be, but..." He turns his direction towards the large television set they had used yesterday, "If we managed to get through once, we

could do it again right? Who knows, maybe if we use the same entrance we could meet that freaky bear guy again too..."

Chie grunted and began to speak again until Yui moved up towards Yosuke, her hand extended. He stares at her open palm in confusion before she gives him a small grin, "I'm going with you...I did sorta say that remember?" She can hear Chie make a faint stuttering sound of disbelief as Yosuke grins at her, nervously.

"You...You are? Oh man, thanks dude." Yui nods before taking a bit of rope and tying it around herself as Chie shakes her head, "Oh man...You both are just."

Yosuke laughs, "Hey don't worry, I'm not leaving without a plan," he quickly cuts her off from anymore protests and hands her the bundle of rope that isn't tied around them, "I'm leaving you in charge of this. Whatever you do, don't let go. It's tied to the both of us."

She stares at the rope in fear and extends her hands towards it, shaking, "Ugh...You guys really cannot be serious.." Yosuke sighs and shakes his head before he looks to Yui, "Last chance of backing out Narukami-chan," he warns her, "You in?"

"Of course I'm in," she replies, "I'm not letting you go in alone...Okay?" The boy gives her a small smile before they turn and enter the TV. Chie lets out a faint cry of protest, but they are already falling down. Yui can feel her eyes blur at the

lights and the descending makes her feel heavy in the head, but compared to yesterday it doesn't make her stomach pull upward.

She closes her eyes and braces herself as she falls on her back onto solid ground, there's a faint hiss of pain and she gets up. Beside her there's a heavy thud and a short curse is yelled out in pain, Yosuke stands up with the help of the golf club.

"Oh man...Oww..."

She dusts herself up and squints around, "It's the same...As yesterday." Yosuke also looks around and lets out a quiet sound of satisfaction. "So they are connected from place to place!" he happily smiles to her...Or at least she think he is. The fog isn't as thick as yesterday's, but it's still hard to see the other beside her without straining her eyes.

"Y-You guys...Why'd you come back?!"

The blue bear from before waddling his way over and stares at the two of them and they stare at him.

"I GET IT!" He points to them both dramatically, "You're the ones behind this! Someone's been stuffing people down here before the fog clears up!"

Yui thinks a moment and quickly interjects a question before the bear continues, "And when does it clear up?"

"When the fog is there over on your side," the bear replies while jabbing a finger at her, "The fog on this side lifts up! It's making this world more and more messed up..." He makes a quiet humming noise and turns away from them, "And...this is the second time you guys came here. I don't think anyone forced you in..."

The bear turns and points to them again, "And that makes you beary~ suspicious...Which means you guys are the culprits!"

"Whoa wait a second! What the hell!" Yosuke yelled at the bear's accusations as Yui crosses her arms over her chest, "...If that's the case," Yui suddenly speaks making her companion stop, "If what you're saying is true, and people are being forced into here. There's a case that Miss Yamano and Saki-senpai were sent here too. Against their own will."

"Well if they are, it's because you two are the ones who sent them here! Come clean already!"

Yosuke lets out a quiet growl before opening his mouth, "Oh shut up..." He turns to Yui, "If what you guessed is right and what that bear thing is saying is true," he whispers, "It...There might be someone out there throwing people here to get them killed."

Yui nods, "Yes...Exactly," she whispers back to him with a nod as Yosuke frowns, "If that's the case..."

"Rawwrr!" The bear's growl makes them stop their conversation and they both return their attention to him, "I

hear mumbling! What're you guys mumbling about? Why'd you come here anyways?!" He stomps on the floor and angrily glares at them, "It's a one-way door! You can't get out once you're in!"

Yosuke scoffs, "Yeah we know, but this time we don't need your help. See we got a lifeli-" He stops and holds up the rope around him as Yui touches her own. They lift up the piece that should have been connected to the one Chie had on the other side.

It's been chopped off...

"Uh oh," Yui glances towards the television sets behind them, "Chie-san must be..."

"W-Whaat!?" Yosuke continues to stare at the end of his rope with his hand shaking it, "B-But! I...It...What...HUH!?" He drops the rope and glares at the bear, "H-Hey! You bear thing! You better let us out once we're done investigating here!" The demand is delivered in a low voice as if he is trying to intimidate the bear from his blunder.

The bear stomps his foot as Yui starts to untie the rope around her torso as she listens. The bear continues to stomp and makes a low growl before looking at both of them, "I'm the one who wants to investigate! I've been living here for a very long time and it's never been noisy until now!"

A glare is fixed onto Yosuke, challenging him, "Do you have proof?! Prove to me you're not throwing people in here!" Yui

sighs and she sets the rope down, "It doesn't work that way-"

"Ah ha! So there! It's you two! It is you guys!"

"Argh! For the last time," Yosuke's voice grows louder as he stares down at the bear, "It's not us! So we got nothing to prove to you! If anyone's been throwing people in here...It has to be you!" The bear lets out a yell of protest at the accusation Yosuke makes and waves his arms up and down, "Wait what?! That's not-"

Yui stares back and forth at the two as Yosuke charges at the bear, "Take off that ridiculous costume and show us who you really are!" She closes one eye as she hears a thud and squints to try and watch the two. The bear is rolling a bit trying to get Yosuke off.

"H-Hey no! Wait! No!"

"Ha!" She hears a zipper unzip and-

"AHH! WHAT THE HELL?!" Yosuke backs away as the bear suit stands up, waving its arms frantically. There is no one inside the suit, but it continues to move as if the bear is...Well if he was still whole.

"No one inside," Yui muses as she steps forward and takes the bear's head off the ground as Yosuke slowly gets up, "H-How does that work! It makes no sense!"

He watches as Yui stares at the head for a moment, the

expression stuck with the bear's eyes wide and mouth open partway as if he was still screaming at Yosuke to get off. She walks over to the waving torso and carefully puts the head back, zipping it right in place.

"Thanks Miss Nice Lady," the bear breathes in relief and stares at her before nodding suddenly, "I...Me? I can't be the culprit. I wouldn't do such a thing...So..."

He looks at her again and looks down, "Look," he lifts his hands and adjusts his head a bit as he speaks again, "I'll take your word for it. But only if you two promise me something! You have to find the real culprit!" The request surprise Yui for a moment as Yosuke also mirrors her surprise.

The bear looks between the two before continuing, his arm movements halt and he pulls his arms behind his back. His ears twitch a bit as he starts to frown, "I...I just want to live peacefully again," he quietly explains as his eyes begin to blink a bit rapidly. Yui squints and notice they are a bit glassy, "It's only me and...I have no one else to turn to so, please. Please will you?"

The bear looks at the two before his mouth quivers and he bends his body as he starts to sob loudly. Yui stares at the bear while Yosuke glares at it.

All alone...

Yui looks towards Yosuke who sighs and puts his hands on his hips, "And what makes you think we'll help you you crazy

be-"

"We'll do it."

The bear stops crying and stares at her with a wide smile as his tears finally stop, "Really?!"

"REALLY?!" Yosuke nearly screams, "Dude y-"

"Yosuke-san," Yui stares at him for a moment before looking to the bear, a small smile on her face, "It wouldn't hurt...And he's just like us. He's trying to find the truth about this just like us." The boy stares at her before sighing, "Okay fine," he raises his arms up, "Okay I'm in. Seriously dude, Narukami-chan you're too nice."

"Yes super nice! Thank you!" The bear happily agrees and Yui nods, "You're welcome Bear-san," she replies to which the bear laughs, "Besides if you didn't agree to help me, I wouldn't help you get out!"

Yosuke's jaw drops and he raises a fist to the blue bear, "You..You little! Damn bear...Holding a gun to our heads..." There is a pause, "But...Like Narukami-chan said. You're just like us, trying to find the culprit. So I guess we might as well do this." The headphones wearing teen grins, "Anyway...Might as well introduce ourselves right? I'm Yosuke Hanamura, and this is my friend Yui Narukami."

...Friend?

The word Yosuke used to associate her to him makes her feel warm and she can't help the smile that suddenly grows on her face. Friend...A friend...

The bear stares again at them before answering, "...Teddie...My name is Teddie."

"Teddy bear?" The words fall out of Yui's mouth and Yosuke stares at her, "...Huh. Figures." Teddie looks at them confused before ignoring them, "So...What now?"

Yes what now exactly...

They just learned that someone was intentionally throwing people into this world in order to kill them, but why? And just who was it? What could be gained from doing this? The two murders of Miss Yamano and Saki-senpai occurred almost in the same time with each other and the two were both found dead in the same position. Yui rests a finger to her mouth as she thinks, it's like a murder myste-

Mystery...

"It seems you will encounter a misfortune at your destination, and a great mystery will be imposed upon you..." Igor's voice echoes in her head as her eyes widen.

Coincidence?

She stares between Yosuke and Teddie who are also thinking, was...Was this it? Was this what that goblin man had

meant?

"Oh!" Teddie nodded at a sudden realization, "I can show you where the last person that came in here went to!" Yosuke immediately grabs Teddie by the shoulders making the bear cry out, "Easy! Easy!"

"D-Did you mean Saki-senpai?!" the boy questions him and shakes him a bit, "Is that who you meant?" Yui hurries over and separates him from Teddie who narrows his eyes at Yosuke before the boy realizes what he's done, "U-Uh sorry, but...T-Teddie did you see Saki-senpai?"

The bear shakes his head, "If you mean the last person in here, yeah. I don't know the name. We can go look at the last place she went into and look for clues." Teddie begins to turn before stopping, "Oh, one more thing. First you oughta put these on!"

Teddie extends his hand out to Yosuke and Yui, presenting them with glasses.

The pair offered to Yosuke are a simple pair of square framed glasses that are a bright orange color just as the shade of his headphones. The glasses being handed to Yui are rectangular frames and are a light gray color as she takes it from Teddie and lifts it closer to inspect them she notices a few stripes of color on the sides.

Yosuke takes the pair being handed to him and stares, "...What're these glasses for?"

Yui shrugs at him before staring at them again.

She closes her eyes and places the frames onto her face, slowly opening them and her eyes widen. Around her is no fog at all. Everything is in clear view, she can finally see the area they're in. The place is indeed a television studio like area.

Yui touches her glasses before looking to Yosuke whose mouth drops, "Whoa...It's like night and day," he muses, "The fog doesn't exist when we were these."

Teddie lets out a chuckle, "Ha! Good, it'll be easier for you both to follow me. I've been here for a long time, so you can rely on me!" There's a pause as Teddie nervously turns his head side to side, "Uh...I can only show you guys around," he quickly adds, "You guys need to defend yourselves."

Yui watches as Yosuke grabs the golf club he left on the ground and waves it to the bear, "W-We brought weapons see!" He points to the club as Yui quietly sighs as he continues, "T-There better not be any monsters! You understand!? T-They're more for show! We just got here! If it's so dangerous...Why don't you do something about it instead of relying on us?!"

The bear shakes his head, "Uh uh. Nope. No way. I've got no muscles. Oh! If it helps, I'll give you guys moral support from a safe distance!"

Teddie stops smiling before looking to Yui, "Uh...What's wrong?" Yosuke glanced and immediately shuddered at the

sudden stillness of the girl's eyes. "Shit...Really? N-Naru-" The silver-haired girl goes up to Teddie until she is practically an inch apart from the bear. Teddie blinks a bit as he starts to grow unnerved by her stare, "Um-"

Without warning Yui shoved him down, making him roll on his back as he began to cry out. "Nooooooooo!"

Yosuke's jaw drops as he holds the golf club tighter, "...Is this bear for real?!"

"...I guess so," Yui sighs as she watches the bear frantically try to roll back up, "Help!"

She looks to Yosuke as the boy began to quietly groan, "We swore to find the culprit and this bear is all the backup we get? Ugh...Man...I wished we brought Chie, at least she'd be more help than this guy." Yui shrugs and frowns, "It can't be helped. We should hurry so she won't get worried." She points to the rope still tied around Yosuke and he blushes, failing to realize it's still around him.

"Y-Yeah you're right..."

"Helloooooo?! Help me upppppp!" The two teens stare at Teddie as he continues to just roll left and right.

Teddie lead Yui and Yosuke down the path and soon the sight of the television station began to be replaced by a very familiar sight.

"It...It looks like the shopping district back home," Yosuke commented as they walked down the street as Yui glances around. It does look like the street she had seen on her first day to Inaba, only all the stores were closed and it looked rather run down. The sky was black and red instead of the blue she would expect to see back in their world...It...Was disturbing to stare at.

"Some weird places have appeared here recently," Teddie informed them as he glanced around, "I lost that girl around here somewhere..." Yosuke stopped before digging into his pockets and turned, "Wait is this the girl by the way? Who you saw?"

Yui leans back and both Teddie and her stare at the screen. It's a picture of Saki-senpai wearing her Junes uniform smiling at the camera. It looked quite recent...

Teddie nodded, "Uh huh! That's her!" The bear points up ahead, "I lost her just as she went into that place right up ahead." Yosuke shoves the phone back and looks at the direction he is pointing to and his face pales a bit. "Wait...So if this place is like the shopping district then up ahead is..."

Yui can't hear him finish and he runs on ahead, "Yosuke-san!" She and Teddie hurry after him as he runs full speed up the street towards the direction Saki-senpai was last seen.

The store is just like the others, old-fashioned, yet there are crates of liquor bottles and a wide doorway that mirrors the same light as the sky. Yui and Teddie stand by to Yosuke as

he stands there, staring at the store. "That's...This is the liquor store Senpai's parents run," he tells them, "She...She disappeared in here?"

The boy takes a step forward and Yui notices that Teddie takes a step back, she can see the bear's eyes grow wide and he starts to shake suddenly. "W-Wait!" he calls out and Yosuke stops, "T-They're here!" The teenagers stare at him confused at his words and he glances around frantically.

"S-Shadows," he whispers in panic, "I...I had a feeling they were going to attack!"

An old sound emits from the doorway and Yosuke quickly turns away, the golf club in front of him, "W-What was that?!" He takes a step until he is in front of Yui and Teddie as something begins to emerge from the odd portal. Yui can make out a blue mask slowly pushing its way through the red and black light and her eyes widen as it falls in a sickening splatter onto the ground.

The blue mask is grinning towards them as it forces its black murky body upright as another begins to push its way out.

The two creatures' raise their hands up and Yui swallows the lump in her throat when she notices how both of them are staring intently at them. "Yosuke-san!" she finally yells when she notices the two slowly begin to run towards them. Yosuke reacts and swings the club only to lose his footing and the club flies into the air to land out of bounds.

Teddie lets out a yell and frantically runs in a small circle as Yui watches as the two creatures zoom by Yosuke, only to stop midway and suddenly jump up in the air. "Oh no!"

The dark matter of their bodies swirl and soon form a sphere...The blue masks dissolves into the sphere as it starts to harden into a bizarre zebra pattern...A pair of mouths begin to form and the pair grins towards her, long tongues licking their lips as they laugh.

"Narukami-chan!" Yosuke screams as he watches the two creatures heads towards her, Yui's arms fly up to her face, her eyes close shut, and she tries to brace herself from impact as she awaits for the worse...

I AM THOU

Her eyes widen at the voice. It's the same one that spoke to her...On the first night she drifted to sleep. The voice who spoke to her to catch the truth...

THOU ART I

Her body stiffens as the words echo in her head and suddenly the monsters in front of her freeze. The throbbing begins to pulse in her head as she silently begins to gasp at the pain in her head.

THE TIME HAS COME

Her arms slowly fall to her sides and she stares up as a blue

card begins to descend before her. It flips over and over in midair, shining as the voice grows louder and louder as she stares.

OPEN THINE EYES

She has seen this card before.

Somewhere...

It's...It's calling to her.

The blue card shines brighter as she extends her hand out to allow it to rest in her open palm. Its tip spins fast as the image of a blue mask, one half black and the other half white, appears on the surface.

AND CALL FORTH WHAT IS WITHIN!

The other surface is blank save for the light and she crushes it, "Per...So..Na...PERSONA!"

The card shatters as her fingers close around it, exploding up in a blast of light and wind. She can hear something roar around her, electricity. It sparks and she can see it form something behind her, a form of a tall creature. Shaped like a human, but not. It stands tall behind her, the light gleams from its helmet covered faced as bright gold eyes stare out as it swings its weapon to disperse the lightning around them.

A shock wave of electricity strikes the two creatures and pushes them back, hitting the wall of the store. The light fades

and Yui steps forward, she picks up the fallen golf club and smiles. "...Go...Izanagi!"

10. Inner Echo

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

For this chapter I focused a bit more on how the fight occurred a bit in the anime. It's a bit off and might be long so I apologize. Please enjoy this chapter!

I apologize again in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

*Note: **"Voices"***

"Izanagi!"

The being she calls out flies out towards the monsters, the sword he carries draws back and swings at full force knocking one monster off towards the side. She can faintly make out its movements as it struggles to get up and she grits her teeth. "Don't let it get up!"

Izanagi obeys and strikes down, holding the blade of the sword over the sphere to keep it in place. It lets out a protesting screech and tries to wiggle.

Teddie lets out a gasp, "G-Get it now!" he yells as he holds his hands on his head, "I-It's going to try to slip away!"

Yui nods before waving her arm down as she stares at Izanagi who turns towards her slightly. He nods before lifting his sword up again before bringing it down in one quick motion like a guillotine.

The attack is rewarded with the creature letting out a high-pitched squeal as its body squirms before disappearing up in black smoke. Yui pants a bit, her body shaking for some reason before she remembers. There were two...Right?

"Look out!" Teddie cries and she ducks down in time as the remaining monster tries to bite her. Taking a hold of the golf club she lets out a yell as she swings it back. It makes impact and its sphere body is sent in the opposite direction.

Her eyes glance towards Izanagi who flies towards the spinning creature. Her grip of the club grows tighter as she focuses on the monster.

It seems to have stopped spinning and is spinning towards-

"Ugh!" Her head falls back harshly, as if some force has punched her in the jaw. The monster at that very moment had made impact to Izanagi's face. She stumbles and falls to her knees, "A-Are you okay?" Teddie asked as he ran over to her, "H-Hey uh-"

"I see now..."

Teddie backs up from her as she rests a hand to hold her jaw as she glares towards the monster. Any attack to Izanagi, she is also harmed. If that were the case, it would be the same in the reversed effect. Izanagi stands still for a moment before reaching up and touching his own jaw before gripping hold of the sword handle as Yui pushes the glasses up closer to her eyes, "Izanagi, show no mercy. Go!"

The faint sounds of static are heard and suddenly electricity begins to form around Izanagi's blade. The bright white light illuminates Izanagi as he charges start towards the monster. She watches as Izanagi swings the sword back, arms holding it high before striking down. The sounds of thunder echoes around them as the light begins to circle the squealing sphere.

Just like its companion it too disappears in a burst of black smoke.

Yui stares at the open street, her chest heaving up and down as a sudden rush goes through her. Izanagi floats towards her and stands before her in silence. Grey eyes meet gold and Yui feels a sudden wave of warmth wash over her. Izanagi's form slowly begins to fade and soon it shatters, the light falls onto her and then seems to go into her heart.

Her eyes don't leave the spot from where she had seen Izanagi until she hears someone walk up to her.

"Whoa!" It's Yosuke...

The boy stutters a bit, "W-What was that?! It was like...And

you...And it...Those things...It was just...Whoa! D-Did I hear you say 'Persona?!' W-What was it and how did-" Yosuke finally comprehends that his words are not forming the right sentences.

He takes a deep breath before putting his hands on Yui's shoulders and shakes her, "I mean, what did you do!?" Yui stares at him and blinks before raising her shoulders up. She herself is still speechless...

Yosuke lets his hands fall and has a small grin on his face, "Hey, you think I can do it too?" he suddenly asked her, "I mean, that was so cool and-"

Yui snaps out of her trance and shakes her head a bit, "W-Wait Yosuke-san I-"

"Calm down, Yosuke!" Yui turns to see Teddie walk towards them. Though she wouldn't call it a walk really, the bear had a little swing and hop in his step. A swagger, the bear stops beside her and looks at her with awe, "You're troubling Sensei!"

Se..Sensei?

"S-Sensei?" Yosuke also mirrors her puzzlement as Teddie nods before stepping closer to her. His eyes grow huge as he continues to stare up at her and the smile on his face is the biggest and brightest she's seen on him. "Gosh almighty! You're amazing, Sensei!" he happily praises her, "I am one impressed bear! I can't believe you were hiding an amazing

power inside you...No wonder the Shadows were scared of you!"

"Shadows? That's what they're called?" Yui tilts her head a bit to the side before staring out towards the empty street as she recalled the fight. "Well...I'm just as surprised as you," Yui quietly replies as Teddie looks towards Yosuke, "Isn't that something Yosuke?" The bear laughs a bit until the teenager makes a grunt and shoves him down.

"Dude, you call her 'Sensei' and then you don't show me any respect?!" Teddie lets out a big of a yell, his arms going up and down until he righted himself up from the shove. He looks at Yosuke before cowering a bit, "Sorry..."

Yui looks between the two before lifting a hand and patting Teddie on the top of the head making Yosuke sigh, "Sheesh...Well, at least you helped give support during that fight. So...Props to you Teddie." Teddie grins as a light pink floods his face, "R-Really? Oh heehee!"

Yosuke glances between the both of them and nods, "Keep that up...And I think we'll be fine from here on out!" Yui nods as well, "I got your back." He laughs and smiles, "Wow...It's like we're a little team...Let's get back to the investigation!"

They turn their attention back to the doorway. The light of red and black stare back at them as they advanced forward. Yui can't help, but think that the circles of light are just like the ones that appear when they enter and exit the TV, only in different colors...

"..I wonder what happened to Saki-senpai here," Yosuke quietly ponders until-

"I wish Junes would go under!"

Yui jumps and looks around the street as the sound of a woman's voice suddenly speaks. No one...

"It's all because of that store..."

She looks up, "Above?" There's a jumble of voices that echo around them. Some are whispers, mutters, and at some points Yui can hear a snarl before someone yells.

"I heard that Konishi's daughter is working there."

She feels Yosuke tense up beside her at the woman's next sentence, "What...What is this?"

The voices continue speaking. Obviously not answering as the next words spoken make Yosuke let out a low snarl.

"How could she do that?! That place is ruining her family's business and everyone else's!"

"That girl is trouble!"

Yosuke takes a sharp intake of breath, "SHUT UP!" Yui and Teddie watch as he stares upward at the sky, "Cut it out! Stop spurting out this crap!"

The voices of the two women seem to get louder at this point

instead of silencing. One woman makes a soft 'tsk' sound, ***"That poor father...To have his own daughter working for the enemy."***

"I said shut up!" The headphones wearing teenager spins around on his heel and runs into the store, "Wait Yosuke-san!" Yui runs after him as Teddie lets out a quiet cry of protest. "Oh not good, not good!" The two enter the liquor store and freeze in place at the doorway. It's dark, very dark inside...It looks larger than it should be, with its high walls and ceiling. Yui kicks at the floor and a bottle of alcohol rolls off to the side.

The place is littered with bottles and broken glass. A mess...

She can hear Yosuke gasp quietly and sees him start to walk further from the entrance. Her hand shoots out and grabs his sleeve before he ventures deeper into the store, "Yosuke-san wait."

"What?!" He snaps his head in his direction, "This...This can't wait!"

"I understand your feelings," Yui calmly told him as she keeps her hold, "But rushing into things like this isn't safe. Please, something isn't right here." Yosuke's mouth opens to protest, but shuts it as they hear a chorus of low voices begin to echo above them. "Damnit...Not again..."

A man's voice suddenly echoes throughout the store, ***"How many times do I have to tell you Saki?!"***

His voice is loud, anger and hisses are emphasized as he speaks. ***"Do you know what the neighbors say about you?! Aren't you ashamed? You're the eldest daughter of a family who's owned this store for generations! HOW DARE YOU TAKE A PART-TIME JOB AT THAT PLACE!"***

Yui hears Teddie whimpering and clings to her skirt as she stares up, "Is..."

"That's...That must be Saki-senpai's dad," Yosuke whispered, "I...I never knew. I thought she was okay. She seemed to be having fun at work. She never said anything about this to me...Did..Did she hear all of this? Before she..." Yui's fingers loosen until he gasps, "Wait a sec..."

He runs towards the counter on the opposing side of the room, bits of torn paper are scattered upon the surface. Yui steps beside him and picks up a torn piece. It's not paper...It looks like it's a photo torn up...But why?

Yosuke picks up a few piece and stares at them, "I...I know these. They're photos we took of the part-timers at Junes. Why...Why are they all torn up like this?"

"I could never tell him..." Yui and Teddie tense up as a girl's voice echoes out. It's not like the woman's voices outside who speak in disappointment or like Saki-senpai's father who speaks in anger. This one is spoken in an airy tone, almost indifferently. Despite the tone, Yui knows the speaker.

"Saki!" Yosuke frantically looks around confused, "W-Where

are you! H-Hey! Say something! A-Are-" Yui feels a shudder as she hears Saki's voice sigh, ***"But I think Hana-chan is..."***

Yosuke stops yelling and freezes, "A...About me? What-"

"A pain in the ass!"

Teddie looks to Yui in confusion, but says nothing as the voice continues on. "I was only nice to him because he was the manager's son at Junes. But he took the wrong way and now that idiot thinks I like him." Yui feels her hands grip the club still in her hold as she stares at Yosuke.

He's frozen. His mouth hands open slightly as his eyes stare up at the ceiling in disbelief.

"I don't care about Junes. Same goes for my Dad's store too. The shopping district. And my parents...I wish everyone and everything could disappear! Just die!"

Saki's voice is laced with venom, the hate and anger rings out from her words as Yosuke takes a few steps back from the counter. The pieces of the photo he holds fall to the floor.

"No...No," he whispers in confusion, "S-Saki-senpai's not like that! It's a lie!" He falls to his knees and lets out a yell, "It's a lie! Shut up! Stop lying! She would never say that!"

"Yos-"

A laugh echoes behind them making them all freeze, "It's so sad," a voice drawls out, "Nobody understands you, but the

truth is YOU'RE the one who finds everything and everyone as a pain in the ass!" Yui turns and quietly gasps as a figure emerges from behind the racks of bottles.

Yosuke's mouth drops as Teddie lets out a yell of surprise.

Grinning before them is Yosuke. However in the darkness of the store there are obvious differences. The grin on the other's face is much more crooked, almost menacing. A sneer that was wrong and not like the grin that graced Yosuke's face when he laughed. The posture is wrong, it's too lax and the slouch is much worse than what Yui has seen the boy have. It's lazy...

But the most distinguishing feature that marked a true difference was the eyes that stared at all three of them.

"Because you're me," the doppelgänger chuckles as Teddie frantically looks back and forth, "T-Two Yosukes?!"

"Who..Who are you!?" Yosuke picks himself off the floor and struggles to right himself to stand as he stares at the other across from him. Yui watches as the double's grin grows, "I'm you of course," he laughs, "Didn't you hear me?"

"You're...Me? But that's-"

"Which means I know everything about you," the double continued as he remains in the shadows, "You made everyone think you came here just for Saki right? What a load of bullshit!" Yui watches as Yosuke's stance tenses as the

Yosuke with gold eyes grins wider, "Truth is you were looking for some fun weren't you? What else is there for you to do anyway? In this back hole shit hole town."

"N-No that's not-" His eyes glance towards Yui and she can see hesitation, he doesn't look at her directly in the eyes and she can see him force himself to swallow back his emotions, "I...I don't think that at-"

"Oh stop deluding yourself," the other Yosuke's arms fall to his side and the sneer on his face drops into a straight line. His gold eyes narrow as he starts to step a bit closer to Yosuke, his tone taunting, "You were thinking there was a chance that you might get lucky and become a hero! The death of your beloved 'Saki-senpai' was the perfect excuse to make the trip back here."

Yui cringes as the other Yosuke laughs loudly as the real one starts to grit his teeth, "Stop saying that crap!" he finally yells, "Who are you really?! I would never say all those things!"

The doppelgänger grins and laughs again before bending his body forward, his hands rest into his pockets as he lets out bits of snickers. "Who am I?" he snickers again before directing his gold eyes back to Yosuke, "I am a Shadow...Of your true inner self. I. Am. YOUR. Shadow."

"No..That's not true!" Yui tenses suddenly as Yosuke's voice suddenly raises, "No..You're...You're not..YOU'RE NOT-"

"R-Run for it!" Teddie tugs at her skirt and tries to drag her

away as dark Yosuke grins manically. His eyes get wide and she feels faint shivers run down her spine. The gold color throws her off, they are not like Izanagi's own eyes that looked at her with companionship.

These are eyes that children feared to wake up to. The sort of eyes that a monster has that awaits for the right time to strike.

"SAY IT! KEEP SAYING IT!" She hears the doppelgänger yell as black and red smoke begins to form out of his body. Teddie frantically tells her to run as Yosuke points a fist to his double, "You're not me! YOU ARE NOT ME! YOU CAN'T BE ME!"

The other laughs louder and the smoke turns to light around him, "Yes! That's right!" he laughs out loud as he leans forward as he glares to Yosuke. The look is full of hate, "I'm not you! I'm my own self now! I'm not you at all!"

Yosuke cries out and lifts his arms to shield his face as the dark light brightens and around them wind blows, "Yosuke-san!" Yui screams out as she watches the walls around them begin to fall. Teddie screams as the place the dark Yosuke was doesn't have a Yosuke look-a-like.

No.

In front of them stands a large creature, larger than the Shadows from earlier outside.

It's composed of a large black form that's about the same size as Izanagi, its eyes have a pair of yellow star like shapes, a long red scarf is around the neck, and its yellow gloves hands wave left and right carelessly as it sits upon what looks like a demented looking frog.

"He's gone beary beary BEARSERK! He's a Shadow! Yosuke Number Two turned into a Shadow!"

Yui opens her mouth, ready to yell out the word 'Run' until she notices Yosuke. He's standing closer to the Shadow, his entire stance stiff and he stares up at the other. The Shadow grins towards him and reaches an arm out, the palm open as if to-

"No! Yosuke!" Yui runs forward and tackles the boy down with enough force to move them out of the way of the Shadow's hand. Using her body as a shield over Yosuke, she extends her hand up. A faint light appears over her open palm as a blue card flips over in the air quickly as her fingers reach up and grasps it tightly.

"PERSONA!"

The Shadow leans back slowly before dropping its other open hand down towards them only to let out a groan of pain as Izanagi appears before it. The being...The Persona, had flipped in the air upon Yui's call and kicked the Shadow back right in its stomach.

The Shadow lets out a grunt of protest, "I'll crush everything

that bores me...STARTING WITH YOU!" Izanagi jumps out as Yui covers Yosuke as dust and wind flies over them. She watches as her Persona flies around effortlessly despite his armored body. The frog the Shadow rides jumps after him, using both its long arms and the frog's legs to try and crush Izanagi. She instinctively hugs Yosuke as Izanagi flies over them again with the frog flying barely over them.

She barely has time to loosen her grip as more dust and wind hits over her.

The position she is in is dangerous. She has to move Yosuke out of the way...

"Izanagi! Please keep it busy!" she yells as she drapes Yosuke's arm around her shoulder as he lets out a weak groan.

Izanagi glances towards her and nods. He takes a hold of his sword and swings it back before slashing the Shadow away. The Shadow lets out a yell and tries to go forward only to hop back as Izanagi begins an onslaught of slashes towards his enemy. Yui lets out a grunt as she drags Yosuke off towards the side where Teddie stands.

"Over here, here!" The bear helps Yui ease Yosuke down to the floor before turning to watch Izanagi skillfully back the Shadow into a corner. The Persona jabs the Shadow with the tip of his sword while flying around to avoid the other's punches. "Wow Sensei! You really are amazing!" he cries out in awe, "You can handle all that power!"

"Teddie, not the time," she lightly scolds him as she touches Yosuke lightly on the shoulder, "Yosuke. Are you alright? Say something..."

The boy sits on the floor with his hands gripping the tops of his knees as his head is bent down. "No...There's no way. That jerk...He isn't me." He whispers this faintly as Yui glances over to Teddie. "But he is," the bear finally says, "That guy came out from somewhere deep in your heart Yosuke. It's a part of you." The Shadow laughs loudly and Yui clenches her teeth as she feels a sharp jab to her side. Izanagi flies off in air as the Shadow's arm swings and shoves the Persona out of its way as it sneers their direction.

"You put on a pretty good show just pretending to be carefree and happy go luck huh?" They hear as it slowly advances to them, "But you're afraid of being alone!" Yui glances towards Izanagi who flies towards the Shadow at full speed. The sword lets out a sharp sound through the air as it tries to land a hit on the Shadow.

The frog jumps up and Izanagi is left chasing after it again as Yosuke shakes his head, "No! There's no way! It's not me!" Yui stares down at him and she hesitates, alone...

He was scared of being alone...

Her arms quickly retract as her hands fly to her sides as Izanagi is again flung off out of the Shadow's path. She lets out a hiss of pain at the throbbing to her side. "Izanagi careful!" she yells as she looks to Yosuke who grips the

ground and punches it. She has to take care of the Shadow now, as fast as she can, but if what Teddie said is true...

Thinking back at how she could feel pain when Izanagi did, maybe her theory earlier was right! If Yosuke's negative feelings and denying were making the Shadow grow stronger then-

Her thoughts are cut off as Yosuke shoves himself up from the floor and begins to make a run towards the exit. Her head snaps and she runs after him, "Yosuke wait it's not saf-" She stops as a gust of wind flies up as the frog and Shadow land right in front of them. She glares up and opens her mouth to call upon Izanagi.

"Not so fast~!"

Yui barely has time to register the hand that sweeps up in the air and makes contact with Yosuke with a heavy slap.

All she sees in her line of sight is his back flying towards her and her arms open up, trying to catch him. She hears him grunt in pain as they both land hard on the ground. The Shadow laughs at them, "What a pair of eyesores!" Izanagi appears as Yui slowly gets up, her legs shake a bit as she looks up to the Persona in front of her.

The armored being takes hold of his sword and charges at the Shadow who laughs. Izanagi places the sword in front of him horizontally and slams it at the opponent's stomach making it yell out in pain. "Izanagi push him up! Up quickly!" she orders

as she notices the frog it rides on starts to hunch down. It's a matter of seconds that Izanagi and the Shadow are now up in the air, the sword pressed on the Shadow's belly.

There's a spark of electricity forming around the sword as Izanagi continues to press-

"Get out of my sight!"

Yui lets out a scream as a large tornado of green wind is blasted around Izanagi. She can hear the roar of it as if she was being consumed into the gust, her body shakes, and she feels her head grow heavy before collapsing to the floor on her knees. The golf club in her hand falls in a loud clatter onto the floor. "Sensei!" Teddie runs over to her and fusses over her, "Are you okay! What's wrong? Are you hurt?!"

"I'm...Okay..." She weakly lifts her head as she watches Izanagi's form fall down towards the ground as the wind disappears and holds her stomach. She feels...Sick...

Her body lurches a bit and she gulps down whatever threatens to leave her system before reaching down with a shaky hand to hold the golf club back in her grip. Using it as a support she gets up slowly, her knees trembling and she sways a bit until she manages to hold her balance again. The Shadow hangs from above them on a tower of crates and laughs, "How pathetic! Is the little girl sicky wicky now?"

She refrains from speaking as she can feel the odd eyes stare down at Yosuke as the boy continues to stay on the

floor in shock, "I know just how pathetic you are! Ooh! How about I just let you listen to it yourself!"

Teddie and her tense as they hear something above them. It sounds like static. The type of static you hear from the radio as you turn the dial, ***"Hey why don't you go and ask Yosuke for some help?"***

A distorted high-pitched voice of a girl echoes around while another giggles too highly, ***"The Prince of Junes?"***

The two voices snicker in unison as the first girl speaks, ***"Yeah I know. That guy thinks everyone looks up to him because he's the son of the manager. He's such a loser right?"*** Yui cringes at the sound of the girls' laughs. It's too distorted and high-pitched that it resembles the sounds of nails on chalkboard as Yosuke weakly looks up in disbelief. The look on his face gives an opening to his feelings.

Sadness, betrayal, and a small bit of anger. "Yosuke don't listen," Teddie struggles to keep Yosuke calm down, "It's trying to rally you up! It feeds off of your feelings!"

"But he took it the wrong way."

Saki's voice speaks again, her tone of indifference light before switching to a heavy hiss of annoyance, ***"Now that idiot thinks I like him!"***

"Living the boonies bores you doesn't it?!" The Shadow yells as it flies off the tower of crates causing it to wobbly from the

force, "You just asked her out because you just wanted some thrill right?! Thought you could get her huh?! Think again! You were seen as an idiot! Because you are!"

Yosuke's hands cover his ears as he screams out. "No! No! You're wrong!" He shakes his head as the Shadow starts to descend upon them, "It's not true! It's not! It's not me!"

"You're better off dead!"

Something in Yui snaps and she turns, "IZANAGI!"

Teddie lets out a gasp as both her fist and Izanagi's fist make contact with both the Shadow and Yosuke's face at the same time. The force of her punch causes Yosuke to land on the floor with him crying out in pain. His hand flies up and cups his cheek feeling a small bruise starting to form, "Ow! Dude what the hell was that for?!"

The Shadow also flies a good few feet away as Izanagi floats in the air, arms crossed and gold eyes narrowed as he watches the tower fall on the fallen form. His silver-haired companion blinks before down at her own fallen victim and looks to her fist before looking to Yosuke, "Oops. Wrong guy." Teddie gasps again, but this time it goes into a snicker as Yosuke stands up quickly, "The hell you mean the wrong guy?!"

"My target was the jerk," Yui bluntly says as Yosuke touches his bruised cheek, "You liked her...Didn't you? Saki-senpai." Yui watches as the boy tenses, his hand falling from his face

as he stares towards the ground.

"I...Actually I loved her," he finally tells her, "But...I couldn't bring myself to actually believe it. That she...That she saw me as an idiot. I..I wanted, no I tried so desperately to fit in and tried to play it off as cool. 'Pain in the ass' huh...Even I think I am at times. But...If there's one thing I knew well enough was that my feelings for her were real."

He stops and stares as the Shadow hops out from the heaps of crates and jumps towards them, "It's about time you get crushed!" Izanagi lets out a grunt swings his blade across, a flash of lightning slices through the air and hits the Shadow. It screams in pain and falls down, "Pain in the ass!"

"Its getting weaker," Teddie suddenly announced, "Before he was able to dodge all of Sensei's attacks, but it looks like he's beginning to slow down for some reason!" Yui smiles a bit, "...I think I know why." Her grey eyes glances towards Yosuke who stares at her.

"Oh..." He stares at the fallen Shadow, "It...It's linked to me huh. It really is a part of me. Damn...It hurts to face yourself huh?"

Yui gently places a hand on his shoulder, "You're still yourself," she tells him quietly, "No matter what."

"You are so freakin' annoying!" The Shadow struggles to raise up from the ground and tries to strike at Izanagi only to miss.

Yosuke stares and begins to move, his steps leading him close to the raging Shadow as it roars and swings its fists around to try to hit Izanagi. "Well...If I'm going to be honest," his voice growing louder the closer he gets, "All of this is a part of me. I accept that." The Shadow freezes at those words and Yui rushes forward as it lets out a low growl as its heads turns towards Yosuke.

"You little...DAMN YOU TO HELL!"

A gust of green wind heads towards them and Yui quickly grabs Yosuke, forcing him and her to huddle down as the attack hits them. She can feel her body tighten and she keeps a hold onto Yosuke's shirt. The sounds and the force of it make her body heavy, but it isn't as hurtful as the earlier attack...

Her hand grips the club and she swings it, the force departing the green winds in half as she spots Izanagi in the air. His gold eyes stare at her grey and they nod at the same time, "Do it Izanagi! Strike him down!"

The Persona lifts his sword up into the air as lightning begins to appear everywhere around them. The sounds of thunder ring out and light strikes down upon the Shadow. The frog jumps and Yui can see the being on its back jerk left or right as it lets out a scream of pain. Black smoke soon explodes out of its body and sweeps over them.

Yosuke's arms wraps itself around her as another gust of wind, not green, blasts out.

There's a moment of static and soon the Shadow falls to the ground, in the form of Yosuke again. Teddie dashes forward as Yosuke and Yui slowly begin to unfurl from their defensive crouch. The fallen Shadow doesn't move, instead its form flickers oddly in the way static on television appears.

Yui feels Yosuke begins to move forward, "You're a part of me and I'm a part of you." He kneels down towards the Shadow and reaches a hand out, "All of of this is me." The Shadow lifts his head up from the ground and grins. The grin is a mirror of Yosuke's own, relief forms in its gold eyes as it begins to glow in a blue light.

The Shadow's form disappears, shattering, and soon something else begins to form in its place.

Yui can make out the form through the light. The being is about as tall as Izanagi, the red scarf is still around its neck however instead of all black it wears white. Moving her head a bit she notices the face makes out the shape of the frog's smile earlier, the yellow metal in front of the chest and the eyes on top of its head form it. It nods to Yosuke before disappearing.

A blue card spin in the air, identical to Yui's own. "This..." The card vanishes and the light showers over Yosuke, "Is this...I have a..."

"It's yours. Your Persona," Yui finishes for him as she and Teddie walk over to him, "You did it Yosuke..."

"Hey now," Yosuke laughs quietly, "Narukami-chan...Thanks. You were a huge help. I owe you one. Man...So I got a Persona-Whoa.." The boy stops and sways a bit and holds his head, "Oh man...My head..."

"Q-Quick let's get back to the other place," Teddie insists as Yui takes a hold of Yosuke's shoulder and lets him lean on her, "It might not be safe here to rest. Come on."

11. Soaked to the Dream

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

I apologize in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

"Easy, easy, and...Ta-dah! Back where we started!"

Teddie happily announced as Yui and Yosuke fell onto the floor.

"I can't...Feel my shoulders," Yui quietly whines and sighs as she rests on her knees before rubbing her shoulders. Beside her Yosuke lets out a quiet groan and lays on his back, "I can't feel my legs..."

The two teens sighed in unison as Teddie looked at them, "Huh...You both must have used a lot of energy. I feel pretty good though."

"Oh well gee I wonder why," Yosuke quietly grumbled as Yui pushes herself up from the ground, "C'mon Yosuke. Up and at 'em..." The other groans before slowly standing up and glances at Teddie, "Hey..Teddie," he quietly starts to speak,

"You said..I think you said this place is reality for people who enter it right? Or whenever someone enters it just changes."

The bear turns and nods, "Yup. I did mention that." Yui notices the uncomfortable look that passes over Yosuke's face, "...So the shopping district and the store...They just appeared because the ones who died entered this world and it became their reality?"

The boy stops as he notices Teddie stare at him with a puzzled expression and tilts his body to the side, "...Guess I really should try to make my words come together huh?" Yosuke sighs and shakes his head, "Basically all I'm asking is if those places just formed because of the people who entered here."

"Well...I never thought about it much before," Teddie admits as he looks at the two, "But that's probably where they were when the Shadows attacked them."

"So what you're saying is," Yui finally speaks as the two look at her, "Anyone who enters here and goes into the reality they subconscious creates...The Shadows go after them? And they have a Shadow of themselves ready to strike?"

Teddie nods a bit before looking around, "When the fog lifts here," he explains as he turns back to stare at the direction they had just left from, "The Shadows get really violent. I..Always get scared so I just hide when it happens." The bear looks down, shoulders up a bit as he looks troubled, "I sensed people here twice, but they both disappeared after the fog

lifted and I lost them..."

Yui and Yosuke share a look until the boy speaks, "So...Okay, recap. Senpai and Miss Yamano were thrown in here right? And because they couldn't find a way out they wandered around," Yosuke pauses and closes his eyes as he concentrates, "After a while, that Shadow thing comes out at them. The fog here clears, it goes crazy, and it kills them."

Yui shakes her head a bit, "I don't think their Shadows would kill them right out," she suddenly speaks up, "Remember Yosuke...What did your Shadow do?"

Yosuke looks taken back in surprise, "Oh...Oh! It kept making of fun of me right!" His eyes widen as Yui nods, "I think...It didn't kill them straight out," she quietly explains, "It was like you. They wandered off, their Shadow did emerge, but it waited out until the fog cleared and taunted them. As soon as they denied it..."

The other stares down at the floor, "So..If I had been here alone, until the fog cleared," he realizes, "I..."

Teddie nods, "Yeah...You'd be in pretty big trouble Yosuke. It's a good thing me and Sensei were here."

Yosuke suddenly lets out a quiet scoff, "That doesn't make me feel any better," he mutters as his hands form into fists, "Senpai and that announcer...They were here alone with no one..."

Silence falls on them as Yui glances towards Teddie who looks back to her. The bear stares at her before walking over to the headphones wearing teen and lightly pats him on the arm. "Yosuke," he quickly speaks up, "They disappeared when the fog lifted. Before then they were safe, no Shadows attacked them. I think the Shadows that attacked us earlier were just keeping an eye on us. They might see people in here as enemies no matter what."

Yui watches as the bear nods, "It's going to be dangerous, but we might be able to fight them! We can save other people!"

That snaps Yosuke out of his state and he immediately stares at the two of them, "A-Are you saying...There's a chance! We can save people who get thrown in here before they disappear!? A- And we can save them like how you saved me?"

"That's the case," the silver-haired girl nods, "We won't let anyone else disappear...Just like them. We'll keep people safe." Yosuke nods eagerly, his eyes are determined behind his glasses, "Yeah...And we still need to catch the one who's throwing people in here...They have to stop."

He gives her one last nod, "Yeah...That sounds right...I understand it now." The two smile to each other before Teddie raises a hand, "Um..I..I have something to say," he timidly tells them, "If...If Shadows are born from humans, what was Teddie born from?"

Yosuke makes a choking sound as he hears Teddie, "W-Whoa wait, you...Teddie you got no idea where you came from? How do you think we'd know?"

"When a man and a woman love each other very much-"

Yosuke chokes louder and coughs, "Narukami-chan!"

"What?" she blinks innocently before looking at Teddie, "All jokes aside, Teddie we really can't give you the answer you want...I'm sorry." Teddie shakes his head, "No...It's okay. To be honest I don't know anything about myself," the bear explains as he kicks the ground, "I just know this world and...That's it. Nothing else..."

"Oh man..No wonder we couldn't get an answer from you," Yosuke nervously laughs, "Ah...Sorry Teddie."

"Will...Will you guys at least come back here?"

"Of course we are," Yui replies, "We made a promise to you. To help you...We have no choice in the matter either since the culprit is still a threat." Teddie looks up at her, his eyes wide again and glassy, "So...Y-You're really going to keep your promise?"

"Well duh," Yosuke lightly chuckles, "I mean...You did say you weren't going to let us out if we didn't. Remember? Sorta put us at gun point on that Teddie." The bear grins and laughs a bit, "Oh yeah...I did huh!" He keeps laughing and Yui reaches out to pat him on the head lightly, "So always expect to see

us...Okay?"

Teddie nods before stopping, "Oh! By the way," he quickly adds, "If you do come back, use the same way you did when you came here the first and second time. I'll be waiting right here and it's also easier that way." The bear suddenly makes a scowl, "If you try anywhere else, yeah it might work, but it's bad. You might end up somewhere else...I won't be able to find you...And you'll be doooooomed~"

The blue bear pause before letting out a quiet roar, "Got it!? I don't want to sniff you out if you get lost somewhere! Promise me that!" Yui snickers as Yosuke laughs loudly, "Okay we got it," he assures Teddie who smiles at the two of them, "Well since we're all done here...Think you can show us out?"

Teddie flashes a tooth grin before skipping off, "Your wish is my command!" he happily cheers as he taps his foot a few times, "One exit...On the house!" The same stack of television sets appear before them in smoke. "Yes, thank goodness," Yosuke breaths as he and Yui step forward, "Okay we should check to see if there's anyone on the other side first just in cas-"

"Out out you go! Go go go! Squishhhh!"

Yui lets out a small yelp as she feels Teddie shove at her lower back making her hit her forehead on the corner of a TV while Yosuke nearly misses the screen, "W-Whoa hey hold up!" Yosuke protests as he tries to right himself to look at Teddie, only to get one arm stuck through the TV in front of

him, "Argh! H-Hey! Stop it Teddie! Hold on a sec-WHOA!"

Yui stumbles through the screen right after Yosuke is pulled in, her legs jerking in different directions as they begin to go up.

"Bye guys!" Teddie's voice echoes from the other side and she swears he's grinning as she and Yosuke let out yells of surprise when they fell.

Again, white and black circles of light flash by her eyes and she squints her eyes as she feels her body levitating up towards the top. She manages to brace herself enough to close her eyes and start to reach out towards the light at the very end-

Her leg extends out from the screen first and soon her entire body gets shoved out of the TV screen, avoiding the possible chance of her face meeting the tiled floor of Junes. Yosuke soon emerges behind her, stumbling over his feet and stopping just in time before tripping over air to the floor. Both of them turn to stare at the screen.

It shines brightly for a moment before turning back to its blank black screen with their reflections on the surface.

"It...We managed to get out easier this time," Yosuke breaths as they both turn away, "Man...Going in or out makes no difference at all. I feel ready to hurl..."

Yui nods before looking in front of them, "Ah..Chie-san!"

"Ah...N-Narukami-chan, Y-Yosuke," the girl stares up towards them. Her brown eyes were wide and red, her mouth quivers and she opens her mouth, "Y-You guys came baaaack! W-Wahhhh! AHHH!"

"W-Whoa Chie," Yosuke blinks in surprise as Chie starts to cry, "W-What's with the face?"

"I-I thought you guys weren't coming back!" She grabs hold of something tucked behind her before throwing it at full force. Yosuke lets out a painful grunt as it comes onto contact with his stomach hard, "Ow! T-That hurt!"

"The nerve of you guys!" she points to Yosuke and looks to Yui, "You're both morons! I can't believe this! You both suck! Do you have no idea what I've done for the past hour?! W-When the rope got cut off I...I didn't know..W-What to do and I thought you weren't coming back! W-Why'd you do that! I...I was so...W-worried."

The short-haired sniffles and raises her arm to wipe away her tears as she struggles to swallow back her cries, "I was scared stiff damnit!" She screams again, "I hate you both! Don't ever pull a stunt like that again!"

Yui weakly nods, "We...We won't pull anything like that again," she quietly agrees as Chie stomps her foot, "I'm going home! I still hate you two!"

The short-haired girl wipes her tears with the sleeve of her jacket before running on ahead. Yosuke stares at the rope in

his hand before sighing, "Oh man...She was really worried. I think...We might have went too far. It's sorta our fault. Let's apologize to her tomorrow." Yui nods, "Yeah that would be best. For now, we should go home and rest huh?"

He takes the glasses off his face and folds them up before putting them into the pocket of his jacket before running a hand through his hair. "I think...I'll be able to sleep a bit better tonight," he tells her with a smile.

"Well, I'll see you in the morning...Yui-chan."

She blinks in surprise at the sudden change of him addressing her before nodding, "Yeah...Rest easy Yosuke-kun." The boy grins before turning to leave, his hands behind his back as she starts to make her way towards the opposite direction.

She's barely past the produce section until she catches sight of the signs showing a good discount off at the meat section. Her hand digs into her pocket for her wallet and she opens it. There are a few paper bills nestled safely inside.

Perhaps...She's barely done processing the idea until she's already walking in a new direction...

The rain fell unto her umbrella as she carefully held the bag containing a few packages of meat in her other hand. The water splashes up as she tries to navigate her way through the flood plain towards home. She pauses at the sight of a rather large puddle in front of her and groans.

She raises a leg up and tries to stretch it towards the dry side only to retract it back.

Her choices are to either walk through it or jump over...

Even if she was tall, her long legs weren't long enough to try to jump. Yui lifts one foot and tries to walk tip toe on the water. She can feel water soak into her shoes and she starts to run. Splashes of water hit the thick black fabric around her legs and she cringes as she feels her toes completely wet.

The silver haired teenager sighs and looks around for a place for her to rest, her eyes stop over at a gazebo up ahead.

It would provide shelter, but it wasn't just the gazebo that caught her attention. Sitting on one of the benches under it sat a lone girl in a pink kimono. A red parasol rested to her side and her long black hair curtained her face as stared at her hands neatly folded onto her lap.

"Yukiko-san?"

The girl looks up at Yui, "Oh...Narukami-chan, hi." Yui flinched as a gust of wind blows and makes a mad dash across towards the gazebo. Immediately the silver-haired girl closes her umbrella and nearly drops her bag as she shivers.

"It's so cold!" she exclaims as Yukiko politely smiles up at her and nods, "Yes...It looks like you're soaked to the bone." Yui nods and sits down next to the raven haired girl, "Yeah...The puddles back in the city were nothing like this."

She takes a look at her shoes and frowns. Her shoes and lower parts of her thigh highs are really soaked...She would have to put them by the heater as soon as possible or take off her leg covers to avoid wetting them any further. Yukiko laughs quietly, "Well, it grows on you."

Yui sighs and nods, glancing towards her classmate, "Why are you dressed like that?"

"Hm? Oh this?" Yukiko gestures down and smiles a bit, "Is it a surprise? My parents sent me out on an errand." There's a pause, "Are you...Getting used to things here? In town and school? I'm sorry for not being around so often."

She shakes her head, "Oh no don't feel bad," Yui assures her, "I've actually gotten used to Inaba."

Yukiko's smile widens, "That's good to hear...Though..It must be hard. Moving to a place you know nothing about. I've never been out of Inaba, so I don't know what's it like to be the new kid in school."

"My Mother told me a few things," Yui attempted to share with the other girl, save for Chie and Yosuke...Yukiko was one of the few students who did attempt to try to talk to her on her first day here. That and Yui hadn't seen the other since her first day.

"She's from here. This is her hometown," she continues, "She didn't share a lot, but she did mention how the town is very laid back and even with the lack of things to do, it's a nice

place to live." Her companion nods, "Well she's right...Oh! Are you getting along with Chie?"

Yui nodded, "I am. Along with Yosuke-kun. You're friend is a real handful." Yukiko's smile grows, her face glowing as she nods, "Uh huh. That's her alright," she happily agrees, "Chie's so supportive you know. It's always her who gave me that little extra push I needed..."

She giggles quietly, "We had home room together last year and I still remember how we'd cut class sometimes. It was...Fun." Yukiko pauses a moment, "Oh! I should get going. I need to make tomorrow's arrangements with our head chef," she quickly tells Yui.

Pushing up from the bench Yukiko carefully dusts off the back of her kimono and takes hold of the handle of her red parasol, "Our inn can't function without me right now," she adds as she begins to slowly open it, "I'll...See you in school then Narukami-chan." The girl bows to Yui before leaving the gazebo, Yui watches as the girl's steps thread lightly over the water and her hold on the parasol with both her hands were angled to avoid any drops of water to fall on her.

She waits until the other is gone from her sight before looking at her still wet legs, "...I should just run."

Retrieving her umbrella and the bag before making a mad dash home.

Her feet kick up more water and she can feel it brush against

her covered legs, but she doesn't stop. Only when she's inside the Dojima household does she stop. Panting she drops both items in her hands, struggling to kick off her shoes.

Her fingers pry off the black thigh highs off her legs and she stares at them for a moment.

Her eyes widen as she noticed a small tear in the back of one of them, probably from when she was attacked by the Shadows. Her fingers grip the fabric and she mutters curses towards Yosuke's Shadow. It had to be when that tornado like attack hit her.

"I'm hurting the Persona," she announces quietly to herself as she drags herself inside, "It owes me a new pair..."

Nanako stares at Yui as she watches her older cousin stare down a thick book, "...What's that?"

"Hm? Oh cookbook," she informs the little girl as they sit at the table, two mugs are placed in front of both girls. For Yui it's a glass of warm tea while Nanako drank her milk as she looked at the book, "...What are you going to make tonight?" she asked quietly, "Dad's late again and..."

"Well, maybe we can try making some curry," Yui quickly replies as she flips a few pages before turning the book around to show her cousin, "Have you had any before?" Nanako shrugs a bit, "Not much..."

There is a pause and Yui quietly turns the book back over, hiding her sigh as she loudly rustled the pages. The seat her uncle would occupy during the evenings was empty again.

Nanako looks towards the television as the chime for the evening news comes up. Again the same anchor man appears.

"Our next story is an update in our ongoing report on the bizarre murders occurring in Inaba. At around seven A.M., local high school student Saki Konishi was found dead-"

Yui freezes and turns the page over sharp until she's staring at the dessert section. She wonders if Yosuke is watching the news right now...Probably...Closing her eyes and taking a deep breath her hands close the book and places it down onto the table as she tries to listen.

"-Police are under the assumption that this may be a serial murder case related to the death of Mayumi Yamano. Upon investigating and carefully analyzing the crime scene, Ms. Konishi's time of death was around one o'clock A.M. last night. The body went unnoticed until this morning due to the heavy fog blanketing the area."

"..Another incident..." Yui turns her head towards Nanako who stares at the TV screen with a sad expression on her face
"...Dad won't be coming home tonight."

"I'll be here with you." The words fall right out of Yui's mouth before she had time to realize just what she said. Nanako

turns her head and faces her, her eyes blink twice before she weakly shakes her head, "I'll be okay...I'm used to it."

"...I can tell," Yui quietly agrees as she studies Nanako. Only seven years old and her younger cousin was already reliable...

Her heart clenches a bit as she stares at her younger cousin. Where was she when she had been seven years old? The same place as Nanako, trying to take care of things all by herself. She isn't sure whether to be angry at the situation or be sad...

"-Amagi Inn-" Her head snaps as an image of a simple inn appears on screen. The voice is that of the report that had done the interview with Saki last night...

"After the incident with Ms. Yamano, the manager has stepped aside, leaving her daughter Yukiko to fill her shoes." The camera turns and focuses on Yukiko, wearing the same pink kimono Yui had seen her wear earlier, "In other words, a manager who's still in high school...Now that has a nice ring to it. Let's see if we can interview her..Excuse me miss!"

Yukiko is startled at the reporter's sudden yell and turns, her face confused before her mouth is drawn into a tight line and her brows furrow down, "Were..Were you speaking to me?" Her voice waivers and she stares at the microphone that's shoved right into her face.

"We've heard you're the new manager. Is it true you're still in

high school?"

Her face relaxes suddenly, her mouth drawn into a shy smile and she shakes her head, "Oh, well...I'm only filling in temporarily." The reporter whistles, he's obviously impressed and he continues on.

"Someday though...Wow! Aside from that you look gorgeous in that kimono. You must have a lot of male visitors." Yui grips the cup of her tea and just squeezes. The man seemed to lack a lot of professionalism...First Saki, then with Yukiko. Why hadn't the station fired him?

The raven-haired teenager on the screen looks completely annoyed now and shakes her head, "Um..No?"

"This is boring," Nanako announced and stares at the television with equal annoyance like Yukiko. Yui reaches out for the remote and lowers the volume, the reporter still harassing Yukiko who's slowly looking more and more angered. It's a mystery to her how a reporter like that hadn't been punched in the jaw yet...

"Um...C-Can we cook the curry now?" Nanako questioned, "I wanna do something then listen to that." Yui nods and stands up, "Agreed. Think you can do the rice?" Nanako nodded eagerly and stood up as well, "Uh huh! I can do that!" The girl's smile is a relief to see as she hurries off to the kitchen as Yui stares back at the TV. The channel now displays the normal anchor man who is patting his forehead with a handkerchief.

She smiles a bit in amusement before leaving to help Nanako.

Stretching Yui collapsed on her futon as a yawn came out of her mouth. After tucking Nanako into bed she went straight to her room to complete her homework. Her little adventure today took a good amount of her energy and she was a bit slower on completing the homework.

Lying on her back she reached her hand up, staring at the palm.

Just hours ago she had summoned a being, a Persona, that fought against monsters known as Shadows...Had someone told her this before yesterday, she would laugh and say it would be a horrible science fiction movie. Yet it came true and the image of the blue card reappeared in her mind.

"...Izanagi." The name is familiar to her ears, but she can't recall it well. Her arm falls to the side with a soft thud as her eyes begin to drift close, it had been a very long day.

Saki's death...

The Shadows...

The TV World...

The culprit...

Personas...

The very thought that the culprit was still around sent a shudder through her. They needed to get them. They needed to be stopped, killing people by throwing them into the television and making them face themselves...Alone...

"No one deserves to be alone," she whispers as her eyes begin to shut themselves closed. When she fell asleep was not clear to her, she only felt grateful for the soft cushioning of her futon under her back as she breathed quietly. Coming to, she notes that she isn't waking up in her room.

It's just an open space. Wide and clear with her lying right on her back on the cold floor. The silver-haired girl sits up and glances around curiously, the floor is a dull gold color and she can make out a figure standing away from her. The sight makes her eyes go wide in surprise.

The armor and helmet...The sword, "Izanagi?" The Persona turns around and glances to her, nodding. She can see a faint twinkle in his gold eyes as he floated towards her. He stops and for some odd reason Yui can tell he is smiling down at her, "...Where am I?"

"Your head of course."

Her eyes widen more and her mouth drops a bit as a deep voice resonates from Izanagi's helmet. It isn't distorted as it was in the last few encounters and she nearly falls back on the floor to make sure that she heard right. Wasn't sleeping the time where worries disappeared?

No.

It wasn't.

12. Alarm False?

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

I apologize in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

"You look ready to faint Yui."

The Persona's voice makes her flinch and she raises her hand to cover her face. "...I'm going crazy."

"I wouldn't think that."

Lifting her head she watches as Izanagi regards their surroundings, "I think this is all just new to you...As it is for me. We are after all the same person." This makes her quirk an eyebrow up, "You mean to say the 'Thou art I and I art Thou' I kept hearing you say?"

"Ah yes. I am after all, you, and you are me...Reflections upon each other or rather close to them." Yui sighs a bit before resting her arms back as she angles herself to keep her eyes on him. Up close she can study Izanagi better. The metal of his armor is black and white. The helmet mostly made of

white with odd white streamers attach to it that move as he floats around.

He wears a black duster like coat over his body. The collar is pulled up fully and she muses a bit that it resembles how she keeps her collar up when she wears her school uniform. The bottom part is open revealing his legs, "...Aren't those hard to walk in?"

Izanagi looks at her before looking down.

His 'shoes' resembled a bit of what one would see as knee-length boots, but the very ends were awkwardly shaped like stilts.

The Persona shrugs and floats back to her, "I do not walk," he informs her, "I float if you had not noticed."

"It's hard not to," she replied back as he sets his sword on the floor before folding his legs Indian style. His body continues to stay floating up above the floor as he stares at her. "So...Why is it that we're able to talk. Just because we're in my head?" Izanagi nods, "In a way, that and it's because I wish to speak to you..."

Yui tilts her head to the side as she watches Izanagi close his eyes before opening them. The gold in them dims as he sighs quietly, "This journey you are about to embark. It will be hard," he begins to intertwine his fingers together as he speaks, "I wish to know...Do you deserve to follow down the path towards truth?" The question makes Yui smile a bit in

amusement, "You've asked or rather you're been implying that I should."

"But do you want to pursue it," Izanagi corrects her, "One can press an idea. Pushing words towards another until they agree. That's how lies are formed. They become words that form from hidden intentions that slip under one's detention like wind. A suggestion that others soon take into their own and pursue, believing it is the truth. What I ask from you an assured answer. For all you know, my repetition of speaking of truth...Could be a lie."

The two sit in silence, grey staring up at gold.

"You know as well as I do," Yui's voice echoes throughout the space, "That I wish to, want to, and will pursue after the truth. After all, we're each other right? My Persona."

Izanagi chuckles a bit and releases his fingers from each other, arms crossed.

"Bravo...I couldn't think of any other answer from you," he replies in a light tone before looking around them. Unfolding his legs Yui watches her Persona float around the empty space. "It's a rather nice open space...Your inner self."

She glances around as well, looking down on the floor, her reflection dimly peering up at her.

"You have nothing to hide," Izanagi continues on as he floats, "You don't have anything holding you back nor do you feel like

you need to hide something. It's nice...And the color gold." The armored being stops back in front of her and regards the dull ground, "It's a bit dull...Perhaps because you are still getting used to yourself. But gold-

"Symbolizes a balance of life right?" Yui finishes for him, "It means value and wisdom as well. I'm pretty sure you know I've studied up on symbolism right? You are me-

"And I am you," Izanagi nods, his gold eyes lit with amusement, "I must say...I'm quite proud that you are my partner Yui."

"And I'm happy to learn that you are my partner too...Izanagi," Yui smiles as the other nods. He pauses a moment and looks up, "Ah...It seems it is time for us to part. Be well."

No sooner did the words come out did Yui feel her eyes begin to droop as something faint rings out from somewhere. Izanagi reaches a hand out and pats her lightly on the head. The gesture is enough to make her feel secure and her eyes finally close as her body begins to grow heavy.

Yui yawned as she walked to the school, the back of her hand resting over her mouth as her other hand held her school bag. She had slept surprisingly well, but seemed drained. Perhaps because of her time in her 'dream' with Izanagi.

It felt like she had been up all night...

Her alarm had been the reason for Izanagi and her departure in her dreams. The morning wasn't all that eventful after she got out of bed. She had to find a pair of thigh highs from her closet to replace the still wet and torn ones that hung limply on the top of her chair by the desk. Having only owned three pairs, the one she used was not...School appropriate for that matter.

It was black just like her old ones, but this one also had white cats chasing a ball of pink yarn on the sides which made her blush.

Why they were in her possession you wonder?

They had cats on them and cats were cute. Enough said.

The only positive about that and the rest of that morning was when Nanako saw Yui making her bento that day with cute little octopus sausages and her onigiri shaped into penguins and the thigh highs. Her reaction was about the most excited and cutest Yui had seen. The girl's face had broken out into a huge smile and she giggles happily at the sight.

It was a bit of a boost to her pride.

Who could blame the little girl though for reacting as she did?

They were all cute...

The silver-haired girl regarded her bag for a moment and smirked, confidence growing a bit as she remembered what

else she carried in her bag.

"Hey! Yui-chan!" A bright orange bike stopped at her side, "Yo." Yosuke grinned to her as Yui nodded, "Good morning Yosuke-kun."

He laughs a bit, "What do you know? We're getting on the right pathway as friends!" The boy stops, his face suddenly serious. "I...Got to thinking," he tells her, "About what happened yesterday and all...We got those powers for a reason. We're the only ones who could solve this case. Well...More like you got it first, you managed to go inside and gets yours first."

Again he laughs nervously, "Wow, first thing in the morning and I'm already talking all business huh?" The boy grins before extending his hand out to her, "But really, with what was going on yesterday...I feel, as long as you're with me, cracking this case and finding the culprit will actually succeed ya know? Let's do our best."

Yui stares at the hand before reaching over and shaking it, "Yeah. I feel the same way."

They both look at each other and give a smile.

The light in Yosuke's eyes are back and she can see the boy she's met a few days ago before the death of Saki-senpai. Yosuke is willing to move forward, putting all his trust to her and wanting to bring justice against the criminal in charge of harming both Saki-senpai and Miss Yamano. Yui releases

hold of his hand before freezing as something rings out in her head. It's like a a shattering of glass right by her ear as something faintly forms in front of her eyes.

It's like double vision...

She can still see Yosuke's smile, but now something forms in front of his face in a faint haze of blue light. A card she knows very well from yesterday appears. It is the same kind she used to summon Izanagi. The black and white face on the blue card stares at her before glowing, flipping over to the front as an image appears.

There is a Roman numeral symbol for the number one placed at the bottom of the surface as a pair of eyes on the card stare back at her. She makes out a sign of a flame burning in front of the eyes as well as hands seeming to hold it up.

THOU ART I

AND I AM THOU

THOU HAS ESTABLISHED A NEW BOND

OF THE MAGICIAN ARCANA

Hearing Izanagi's voice echo in her mind makes her react and she nearly flings her hand away from Yosuke's who stares at her in confusion. "Uh...You okay dude?" he asked as Yui stares at her hand and glances around. Her vision had returned to normal after Izanagi's voice vanished from her

head. Her head snaps to Yosuke who keeps giving her a look which could translate to 'Dude you're being weird' before shaking her head.

"Oh yeah I'm fine," she laughs a bit as she looks at him, "Oh...By the way..." Yosuke raises an eyebrow before yelping as Yui pinches him on the upper arm, "The hell!?"

"That's for ruining my thigh highs yesterday," she huffs as he drops his mouth open, "Hey! It's not my fault! Blame Jiraiya damnit!"

"...Jiraiya?"

Yosuke makes a quiet sound, "Oh yeah...I guess you wouldn't know. Yeah Jiraiya, that the name of my Persona," he explains, "Came into my dream last night and just introduced himself to me. He was pretty guilty about hitting you and Izanagi hard with his attack. If anything, he's to blame not me for ruining your stuff."

"Ah I see...Funny, Izanagi and I talked about stuff in my dream too," Yui added as she tucked a strand of her hair behind her ear, "Was your dream in a wide space? Big, open, and gold sorta?" The boy gives her a blank expression, "Huh? No. Mine was like in a huge meadow sorta thing. Like long path running through it and there was this weird well thing too somewhere off the sides. Yours was just an open space in gold?"

"More of it just being empty," Yui informs him, "The only color

was the floor which was gold...It might be different since our Persona represent ourselves." Yosuke nods in agreement before looking at his watch, "Oh man crap! We're almost late again! H-Hop on!"

Yui doesn't add anything else and hurries around him to settle behind him, but stops to give him a light pinch on the arm again, "You still owe me a new pair." Yosuke narrows his eyes before pushing off, "Hey! It was not my fault it's Jiraiya's!"

"Thou art I, I art thou. You're both to blame Yosuke-kun."

"Oh for the...Okay when you put it that way alright maybe it sorta is."

The morning at school went by quickly. King Moron's lectures were short and the history lesson that followed were too easy for Yui who already knew that B.C. meant 'before Christ' and chose that time to send notes back and forth between her and Yosuke.

The boy seemed a bit too eager about this, but she made no protest to stop him as she really didn't want to listen again to this chapter of the book. For some reason, Chie didn't look or speak to her or Yosuke. Was she still mad?

The short-haired girl had given them a look when they came in together, but ignored them. She had been stuck texting on her phone or opening and re-closing it during the past few hours.

By the time lunchtime rolled around Chie had bolted out the door before Yui could say anything. Yosuke was also concerned as he leaned and poked her on the shoulder, "You think she's still pissed?"

"I wouldn't be surprised if that were the case," Yui points out, "We were inside for a long time..." She leans over the side to slip her bag out from under the desk, opening it to show two bento boxes. One black which was her own and the other green. Setting them down on the desk she sighs, "And I made her this too."

Yosuke shrugs before looking up to see Chie reenter the room. Her face is pale and her mouth is open slightly as she lets out a quiet gasps of air as she slowly makes her way to them. Beside her Yosuke straightens up and he quickly holds up a hand to Chie as she stands in front of them.

"Okay before you possibly unleash some angry kung fu move," he quickly objects to her as she looks around the room, "We're really sorry we worried you-

"I don't care about that. Is Yukiko still no here?"

Yui and Yosuke turn to each other before shaking their head. Yosuke shrugs at this point, "I haven't seen her today at all."

Chie's eyes widen and Yui can see her breathing halt in one second as her mouth turns down into a frown, "W-What could I do?" Her voice raises higher than it should as she begins to nervously laugh, "I-I mean...Do...Do you think that stuff you

were talking about for real? About how people showing up on the Midnight Channel is related to that other world? I-It can't be right. Please tell me you're joking."

Chie is shaking as she struggles to keep herself in check. The laugh stopped and she's glancing at them both, her eyes darting from Yui to Yosuke and back as her lips twitch down.

"I..I watched it yesterday and..I think I saw Yukiko."

Yui's eyes widen as Yosuke's jaw drops, "Y-You sure it was her? You positive?" he quickly asked in hopes to calm Chie down as gulps a bit, "Yes it was her. S-She was wearing this pink kimono I always saw her wear at work and she wore it on that one interview," Chie explained as she looks to Yui, "I got worried and I emailed her last night. She didn't answer back! And I've been trying to reach her today and nothing. She always answers her phone!"

"Chie," Yosuke whispers and makes a hand move for her to lower her voice, "We get it. Did...Did you try everthing to reach her?"

"If she appeared on the Midnight Channel there might be a chance she's in there," Yui quietly adds, "Considering how that announcer and Saki-senpai appeared and soon disappeared, there might be a chance Yukiko might have been thrown inside as well..."

"Wait are...Are you sayin' Yukiko might have been thrown in there?!"

"Calm down," Yosuke hisses as he looks around, "We're only saying. We can't be for sure yet. Try calling her again."

"R-Right," Chie stuttered as she fumbled over the buttons of her phone, "C'mon Yukiko pick up...Pick up..." After a few minutes Chie snapped it closed and looked at them, "She's not picking up. It went to voicemail! Oh man...S-She's not-"

"Try another phone call," Yui quickly told her, "Maybe...A home phone?"

"O-Oh yeah," Chie frantically pushes buttons down, "S-She might be still helping at the inn. T-That's why she's not answering her phone." The short-haired girl swallows and presses her phone against her ear while tapping her foot. Yui and Yosuke stay quiet as their faces mirror worry the longer the Chie stays quiet.

"H-Hello!" Chie's voice raises up again and Yui and Yosuke jump, Yui pushing her chair back a bit from force as they watch Chie carefully, "Y-Yukiko? O-Oh! Oh you're there! Oh...Uh-huh...Y-Yeah I see...I-It's okay it's nothing. Just...I'll talk to you again later okay? Bye."

Pocketing her phone Chie lets out a huge sigh, "Oh she was over at the inn!" she happily cheers, "She said there was this huge group reservation and she had to help out. Oh man..N-Now that I think about it, this happened before too. At least once a year." Chie's face returns back to it's normal color, her cheeks are a bit pink as she smiles although her expression of joy turns to one of anger as she glares at them.

"Sheesh you two! What was the point scarin' me like that! She was totally fine! Both you saying she was in there, hmph!"

"Good to see you're better now," Yui lightly grins as she sits back at her desk as Yosuke sighed, "Well excuse us, but we had a reason to think that. We thought people who showed up on the Midnight Channel was because they were already over in that world. It would make some sense right? People who up on TV because they're inside the TV..."

Yui leans on her hand a bit as he continues, "If Yukiko-san's still here...We might wanna check out what's going on later. After school let's meet up again at Junes." Chie nods, "Right. We've been meeting up there a lot huh..."

"That's true, oh!" Yui quickly picks up the green bento on her desk, "Here. For you as an apology for yesterday."

"Huh? For me?" Chie took the bento, opening it before letting out a gasp, "Oh holy meat! This is this all beef steak! N-Narukami-chan did you cook this for me?" Yui nods, "Uh-huh. It's an apology for yesterday...Is it too much?" Chie shook her head as she stares at the lunch, "Too much? It's not! It's just right. Oh wow this is just...This is so nice."

Yosuke lightly scoffed and crosses his arms, "Hey what about me?"

Chie stuck her tongue out as she sat herself down in a chair and smirked, "None for you~"

"You still owe me thigh highs," was all Yui said as Yosuke throws her a glare, "For the last time it was not me!"

13. Before Midnight's Showing Again

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

I'm on another roll whoa! This chapter's got a few more interactions that occur a bit much earlier than in the anime and game.

I apologize in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

Yui waited by the stairs as she waited for Chie and Yosuke to leave.

The two had been caught by King Moron, for Chie caught with her cell phone still a bit on edge from earlier and Yosuke for sleeping through the lesson. The two were getting a major scolding Yui had taken her time to just wander around the school, dropping by the office on the way back to the main entrance to pick up her new skirt.

It was obviously a relief to her now that she didn't need to be self-consciously tugging at the end of her current one. Her height didn't help at all with how it appeared shorter than it

should appear. "Excuse me..."

"Hm?" Yui glanced to see a small girl holding a rolled up poster in her arms, "I um...The board..." Yui turned and quickly backed off as she noticed she was blocking the large billboard that held up flyers and posters for the clubs slowly opening, "Oh it's okay sorry," she apologized before stepping a bit further away for the girl. The girl nodded, "It's...O-Okay..."

The silver-haired girl watched as the girl began to unfurl the poster while standing on her tip toes to hold it up. Yui watched as the girl struggled, trying to hold up the top edges with her fingers. "...Let me help."

"Oh no it's okay!"

Yui just gives the other a small smile before holding it up, "This good?" The girl looks down nervously and nods as Yui quickly takes one of the tacks from the board and pins it firmly up. The words **YASOGAMI SYMPHONIC BAND** are bolded brightly against a yellow background with an outline of a saxophone with musical notes flowing out. "It looks good," Yui complimented the girl who just nods while still looking down, "T-T...Thank you for helping," she quickly tells her with a bow before hurrying off.

Yui stares after her before turning her attention towards the billboard. Her eyes fall on two large posters that are bigger than any others on the board.

One is purely black and white. An image of a basketball player dribbling on the surface with words **COME ON! JOIN THE BASKETBALL CLUB!** scrawled near the left side of the poster.

The other is orange and yellow save for a soccer player that's positioned as if he's going to stop a ball from going into the goal. Like the Basketball Club's poster, the soccer poster has dark bold letters that are printed as **SOCCER CLUB IS CURRENTLY RECRUITING.**

She stares between the two curiously before looking at the other posters again, it seemed only these two posters were the only ones currently up indicating sports clubs.

"Oh hey! Transfer girl!"

A familiar voice calls out to her and she turns to see a very familiar pair of students heading towards her. The boy with blue hair grins at her, "Hey what's up? Looking at clubs to join?"

"Not particularly," Yui answered as she nodded to them both.

The boy in the gym uniform regards her with a short nod, turning his head away. It seemed he wasn't interested in her as his friend continues to talk, "You should consider it! We got a ton of stuff," he continued, "Though we don't have a lot of girl sports teams...I mean we got tennis, but they're all booked out."

"Oh really? That's a bit of a disappointment," Yui sighs a bit, "Though...What about um...Basketball or soccer?" She should try to make conversation right? They did help her out after all...

The blue haired boy shakes his head, "Nah. It's only for guys. Though the team manager position's open for both of 'em. Right?" His friend grunts and shrugs, "Oh yeah...Though it's a bit of a pain. The guy's on the team keep askin' for a girl...Sheesh."

"Yo!" Yui jumps a bit as an arm swings around her shoulder and almost makes her fall.

Chie gives her a grin and winks, "Oh did I surprise you Narukami-chan? Come on let's go!" The short-haired girl regards the two boys in front of her and grins, "Sorry, but I'm gonna have to take her away from this conversation. We got plans."

The blue haired boy just nods immediately, "Y-Yeah sure! It's cool!" His friend grins a bit, but doesn't say anything as Chie begins to tug Yui away. "See ya," she quickly tells them before letting Chie lead her out. She spots Yosuke hurrying after them, "Sheesh! Can't you wait Chie?! Oh hey you two."

Yui looks back to see Yosuke wave to them before dashing after the two, "Again sheesh!" he yells to Chie as they begin to leave the building, "Couldn't you have waited until I was out the room too?"

"Yeah, but you'd take too long and c'mon we had to leave before King Moron dragged us back in for a longer lecture," Chie pointed out as they began to walk before looking to Yui, "Anyway, I didn't know you knew Daisuke and Kou."

"...Who?" Chie smiled a bit, "The two guys earlier," she explained, "They're pretty cool and all, though I think Kou's a bit weird. He makes these weird faces at me and stutters sometimes. They're both run the Soccer and Basketball club. That's why they were hanging around close by the board. They're trying to get more people to join."

Beside her Yui can hear Yosuke snicker and she looks at him curiously before he shakes his head.

When they came into the Junes electronic section, they were all surprised. From being there the last two days, the section was usually empty.

Today it was crowded.

Couples and families came up and examined the few television sets and the three teenagers awkwardly stood in front of the large flat screen that connected them to the world on the other side.

Chie glanced nervously as Yosuke paced back and forth as he tried to see if any customers would leave only to groan as more people came. "Oh man, its crowded today huh?" Chie commented as she stood by Yui, "How are we gonna get

inside without freaking out anyone?"

Yosuke walked over, standing by Yui's other side before glancing around nervously, "Well if we can't go in...We might need to just talk through to Teddie."

Chie raises an eyebrow before Yui explains, "That bear guy from last time. His name is Teddie."

"...Like a teddy bear?" Chie snickers a bit, "That's super original huh?" Yosuke frowns and turns around so his back faces Yui, "Try to grab his attention," he instructs Yui as Chie turns around as well to cover Yui's other side, "Maybe he'll figure it out that we wanna talk to him."

Yui nods before slowly pushing her right hand through the screen.

She waves her hand a bit on the other side, feeling nothing until-

Her fingers are held down tightly by something. It's like teeth! She bites her tongue and quickly pulls her hand out of the screen startling Yosuke and Chie. "Dude! What's wrong?!" Chie hisses at him, "Not so loud you idi-"

She gasps as she looks at Yui's hand.

The silver-haired teenager stares at it as well and swallows back her own gasp. Along the ridges of between where her knuckles and middle joints of her finger, are deep indents of

teeth marks. Her hand throbs and she shakes her hand and blows on it as Chie stutters.

"A-Are you okay?"

"Yeah...Fine," Yui quietly replies as she stares at her hand, "...I hope I don't need a rabies shot..." Chie glares towards the screen as Teddie's voice is heard from beyond.

"Ooh, ooh!" They hear him happily speak, "Is this a game?" Yosuke glances around before looking towards the screen, "It's not a game Teddie. Hey, can you sense anyone over there now?" he whispers.

"Who's 'anyone?'" Teddie asked in amusement, "No of course not. I'm just a lonely little bear like always. This land seems so...Bear-en." The bear on the other side chuckles at his little joke as Chie's eyebrow twitches, "Are you sure no one's with you? Be serious here!"

Teddie immediately stops his giggles at the sound of Chie's voice and frantically answers, "No no! Of course not! I'm not telling tales, my stout is working just beariffic today! No one's here, but me." The three glance at each other as Teddie seems to have stopped talking.

Chie frowns, biting her lower lip before glancing to Yui and Yosuke, "I'm gonna go warn Yukiko anyway," she tells them, "Even if she's busy at the inn and won't leave...I still wanna be sure she's okay." Yui nods in agreement, "It's understandable."

Even yesterday when Yukiko talked to her about Chie, Yui could tell the two girls were very close. It's mirrored with how concern Chie is at the moment. They both praise each other and try their hardest to be sure the other is alright.

Yosuke nods as well, "We should at least check out ore on tonight's Midnight Channel," he points out, "Let's hope this is all a misunderstanding..." The headphones wearing teen takes out his cell phone, "Hey Yui-chan, could you give me your number? I'll call you tonight after watching it. That okay?"

"Of course."

Yui reaches into her own skirt pocket to take out her phone. The two hand their phones over to each other before typing in the correct information. Chie looks at her own phone and lets out a sigh, "I really hope...We don't see anything tonight."

Yosuke sighs as well as he returns Yui's phone to her and takes his own back, "Yeah...Cross your fingers and hope." They all nod before Yosuke looks at his watch, "Oh crap! I'm late!" He turns to them both before bowing a bit, "Ah sorry, I gotta book it for now. Just get home safe okay?"

"Yeah, me too," Chie announces and looks to Yui, "Sorry for ditching you again...Will you be okay walking back home alone again Narukami-chan?" Yui nods, "I will don't worry...Besides Yosuke-kun.."

The boy raises an eyebrow and flinched as the silver-haired girl stares at him, her eyes widen a bit more, "You owe me

something..." Chie snickers a bit before waving to them, "Don't stay out too long then I'll see you later!"

Yosuke nods weakly, though whether if it was to Chie or Yui wasn't clear. "J-Just...Ugh...S-Stop it with the freaky stare!" He sighs, "You know what, yeah. Better to do it now then later huh? Just go to the clothing section and I'll meet you there okay?" Yui nods and blinks as Yosuke lets out a sigh of relief, "Like seriously, Yui-chan," he whispers as he lets himself shiver, "If someone ever woke up to the sight of you doing that they'd piss themselves over. No one can do that..At all!"

"It takes practice," Yui lightly replies as she begins to walk over to the clothing section.

The rain is lighter this time so Yui breathes easy as she walks home. She pauses a moment when she spots a familiar man in front of her and stares.

Having been a bit too happy about Yosuke paying back for her ruined thigh highs, she didn't notice that this street had been empty. Very empty. The police car and the sight of a few officers around should have made her aware that she was going in the wrong direction. She glances around before nervously turning around, maybe she should try a longer way home, "Hold on!"

The teenager freezes and turns around as an officer walks up to her, "What are you doing here? Don't you know how late

it's getting?"

"Well I-"

"You're not doing anything suspicious are you?"

"Of course no-"

The police officer cuts her off before glancing towards the two men off in the distance, "Detective Dojima! There's a suspicious minor over here!" suspicious? Really? She might as well be mute at this point.

Her uncle turns and nearly gawks as he catches sight of her, "The...Oh for the love," he walks over and glares to the officer who looks frightened, "She's not suspicious she's my niece," he corrects him. His stance takes a rather intimidating height as he glares down on the lower ranked officer, "You should have guarded the end of the street to be sure no civilians weren't coming this way!"

"S-Sorry sir!"

The officer salutes before heading back down the street to resume his post as Yui nervously grips her umbrella as her uncles looks at her. They stand in silence for a while before hanging his head, "Are you trying to get into trouble?"

"No," she shakes her head, "I was going this direction to get home faster." Dojima scoffs a bit and runs a hand through his hair before sighing again, "Well...I know you're not the type to

get into trouble," he agrees, "But it doesn't mean anything here. You know what's going on. You might be used to going out late in the city and all during stuff like this, but here...I don't like it. I rather you go straight home before dark."

"Understood..." Yui watches as Dojima looks behind him, "Adachi!" A younger man jumps and runs over to them, "Y-Yes sir?" Yui raises an eyebrow, noticing the man who had thrown up at the crime scene where Miss Yamano's body had been found. "This is my niece," Dojima nods to Yui who bows, "I need you to walk her home, and get back here soon after got it? I don't want you using this as an excuse to slack off...Also..Anything happens to her you'll be answering to me."

Yui watches as the man, Adachi, stare at her uncle with widen eyes. "Wait what?! B-But she can walk by herself can't she?"

"Adachi." Yui flinches as her uncle's voice growls out the man's name, "You heard me. You walk her home and come right back. I'm her guardian, I don't want anything to happen to her got it?!"

"Sir yes sir!" Adachi yells as Dojima sighs and looks to Yui, "And tell Nanako I'll be late again okay Yui?" Yui nods and begins to walk around him, but stops. "Um...Uncle," she quietly swallows a bit before looking at him, "She misses you by the way." The words leave her mouth before she could even think and she braces herself to hear her uncle.

The older man just sighs, "...I'll see what I can do."

Those words are too routine for her...

She grips the handle of her umbrella and nods before turning on her heel as she can hear Adachi stutter before hurrying after her.

They walk with only the rain hitting the tops of their umbrellas being the only sounds around them. She can hear Adachi beside her clearing his throat a few times, "So uh...You're Dojima's niece...Um..." He sighs, "Okay, look you really can't blame him right? We're swamped with work at the station with what happened with that announcer lady and Saki Konishi. And-"

"Should you really be telling a civilian this?" Yui finally speaks up and looks at him, well...Up at him. Adachi stutters and mutters a quiet 'Oh shit' when he realizes she's right, "Oh right uh...Don't rat me out okay?" he pleads to her with his mouth turned down into a frown, "I-I mean it's not like I'm saying we're thinking that it's a serial ki-Oh damnit!" Yui snickers a bit as the man groans.

He nearly drops his umbrella and yells out a profane word before holding it correctly again, "Oh...Man..."

"I won't tell...And...I'm used to my own parents not being home with me," she tells him, "I just want him to at least come by to see Nanako. She's pretty worried about him."

Adachi nods, a small grin on his face, "Nanako's Dojima's kid right? Don't worry so much about him on that. I'm pretty sure

he'll come back home sometime if you keep telling him to come back. Hey, I'll even try to put a word in. Though, I think I'll get more of a workload if I tired..."

"He's pretty hard on you huh? I remember that one day you threw up." Adachi's eyes widen and his mouth drops a bit at her words, "Y-You saw that? Oh...Oh man...Shit...I must've looked stupid huh?" Yui shakes her head as he sighs, "You dont need to lie about it. Detective throwing up at the sight of a corpse...What idiot does that? Of course I'd see dead bodies on the case."

The silver-haired girl shrugs before spotting her destination and bows to Adachi, "I can walk from here Adachi-san. Thank you for walking me back." The man laughs awkwardly, "Wow...Dojima wasn't kiddin' about you being super formal huh?" Yui straightens up and he waves, "Just call me Adachi if you want. Can't handle the formalities too stuffy. Anyway try to keep out of trouble. I should head on back before your uncle chews me out. Sheesh..."

Yui can only smile for the man as she listens to him. Her uncle seemed to be a very tough man at work...

"Night," Adachi sighs before dragging himself back to work. Yui watches him leave before hurrying towards the house. Hopefully Nanako didn't make instant ramen for her dinner by now.

14. Just Think Paper Cranes

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

I apologize in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

Yui sat in front of the television of her room, legs crossed as she sat on her couch with her arms folded over her chest.

Nanako thankfully hadn't made instant ramen when Yui had walked through the door. The girl had been watching a quiz show and was happy to learn that Yui was going to cook dinner. The girl had taken some warming up to her and was eager to help her older cousin.

After dinner and all was cleaned up, Yui let Nanako watch one more game show before making them both go to bed.

Yui had spent a good amount of time doing her homework and reading again to keep herself awake. She was tempted to sleep, hoping to speak to Izanagi, but decided it be best to do so later. She rather not risk the chance of missing the Midnight Channel.

The rain outside hit her window as her eyes gazed over to her clock.

11:59...

She stares towards the dark TV screen, the reflection of her and her room stare back at her.

The minute hand ticks the last few minutes and suddenly...

The TV flashes on, an image of a castle appearing. It looked...Cartoony or rather typical for a castle to look like. The cobblestone path way leading up to the gated entrance, rows of statues lined up, and a huge tower right in the middle are shown. It looked like the type of castles one would see in cartoon or even a video game where some princess was trapped and a main character had to storm in to rescue the princess from some monster.

Yui stares at it in shock before blinking as she hears a faint sound.

It sounded like...Someone making..Kissing sounds?

The screen changes, as if the camera recording...Whatever is being shown darting around to find the source.

"Hello there!"

A raven-haired girl grins while giggling into a microphone as the camera zooms over her, "I didn't see you there? Were you watching me~?"

"Yukiko-san?!" Yui stands up and her mouth drops as she takes in the sight of the usually quiet and reserved raven-haired girl.

It is Yukiko.

However instead of the pink kimono or even her school uniform with the red cardigan, Yukiko is wearing a pink princess ball gown, a large red rose pinned right where her heart would be as other matching roses were all over the skirt. Yui can hear the tulle of the dress move against each other as Yukiko twirls around playfully. On her head sits a golden tiara and her arms are covered in bright pink gloves.

Yui swallows a bit, unsure what to think. The dress looked like shades of pink just threw up all over it to make the girl look 'princess' like as possible, and it hurts her eyes.

"My name is Yukiko Amagi!" Yukiko on-screen announces loudly, "And today I'm gonna hunt me down a stud muffin!" Yui cringes a bit at how loud and obnoxious sounded Yukiko is on the television screen and restrains from dropping her jaw down as she hears the sound effects of a gun sounding off as Yukiko finishes her declaration with a gun sign.

"Are you ready?" Yukiko winks out to her audience and her movements become more ecstatic as she keeps speaking. "C'mon saddle up!" Her hands clasp the microphone in her hands and she starts to tug at an invisible rope, "And reign in your stud!"

Yui can't tell if her head hurts from the pink or from what Yukiko says as she giggles, "This is Princess Yukiko's hunt for Prince Charming!"

The silver-haired girl's jaw drops as a corny pink banner appears on-screen.

PRINCESS YUKIKO'S HUNT FOR HER PRINCE ON A WHITE HORSE!

It looks completely outrageous! The banner reminds Yui of those cartoon of some princess anime or just a little girl show in general. The princess giggles and the camera begins to slowly focus away from her, slowly getting her entire body.

"And I've came prepared~"

The Yukiko on-screen smirks and the camera nearly breaks the lens as it zooms up where her hands fall, right on top of her skirt where her crotch is. Yui nearly falls back on the couch in disbelief, "My lacy unmentionables are stacked from top to bottom!"

The camera zooms in on the tops of Yukiko's breasts and Yui's face begins to turn bright red as watches Yukiko shove the microphone between them before the camera backs off.

"They're ready to go! And so is my heart~!"

Her hands make a heart and she drags it across in the front that form a pink, sparkling heart over herself. A typical

princess, girly move that makes Yui want to cry or scream a bit. This wasn't like Yukiko at all. What was going on?!

The silver-haired girl can only stare at the screen with her mouth open as Yukiko lets out a grunt and makes a fist, "See!" The raven-haired girl pumps her fist up as the mike remains between her breasts. The camera isn't focusing away and Yui is stuck staring at Yukiko's cleavage and face as she nods a bit.

"I'm out to tame me the whole pack of the best studs there are!" Yukiko declares as she plucks the mike from out from her breasts before winking to the camera, "Well! Time to go~!" Yui watches as the girl flounces off towards the castle, the gate opening for her as she lets out a little cheer as she enters.

The screen starts to flicker and Yui is back to staring at her own reflection.

Her legs feel numb as she collapses onto her couch as she stares at the black screen. Her phone vibrates on the table and she swipes it up immediately, "Yosuke-kun?"

"D-Did you just see that?!"

"...I did...And my eyes hurt," Yui responds as she stares at her screen as Yosuke groans, "That was Yukiko-san for sure! It looked like her and hell, she even said her name too! But didn't the stuff she say sound weird? 'Stud muffin?' The Yukiko-san we know would NEVER say that. She doesn't

even know what it means!"

"I know," Yui agrees, "And those TV effects...They remind me of some weird kid show. Or a low-budget show ya know?" Yui hears Yosuke groan again and she can just hear him in the background. His feet pacing loudly of the floor in his room.

"Yosuke-kun, you're pacing."

The boy on the other end stops and sighs, "C-Couldn't you blame me? It wasn't like this the other times ya know," he points out, "...What's going on?"

"We should try to reach Yukiko," Yui suggests before stopping, "Oh...We don't have her number..." Yosuke groans again before making a sound, "Oh! Wait! I'll call Chie!" Yui breathes a sigh of relief as the other continues, "Tomorrow's Sunday...So let's all meet up at Junes first thing in the morning," Yosuke tells her, "We should go into the other world. We can't..."

The silver-haired girl nods in agreement, "I know Yosuke-kun. We'll help her out." The boy on the other end makes a soft sound of confirmation before hanging up. Yui sets her phone down before staring back at the television screen. The image of Yukiko on-screen and the Yukiko from the day before flash in her mind. The two were alike in appearance, but in personality they were far apart.

Even if the princess on-screen said she was Yukiko, she wasn't Yukiko...Or...

Her eyes narrow a bit as she remembers Yosuke's Shadow. The two were alike...

Was...This the same with Yukiko? It seemed to be the only possible explanation. What was shown on television must be Yukiko's Shadow, her repressed emotions just as how Yosuke's Shadow appeared and began to speak of all the hidden thoughts of the boy's mind. Yes...Maybe...She hangs her head and closes her eyes as her fingers press against her forehead, but why would it show up like that?

Didn't Teddie say...No one was on the other side? Just what is-

"The truth will be uncovered," Izanagi's voice rings out in her head and she opens her eyes in surprise, "You should rest...You have a long day tomorrow." Yui smiles a bit at her Persona's words and nods, "Yeah...You're right." He chuckles quietly, his voice fading into the back of her mind as she stretched. Pushing herself up from the couch she walked around the table, pausing at the television again.

"...Stud...Muffin?"

Yui made her way down the stairs before stopping as she hears Nanako giggling and the sounds of the television echoed through the living room. Walking over she stops in the middle of the room as she catches sight of a ninja squeaking as he's taken down by cartoony ninja stars. Nanako glances at her and smiles, "Oh good morning."

"Morning."

She's dressed in a pair of gray jeans and a light gray turtle neck, her black leather jacket rests over her arms as she looks at Nanako and back to the television, "Where's your Dad?" Nanako reaches out and lowers the volume of the screen as she looks to Yui. "He went out already," she answers, "He'll be home late he said. Oh..." The younger girl looks Yui up and down curiously, "Are you going out?"

"Uh...Well..." Yui hesitates and looks at her jacket draped over her arm and back up to Nanako. If she left the house...Nanako would be by herself for a long time. Was that really okay to do? But, Yukiko might be in trouble and she couldn't just leave Yosuke and Chie alone...

"It's okay." Yui blinks as her cousin smiles a little, "I'll be fine by myself. I can hold down the fort." Yui stares a bit in shock at her words and struggles to find something to say. Nanako reaches for the remote again and changes the channel, perking up at the weather's forecast. "Oh its sunny today. I'll do some laundry..." The brunette looks up at her, "...Weren't you going out?"

"Oh..Um..." Nanako smiles, "Don't worry about me. You go have fun," she assures the younger girl before brushing past her. Yui stares after the girl before sighing.

Too mature for her own good...

She walks slowly to the door, retrieving her black ankle boots

from the sides and slipping them on before shrugging her jacket onto her shoulders. Aside from the green stripe that runs from the shoulders down, her clothing choice is rather simple...

She wonders if Yosuke will be able to spot her in the food court, most likely since she was the only person in town with gray hair. Her fingers play with her bangs as she walks, one of her hands resting in the pockets of her jacket. The town seemed much more livelier today than usual and Yui sees a bit of activity around the shopping district as she passes by. It's not as busy as Junes, but Yui can see more life in the usually quiet district.

She paused at one of the stores, a bookstore, and peered in curiously. Inside were a good number of shelves holding a large quantity of books. The cashier looks at her curiously and she waves a bit before hurrying on ahead. Perhaps later.

By the time she arrives to Junes, Yui finds herself the only one there. She sighs and slips into a chair, crossing her ankles as she rests her elbows on the table surface. Had she left too early?

Her fingers play with the napkins set on the table and before she realizes it her fingers are moving quickly to form paper cranes. It seemed to be her new hobby now...Making paper cranes. She had done so before back home, but arriving to Inaba seemed to spark her odd habit into a new form of entertainment for her.

"...Those are cool..."

She turns her head as a tall boy standing only a foot away stares at her table. He blinks in surprise, not expecting her to turn, before stuttering, "I-I mean uh!" He's tall...Very tall. His hair is obviously dyed as Yui can make out some dark under the bright blond as he struggled to gather his words, "Y-You're...Uh...Paper cranes are hard to do! You're doing a good job!" He looks around frantically before shoving his hands into his pockets and hurrying out of the area.

Yui blinks a few times. While it was comical, she had been stunned in her folding as she heard footsteps coming her way.

"Yui-chan! Sorry I'm late!" Yosuke grins as he runs to her, his hands behind his back, "Oh...Whoa...Dude. We need to get you a new hobby. How many did you make?" Yui looks at the table and blushes a bit when she places the crane in her hands down to the table. The cranes are scattered over a good half of the circular table, "I think I lost count after...Twenty?" Yui weakly shrugs as Yosuke sighs and shakes his head.

"You are one weird girl dude, but anyway!"

Yosuke grins as he leans in close to her, "Check out what I found in my backyard~!"

Two blades shine under the sunlight as Yosuke reveals what he had hidden behind his back.

One blade is longer than the other, a katana. The other is shorter, a dagger. The metal on both gleam and Yui leans away a bit as the boy grins and chuckles happily, "Yosuke-kun...In your backyard," Yui weakly laughs, "Wow...Your family has an interesting way of cutting the grass huh?" Yosuke smirks, "Oh c'mon don't look so shocked!" he tells her lightly as he swings them around a bit, "They're not real, they're fakes!"

"...They sure look real to me," Yui argues back as she watches Yosuke pose with the two imitation weapons as he laughs, "That's the thing!" He crosses them together, "Even with our Personas...It's not enough. With something weapon like, not like a golf club, we can at least defend ourselves while our Personas kick Shadow ass. C'mon Yui-chan pick one!"

Yui can feel her mouth drag down into a frown as she stares at him in disbelief, "Pick one? I don't even want one. Should you really be swinging them aro-"

"Huh? You know when you put it that way," Yosuke cuts her off as he looks at the two blades with interest, "Maybe wielding both? That would be totally bad ass! It'll be...Something like this!" Yui leans back a bit as the other points the dagger towards her with the katana point up to the sky as he stands on one leg. "Or..Something like this!" Yui relaxes, but leans back as the boy spins in front of her.

"Or this!" Yosuke attempts to crouch down and hold both blades in front of him.

"O-Oh! Or this!" This time he begins to wave the two fake blades around as if he's fighting multiple enemies all the while making grunts and yells as he moves. Yui can just hear the police sirens in the distance as she watches him.

"Yosuke...This really-"

"I've spotted a suspicious male, minor, armed with multiple weapons. Appears to be harassing female, minor. Requesting immediate backup."

Yosuke freezes and quickly hides the two weapons behind his back as Yui stands up, "Uh...O-Oh crap, no wait I mean wait! No...No no no no no! It's not what you think officer! These are fake! Fake! We're just two um weapon crazed teenagers..Uh heh...Yui-chan..Help."

"Officer look," Yui calmly spoke up, "He's not doing anything bad. And I'm fine-"

"Put the weapons down now!" the police officer ordered to Yosuke, ignoring her words making her twitch, "We'll listen to your story at the station. Hands where I can see them...Now!"

Yui backs away as Yosuke lets out a yell, "No look you got it all wrong Officer! It's not-"

The officer steps back, his hand pressing the walkie-talkie on his side as he stares at Yosuke in shock, "Are you resisting an officer of the law?! You're under arrest! Requesting immediate backup in the food court, repeat requesting backup!"

Yui stares up to the sky, her hands lift up and she smacks both over her face as Yosuke lets out another yell as more police officers surround them, "..Damnit Yosuke!"

"I-It's not...Will you all listen! G-Gah!"

Yui doesn't need to look to know that the officers managed to grab Yosuke and discarded the fake weapons to the ground. She feels a hand on her shoulder and she wills herself to look as one of the officers look at her in concern. "Are you alright miss? He didn't hurt you did he?" Yui's eyebrow twitches as she just stares at the man, "Does it look like he hurt me?"

The man sighs, sympathetic, and pats her on the shoulder, "I'm sorry, but you might want to go with us back to the station. We'd like to hear your take on what happened. It might be hard, but we understand."

The silver-haired girl's eyes only widen and her mouth drops a bit as she hears Yosuke being dragged off yelling in protest. She turns her face away from the man and buries it again into her hands.

Paper cranes...

Just think about paper cranes...

Yui rests against the wall as she waits outside of the interrogation room where Yosuke is, she and him were both questioned...Though it seemed the men didn't take her word

for it for the first half that Yosuke meant her no harm. She didn't want to pull the 'Hey...Detective Dojima's my uncle' card, but she did. They all began to change their tune and managed to grab the older detective to talk to Yosuke before running off back to their posts.

The silver-haired girl sighed and hung her head. That was the second time she had been ignored...Was she mute to them? She had been cut off and ignored, did she have to speak louder? She shakes her head as the image of her screaming at the top of her lungs to the previous officer at the food court comes to mind. That...Would be bad...

"Yui!" Yosuke burst out the door, "Oh..Oh man...Thank god. Thank god. Thank god you're a niece of someone who works here!" Yui shakes her head slightly as she looks at Dojima who emerges out of the room, his fingers pinching the bridge of his nose as he glares at the boy making him shut up. "You. Hanamura right?" Dojima glares, "What were you thinking? You know what's been going on. We got men everywhere and Yui..."

The teenager looks up at him and crosses her arms and sighs, "I...Know...Sorry it won't happen again. I should have taken responsibility correct?"

"Damn right," Dojima sighs, "The last thing I need is for your mother to learn about an incident like this. You're lucky I was in today or you'd both have this on your records, I know you two aren't stupid. I also know you're both not troublemakers...So stop getting in trouble. Both of you."

Yosuke sighs and nods quickly, "Y-Yes sir..." Yui also nods, "Of course uncle..."

Dojima sighs and gives them one last glance, "You both can go...Though I guarantee we won't give you back those weapons."

"...Too bad for your grass Yosuke-kun," Yui quietly whispers as the boy grunts and nudges her on the side, "Not the time Yui-chan!" he hisses as two officers walk by them. "So...The one who disappeared is the Amagi girl?" The two of them freeze as they listen to the other officer, "Seems like it, but she's just a high schooler you know. Could be that she decided to run away from home. You know..The usual."

"Hey..Did..." Yosuke whispered and Yui nods before Dojima clears his throat making them jump, "I'm sure you've seen on the news that there's an investigation in progress," her uncle continues, "We're sensitive about certain things. This better not happen again...I'm telling you this again so you BOTH know without excuse."

They nod before the detective walks away, leaving them both in the hall. "Narukami-chan! Yosuke!" They turn to see Chie running towards them, "Oh there you are! I've looked all over for you! Yukiko's gone!"

"Yeah...We heard, well overheard," Yosuke looks around, "And keep your voice down! I know you're scared, but still..." Chie shakes her head, "T-That's easier said than done," she struggles to whisper as she looks at them both, "I went there,

at the inn, and they told me she just disappeared! How can I stay calm when I know my best friend might... Might be... She..." Chie struggles to form the words and Yui opens her mouth to speak until she feels a hand on her shoulder.

"Yo! Yui-chan, this is a surprise!"

She jumps and almost swings her hand around until she spots a familiar face, "A-Adachi-san?" The detective laughs as he raises a cup of coffee in his hands, "I told ya. You can cut the formalities out, stuffy. What are you doing here? Visiting your uncle?"

"N-No," Yui laughs nervously, "Just..A misunderstanding. I had to clear things up." Adachi shrugs a bit, "Ah I see, well I better get going."

"Uh W-Wait!" Yosuke quickly steps in front of the man, "We um...Is it okay with we ask a question? Its about Yukiko-san. I-I mean Yukiko Amagi of the Amagi Inn. Did something happen to her?" The man looks at the three of them, "Huh? Oh...Uh...I can't..Say."

Yui can hear Chie start to move before stepping in front of the girl, arm out a bit. Chie looks at her before crossing her arms. Her fingers drum against her jacket sleeve as she stares at Adachi. "Please," Yui quietly asks, "We're her friends and we're worried."

Adachi glances around, fearful a bit if any other people working at the station are coming down the hall before

sighing.

"Well...If you're Ms. Amagi's friends," he quietly muses, "Then okay. Just keep it between us okay?"

"Yes! Yes we will just tell us!" Chie exclaimed as Yui shakes her head to the other girl as Adachi sighs, "Well...We got a call from Ms. Amagi's parents yesterday evening saying she was gone. Couldn't find her anywhere," the detective explains, "Since it was the weekend, the workers at the inn were all pretty busy. And no one saw Ms. Amagi around that time."

Chie gasps at this point and Yosuke stares at him in shock, "Oh!" The man quickly shakes his head, "No no no. It's too early to tell if it's a case though," he tries to assure them quickly, "Yeah...I mean..People's been turning up dead on foggy days and we're really sensitive to stuff like this, but for all we know it could have been a simple runaway case..."

Adachie looks at the three before snapping his fingers, "Ah actually...Could you three tell me something else too?" he suddenly brightened at his realization, "Did she say anything to you guys? Was she acting...Strange?" Chie shakes her head, "No...She was just busy working."

"...There a reason?" Yui questions as the detective frowns a bit before switching the cup of coffee into his right hand and pulling out small notebook and flipping it open. "Well," he informs them as he stares at the page he's reading, "That announcer, Ms. Yamano? She was staying at the Amagi Inn before she was murdered. According to our investigation we

found that Ms. Yamano was a pretty high maintenance guest and said a few harsh words to the manager. Apparently the manager, Ms. Amagi's mother, collapsed from the stress of trying to keep her happy."

Yui hears Chie take in a sharp intake of breath as Adachi continues, "Thing is...There's a few theories flying around. That maybe Ms. Amagi did a few things to get back at Ms. Yamano and her being missing is just her staying on the low-"

"YOU THINK YUKIKO'S THE MURDERER?!"

"Whoa whoa!" Adachi held up both his hands, the cup and notebook still clasped in his fingers, "Calm down! It's only theories floating around!"

"It's lame that's what it is! How dare you!" Yui quickly grabs the girl around the torso as Yosuke tries to grab hold of one of her arms as she tries to strike at Adachi. Being as both she and Yosuke were taller, they had a good advantage to keep the girl in place. Adachi stares at the enraged teenager before backing away slowly, "Crap...I..Might've gone too far," he quietly mutters as Yui shoots him a look, "You think?"

"I'll...I'll just go. You didn't hear anything from me, got it?" Adachi nods to them before hurrying off as Chie still continues to struggle in their arms.

"Yeah you better go!" Chie snarls as Adachi disappears around the corner, "I'll...I'll...Those are lies!" Yui continues to keep hold of her as Yosuke struggles to keep her arms from

swinging.

The girl's eyes are starting to become glassy and Yui spots a tear falling as she continues to yell and stomp her foot on the floor. "Chie-chan..Chie!" The girl stops as Yui calls her and looks at her, "C'mon. Would Yukiko-chan want you like this?" The short-haired girl sniffles and begins to relax her body, "No...No she wouldn't..." Yui slowly unwraps her arms around her as Yosuke takes a step back.

They watch as she wipes at her eyes with her hands before looking at them. Her lips drawn into a line, her eyes are still glassy, but there's a look of determination in them. "Listen you two...We..We have to save her. We have to save Yukiko."

"That was the plan," Yui reminded her as Yosuke nods, "Yeah," he tells her and pats her on the shoulder, "We won't leave her in there...We'll save her." He looks over to Yui who nods back to him, "It's obvious now the police won't help us. So it's just us. You okay with that Chie?"

"Well duh," the girl smirks, "Of course I'm okay with it. I'm going to save Yukiko. Even if I have to go against some twisted monster! I won't leave her alone, she's my friend."

15. Whip Lash

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

This chapter and the next leans a bit more into the anime more so then the game.

I apologize in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

Note="Voice"

Yui made a note to never try to tell Chie to wait.

As soon as the girl declared herself willing to save Yukiko, she took off. Leaving Yosuke and Yui to baffle over what to do before chasing after her. The girl had a pair of strong legs for one, even Yui couldn't keep pace with her.

To 'wait' for Chie was a waste of time, they had to act immediately and immediately meant now. The short-haired girl had flung herself through the television just as Yui and Yosuke rounded the corner into the electronics section.

"Ugh! That idiot," Yosuke groaned as he and Yui stood in front

of the screen, "She didn't even wait to check to see if it was safe. She just went straight in!" Yui sighed and shrugged, "There's nothing we can do, but follow...I think she won't be able to get too far though with Teddie guarding the entrance." Yosuke nods and they both take out their glasses before pressing themselves through the screen.

The landing this time was much better, save for Yui stumbling back and landing on her butt as Yosuke managed to land not on his back, but his face.

"...We need to improve on this," Yosuke grumbled as he pulled his glasses off to check to see the damage. Yui only lets out a grunt as Chie stands before them, "Sheesh! About time you both came!"

"Well some of us actually want to keep this place a secret," Yui hears Yosuke mutter under his breath as he walks up to them, "Besides, you were the one who didn't wait to see if we were right behind you. You have to think logically here Chie."

"I am thinking logically," the other argued, "We have to get Yukiko back right away! She's in danger!"

Yosuke sighs again and puts a hand to his face, "Ugh...This is getting us nowhere. Look okay, do you think you know where you're going?" Chie opens her mouth before stopping herself, she hesitates and glances to Yui. The silver-haired girl shakes her head as Chie sighs, "No...No I don't..."

Yosuke nods before turning to Yui, "Let's go find Teddie. I'm

sure he'll lead us in the right direction." He walks ahead of the two girls as Chie sighs, shoving her hands into her pockets. Yui stares at her before patting her lightly on the shoulder, "I know Yukiko-san's important to you," she starts to say. Chie looks at her, her face drawn into a tight expression, "But we'll save her. We just have to be careful here. Please just trust us. We are also your friends."

Chie stares at her for a moment before turning her head down, "...Yeah...You're right." She smiles a bit, "I guess...I'm just like this because Yukiko's been my friend since forever. She and I are best friends. Nothing can tear us apart." Yui nods in agreement, "That's the spirit." The other smiles back at her as Teddie and Yosuke began to walk over to them, "Teddie did sense someone coming over here," Yosuke announced as the girls looked at the blue bear.

Teddie nodded, freezing when he saw Chie, "Uhhhh...Y-You're not gonna yell at me are you?" Yui glanced over as Chie blinked in surprise, "Huh? No...Er...As long as we're not going to just stand here all day," Chie managed to say without raising her voice, "Oh right. I'm Chie Satonaka you're uh...Teddie right?"

"Yup, that's right!" Teddie's posture relaxed as he spoke to Yui, "Right after I talked to you guys, it felt like someone was here."

He gazed at the three teenagers, "I haven't looked yet at the place I can sense the person though..."

"So it could be Yukiko," Chie whispered to herself as Teddie pointed towards the opposite direction from where he lead Yui and Yosuke, "I can feel a presence over that way. That's probably where they are." Yui nods before reaching a hand out to grasp Chie on the collar, "Chie-san."

The shorter girl flinches at the tone Yui uses before huffing, "Okay, okay. No jumping in I remember..." Behind them they can hear Yosuke breathe a sigh of relief, "Oh good. Yeah, keep Chie back Yui-chan. We don't need her lost again..."

"I wasn't lost last time!"

Yui released the girl's collar and they followed Teddie as he hurried ahead of them.

Just like before with the Shopping District, the area of the television studio where they started off from began to transform to a whole different landscape.

The path began to turn to cobblestone and statues began to show up until they came to a castle, a very familiar cheesy castle.

"Wait a sec...Isn't...Didn't we see this on the Midnight Channel?" Chie's voice rose a pitch as they stared up at the castle. The gate had been left open this time and Yui glances at Chie, "Chie-san, I think you might want to stay out here..."

The advantage Yui and Yosuke had were their Personas. They could fight, Chie however did not have anything to

defend herself with. In fact, now that Yui realized it, she had no glasses. If she was possibly separated from them she could get attacked from behind or even lost in the countless halls Yui can just predict were in the huge castle.

"Nope. No way. I'm going in there!" Chie bluntly growls as Yosuke sighs, "Sheesh," he shakes his head towards Yui, "Once her mind's made up there's no changing it. Still..." He glances a look to Teddie, "You positive no one else is here? Someone that might have recorded the Midnight Channel?"

Teddie shrugs and shakes his head, "No. I don't think so. It's only you guys and that other person here. Maybe it's because of how you guys see things over on your side? I told you, just me and Shadows until someone gets thrown in..."

"So," Chie scratched her head as she frowns, "Are we really looking into this world? Because...Wouldn't that make sense? I mean the first time Yukiko showed up on the channel was before she disappeared and...Wasn't..She acting weird? Saying stuff like 'stud muffin?' It's not like her at all!"

"...Or the unmentionables," Yui quietly shudders as Teddie looks at them confused, "...What's a 'stud muffin?'"

"Later," Yosuke quickly cut Yui off from explaining it to the confused bear, "Though...I agree. Yukiko-san would never say anything like that. No..Wait. It was...It was like that for me too last time right?" Yui nods, "I was thinking about it too," she agrees, "What if...The Yukiko we saw on the channel..Wasn't her, but still her?"

Yosuke hesitates, his mouth in a frown and his eyes gazing down, perhaps recalling his own experiences back in the Shopping District. "That would make more sense, but..."

"Well...Maybe that 'channel' happens because of the person who appears on it?" Teddie suggested, "Or something like that?"

"...So Yukiko was producing that show last night by herself?" Chie asked before letting out a frustrated groan. Her fingers grip her hair and she stomps her feet, "Ugh! We're wasting time here! Teddie, are you sure she's in there?"

"I'm beary sure!" Teddie exclaimed and hit his chest with his paw, "Don't underestimate my stout! She's in there."

"That's all I need to hear!"

"W-Wait Chie-san-" Yui reaches a hand out to grab the girl's jacket, missing it and watches as she disappears into the gateway, "Oh..."

"Hey! Don't go off on your own!" Yosuke yelled before making a quiet sound, "Damn it...Not logically thinking at all. Crap, Yui-chan we gotta catch up to her."

"Let's go."

Teddie lets out a yell of protests, but she can hear him trot after them as they too run through the gate's entrance way.

As she predicted, the castle had a long hallway and if she

squinted enough leading into new hallways. Around them the walls, windows, and ceiling were made to stand at an impossibly tall height. There's red and pink everywhere save for a few colors of gold that are embroidered at the edges of the carpet they stand on.

"Oh...Chie!" Yosuke yells as he spots the green and yellow jacket in front of them, "Hey! Wait!"

Yui sighs a bit as they run after her, "She's not stopping." She hears Yosuke mutter a curse before they both stop.

Chie doesn't stop and continues to run forward, ignoring the obvious figures that slowly fall out of the black holes that form in the walls and ceilings.

Shadows with blue masks moaning sadly as they floated in front of Yosuke and her, unlike the ones yesterday these maintained a more human form. However they are paired in twos with metal having been stabbed through at their ankles, wrists, and necks.

"She's completely blind," Yosuke sighs as he watches Chie disappear further, "Without the glasses she can't even see these Shadows!"

"We have to catch up to her," Yui told him and opens her hand. A blue card quickly forms over her fingers and the light turns to flame as it spins faster, "You ready Yosuke?"

"Ha you need me to tell you Yui?" The boy grins as Yui nods.

Her fingers crush the card and it shatters, "Izanagi!" Electricity sparks up around her as blue light glows from behind that soon disappears as Izanagi stands behind her.

"Bring it on! Let's go Jiraiya!" A blue card appears before Yosuke, however the boy does not extend his hand out like Yui does for Izanagi. Instead he crouches down before jumping up and spinning in the air, delivering a punch to the lit card to shatter it.

As it shatters Yui puts an arm up to shield her face as a strong gust of wind breezes over beside her as the blue light swirls around Yosuke like a tornado. A white Persona with a red scarf forms right behind Yosuke and it disperses the wind as it stretches its limbs out from its curled position.

The Shadows moan and begin to head towards them, "Now!" Yui points towards the one closest to her and Izanagi charges forward. He swings his blade and splits the Shadow in half before diving through the damaged creature as it erupts into black smoke.

Izanagi goes towards the windows, dragging his blade against the glass as sparks begin to form on his blade. The Shadow that tries to block him off is struck down in a swing of lightning and the other that tries to strike him from the side is destroyed by a kick.

"Nice one Sensei!" Teddie cheers as Izanagi throws his sword up in the air and catches it by the handle.

"Jiraiya do your thing!" Yui watches as the ninja like Persona flies through the air. Unlike Izanagi's charge, Jiraiya's looks more like a hop in midair and is faster than that armored Persona. She braces herself as Jiraiya extends a hand, a bright green blast directed towards the remaining Shadows that fly towards them.

The wind of the blast makes her hair fly up from her shoulders and she bends her knees to keep herself balanced from the power of the attack.

Izanagi flies around the green tornado as Jiraiya flies higher in the air, kicking back the remaining Shadows that weren't sucked into the vortex. The two Personas look at each other and Izanagi stops and spins around to slash at the Shadows Jiraiya kicks his way. "Nice teamwork!" Yosuke cheers as Teddie sighs, "Man Yosuke, you still got a lot to learn." The boy glares at the bear, "Why is it I keep getting crap from you?! Shut up!"

The Persona stand in front of their respective partner as Yui smiles up at them, "Thanks."

Izanagi nods as he gives a glance to Jiraiya who happily waves to Yui before giving her a head tilt. She hasn't...A clue what sort of greeting that was, but blinks in surprise as Yosuke glares at his Persona, "Hey cut it out...No. We talked about this." Jiraiya places his hands on both sides of his face and waves them, a sound of a raspberry is heard which angers Yosuke, "Oi!"

"As much as I enjoy you two arguing," Yui points out, "We have to catch up to Chie-san, now." Yosuke and Jiraiya quickly nod and start to run off ahead, only to have Izanagi hit them both lightly on the back with the handle of his sword. Yosuke yelps and Jiraiya instantly puts his hands over his back and wiggles a bit as if in pain as Yui snickers, "Now the thigh high incident is even out."

"I bought you a new pair! Let it go!" The silver-haired girl only snickers before they begin to run again.

Izanagi kicked a door open, knocking a few Shadows guarding it to the walls. Jiraiya quickly came in front of Izanagi and struck the Shadows with his wind attack, creating a clear path for the teenagers and Teddie. Teddie had pointed out that the Shadows had gotten restless as soon as they all entered, it seemed they held no interest in Chie as they had yet to see the girl being stopped by any.

In fact, it looked like the Shadows all saw Yui and Yosuke as threats and seemed to like popping out right at them when they opened the door to continue to a new hallway.

The decided on a new strategy instead.

As Izanagi had more power, he was to kick the doors open with as much strength as possible to knock back any Shadows ready to spring on them. Jiraiya would then attack the Shadows immediately. He was faster than Izanagi and the chances of weakening the enemies or even destroying them

at the first strike seemed to be favored more if the faster Persona did it. Izanagi kicked a Shadow off to the side as Jiraiya blasted a few out of the way.

In regards to teamwork, the two Personas seemed fine with each other and they seemed to be in perfect sync the further they left.

"You know...There's something bugging me about this," Yosuke announced as they ran up a few flights of stairs, "Why is it the Shadows aren't attacking Chie yet? They've attacked us, but none of them seem to be paying attention to her."

Yui pointed to the door as Izanagi slammed his foot against it as she returns Yosuke's concern, "Perhaps it's because this place is like Yukiko-san's reality?" she offers as Jiraiya blasts a number of enemies away from them as they stormed down the hall. Izanagi's sword clashes against metal and an electrical sound is heard as the Shadow is burnt up in black smoke.

"Seeing as they're both friends...That would make sense wouldn't it?"

"Yeah maybe," Yosuke agreed as he watches Jiraiya attack a large Shadow before signalling the teenagers to hurry faster. "Though she's gotten pretty far huh? Man...This place looked a lot smaller on television."

"Television distorts a lot of things," Yui commented to which Izanagi nods in agreement before charging ahead, however

he stops before he could kick the door open.

Jiraiya nearly crashes into the door, but manages to stop himself. The shorter Persona puts his hands on his hips and gives the other a 'What gives man' vibe as Izanagi glances to Yui. Teddie blinks in surprise before frowning, "Huh...Something's not right," he announces as he stares at the door, "Chie-chan's definitely in there, but...I sense another presence in there and...It's not friendly."

Yui and Yosuke exchanged a glance as Jiraiya instantly hops up in the area in surprise as Yui gives him a cold glare. It's not like she dislikes the Persona, but she isn't still over the little fight they had as it was a Shadow. Especially now that when she felt a breeze from the Persona's attack she tensed.

"By not friendly what do you mean?" she quietly questions as Jiraiya edges towards Izanagi and ducks behind him. The armored Persona looks at the cowering one before floating away. This provokes Jiraiya to hop up and down in the air in anger as Teddie glares at the door. His concentration breaks as he sighs, "I can't really tell...We...We have to go in, but most definite Chie-chan is in there!"

Izanagi advances to the door, still being 'yelled' at by Jiraiya and opens it with a punch causing Yosuke to jump back, "There's something called a push!" Yui cringes as well and gives Izanagi a narrowed look. The Persona looks completely confused as Jiraiya does a face palm to his face.

They enter the room and stop in surprise.

"What..Where are we?"

It's not related at all to the castle they had been in for the past few hours.

Instead its a room, a room that would have been styled for an inn. However Yui notices a few things are out of place, there are permanent furniture around the room such as a bookcase, a few picture frames hanging from the walls, and a desk with a lamp that had a few notes placed on the surface. Its format is like a room at an inn, but the style is not set as a room for a guest. Around them the colors are only black and white, no color at all save for them. Jiraiya and Izanagi seem to have managed to fit themselves in, alarming Yui, "This...Isn't...Right at all."

"It looks like someone's room, but whose-"

"I look good in red..."

"Yukiko-san?!" Yosuke looks alarmed at the voice and Yui's eyes widen, "Oh man...Is...is this her thoughts?" Yui can only nod as she steps into the room. Her eyes fall on the bird cage that hangs out the window as Yukiko continues to speak.

"My name means 'snow child.' And I hate it."

The girl's voice is spoken quietly, as if ashamed of herself for even speaking.

"Snow is cold and it's never here for long. Its fleeting and

completely useless, I guess it fits me perfectly..."

Yosuke frowns as he glances around the room and Teddie stays behind the Persona, an uneasy look on his face as they listen. The girl sighs, Yui can just picture the raven-haired girl bowing her head as her eyes are averted.

"Aside from inheriting the inn, I absolute have nothing to offer. I don't have any value at all. Still...Chie was the one who told me, 'Yukiko, red looks good on you.'"

Yui's head snaps down as the carpet of the room begins to turn from black to a bright red. Yosuke also reacts and stares down as around them other objects began to turn red. The bird cage, the bookcase, some of the frames, and even the desk turn a shade of bright red.

Red just like the color of Yukiko's favorite cardigan.

"Chie was the only person who gave my life meaning."

Yui and Yosuke exchange a look as soon as Yukiko's voice begins to speak about Chie. It's starting to rise up to a lighter tone, like she's happy.

"Chie's always happy and strong. She can do anything."

"She has everything I lack. You see...Compared to Chie, I'm just.."

There is a long pause as Izanagi and Jiraiya float around the

room. They seem to be examining the objects, but on occasion would look up above them from where the voice came from. Yukiko's voice picks up again. She giggles a bit before she speaks again.

"Chie...Chie will always protect me."

"I may be worthless, but Chie's nice. She'll look after me..."

The room suddenly dissolves and they find themselves in a bigger room. They have returned into the castle thanks to the return of the red and pink color scheme. However the room has a heavier usage of red, it makes the room feel heavy and the five of them glance around confused until Teddie lets out a menacing growl.

Yui looks to where the bear is glancing at and she tenses up. Chie is standing in front of them, safe, but there is someone else in front of her.

The mirror image is just like Chie, but the smile that forms on her face is nothing like the one the girl always makes and those gold eyes...

Teddie snarls again and she can hear Izanagi grip his sword as it seems the darker Chie notices them, she gives them a smirk before speaking. "Yukiko," her voice distorts as she speaks and Yosuke cringes at the sound of it besides Yui, "Did you hear what she said? She actually thinks I'm protecting her!"

The girl snickers loudly and they can see Chie shiver as she watches her mirror image laugh louder, "And she thinks she's absolutely worthless? You gotta love that!"

By now Chie is on edge, her shoulder rise up as she speaks to the other, "The hell are you talking about?! That's nothing to laugh about!" Yui can't help, but notice the girl's voice rising a pitch higher. Offended that someone that looks just like her could speak about her friend that way...

"Yukiko's hot, sweet, and her skin is like totally perfect," the doppelgänger continues as her smile remains. Yui can feel the other's eyes flicker to them for a second before focusing back onto Chie. She has no intention of telling Chie they are right there and keeps speaking, "Guys can't leave her alone..They love her."

Again the other giggles and snickers, hugging herself, "But when I actually heard that Yukiko is actually jealous of me, ME! Ha! Man did I get a charge out of that!" The laugh makes them all uncomfortable, it's loud and the delivery of it makes Yui describe the unpleasant feeling as nails on the chalkboard.

"You see the truth is...If I wasn't around Yukiko couldn't do anything. She's nothing without me. Because I'm the one...Who's truly the top dog around here! She knows the score...I'm better than her, much...MUCH BETTER!"

"Shut up!" Chie stomps at the ground and screams, "It's not true! You liar! That's not how I feel!"

"It's just like with Yosuke," Teddie quietly growls, "If this keeps up..."

"We need to protect her now," Yui quickly agrees as Yosuke nods, "Hey! Chie!"

The girl turned, her eyes wide at the sight of them, "N-No you...You guys, no...J-Just stay there. Don't come any closer! It's...It's not true."

"Oh why deny it?" Chie's other self laughs, "They've been here the WHOLE time!" Yui watches as Chie's head frantically snaps to her doppelgänger before looking to them. Hurt, fear, and shame flash upon her face before she covers her ears, "No no no...They're lies. All lies!"

"You're not safe! Chie get over here!" Yui yells as Yosuke charges forward with Jiraiya and Izanagi following after him. Teddie and Yui bring up the rear, but they all stop when a Shadow slowly emerges out from the carpet, "Oh hell," Yosuke curses as slowly more and more begin to emerge out from the floor and ceiling. Teddie lets out a cry and ducks behind Yui as Izanagi places himself in front of Yui while Jiraiya repositions himself in front of Yosuke.

The Personas stand, back to back as Yui and Yosuke mirror their stance.

"Shit...There's too many of 'em," Yosuke whispers as Yui hisses in agreement, "We can't take them all done at once." There's five in front and six in the back from what she can

see, even if they could take them all out Chie would be endanger of getting hit by them or by a Shadow.

Behind her she can hear Chie yell.

"This isn't happening! This isn't happening!" She turns her head as she watches the girl fall onto her knees, her body facing away from her other self who laughs a bit, "No...You're not right...It's wrong. All wrong...This isn't real..."

"Are you really gonna continue to ignore me?" Chie's doppelgänger gazes down at Chie, her eyes narrowed with a large grin on her face, "Keep pretending I don't exist?"

There is a pause and Chie's other self smiles, for a moment it looks like one of Chie's cheerful grins. Yet the voice that speaks is wrong, "Well truth is I can't do anything alone. I can't win as a girl, let alone as a person...I'm pathetic. But Yukiko...She depends on me...That's why she's my friend. I'll never loosen my grip on her. She's too important to me."

"Shut up! Shut up! You're not real...You're not real!" Yui turns her body as soon as her back feels Yosuke's tense up, "Shit...No. Don't say it you idiot!" Yosuke yells as Yui and him frantically try to stop her from speaking, "Chie you have to be strong!" Yui yells.

The girl shakes her head, "She's a liar! THAT ISN'T ME!"

Teddie tenses up and he tugs at Yui's jacket, "Ah! She's gonna turn! Brace yourselves!"

Shadow Chie laughs manically, the red and black light around her flaring up causing Chie to stare back in terror as the light forms into a shape.

The light disperses and there stands Chie's Shadow.

It sits upon three smaller forms, all wearing the Yasogami High School girl uniforms. Yui can barely see their faces, but their eyes looked droopy. There are three metal collars on each girls neck with a chain that leads up to the Shadow's hand that yanks them, forcing them to straighten up so she can seem tall. She dressed in yellow, the hat on her head covers her entire face save for narrowed gold eyes and an odd red smiley face painted near the top. Long black hair flows out from under the mask, spilling out on to the floor.

The Shadow's appearance appears to be a dominatrix, a hand extends forward, a red cord falls out to the ground as a handle is held tightly.

"I am a Shadow of your true inner self!"

"Chie!"

Yosuke points out and Jiraiya jumps ahead, the stars in his hands fly out and slice all the Shadows in the front before he runs forward. Yui can only see a blur of him as Teddie yells for him to look out. The red cord of the whip is swung up into the air, ready to strike Chie who's frozen.

The breath Yui holds exhales out in a short gasp as she sees

Yosuke's body grab Chie up into his arms, rolling them out of harms way.

The Shadow snarls, "What do you think you're doing?! Tring to defend the 'real' me? Well...DON'T GET IN MY WAY!"

The strands of black hair begin to move, they raises up like snakes uncoiling themselves and Yui can barely stop to think as she screams out Izanagi's name. The Persona flies forward and his blade slices through the black hair before they could strike at Chie and Yosuke.

They dissolve into black smoke as Yui can hear the Shadow growl at her Persona, "So...You're gonna annoy me too, well...I better teach you a little lesson!"

"Izanagi defend!" Yui orders as she can see the Shadow's hand raise up to drag the whip down on to Izanagi. Her Persona turns his sword around and blocks the attack, keeping his hand pressed against the side of the blade in a horizontal position. The Shadow withdraws the whip and Jiraiya appears in front of Izangi, blasting a green gust of wind right towards the Shadow. The Shadow lets out a yell of protest as it hits.

"Yosuke, get Chie over here!" Teddie quickly tells the boy who is already moving. The Shadow lets out a scream and Yui fails to notice the hair starting to move again. The hair forms into a wave, striking their Persona's off to the sides. She is knocked off of her feet as she can hear Yosuke yell in pain at the sudden impact at his side. The fall causes him to let go of

Chie who lets out a grunt of pain.

Yui quickly gets up, shaking her head to gasp as the strands of hair wrap around Jiraiya, squeezing him into submission. Around the same time Yosuke screams out in protest as he tries to break free from the invisible force wrapped around him as Chie kneels by him, "Yosuke!"

The Shadow glances towards her and Yui can hear the chuckle under the mask as she stares down at Chie, "You're still there huh? I wished you die already! I promise to treat Yukiko really well...As my personal punching bag that is!"

"Let her...Be..."

"Chie...Don't give her fear," Yosuke weakly struggles out as he tries to push off from the floor, "Ah!"

"Yosuke!" Yui and Chie yell as the Shadow's hair wraps around his neck, cutting him off from speaking. Yui grits her teeth running forward, "Izanagi!"

The blade sparks with static and the Persona swings back, ready to strike at the Shadow. The Shadow laughs, raising her hand and the whip falls down right onto the armored Persona forcing Yui to fall back onto the floor, "Yui-chan!" Chie yells as Yui can feel her eye sight turn black.

No...

No...

Not here!

16. Wild Card

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

I apologize in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

Notes!

"Voices"

"Margaret's Voice"

Yui struggles as she tries to push herself up from the ground, only to fall back.

She can hear Chie screaming at her to get up as the Shadow laughs and cracks its whip against the floor as suddenly the room echoes out with Chie's voice.

It sounds identical to what she and Yosuke had heard when they were in the room earlier that had Yukiko's voice echoing through it. She can barely see anything, it's black. She hasn't passed out, but she isn't sure just where they are now. Chie's voice echoes around them and she struggles to try and force

herself to keep awake.

"Yukiko is so pretty."

"The boys go crazy over her."

"This...This is me?" Chie's voice echoes in the dark making Yui stiffen as she hears the Shadow giggle, "Yes..This is all the voices of the feelings you have. The words you keep bottled up, deep down inside." There's a light hiss of anger that lingers in the dark as the voices start again.

"Without me around, Yukiko would be nothing."

"She can't do anything."

"If it weren't for me, she'd be nothing."

"No..No it's not..." Chie weakly struggles to deny it, Yui can hear it in her voice and her throat tightens at how shameful the girl sounds. "This..Is...This is how I really feel? Oh..."

"So what if it is true?! Who cares!" Yosuke's voice echoes out from the darkness, stopping Chie from speaking. Yui also opens her mouth to yell, "Does it matter? You're still her friend! Aren't you?"

The girl lets out a small gasp as she hears them, from wherever she is. Yui pushes herself up as she can feel her eye sight returning to seeing color as Chie whispers out Yukiko's name. The black turns back to red and Yui looks

around frantically.

Everything had remained the same, Izanagi unmoving from the ground in front of the Shadow, Jiraiya weakly struggling to get out of the Shadow's hold on him with her hair, and Yosuke still grounded and gasping for air as he tries to get rid of the hair around his neck.

She spots Chie glaring up at her Shadow from where she kneels, the black around them slowly disappearing as she speaks louder, "Yukiko...Yukiko and I..Will always be friends! Listen...You're a part of me that's true...You're a voice I pretend that doesn't exist." The girl slowly stands and looks up to the Shadow who softly starts to snarl at her, "You're the pathetic part of me...But...That's still a part of me! Isn't that right?"

The Shadow shudders and lets out a pained groan as her image starts to distort. Static ripples through her body and the girls that support her begin to shake, making her lean too far before she cracks her whip and yanks their chains making them stand upright again. Yui sees the golden eyes in the mask widen as her voice grows high with each word she spats out, "Cut the crap! You're just gonna say that?! Are you seriously going to start acknowledging me?! Just accept me so easily?!"

Yui lets out a quiet gasp and raises her hand up weakly, Izanagi wastes no time and stumbles to stand up, blocking the whip that is ready to strike Chie down where she stands. Yui lets out a scream of pain as she feels the front of her body

sting in pain. Izanagi tenses up, the metal of his armor barely protection from the stinging blow.

"That's right...Scream for me!" The whip falls again and Izanagi is forced to return back to the ground with Yui following after him letting out a grunt of pain. It feels like her front is burning. From her shoulder to her front thigh she feels an unbelievable sting forming that makes her shudder. It feels like she had taken the whip herself on bare skin and she screams again as the Shadow hits Izanagi's back.

"Yui-chan!" Chie and Yosuke yell at the same time, "You bitch! Alright that's it! You're going down!" Yosuke yells only to let out a yelp as his body is taken off the ground. The hair around his neck tightens as the Shadow exhales sharply, "I'm gonna rip you to pieces!"

"Yosuke!" Chie yells as Teddie cries out from where he hides, "Yosuke's a goner! what do we do! What do we do?!"

"Yosuke..." Yui struggles to stand, but falls right onto her front hissing in pain. What can they do? Izanagi and Jiraiya were incapable of attacking from where they were. Chie would be left defenseless...What could she do? What can she-

"You are the Fool. The Wild Card."

A voice echoes through her head, freezing her. It's a voice she's heard before, a woman's voice. She cannot remember where, but she knows she has met this person.

"You have established a bond. A new bond, and with it will follow others of many different arcanas. As the Wild Card, you have the ability to wield a multiple Persona...Oh Chosen One."

"Wild..Card..Chosen..One," Yui repeats the words to herself as she weakly gets onto her knees. The color blue flashes by her sight and she stares at Izanagi who is weakly struggling to get up. "Izanagi..." The Persona looks at her from where he lays. His gold eyes stares at her and he nods, aware.

"Alright...Let's do it. Change!" Her hand reaches out and soon Izanagi's form disappears and suddenly a new card falls in the spot of where he was. The card resembles the card Yui had seen when she had talked to Yosuke "Pyro Jack!"

The card shatters and the blue light flares up into what resembled flames as a small figure appears in the midst of the blue light. It is smaller than Izanagi and Yui can make out a large pumpkin head with a black wizard hat and cape. It carries a large lantern with a bright flame with one gloved hand.

It lets out a high-pitched laugh, much like how she'd expect a Halloween decoration to make when you went by it.

Around her she can hear Teddie let out a scream as Yosuke seems to let out a yell of protest, "She..She can summon another one?! Not fair dude not fair! That blows!"

Yui stands up, stumbling a bit until she finds her center. The

sting from the whip faded as soon as she switched Persona and she smiles a bit as she regards her new fighting partner. Pyro Jack giggles a bit, the wide smile carved into it widens as she nods to it.

"Take her down," Yui instructs as the Shadow stares at the small Persona with amusement, "Am I suppose to be frightened?" Pyro Jack laughs and floats towards her, the lantern's flame growing brighter and larger. The Shadow tilts her head, only to gasp as flames begin to form on her hair.

Yosuke lets out a yell as he falls to the ground as Jiraiya hops away, breaking free of the loosen hair around his body. Yui watches as Yosuke yanks the remaining hair off of him before looking towards her and nods, "Yosuke do it!"

"I'm all over it!" He smirks as he glances to Jiraiya who happily flies back and raises his arms out. Green strikes the ground around the Shadow who weakly yells in protest. Pyro Jack cackled again and raises the lantern and more flames begin to form on the Shadow's hair.

She struggles to support her balance on the girls under her who struggle to move far away from the combination of fire and wind. "No...NO!"

The flames engulf her and she falls forward, her form disappears in in place is Chie's form surrounded by a faint blue light. Chie steps forward, staring up to her inner self, "You are me...A side I couldn't forgive...And I tried to ignore, but..."

She continues to stare up, her inner self grinning a bit as her eyes begin to close, "but it's true...You're me."

Yui can see a the blue light glow stronger and a new form slowly starts to show itself to Chie.

It's a woman dressed in samurai like attire while holding a long staff like weapon that seems to have two blades at the end. The black hair that used to be so long is now cut and is neatly grown at knee-length. The gold eyes behind the woman's visor of her helmet stare down at Chie.

Unlike the Shadow's eyes, hers is filled with pride and she nods to the girl.

There's a sound of a shatter and a card floats down towards Chie who quickly catches it with her open hands, "What's this?"

"It's a Persona," Yui smiles as she and Yosuke advance forward to her, she rests a hand on the girl's shoulder as she glances behind her and Yosuke. Pyro Jack cackles and floats around Jiraiya who starts to swat at the small pumpkin man, "So...This.."

"Yup. Just like us," Yosuke nods in confirmation as Chie returns her gaze back to the card.

"A..Persona.." The card twirls in place, glowing brighter until the light fades and slowly slips into Chie's body. She smiles towards Yui whose smile grows.

Only to let out a quiet gasp of concern as the girl starts to shake and almost collapses to the floor only to have Yui catch her in time. "You don't look too good..."

"I think it'd be best if we go back for now," Yui tells him feeling Chie's fingers grip her arms tightly, "N-No," Chie quickly protests, "You guys...Don't need to worry about me. I can keep going."

"Oh no you're not," Yosuke firmly tells her as Jiraiya pops up behind him, his arms also crossed as he gazes at Chie as Teddie places himself in front of the girl, "Don't overdo it..."

The bear stares at her in concern. Chie glances at the two boys before looking towards Yui who shakes her head as she keeps the girl up with her arms, "Chie-chan you need rest," the silver-haired girl tells her, "I know you want to save Yukiko-san. I understand. You have the power to fight with Yosuke and I, but I don't think you should try to fight right away...It would be best if we were all at our full strength, so we can rescue Yukiko faster. Okay?"

Chie stares at her for a moment, her mouth quivering and Yui braces herself from a possible yell. However Chie slowly nods, "Okay..."

Yosuke gives a weak smile as he takes Chie's arm and drapes it over his shoulder as Yui does the same. "Come on...Let's go home. We'll be back after you rest. Got it?" The girl nods and Teddie quickly hurries ahead of them as Jiraiya and Pyro Jack follow after the bear to keep the pathway clear

of any possible Shadows.

Chie remained quiet during the walk, on occasion she would stumble over her feet and she would grumble a quiet apology before walking in pace with Yui and Yosuke.

By the time they had left the television back to Junes, Yui grew concerned.

In some ways she was relieved that Chie didn't protest and came back willingly, the girl had exhausted herself mentally and physically going against her Shadow. Yet another part of her grew worried the longer the other girl didn't say a word. Was the other upset with them again?

Yui stares at Chie as she slumps in her seat as they both sat in silence in the food court, her fingers playing with her straw as she glances to where Yosuke stands.

The boy is busy with customers and she sighs, "He looks pretty busy right now...Huh?" Yui weakly speaks as she gazes at Chie.

The short-haired girl doesn't say anything for a moment and Yui is about to sigh until-

"I'm so pathetic..." Yui's fingers stop fiddling with her straw as she looks to Chie, "The next time it gets foggy over here...It's possible Yukiko will die..." Chie's fingers hold her drink tightly in her hands, fingers pressing against the thick paper container making dents form, "And...And I won't be able to do

anything..Useless..."

"You're far from useless Chie-chan," Yui speaks up and reaches out. She rests a hand onto the girl's rest and her grip on her drink loosens as she stares at her.

Her eyes are glassy, tears threatening to flow out as Yui stares. "When we go back to save Yukiko...We need your help to do it. You're not useless at all." Chie stares at her, her eyes wide as the glassy look in them fades as she weakly smiles.

"Thanks," she laughs a bit and Yui withdraws her hand as Chie quickly puts her hand into her pocket, "You know..For exchange for that, I gotta show you something...Yui-chan." Yui's eyes widen in surprise at the sudden change, but she smiles. "What is it?"

"My dog," Chie giggles a bit as she opens her phone to her, "He's a real porker huh? He stinks like nobody's business too." The picture Chie shows her is that of herself and a rather large dog. The dog's fur is brown and white, his mouth hanging out from his mouth as he gives a very goofy expression towards the camera as Chie fondly smiles, "But if it wasn't for this guy...I may have never met Yukiko. He's the one who made our friendship possible."

Yui smiles, only to jerk up when she hears something and her vision starts to turn odd. It's like that time with Yosuke as the other day, her eyes become unfocused and she can see faint blue in an odd haze as Chie looks at her cell phone with a

smile.

THOU ART I

AND I AM THOU

THOU HAS ESTABLISHED A NEW BOND

OF THE CHARIOT ARCANA

The card they use to summon Persona turns over and an image becomes clear as it presents itself to Yui. The Roman numeral number this time is displayed as a seven, VII. The picture is that of a person in armor riding what looks like a chariot with two figures in front that resembles lions that seem to pull it.

Yui blinks rapidly as the image fades as Chie smiles to her, "Oh yeah, speaking of cell phones...We should exchange numbers now huh?" The silver-haired girl nods in agreement, still blinking away the haze of blue that lingers behind. Chie raises an eyebrow, "You okay?"

"Oh yeah...Just dust in my eye," Yui weakly laughs as she takes out her phone and hands it to Chie who gives her hers, "And da dah! We have exchanged numbers!" Chie hands back her cell phone and Yui glances at it, raising an eyebrow at the sudden change of one name on it, "...Why is Yosuke-kun's name suddenly Dragon Killer?"

"Hey. He ripped your thigh highs right? Until he buys me back

on the DVD that is officially his title...Don't let him know," Chie smiles as she sips her soda. From where he stands Yui glances over to see Yosuke sneeze loudly before snickering lightly.

"Whoa...You know...You didn't have to go all out," Dojima comments as Yui and Nanako set the table for dinner.

Her return home she had found her uncle resting on the couch with Nanako watching TV. Yui immediately set to work to prepare dinner, Nanako jumping up and trailing behind her as she started to make the rice.

It was amusing really, her uncle staring at Nanako and her in the kitchen and hearing them talk about their days. It must have felt odd as both girls rarely spoke at all.

"...Hey mind if I ask you something?" Dojima spoke up as Yui paused herself from eating, "Yes uncle?"

"You're not getting yourself involved with any strange business are you? What happened at the station earlier bothered me," he quickly explains, "You're not...Hiding anything are you?" Yui raises an eyebrow and shakes her head, "No. Of course not."

Most definitely not hiding anything about a TV World, Persona, and Shadows...Nope. Same old business. Yui keeps her face completely neutral. No smiles and nothing of the sort, just a clueless expression as her uncle stares at her. "I see...Well it's just been nagging at me," Dojima continues.

He doesn't turn away and Yui continues to hold a steady gaze towards her relative until Nanako speaks, "What's wrong? Are you fighting?"

Dojima and her looks away and stare at the little girl as she gives her father a look. Dojima quickly shakes his head, "Oh no no...We're not fighting..." Nanako's frowns and her eyebrows arch as she points her chopsticks at him, "This isn't the police station," she lightly scolds as Yui isn't sure whether to snicker or not.

Dojima looks at his rice and sighs before looking at Yui, "I agreed to look after you," he tells her sternly, "So don't get yourself involved in anything that could get you into trouble...Understand?" Yui nods, "I know..."

Nanako clears her throat loudly again making them both flinch as Dojima looks at his daughter with a hard expression, "Nanako..We're not fighting...I promise." Nanako only lets out a light huff before returning to her food. Yui gives her uncle a sympathetic smile and shrugs, hoping to at least assure the man he didn't do anything wrong.

The phone rings and Yui blinks in surprise. "I'll get it," she quickly announces before Dojima moves from his place. She takes the phone out of its cradle and presses the answer button.

"Hello?"

A man on the other side clears his throat and her face drops,

"It's me, Morooka."

Oh lord...He had her home number...

Well that shouldn't be much of a surprise anyway, he was her homeroom teacher. Though hearing the man's voice after having a day away from him...She bites back her words and speaks again, "Yes sir?"

"I have something that I've prepared just for you. I was going to deliver it to your house, but the situation's changed. I need you to come pick it up."

She had to pick it up? Why couldn't he wait until tomorrow?

"Yes sir, um...Where are you exactly?" She pulls the phone away as soon as she asks as the man's voice rises, "Where am I? I was getting to that!" He clears his throat again, "I'm in front of the gas station at the shopping district. You got that? Now hurry up and come pick it up!" The dial tone meets her ears immediately and she stares at the phone.

"Who was that?" Dojima asks from the table as she turns, her face must be pale because Nanako looks rather concerned, "Are you sick again?" she asks and Yui shakes her head, "Oh no..I'm fine, but um...Uncle, I need to go out...My homeroom teacher summon-I mean, needs to see me."

The way that man talked sound more like he was ordering her to just get whatever he wanted to give her...

Dojima raises an eyebrow, "Your homeroom teacher wants to see you? You just got there, and you're already done something." Yui's eyes widen and stares at him, not blinking. The man blinks in surprise at the sudden stare before looking away after she hadn't blinked at all.

"It was a joke...Well, I understand," he sighs quietly as she lets her eyelids blink again, "Go take care of it, but hurry straight back home. Sheesh...This is the first time I've seen you do that. Your Father does the same thing. It's freaky."

Yui shrugs before walking out towards the front door.

Yui ran towards the Shopping District as soon as her shoes were on her feet.

For one she didn't want to get her uncle upset for being slow and also not wanting to anger King Moron for being, well slow to respond.

Rounding the corner she spots the slouched man, and a girl from school who looks rather annoyed. She slows herself and walks up to them, "Mr. Morooka?"

"Oh there you are," her teacher turns and throws a bundle of clothes at her when she's even barely a foot away. Her hands catch it in time before they fall to the ground as he continues to talk, "This is the school jersey. Go on, take it!" Her eyes twitch as she studies the uniform in her arms, how could she take it? He practically threw it at her instead.

It's nothing too new, a simple uniform with sweatpants and a jersey jacket with the letters Y and H sewn on it. She folds them neatly before she looks to him. King Moron scoffs a bit and waves his hand out, "Now that you've got it, get the hell outta of here! I need to see this girl home! Unless...You want me to help you home too?"

Yui shakes her head and immediately speeds off before the man changes his mind. The girl beside him sighs loudly, "I'm being honest!" Yui can hear her say as she bolts towards the stores, "I really was coming home from cram school!"

"Yeah, yeah that's what they all say!"

Yui stops herself when she's sure she's safe at a far away distance and breathes out a sigh of relief. She freezes suddenly before turning her head towards a blue door that stands in front of the wall between two stores.

"This...Wasn't here before..."

"Ah, I see you've finally started," a man's voice echoes in her head and she leans away, that voice!

"Now...If you'll give me a moment of your time?" Yui slowly walks towards the door, her fingers reaching out to touch the handle of the door. As she pushes it open she begins to see a very familiar room.

A room she hadn't seen since her arrival to Inaba.

She slips inside, her body bending down as she slides into the seat as the door shuts automatically.

Blue...Everywhere around her is the color blue.

Her head turns as she studies everything, it's a lot brighter now then when she had first seen it. The engine of the limo is quiet and she finally turns her head.

There sits two figures she hasn't seen in a very long time and she isn't sure whether to smile or stare.

"Hello again," Igor greets her, "We have been expecting you. The catastrophe that is headed your way...Has already taken human lives in is approach towards you..."

"...Are you talking about Ms. Yamano and Saki-senpai? Their deaths?" Yui inquires as the man before her quietly chuckles, "There is nothing to fear my dear guest. You already have the power to fight against it. The power..Of Persona."

Igor chuckles again as Yui sits there in silence until a new voice chimes in. This time it's from Margaret, the woman looks at Yui and Yui immediately knows where the voice from her battle with Shadow Chie came from. It was from Margaret.

"As you know...You are the Wild Card," Margaret explains, "As stated, you wield many Persona all of which are from your bonds with those who possess other arcanas. As you strengthen those bonds, their power will help you overcome

any ordeal."

Igor nods as his assistant finishes, "You have the power to hold multiple Personas and with that, you can use them accordingly." Yui takes in the information before resting a hand against the side of her head, "So...The more relationships I have," she quietly speaks, "The more Persona I gain and with that, I gain more power? Is that it?"

"Correct," Igor smiles, "Do you recall my words to you before? 'The coming year is a turning point in your destiny...If the mystery goes unsolved, your future may be forever lost.' I meant precisely what I said, defeat in battle is not the only way your journey may come to an end..."

He chuckles and Yui feels a light shiver race down her spine a bit as she keeps her eyes focused on the goblin like man as he nods to her, "Do not forget this." He chuckles again and waves a hand towards the door and it opens for her, "The next time we meet, you will come here of your own will. I look forward to your journey dear guest...Until then farewell." Yui nods, bowing a bit to both him and Margaret who nods in return.

Slipping outside of the room, Yui stumbles a bit on the ground before glancing behind her. The blue door stands closed as she hugs the gym uniform to her chest, "...Wild Card huh?" She glances down to the ground before looking up, "...I should get home."

She picks up her feet and starts the walk back to the Dojima

residence, all the while wondering just how the future would play out.

17. Strength in Unity

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

I'm gonna be honest with you guys... This social link encounter about to occur was the hardest for me to write. I really hope it meets your expectations!

I apologize in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

The walk to school was uneventful, her new skirt that came down just pass her knee made her feel a lot better walking. She didn't need to pull on the ends anymore and just had to worry about the longer skirt get stuck in the door. Which she doubted.

"Hey Yui-chan! Morning," Yosuke greets her, thankfully managing to support his bike from crashing into the usual telephone pole or trash can as he pedaled by her side.

"Morning Yosuke-kun," she greeted. Her eyes fell right onto the boy's bike and watched it jerk as he tried to keep his balance as he stayed at her pace, "...You know you don't

need to keep yourself at my pace. You can wait for me up ahead if you have something to do first before class."

"Hey, are you trying to say I can't ride my bike?" the boy scoffed as he pedals, "Have more faith in me Yui-chan, I've managed to get us to school twice."

"With me praying behind you if you recall," she finishes for him and nearly jumps away as he lets out a quick yelp as he tries to adjust the front wheel. Yosuke lets out a weak laugh, "Hey this old bike's not that old or bad...Not saying the rider's to blame either." Yui gives him a face before shaking her head, "You think Chie-chan will be okay?"

"Huh? Well..." They both hesitate on the question. The girl looked completely wiped out when they left from Junes. In fact when Yui had texted the girl to be sure she went home safely, she received no answer. Her first assumption was to worry, but after a while she understood that perhaps Chie had fallen to sleep as soon as she got home.

"Speak of the devil," Yosuke comments and hits his brakes as she turns to see the short-haired girl walking their way. "Oh, mornin'!" She greets them and Yui waves, "Did you sleep well?"

"Oh yeah," Chie stretches her arms up into the air and sighs in relief, "I was out cold until this morning. I feel a lot better now." She pauses, glancing at the two before looking around. Yui tilts her head in concern as Chie speaks quietly, "Thanks for...Everything yesterday," she tells them, "It's...Sorta

embarrassing. You two were there to see everything. My hidden feelings and..."

"It's no problem," Yui tells Chie as Yosuke nods in agreement, "Yeah, don't sweat it."

Chie nods, a small grin forming before she looks to Yosuke, "Oh yeah, you guys kept going on how it was for you right, Yosuke? So...What was it like?"

Yui watches as the other jerks a bit, "Uh well um...How should I put this?" Yosuke stops before glancing to Yui who blinks in surprise, "Oh right...Yui-chan nothing happened to you right? Wonder if it's cuz you got nothing to hide?" Yui shrugs, "I don't know...I just heard Izanagi and he was just there. You saw."

"So...Wait, nothing?" Chie stares at her in shock, "Well...Now that I think about it, you're pretty blunt when we ask you for your opinion and you're an open person...And there's a funny air about you. Don't know, maybe that's just makes people want to talk to you."

Yui blinks in surprise and tilts her head as Yosuke and Chie laugh at her expression. "You know when you do that I keep thinking of this cat I keep seeing around here," Chie giggles, "It always does what you do when it's confused. Its eyes get a little bigger and it tilts its head."

"Really? Well...I like cats after all," Yui smiles a bit as the other smiles before her face turns into one of determination, "We have to rescue Yukiko still. That's the most important

thing right now. You promised, Yui-chan." The silver-haired girl nods, "I know. I know."

Yosuke seems to smile as he watches the two until he glances at his watch, "Oh crap. We're not late, but at this rate I won't make it to the bathroom on time! I-I'm going on ahead!" Yui sighs a bit as she watches the boy pedal off before cupping her hands around her mouth, "I told you so!"

"Dude don't start!" Yui frowns as he watches him pedal through the gate, almost hitting the sides before yelling, "I meant to do that!"

Chie scoffs lightly as the boy disappears before turning to Yui, "Also Yui-chan...Uh...Thanks for talking to me yesterday," the girl continues, "I mean...I meant what I said. That there's something different about you? There is, like I can trust you and you won't let me down."

"Your welcome Chie-chan," Yui laughs quietly, "No need to humble yourself. It was the right thing to do." Chie grins and nods, "Uh huh. Hey, do you think that...When we get Yukiko back we can just hang out, all three of us? It'll be awesome huh?" Yui nods in agreement as she and the other girl begin to walk towards the gate all the while chatting about possible ideas of what they could all do together, when Yukiko came back.

When classes began, with Yosuke jumping into his seat at the first bell, Yui and Chie were still giggling quietly over his new nickname.

Instead of King Moron entering the room, a man in a red tracksuit came in. He smiled to them before waving, "Good morning everyone!" he greets them, "As you know I'm Mr. Kondo. Your P.E. teacher, however right now I'm official your English teacher." Yui blinks a bit in surprise at the man's words, the school allowed teachers to teach two different classes? It became official, Yasogami High had surpassed the standards of her old school back in the city. She would never picture any of her old teachers filling in any other role than the one class they were specialized to teach. Next to her she can see Chie's head nod, looks like she's still a little tired...

"We're going to start on with the English alphabet for today. It starts with A, then B, then C and...Well...23 more!" The man laughs as Yui rests her chin onto her fingers as she listens. It's all basic to her...After all, her parents somewhat pushed her to learn English when she was younger for 'business' purposes as it was the universal language...

"Hm...Let's see...Narukami!"

Yui jerks up as she is called and nods, "Yes sir?"

"The word 'alphabet' comes from the words 'alpha' and what other one?"

"Beta," Yui immediately answers, "Both derive from the Greek alphabet." Her teacher nods, "Correct!" Yui relaxes as she looks to Chie who is now glancing at her phone, suddenly alert and sits up a bit straighter as she reads the text. She glances over to Yui who looks at her in confusion before returning

back to her phone and looking back to Yui.

"...Chie-chan is something wrong?" Yui whispers quietly as their teacher's back is turned as the girl hesitates a moment, "Uh...Hey Yui-chan," Chie whispers quickly, "Have you signed up for anything...Uh...Sports related? Or do you know sports at all?" Yui's eyebrows raise up at the question and she thinks a moment. She hadn't really thought about joining up with any after school activities as she had been focused mostly on the TV World.

There weren't any sports clubs that did seem to interest her...In fact to her knowledge all the girls' teams were all full and weren't doing anything. "Cuz," Chie continues as she leans close to Yui, "Uh...One of my friend's just asked me to help them out finding a manager...And I don't know anyone that's capable. So..." The girl's words trail off as she looks to Yui with a hopefully look, "I told 'em that you won't stay that long...Though I doubt their practice will be too long and we can get to the TV World on time...So...C-Can you?"

The silver-haired girl pauses a moment, letting her eyes rest over towards the back of their teacher before nodding her head quickly, "I guess it wouldn't be so bad..." Chie's face lights up and she puts her hands together and bows her head to Yui, "Oh you're a life saver!"

"Did you want to add something Satonaka?"

"Nope! No sir!"

Chie dragged Yui towards the faculty office as soon as the bell rang that school was over. Yosuke blinks at them both as Yui is unfortunate to be dragged by her elbow and nearly crashes into the doorway as she gives Yosuke a weak grin. "Looks like your strength came back during those class naps," she lightly teased Chie as the two girls went down the stairs.

"Psh! I'll be at hundred percent by the time we go rescue Yukiko!" Chie declared as they open the door before they both crash into King Moron.

"Hey watch it you two!" The man yells as soon as they both backed out to allow the man room to walk by, "Be more well-behaved you little brats. What the hell are you down here for?"

"Uh...Well, sir," Chie quickly spoke, "I'm just here to let you know that Yu-Narukami-chan wants to be a sports team manager. Right?" Yui nods quickly as the man scoffs at them both, "Join as team manager huh? Ha!" The man sneers at Yui whose body automatically straightens up rigidly.

"Ohhh, no! I know what you're trying to pull! You're gonna try to get some guys after you aren't you?! Admit it! Listen up you city slicker, those clubs aren't meant for that sort of crap! They're meant for-"

"Is Mr. Kondo here?" Chie practically yells her question, but it manages to catch the man off guard, "Huh? What?"

"Mr. Kondo, the P.E. instructor?" Chie struggles to keep her

composure as she continues, "He's in charge of the sports teams right? Is he here...Sir?" King Moron huffs a bit, "Yeah...Guy's outside with one of those teams. Ha...Meathead..."

Yui swallows in her retort as Chie nods, "Alright got it...Um...Sir. L-Let's go." Yui follows the girl immediately before the man says anything else. They both walk slowly until they round a corner and immediately slump against the wall, "Oh god...I think my heart stopped," Yui sighs out as Chie rests her hands on her knees and inhales loudly, "Yeah...I thought for sure he wouldn't be right there at the door. Anyway let's head off to the soccer field, knowing the coach he should be there first."

Yui nods in agreement, "Any where away from King Moron.."

Chie laughs a bit, "Wow Yui-chan, your face looks completely pale!"

"Can you blame me? The man calls me a loser the first day I come here AND he made a call to my house last night...Just for a gym uniform," Yui weakly points as Chie leads her out of the building towards the field. They walk outside and Yui squints a bit, adjusting to the change of light as Chie runs over to the man who stands right at the edge of the field.

"Mr. Kondo!"

"Satonaka, well this is a surprise," the coach greets her as Yui walks slowly over, "What brings you here? I didn't ask you

to come by to help out any of the teams at the moment." Chie shakes her head, "Oh no. Actually I found the solution to your team manager problems for the soccer team, you know Yui Narukami right?"

Chie pats a hand on Yui's back, urging her forward as the man nods. "Of course," Mr. Kondo smiles, "Answered my question this morning pretty easily. So, does that mean you're interested in managing the soccer team Narukami? All you need to do is help out with cleaning, keep track over who's showing up and such, and probably trying to keep them in line during practice. Sounds easy?"

"...Not in the slightest, but..I can try," Yui weakly smiles as the coach laughs and slaps her on the shoulder, "Good answer! I'll go call the guys over and introduce you." Chie grins a bit as he disappears, "This is great!" she tells Yui, "Oh man, I'm pretty sure this will help the team. I mean, they're so unmotivated sometimes...But still. If you're there to whip them into shape I'm sure they'll get their act together!"

"...I don't know the first thing about soccer though," Yui points out as Chie just nudges her, "Oh don't worry about it. I'm sure you'll do fine and there's someone on the team I know will help you out. Oh right! I should tell Yosuke why we left...He's probably going to tell me I'm not being 'logical.' Bleh...Just meet us over at Junes as soon as you can okay?" Yui gives Chie a mock salute as the girl hurries off before Mr. Kondo returns over to Yui, "Hey Narukami c'mon I'll introduce you to the team."

She follows the coach quietly, glancing ahead spotting five soccer players standing in front of them. There's one person she recognizes from the group of players and she isn't sure whether to feel relief or worry.

The player is the one who she had seen wearing the gym uniform.

The boy looks at her, his face pulled into a tight expression as she stands besides the coach as he looks at the small group of players in front of him. "This everyone? Okay, well good news boys you're getting a team manager!" Mr. Kondo pats Yui on the shoulder as she looks at the players as he continues, "This here is Yui Narukami. Our very own transfer student from the city!"

He releases his hold on her and puts his hands in the pockets of his jacket as he nods to them, "Now you guys won't have to take turns doing all the work anymore. You can thank me later!"

At this Yui can't help, but look at the man with a brow raised. Wasn't Chie the one who asked her? Even the player she recognizes makes a face as well as Mr. Kondo nudges at her a bit, "Go on say something." She regards the man's wide smile before bowing down.

"Nice to meet you all..."

As she straightens up she notices that the team is staring at her, much more than earlier as Mr. Kondo nods and pats her

on the shoulder, "Nice greeting, nice. Anyway, you guys go ahead and do a few laps. Narukami, I want you to keep watch over them okay? Soccer practices are usually Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. We take on break in the week ahead before exams and we don't practice in the rain. Practical huh?"

Yui glances at him before nodding quietly and looking back at the team before Mr. Kondo claps his hands, "Hey what are you all standing around for still? C'mon I wanna see some laps!" The players nod before starting to run towards the end of field to start their laps as Mr. Kondo returns back to his place on the edge. The silver-haired teenager hesitates a bit before walking towards a spot by the goal.

"...Hey."

She turns around and meets the stare of the one player she recognized, "So...You're the one Chie said she managed to get as our manager...Huh." The player crosses his arms and stares at her a moment, "Who'd have figured...Name's Daisuke by the way...Daisuke Nagase, I'm in the same grade as you. Figured you might wanna know since we're gonna be seeing each other a lot more now then in the hallways."

Yui nods, her head bowing a bit more than she intended as Daisuke sighs, "Sheesh...Those guys. As soon as you showed up they started running without a single complaint...That's a new record." Yui focuses her eyes back onto the team as they jogged around in the field. She isn't sure how to feel as a few of them glance her way, "They really shouldn't do that,"

she suddenly tells Daisuke, "They joined to play soccer right Daisuke-san? All practices should be taken seriously, not just to impress someone."

She glances at Daisuke who's stare now is more of confusion before he makes a small grin, "Ya know you're something," he finally says, "I didn't expect that to come from you..."

"What do you mean?" Yui frowns as the other shakes his head, "Don't worry about it. Just glad you seem...Okay." Her eyebrow rises up and she puts a hand on her hip about to speak again, before footsteps approach them, "Yo Daisuke, you waiting for a special invitation? What are you doing standing around for?" The blue haired student that is always around Daisuke stops and looks her way, "Oh hey we meet again," he greets her, "Wait..If you're here."

He glances to Daisuke who nods, "Yeah. Chie managed to get her to fill in our spot as our team manager."

"Really now? Ha! Good," the blue haired student gives her a wide grin, "Be sure to keep these guys in shape. They need all the help they can get. Pretty weak team, know what I'm saying?" Yui watches as Daisuke's eyes widen and he nudges the other on the shoulder, "Oi! Shut up! Your team is just as lame!" Daisuke scoffs and jabs his finger to his friend, "This big mouth here is Kou Ichijo. Same grade as us, but he's on the basketball team."

"I'm also going to be the basketball team's up-and-coming MVP," Kou lightly smirks as Daisuke rolls his eyes, "A little too

high in the clouds on that man..."

Yui watches them, a warm feeling in her chest as the two lightly tease each other. Their friendship is about similar to that of Chie and Yukiko. Though, much more based on light taunts and jokes towards the others. "Man, if I knew Chie would ask you to be the team manager I should have snagged in," Kou tells her as she shakes her head, "I'm that actually not that much of a sports person," she admits to them.

Kou doesn't look at all offended, but Daisuke's face falls right away at her words. "Hey now, don't sweat it. Me and Daisuke can help you out," the basketball player laughs and walks over to her. He stops in front of her and looks, "...Now that I'm closer to you I just noticed...You're really tall for a chick."

Yui's face flares up and she narrows her eyes, "Hey..." Daisuke lightly scoffs, "What's the matter Kou? Not like anyone's any different right?" Kou turns his head towards his friend, "Hey. Hey. What did I say about using my height like that?" He turns around before smiling to Yui, "Though you seem pretty cool Yui...Pretty sure you'll do good things for the team." Yui glances towards Daisuke who has a rather neutral expression on his face.

At the very least he didn't seem as annoyed or indifferent to her before. Kou otherwise seemed pretty welcoming to her as a team manager...Perhaps both athletes would be her friends over time...

She jerks a bit as a familiar shattering sound echoes through

her ears and her eyes start to become unfocused again as blue invades her line of sight of the two boys in front of her. A card is presented to her and Izanagi's voice rings out in her head.

THOU ART I

AND I AM THOU

THOU HAS ESTABLISHED A NEW BOND

OF THE STRENGTH ARCANA

The card flips and shines brightly, presenting a new image upon its surface to her. The Roman numeral, XI, is placed at the bottom of the card which she knows means eleven. The picture displays two shapes that takes her a moment to identify. One shape is more distinguishable than the other, it's a shadow of a lion. The other takes a while for her to figure out until she notices the curves, a woman.

The two are depicted to be interacting with each other in a rather calm way. She blinks a bit and rubs her eyes as Daisuke lets out a groan, "Oh wait dammit! I'm behind on my laps." The boy looks at her before nodding, "Nice meeting you Narukami."

Kou rolls his eyes and sighs as his friend sprints off to join the other team members, "Don't let his weird attitude get to you. He's actually pretty glad that the team's got a manager," he tells her before walking away, "Well I gotta head back to the

gym, nice seeing you again Narukami-chan!"

Yui waves back to the boy, her eyes still blinking away the reminding blue that keeps popping up the more she blinked.

"You know," Yosuke announced as they stood at the center of the TV World after Yui and Chie explained why the silver-haired girl was a bit late, "If you had just said you were gonna be the team manager, you could have told me right away." Chie sighed, "I'm sorry, but it was urgent! Besides Yui-chan came back on time right?"

"...What's a 'team manager?'" Teddie questioned as Chie sighed before earning a light pat on the head by Yui which makes him happily grin. Chie shakes her head, "You know what, never mind. Now that Yui-chan's here we can get back to that castle and get Yukiko out of there!" She squints a bit and rubs her eyes, "Ugh...I still can't see anything at all. I'm starting to get a headache again."

Yui blinks and touches her glasses to push them up, stopping when she and Yosuke look at each other. "Oh, right. You're not wearing the glasses yet."

"Huh? Glasses? My eye sight is fine," Chie lightly replied as Yui looks to Teddie, "Did you make her a pair Teddie?" The bear nods, "Yes indeedy! Tum de dummm! A pair ready just for Chie-chan!" Teddie struts forward and extends a hand out, presenting Chie a pair of folded glasses in his paw.

The yellow glasses' frames are oval shaped and was thicker compared to Yosuke's. Yui watches as the girl gingerly picks them up and places them on her face. Her mouth drops and she looks around frantically, "Whoa! This is awesome! The fog doesn't look like it exists with these on!"

She laughs a bit, "No wonder you guys could see where you were going, I thought you were just wearing them to look cool." Yui smiles as she pushes her glasses a bit up the bridge of her nose, "They do make us look pretty cool huh? All thanks to Teddie."

The blue bear grins, "Fo' sho!" Yosuke grimaces and sighs, "Okay Teddie, rule number one on trying to be cool. No." Teddie sighs quietly and looks to Yui expectantly as the other stares down at him. There's a pause as Teddie tilts his head a bit before Yui giggles lightly and pats him on the head. "Ah Sensei-chan just knows how to make me feel SO much better!" the bear happily laughs as Yosuke puts a hand to his face, "Yui-chan...You're spoiling him. Don't do that or his head's going to get big."

"Aren't you one to talk," Chie lightly teases as the boy sighs, "But all things aside, let's make a promise to each other right now. Nobody comes in here alone. It's way too dangerous." He glances to Chie and Yui, "Even if Teddie's here, working alone won't do us any good...Right? We have to save Yukiko-san, and anyone else in the future in order to solve this case."

"Agreed," Yui nods as she looks at him with a small smile on her face, "Working together...That will be much more efficient

and we can end this mystery as soon as possible." From the corner of her eye Chie also nods, "I promise too," she tells them, "There's no turning back now."

Yosuke clears his throat and Yui notices him staring at her with a serious look on his face, "...Would you mind being our leader?"

The question takes her off guard and her eyes widen as she keeps her gaze at him, "You're powerful. You were the first to get this power," he explains, "And you're way better than me or Chie for that matter of fighting. Also...It's thanks to you that we managed to even defeat our Shadows. I think...It's best for all of us if you were the one to lead us in this investigation. I mean..."

He laughs a bit, "I'm all for being the hero, but I'm cool playing second banana if you're setting the pace for us."

Yui blinks as Chie quickly interjects her own thoughts.

"I agree," she smiles to Yui as she nods in confirmation with her words, "If you're the one calling the shots, I'd feel a lot more comfortable about this."

"Me three!" Teddie pipes up as he happily looks to Yui with a large smile, "If you're the one calling the shots Sensei, my pillow will be a lot more comfortable at night."

"So...We're all in favor of making you our leader Yui-chan," Yosuke concludes, "So...What do you say?"

Yui glances at all three of them, taking in their stares. They all stare back at her with a look of hope and admiration each in a different way. Teddie's gaze beams of happiness while Chie's reflects back respect. Yosuke's steady stare is one of confidence, confidence in her.

"Leave it to me," Yui finally answers. The smile on her face couldn't have grown any wider as she nods while bowing to them, "I won't let you down." She straightens up and there's a feeling of warmth that washes over her. These people...They believed in her. They trusted her. They...They were her friends.

She hears something shatter off in a far off distance, but she doesn't jerk this time.

Izanagi's voice seems louder as the card appears in front of her as she begins to see blue overcast her sight.

THOU ART I

AND I AM THOU

THOU HAS ESTABLISHED A NEW BOND

OF THE FOOL ARCANA

The image that appears as the card flips over is familiar to her...It is her own arcana.

The picture is that of a person who holds a stick with a bag

tied to the end as it seems to be skipping off towards the edge of the card. A shadow of a dog is following it.

She blinks quickly as the image disappears as Chie glances towards the direction of the castle before looking at Yui. The girl doesn't need anything else and nods to her friend, "I know...Let's go save Yukiko-san now."

Again hardest social link formed to write!

*As you know in the games you can form the Strength link through either Kou or Daisuke. In the anime they focus on Kou's story. In this case I decided to do the link through Daisuke as I haven't seen many people do so. I think it's more interesting in this situation with a FeMC... *MUST NOT SPOIL.**

In all I hope I didn't ruin it or made it look poorly written out. I apologize. Thank you again for reading!

18. I Burn Red

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

Brace yourselves guys! Long chapter straight ahead!

I apologize in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

"Come Tomoe Gozen!"

The card shatters as Chie kicks it and Yui and Yosuke watch as the blue light forms around her. The light seems brighter compared to Yui's whose usual summon for Izanagi is lightning, it looks nearly white almost. Chie's light fades, but Yui feels a light cold breeze emitting from the light as faint signs of snowflakes disappear as Chie's Persona forms before them.

The samurai woman stares down at Chie before focusing her gaze on Yui and Yosuke before staring at Jiraiya and Izanagi. Chie grins at her Persona, "Well, this is her. Guys meet my Persona Tomoe Gozen, but she said to call her Tomoe if you want to."

"Nice to meet you Tomoe," Yui greets as Izanagi bows to the new Persona. Tomoe regards them both with a nod before returning Izanagi's bow. "Yo," Yosuke waves, "Nice to meet ya too. Welcome to the team!"

Jiraiya hops in front of the female Persona and extends his hand, Tomoe stares at it before grasping it. It doesn't take long for Jiraiya to flinch up and tug at his arm to free his hand from the other's grasp. "Easy on the handshake!" Yosuke grasps his own hand as the samurai finally releases the ninja Persona's hand. Jiraiya instantly is at Izanagi's side and hides behind the tall Persona who looks between the two in confusion.

"It looks like she doesn't like him," Yui remarks earning a look from Yosuke who is blowing on his hand, "Oh really I didn't know!" He waves his hand again and curls it up into a fist before sighing as Chie laughs a bit, "Well maybe it's cuz she holds some of my anger to you!"

"The hell are you angry at me for?!"

"...Dragon Killer," Yui whispers out before quickly coughing to cover up the name as Yosuke looks at her before glaring at Chie. "Anyway," he sighs as he glances to the door in front of them, "We got no idea what sort of Shadows we'll be facing today. So Chie if you can't handle it-"

"For the last time I can handle it," the girl cuts him off as Tomoe stands by her, "Today we're getting Yukiko back, and I'm not giving up until she's out of here!" Both of their eyes

gleam with determination and Yui nods as she pats Yosuke on the shoulder to get him to relax. Teddie sniffs the air for a moment before looking at the door, "I don't think there's any Shadows yet on this floor ready to attack, but that doesn't mean they won't try later. Be careful."

"We'll do the old trick from last time," Yui announced as she glanced to Izanagi who nodded, "Izanagi will handle the door and when it opens Jiraiya and Tomoe can handle the Shadows that try to surprise attack us. Remember, no leaving gaps between the group okay?" Chie nods and salutes, "Got it! Let's go!"

Yui smiles at the girl's energy before they both begin to run down the hall as Yosuke and Teddie bring up the rear.

The first door they approach Izanagi speeds up, his foot making contact with the wood and it flies open. Sure enough a good number of Shadows were flung off as Jiraiya and Tomoe charged from the back to the front. Yui observes Tomoe as Jiraiya pushes the Shadows back with his wind.

The samurai Persona seems to float just like Izanagi does, however it seemed she favored imitating running while in the air or preferred to stand on the ground. The weapon in her hand swings quickly and aims right on point on the Shadows who try to gang up on her. The blades slice the opponents in half and Tomoe digs one end of the weapon to the carpet using the pole to spin her body around to kick the Shadows into smoke.

Tomoe retrieves her weapon out and jumps up back into the air. Izanagi claps as Jiraiya crosses his arms, trying to attempt a look of indifference towards the new Persona.

"Yukiko!" Chie yells into the empty room before letting out a growl of frustration, "Okay, let's go to the next then!" Tomoe follows after her as Yui sighs a bit and begins to run again, "Chie-chan's really on fire huh!" Teddie comments behind her as Yosuke yells, "Chie, don't over do it we said! We don't want you to use up all your strength!"

"I'll be fine!" Chie tells him as they round a corner, "This is nothing compared to what I usually do!"

"I'm scared to ask what it is you usually do!" Yui calls out as she tries to keep up with Chie. Her legs are starting to strain and she can only follow the girl by at least a few feet behind as they continue down the hall. She was fit, but obviously not fit enough to catch up to Chie. It's only thanks to the length of her long legs she's able to keep up with the girl at all. Izanagi flies by her and kicks open another door, this one leading up to stairs.

"Oh sweet stairs! We have to be close right?!" Chie cheers as she jumps up past three steps before continuing up the rest. Yui stops a moment to stare up at the large staircase before them and Izanagi looks up as well. Behind her she can hear Yosuke pant quietly as he stops beside her, "I'm not surprised...That she's like this. At all...Ah...L-Let's go before we lose her again." Yui nods and starts to pick up her feet again and hurrying up the stairs, she doesn't have the heart to

tell Yosuke it seemed they would be running behind Chie for a good while.

Chie and Tomoe reach towards the end of the steps until the lights suddenly turn off, startling all of them to stop.

"Ah! AH! Weird feeling weird feeling!" Teddie screams as they look around confused, "Something's coming!"

"What's coming?" Chie demands as a spotlight suddenly appears behind Teddie and a drumroll echoes through the area. Teddie looks around confused as he tries to find where the source of his worry is as the teenagers follow the light towards the top of the stairs.

The drumming stops as Yui finds herself staring at someone's turned back. The person has long black hair and is dressed in a pink ball gown.

The person turns and lets out a gasp of surprise, Yui immediately knows who it is. This person appeared on the Midnight Channel and the gold eyes are a dead clue of who this person isn't as well.

"Yukiko?!" Yui quickly grabs hold of Chie's jacket before she sprints up the remaining stairs, "It's not who you think it is," she quickly tells her as Chie looks at her in confusion.

The Yukiko look-alike suddenly giggles as a recording of some weird song begins to play as she starts to speak. She holds the mic in her hands as she stares intently on all of

them, "What's this? Surprise guests?" She giggles again and curtsied to them, "Now this is starting to be a party~"

Yui can feel Chie start to tug at the sleeve she holds, but the silver-haired teenager keeps a firm hold. The other Yukiko again stares at all of them before laughing a bit as she takes the mic in one hand and extends her hand out. "Now that this is starting up I think it's time. For. Our. Next. Segment!"

Words flash over the other as soon as she says this.

IT'S NOT SCRIPTED!

Princess Yukiko's

Hunter for Her Prince on a White Horse

"Uh...What's that?" Teddie asked as the cheers of some audience is played off in the background. "Looks like a title screen," Yosuke answers as Yui takes in the bold words and nods in agreement. The title looks identical to the one they saw on the Midnight Channel, minus the bright pink banner behind it...Thankfully.

"Alright that's it," Chie hisses and yanks Yui's fingers off her sleeve, "Who are you?!" The princess in front of them giggles at the question and tosses her hair over her shoulder as she speaks into the mic, "How could you ask that? Such a silly question!" She gazes down at Chie with her gold eyes and they seem to soften at the girl instead of glare. It's not like the gazes Yui had seen from Yosuke and Chie's doppelgänger. "I

am Yukiko," she continues as she puts a hand to her heart, "And Yukiko is me."

"NO!" Chie's denial echoes through the open space as Tomoe grips the handle of her weapon as she quietly growls, "You're not...I want the real Yukiko, NOW!"

Yukiko's look-alike shimmies a bit, ignoring Chie's accusation before giggling, "Alrighty, well it's time for me to resume my stud hunt! Whoohoo boys!" Yui immediately regrets looking back up as the girl presses her upper arms together towards her chest to push her breasts up as she blinks rapidly towards an imaginary camera, "Ready or not here I come!" The princess makes a gun sign and a gunshot is heard from somewhere as she spins around.

She giggles loudly as she disappears into the darkness and Chie immediately runs after her, "Wait you!" Tomoe jumps up high in the air as Jiraiya struggles to hop after her with Izanagi behind him. Yui and Yosuke turn to each other and start to run again, but Yui stops when she steps on something.

Lifting her foot she takes up what she had stepped on, it's a bright red feather.

"Yui-chan what are you doing? C'mon!"

The silver-haired girl nods up to Yosuke and pockets the feather into her skirt pocket as she follows after him.

Tomoe continues to slash all the Shadows that emerge in

front of them, mostly using kicks and her weapon to inflict damage. It would seem the Persona was more physical than elemental like Izanagi and Jiraiya with their lightning and wind.

"Move outta of our way!" Chie yells as more Shadows began to swarm around them as they climbed higher on the stairs. Tomoe lets out a grunt and a huge blast of cold wind fires towards a Shadow blocking their path, the wind soon turns to ice before all their eyes, freezing the Shadow until Tomoe's blade makes contact to shatter it.

"Whoa! Nice ice!" Yosuke compliments as they keep running up as Chie grins, "Thanks!" Tomoe gives her partner a nod and her gold eyes lit up with praise as they keep running.

"Guys, do you think...What we saw earlier was..." Yosuke's voice rings out as Yui skips up a few steps to try and keep up with Chie as Teddie gives a noise of confirmation, "That was most definitely that girl's other self, her Shadow!" Yui glances and slows down as she directs her gaze to a Shadow behind her. Izanagi charges forward and his blade impales into the enemies body as Yosuke lets out a growl of frustration, "I knew it! There was something off about her when she was on the Midnight Channel!" he exclaims as Jiraiya jumps in front of him and headbutts a Shadow back into the air.

Tomoe's leg lands a kick into the Shadow as it lets out a squeal.

"I thought so too," Yui agrees, "Yukiko-san wouldn't say something like 'stud hunting.'"

Teddie seems to agree, but stops before speaking. "Wait, 'stud hunting?' Why would she wanna hunt horses for?" Yosuke shakes his head, "Yui-chan don't explain! Teddie later!" The silver-haired girl sighs as she picks up her running pace and back to her place right behind Chie, "My explanations aren't that bad!"

"Dude! You'll give him ideas!" Yosuke retorts as Chie turns her head towards them, "Guys! Focus!" Behind her, Yui can hear Yosuke groan loudly and yell back up to Chie. What he says she can't hear as she spots something fly by her. She doesn't stop, but her eyes follow whatever flew by her.

It's bright red, but it's not a Shadow. The tiny form wasn't monstrous and it was too normal for her to even consider a threat, it was a bird. A bright red bird had flown by her.

However...

"Why would a bird be here?"

The red bird, the red feather...Red. All around them is red. Yui frowns, the color dominates the castle just like the Velvet Room with its blue. However there was a link to why there was so much. Chie had told Yukiko she looked good in red. Yukiko seemed to have taken a liking to that color very much as it would seem from her thoughts she wore it often because of her friend's compliment.

Yet why would a bird be here?

There had to be a connection...

"Ah! Guys!" Teddie yells as they spot a large door at the top, "Be ready...I can sense two people in there! One of them is that other girl's self." Chie doesn't seem to hear as she yells for Tomoe to kick the door open. They all run inside and stop as they stand in a large room.

It was the castle's throne room and standing in front of the throne at the top of long staircase leading up by a red carpet, was Shadow Yukiko. At the bottom wearing her pink kimono with a birdcage at her feet, was Yukiko. The one they all knew. "Yukiko!" Chie calls for her friend as she looks from her other self to them, "Chie!"

"My, my," the voice of Shadow Yukiko cuts off both of the girls before they begin to speak, "Two princes showed up! Well...Whatever shall I do?" Yosuke shudders a bit as the Shadow's eyes stare down towards them, "I'm...Feeling some weird tension in here..." Yui frowns as she stares back up towards the Shadow and back towards Yukiko. It didn't look like the Shadow had tried to provoke Yukiko...Not yet at least.

"Hey I wanna go somewhere, somewhere far far away. Where nobody knows me!" Shadow Yukiko holds her hands together and stares at them, her gold eyes half closed and a smile playing on her lips. It tried to appear demure before them, but the voice doesn't fit the face. It's high-pitched and a bit whiny as she keeps talking, "Oh! Please Prince Charming take me away. What are you waiting for? Why don't you...And I go somewhere else?"

"Hold on...You said 'two princes,' does that include me?"

"It's beary clear I'm the second prince!" Teddie rebukes Chie's words immediately as Yosuke scoffs, "Oh please. Keep dreamin' bear!"

Shadow Yukiko blinks and begins to giggle as she hears Chie, "Why of course Chie!" she replies as she stops, a wide grin on her face, "You are my Prince Charming. You always lead the way, you make a brave and magnificent prince...At least, you did." The smile falls off the Shadow's face and Yui can see a hardness grow into those gold eyes as they're directed towards Chie.

"Wait...What you mean 'did?'" Chie's words echo throughout the throne room as Yukiko stiffens as the Shadow speaks again, "When it comes down to it, Chie's just not good enough! I'm done with you!" Izanagi and Yui glance up to the ceiling and immediately grab Tomoe and Chie, "Everyone move!"

The chandelier falls from the ceiling, swinging into the air and crashing into the doorway. Yui glances across the floor where Yosuke, Jiraiya, and Teddie are sprawled out having jumped in time. Chie lifts herself up from the ground as Izanagi releases Tomoe.

"Don't hurt them!" Yukiko yells towards her Shadow as the chandelier pulls out of the wood and comes crashing in front of the stairs. Yukiko flinches and backs away as her Shadow laughs, "Chie isn't good enough," the princess continues

ignoring her, "She can't take me away from here! She won't save me."

"Stop it already!" Yukiko yells again, "That's enough! Don't hurt them!" The raven-haired girl lets out a gasp as the chandelier swings by her again.

Jiraiya jumps from the ground, grabbing hold of the chandelier and tries to stop it. Yosuke grunts and holds his stomach as his Persona gets slammed into the wall. The Persona wiggles against the metal, unable to break free. Izanagi quickly goes to his side and tries to pry the chandelier away with his sword. Yosuke groans a bit louder and Yui runs over to him as Chie glances towards Yukiko.

The girl is frozen in place, her hands clasped in front of her as her eyes are closed as she whimpers in shame. Yui looks up at Shadow Yukiko, her gold eyes are narrowed down towards Yukiko watching her. "Historical inn? Manager in training?!" The Shadow's words finally get a reaction out of Yukiko.

Her eyes grow wide as she stares up at her other self as her face twists in disgust at the words she speaks, "I'm sick of all these things chaining me down! It makes me absolutely sick!"

"That's enough out of you!" Chie yells and charges forward, "Tomoe! Let's kick ass!" Her Persona charges with her only to sink into the dark red carpet. Yui drags her and Yosuke off to the side it begins to move and twist. The movements remind her of how Shadow Chie's hair moved and she gasps as Teddie is caught in the fabric. "Help! Help! Ahhh! Grizzly!"

Chie is also trapped and falls onto the ground, the red slowly gripping her tightly causing her to yell in discomfort.

"I never asked...To be born here," the Shadow slowly makes her way down the stairs, "Where everything, everything, has been decided for me until I die? I don't want it! I DON'T WANT ANY OF IT!"

"We gotta help her," Yui and Yosuke begin to get up from the floor. They both scream in pain as a wave of heat washes over them and they turn to see the flames of the candles in the chandelier grow. Yui can see Izanagi frantically trying to free Jiraiya as the ninja Persona begins to wiggle harder.

She fails to notice the wicks of the candles melting hotter and-"OUCH!" Her loafers are encased with a heavy hot wax and she can't move. Beside her Yosuke is struggling to drag his leg out of the melted wax before grunting out in frustration, "Damnit! She's stalling!"

In front of them Chie is wiggling against the red carpet as Tomoe does the same, "Yukiko! Don't listen to her!" Her pleas fall on deaf ears as Yukiko continues to stare up at her Shadow. "I'm so...Sick of it!" The princess stops at the bottom of the stairs, "To hell with it all!"

"Stop it," Yukiko weakly begs as her body slowly sinks to the floor, "That's not true at all...Stop it please..." The Shadow smirks as the girl cowers at her feet as she holds her hands together and stares up at the ceiling. "Oh...I just wanna go far away," she sighs, "I want to go anywhere, but here. I want

someone to whisk me away. I can never leave on my own..."

The Shadow's voice goes higher in pitch, her words and movements resemble that of a typical princess. The ones that desperately want to be rescued. The type who needed to be rescued.

Yui tugs at her legs as Yukiko shakes her head and tries to cover her ears, "No...No stop it, it's not true."

"But I lack hope if I stay and I have no courage to leave...That's why I've been waiting. I'm so completely useless," Shadow Yukiko continues to taunt as her eyes open and she gazes down at Yukiko, "That's why I sit on my ass all day hoping that someday my Prince will come. Someday he will come and take me away! Some place far away from here!"

"I'm begging you please stop," Yukiko's voice trembles as her Shadow speaks more and more of her thoughts out. Her shoulders shake and her voice cracks as she whispers for the other to stop.

"Old tradition? The pride of the town? SCREW IT ALL!" There's a gasp and Yukiko's head snaps up, "How...How dare you say that!" The girl slowly gets up to her feet as her Shadow chuckles. She steps back a bit, a smile growing upon her face. It's feral smile, her teeth flashing sharply more to the right and her golden eyes are widening as she watches Yukiko glare at her.

"But that's how I feel. It's what we both feel, isn't that right?" The princess chuckles quietly before blinking her eyes innocently, "Right? Other me?"

Yukiko shakes her head, "No..No it isn't! You are not..." Chie struggles more against the carpet that binds her down, "Don't say it Yukiko!"

"Yukiko-chan don't!" Yui yells as she tries to break out of the wax only to hiss as her fingers feel the heat as she tries to pry it off with her nails. "Crap! She's gonna say it!" Yosuke panics as the girl shakes her head.

"You're a liar!" Yukiko points to her other self, "You're not me!"

There is a pause and soon a faint light of red and black begin to form at the bottom of Shadow Yukiko's ball gown as she lifts her arms up with a smile growing wider on her face. "Oh my, my. Ah...And the power starts to surge," she giggles as she laughs louder as the light grows, "Now if things continue at this pace I'll...Ah...Ah...Ah ha ha ha ha!"

The light soon erupts and Yukiko is tossed back further from where the Shadow had been as a bird's caw echoes through the room. Yui covers her ears at the high-pitched screeching as the light slowly goes up into the air, "What's going on?!" Yosuke demands as it soon disappears above.

It's too dark to see where it has gone, but Yui feels a heavy wave of heat fall over her as she stares up at the ceiling.

"I am a Shadow...Of your true inner self!"

"Incoming!" Teddie yells from under the carpet and wiggles a bit in attempt to free himself, but manages to only get an arm out. "She's coming down!"

Down? Yui looks up before yelping in surprise as her arms raise up to blow her face from the blast of heat that flows throughout the room. The room was hotter now, the heat from the flames of the candles that surround a birdcage glow as she spots something red curled up inside. The door flings open and the Shadow emerges, perched right at the doorway. The new form is that of a bright red bird, but with Yukiko's head. Its gold eyes gleam as she stares down on all of them as she lets out a caw.

Yukiko quietly lets out gasps and screams as suddenly the birdcage that had rested at her feet suddenly grows and traps her inside. Yui watches as the girl is helplessly lifted up from the ground by a metal chain and hung high into the air. "Yukiko!" Chie screams as her friend is lifted up out of view, "Chie!" Yukiko's voice is distant and Yui can barely make out the bottom of the cage as it suspends up in the air.

Tomoe digs her blades into the thick carpet, freeing herself before cutting an opening for Chie to slip out of. "Hang in there Yukiko! Whatever she throws...I'll be able to take it!" Chie calls out as she and Tomoe charge forward, "I'm here for you!"

The Shadow screeches and expands her wings as she laughs,

"Oh really? Then...I'll be sure to give you plenty to deal with my dear Chie~!" She flaps her wings as a huge gust of wind stops the girl in her charge, feathers appearing in front of her. The feathers freeze and soon explode as fire blows through the entire throne room.

"Ow! Ow that's hot! Hot!" Yosuke yells as the flames melt free his feet, "Watch it with that fire Yukiko!" He jumps up and down as Yui kicks at the now softened wax and kicks her other foot free as she hears the metal of the chandelier behind them fall. Teddie screams and runs towards the back of the room, fire slowly spreading on his back.

"Stop drop and roll! Stop drop and roll!" the bear screams as he falls to his stomach and rolls all around the floor, "Be careful! She's on fire!"

"We know that!" Yosuke yells as he and Yui run ahead, "Jiraiya! Get her!" The ninja Persona jumps up into the air and blasts green wind towards the bird. The Shadow giggles and she steps into her cage, the door closes right on time as the wind hits the bars. It disperses and the bird laughs as Izanagi's blade hits metal before he flies back as the flames of her candles suddenly grow. Yui hisses in discomfort and fans herself furiously as she yanks the collar of her shirt, "It's too hot..."

"You're telling me! Jiraiya try again!" Yosuke orders as his Persona jumps towards the cage and spins. A tornado of green wind spirals out and hits the fire surrounding the cage, only to cause Yosuke and Yui to duck down as the

combination of wind and fire backfires at them.

The Shadow lets out a high screech of joy, laughing at them as Yui can faintly see Chie and Tomoe in the blaze in front of them, "Yukiko!" The short-haired girl jumps over a flame as Tomoe's weapon swipes at the fires that grow around them, the wind created by the swing of her blade successfully extinguishes the fire before Chie as she gets closer to the cage Yukiko hangs from, "I'm on my way!"

"Not so fast!" Chie lets out a scream as she and Tomoe are flung to the side as the chandelier Shadow Yukiko occupies swings back and knocks them to the side.

"Chie!" Yui and Yukiko cry as the girl falls to the ground. The Shadow scoffs, "Too bad," she turns her head towards Chie and glares down at the fallen girl, "I thought Chie was my Prince, that she would save me. But she wouldn't..." The bird cage opens and Shadow Yukiko perches at the doorway, her feathers ruffling up as she continues to gaze down at Chie, "No. She wasn't my Prince at all! I waited for so long...FOR SO LONG!"

The candles' flames grow larger and soon spark up like fireworks as the Shadow spreads her wings, "You are no Prince...Die you worthless commoner!"

"Pyro Jack!" Izanagi flies towards the flames, disappearing in a sudden flash of light blue light resembling flames. The Persona shields Chie and raises its lantern. Yui feels no heat as she watches the flames come close to Pyro Jack, the

lantern's door opens and the flames the Shadow had tried to target to Chie are soon engulfed inside it.

Chie weakly raises up and stares not at the Shadow's cage, but at her friend's cage. Yukiko clenches the bars of her cage, her body shaking as her eyes are shut tight. "Yukiko..."

The Shadow screeches again and more fire is fired towards Chie, Pyro Jack flies around with his lantern following the blasts of fire. Yui reaches into her skirt pocket, taking the red feather out as she looks up to Yukiko and then at Chie. Both girls mirror agony on each other's faces, one gravely worried for her friend's safety as the other is too afraid to look at them at the sudden revealing of her inner thoughts.

"So what if Chie isn't your Prince?!" she finally yells as she clenches the feather tightly into her fingers, "You're right, she isn't...But is that really important?!" The fires around the Shadow's cage intensifies at her words, "Excuse me?!" the bird screeches as Yui watches as Pyro Jack flints around in front of them, protecting them as spurts of fire come at them.

The bird is focused entirely on Yui as her eyes stare up, "Chie came her and risked her life to save her friend, to save Yukiko," she continues to say as her grey eyes glare up at the bird, the hand holding the feather tightens, "That's enough proof that she cares. What more could she have done?"

There's a moment of silence, the Shadow finally lets out a high-pitched shriek as the fire in the room grow as her gold eyes glare down towards Yui. "SILENCE!"

Yui and Yosuke raise their arms up as the heat and flames begin to spread towards them, Pyro Jack frantically flies around and tries to catch the flames, only to be engulfed by a huge blast. Yui's body flinched at the over excess of heat and she braces herself as more heat surrounds them. "Damn it!" Yosuke raises his arms higher and squints his eyes through the flames, "We can't get near her!"

"We can't...But Chie's closer!" Yui yells over the roaring flames as they focus their attention to the girl as she struggles to stand in the growing flames. From where they stand they can see Tomoe staying close to Chie, the Persona is on the ground and has dug her blade into the ground. She leans against it and glares up towards the Shadow as it caws louder and louder.

Chie advances forward, an arm up as she advances towards where Yukiko's cage suspends in the air.

"...Please," the girl finally speaks, "Please Chie...Chie get out of here!" Her voice cracks as she stares down at them, taking in the scene. Chie continues to walk forward, stopping only once in a while as a fire erupts beside her, but she keeps moving forward, "I'm not leaving you Yukiko. I have something to tell you and it's really important."

"This isn't easy...You see the truth is, I've always been jealous of you!" Chie yells over the flames as she stands right in front of the cage, the fire around her blazes higher and brighter as she and Tomoe stand in the midst. The Persona is shaking a bit on her weapon, but Yui can see faint white floating up into

the air around the two. The Persona must have used her ice power to give them some chance to stand against the heat, even if it had began to wear her down.

"You had everything Yukiko and I...I had nothing. That's why I loved how you depended on me," Chie continued as she gazed up at her friend, "You actually needed something I had. I liked believing that I needed to be with you, to protect you. It gave me a purpose."

"Exactly!" The Shadow screams as the fire grow and Yukiko closes her eyes at her friend's words as she remained silent, she makes no effort to silence the Shadow as it screeches louder, "I can't do anything on my own! I'm helpless!"

"You're wrong Yukiko! That's where you're wrong!" Chie yells as she struggles to walk forward to the cage a bit more, "Yukiko...Yukiko you're one of the strongest, bravest people I know! You want to escape? Then do it! Break out of that cage and go wherever you want to go! Please listen to me Yukiko, I know you can do this!"

Yui and Yosuke duck down as the fire spreads more into the room, Yosuke coughs as Yui covers her mouth with her arm. She breathes into her sleeve as she and Yosuke struggle to move away from the flames. She can feel the heat slowly growing and her head feels dizzy. Beside her Yosuke covers his mouth as he looks around for a place for them to walk to to get away from the growing heat.

"No...No I can't Chie!"

Yukiko's words echo as the fires roar bigger and louder, "I can't do that! No I can't Chie...I'm far too weak to leave. It's just like back then...With...With the bird," the girl cries as she grips the bars of her cage tighter, "I was mortified! The bird I took care of, that I thought was trapped just like me...It managed to fly away! All by itself...I forgot to lock the cage door, I admit that, but..."

Yukiko cries out and grips the cage hard, shaking it as her voice raises up, "That bird. It had gotten the courage to open the door all by itself and fly away! It was a truth I didn't want to acknowledge. I'm not strong enough! I am weak, pathetic! I'm such a horrible coward, I need someone to come set me free!"

"So what?! You were scared!" Chie yells back towards her friend, behind her Tomoe is slowly sinking to her knees as her hands grip harder on the handle of her weapon, "There are parts of me too, parts I'm not proud of either. Horrible things I'm ashamed of! They don't matter! Listen! I will always be there for you, because...Because you're my friend!" Chie reaches her hand up towards Yukiko as the girl stares down, her fingers loosen their hold on the bars. Tears begin to stream down her face as she gazes down.

Chie smiles up towards her friend as Yukiko weakly grips the bars hard as she straightens up. Beside her the Shadow frantically flaps her wings, "STOP IT!" The fire in front grows and all of them fall down as it blows over them, "I SAID STOP!"

"What was I so afraid of...Before?" Yukiko announces as she grips the bars harder, "There was nothing to fear...I have everything I need!" Yui can feel the flames slowly die as Yukiko pushes forward, "Chie!" The bars break and Chie reaches out as Yukiko jumps down from her cage, their hands clasp against each other as Yui can feel the heat slowly lessen as the two girls hug each other.

There's a sound of metal clattering and the Shadow bursts out into the air, her body shaking while she struggles to flap her flames to return back to its blazing size, "No!" Yui squints and notices the glitching of her form, "The Shadow's weakening!" Teddie's words call out far from where he stands away.

"Yui go get her!" Yosuke yells as he and Jiraiya struggle to see through the flames.

"Pyro Jack!" Yui calls out to her current Persona as the Shadow begins to screech as the pumpkin Persona raises its lantern and catches the flames it tries to hit it with. The flames fly into the glass container and soon shoot out again, "Get away! Get away from me you nuisance!"

The bird flies out of her cage, spatting out curses the higher she goes with Pyro Jack flying right after her. The Persona cackled as it continues to shot back the fire. Jiraiya hops up high into the air, the ninja Persona extending a leg out and kicking the bird from behind. The bird squawks in pain and begins to fall straight down to the floor, "Chie!"

Tomoe stands up, pulling her weapon out of the ground as

she twirls the handle in her fingers. The Persona hisses a sound and jumps up high, her foot landing against the feathered chest. The Shadow screams in pain as her body flies up into the sky, her body slowly being consumed by fire and red and black light as she collides to the very top of the ceiling.

The collision results in a rain of red, red bird feathers.

19. At Ease

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

This chapter is more light-hearted and humorous in some ways. After so many intense battles I think it's nice a few chapters are a bit light. Also, I want to do a few funny things as of late and it seemed right to do it now. Hope you enjoy this chapter!

I apologize in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

Yui glances towards where Chie and Yukiko stand, both girls are still hugging each other as they both stare up at the ceiling as red feathers float down. Chie releases her hold on Yukiko, extending her palm up as a red feather rests in her open hand.

"Chie?" Yukiko slowly walks over to her as she stares at the feather in her palm, "I'm sorry Yukiko," the girl quietly speaks up. Her back is towards Yukiko and her eyes continue to stare at the feather. "I was...So wrapped up in my own thing that, I didn't notice all the things that were bothering you. I'm

sorry, I really should have paid more attention."

"I...I didn't notice the things that were bothering you either," Yukiko tells Chie as she rests a hand on her friend's shoulder, "I just wanted to escape." Yosuke backs up a moment as they hear faint footsteps advancing towards the two girls.

Shadow Yukiko stays silent, her eyes staring directly at Yukiko. Her hands are folded in front of her and there is a flicker of static that appears on her form the longer she stares at Yukiko.

There is no snide grin or a giggle, the Shadow is waiting for her to tell her something.

"I want to run away," Yukiko quietly tells her other self as she leaves Chie's side towards her, "I want someone to save me." You're right, those are my feelings. They're a part of me...That's why you were created. Right? I'm sorry..." Yukiko reaches out towards the princess' hands and grasps them in her own as she stands in front of her Shadow, "I'm so sorry...I didn't acknowledge your voice before. You were right. I did want to leave, to escape. It's all true."

The raven-haired girl raises her arms out and hugs her Shadow and the other begins to relax in her arms, "You are...A part of me. I understand, you are me." The other nods and there is a light that slowly begins to form around her.

Yukiko continues to hug her Shadow as it slowly dissolves in the bright blue light and slowly reappears above her.

The Shadow turned Persona glows and extends her arms apart.

Her wings are pink, resembling petals of a flower as she floats above them. The colors and her appearance remind Yui of a cherry blossom and a bird. Her gold eyes look down at Yukiko and there is warmth in them as she nods to her. The Persona shatters and the blue tarot card falls down towards Yukiko as she lifts her hands to catch it, as it reaches her palm it disappears and the light enters Yukiko.

The girl smiles to them and begins to fall onto her knees as Chie hurries over to her side, "Ah! Yukiko!" Her friend weakly smiles up at her as Chie rests a hand on her back, "I'm just a little tired," she replies as she looks at all of them, "It's alright...You all came to save me?"

"Yeah of course!"

Yui nods in agreement as she gently pats Yukiko on the back. The girl stares up at her in surprise before returning the small smile the silver-haired girl has on her face. "So...Who's the Grizzly who dumped you here?"

"Huh?" Yukiko stares over towards Teddie and blinks in surprise, "Don't worry," Yui quickly tells her, "He's safe."

"But...Just what is he? Who is he?" Yukiko weakly questions as Teddie grins and waves his hands to her, "I'm beary much a bear!" he cheerfully replies and yelps as Yosuke hits him lightly on the head, "And where were you when we were all

getting barbecued you?" he quietly hisses as Jiraiya hangs upside down by his companion, looking equally annoyed, "I was stopping and dropping and rolling!" the bear yells back to Yosuke as Yukiko looks at the two of them.

Her gaze lands on Jiraiya and he waves to her, causing her to straighten up a bit in surprise as she glances back to Teddie, "I'm...Not exactly following, but...I...Really don't remember. I'm sorry..Was...Was your name Teddie?" The bear grins more and nods eagerly, before a frown comes to his face, "So...You really don't know?"

"I know you want to know what happened," Chie quickly cuts in and rests her hands on Yukiko's shoulders protectively, "But we have to get Yukiko out of here, she's weak. A lot weaker than I was since she's been in here longer." Yui glances over to the girl and takes in the girl's pale face, "I agree..."

Teddie frowns a bit and glances down, "No new clues..."

"Not necessarily," Yosuke stops him as he frowns, "At least for now we know that there is someone out there throwing people in on purpose." Teddie shrugs his shoulders up and his frown deepens, "So it really isn't you guys..."

Yui's head snaps and she stares down at Teddie, her eyes wide as Pyro Jack seems to cackle at her new expression, "You were still suspecting us?" Teddie gulps and looks up to her and frantically shakes his head, "I-I always believe it wasn't you guys! On my honor! I swear, Sensei! I know!"

"You little!" Yosuke waves a fist towards the bear as Jiraiya jumps up into the air and follows the actions of the boy only to stop as Tomoe gives him a look, "You're one lying sack of honey..." He sighs and runs a hand through his hair as Chie begins to let Yukiko leans against her, "We have to go now guys," she reminds them, "C'mon."

"Right...The sooner Yukiko-chan is rested, the better," Yui reminds herself as she sighs down at Teddie who lets out a yell of protest as he watches them prepare to leave. "W-Wait!" he rushes in front of them as he looks at all four of them, "Y-You're leaving me? Alone? Again?"

"Don't you live here?" Yosuke points out to him as the bear stops and looks down, his eyes droop a bit as he plays with his paws as he sighs, "Oh...Right you have a point, but..."

A part of Yui feels for Teddie, he is after all for the most part alone here until they came back. A small part of her is still offended he thought they were still the culprits. As she contemplates what to say Yukiko is already advancing towards him and pats him lightly on the head.

Teddie looks up at her curiously as the girl smiles, "I'm sorry," she tells him as she continues to pat him on the head, "I'll be back and I'll give you a proper thank you. I promise. Be a good boy until then okay?"

"B-Beary..Beary nice!" Teddie's face flushes pink as he wobbles a bit on his legs as he giggle a bit to himself as Yosuke groans. "See...What I tell ya?" he mutters to Yui,

"You give him affection and he acts like this. This should be a lesson for you not to spoilt him."

"...But I like petting him," Yui whispers to him as Teddie continues to giggle and compliment Yukiko, "Besides, I'm just not doing it now because I'm mad."

Yosuke shakes his head and sighs, "What is it with you girls and...Well stuff like Teddie. Can't you tell he's using that to his advantage for attention."

"Why? Are you jealous?" Yui suddenly questions the other with a confused look on her face, "Do you need attention?" There's a long pause from the boy as he frantically shakes his head, "T-The hell! No I'm fine! I'm perfectly fine! Why'd you say that!? You don't say that!? Yui! What did I say about saying things bluntly?! Those are dangerous words!" Yosuke exclaims as Jiraiya pops out from behind the teenager and pokes him while quiet snickers emit from the Persona.

"Shut up!" The boy yells and playfully smacks the ninja Persona, all the while grunting out 'ow' in return as Yui tilts her head confused before looking back to Yukiko and Teddie only to cover her mouth quickly as she stares at Yukiko. At least...She thinks it's Yukiko.

The girl is wearing glasses, but the pair she has are ridiculous!

Behind her Yosuke is finally staring and he lets out a choke as Chie bursts out laughing a bit as she stares at her friend. The

lenses are thick and there is a black swirl on the surface, the fake nose attached is curved, and the mustache...

Yui lets out a faint snicker before clearing her throat loudly as Yukiko smiles, "I see! These are just like the glasses you're all wearing!" she happily giggles as she keeps them on, "They're great! They even have a nose guard!"

By now Chie had stopped laughing and shakes her head towards her friend, "Ah Yukiko...Aren't you...Lucky." Yosuke shakes his head as well and shoots Teddie a glare, "Those aren't gonna help!" he tells her, "The Shadows are much more dangerous. You need real ones...Like ours!"

Hearing nothing pleasant from the other two Yukiko turns to Yui and grins to her, "So...What you think Naru-Yui-chan?" she quickly asks as Yui keeps her mouth covered with her hand, "G-Great," she manages to say before clamping her mouth shut.

Yukiko nods happily and begins to remove them before handing them to Chie, "Come on Chie, your turn," she insists as her excitement begins to raise. Chie opens her mouth and closes it before sighing, "Ah..Fine," she sighs again before giving her glasses to Yukiko and placing the new pair on.

Yui presses her mouth harder to stop the snicker as the short-haired girl wears the glasses, her mouth twitching down as Yukiko squeals. Her mouth soon opens wider and a loud laugh soon escapes, her arms hug her stomach as she continues to laugh. Yui stares at the other girl in surprise as the laugh goes

on and on as Chie sighs, "Oh boy...She's having one of her laughing fits," she informs Yui as she begins to take the glasses off, "And I only thought she did it around me."

Grey eyes rest on the laughing girl as her smile and laugh grow even when Chie had removed the glasses. There is evidence of water threatening to come out of the corner of her eyes as her cheeks flush a light pink. She grins a bit as Chie shakes her head, "Settle down Yukiko! Breathe!"

Yui watched as Chie walked alongside Yukiko, the girl still unsteady and slow as she walks. The girl had recovered from her laughing fit and the effects of it were slowly dimming the way as soon as they had returned to their side.

When they had departed from Yosuke at Junes they had tried to get the girl to answer their question about who had taken her. Again the same answer as she had given Teddie, she couldn't remember.

At the end of the day, they had come up with a conclusion...

Yukiko had been attacked the same way as Miss Yamano and Saki-senpai. What they saw on the Midnight Channel was not Yukiko herself, but her Shadow. While Yukiko was there in the TV World her suppressed thoughts and desire formed into said Shadow, just as Teddie had told them a long time ago. As of now...Those were their only findings for the day...

Touching her fingers to her head she unlocks the door and

steps inside, "Nanako-chan?" she calls as she takes her shoes off at the entrance, "I'm home!"

Her cousin's head pops out from where she is from the living room and she nods to the older girl, "Welcome home." Yui waves to her as she sets her schoolbag down at the counter as she began to grab two mugs for Nanako and herself, "Milk?"

"Uh huh," Nanako confirms as she takes her seat back at the table as she returns her attention to the TV as Yui pours the milk into a bright pink mug. She sets a kettle onto the stove as she places the mug into the microwave to warm it up, "...How was your day?"

Nanako looks towards her and shrugs a bit, "It was okay." Yui feels too drained to try and continue on with the conversation as she grabs a tea bag from the box resting on the counter. She places it into her own mug before turning off the microwave in time before it sets off its ring and grabs the kettle just as it begins to whistle. Nanako is watching her now, surprisingly, as she pours hot water into her mug and holding pressing the button to open the microwave door.

What the little girl saw fascinating, Yui isn't sure. But she's grateful the girl isn't staring at the television screen for now.

She sets Nanako's mug and her own down before settling down into her seat, only to turn her head as the door opens and her cousin's face lighting up. "Dad's home!" The little girl immediately springs up from her seat and hurries towards the

front entrance, only to stop and hurry back to the table.

Yui isn't ready as her younger cousin ducks to her side and clings to her arm as she hears not one, but two pairs of footsteps.

"Hello!" She turns her head towards the doorway and she blinks in surprise, "Adachi." The man smiles towards her and walks into the room, "Hey there Yui." He spots Nanako beside Yui and flashes a grin, "Hi there. You must be Nanako-chan?"

"H...Hello," her cousin weakly greets him and hugs her arm tighter as she stares at Adachi. This was the first time the girl had seen the man. In all honestly Yui can understand, this was also the first time she had seen someone in the house other than herself, Nanako, or her uncle.

"We finished at the same time for once," her uncle calls out as he emerges from behind Adachi, in his hand is a large plastic bag. Yui can only guess it's take out as he sets it on the table, "Figured I might as well bring him home with me." Adachi continues to look at Nanako as she continues to hide by Yui, "The name's Adachi, Tohru Adachi," he tells her, "The guy who's been your dad's slave since spring."

Nanako makes a quiet sound and refuses to leave Yui as the man finally enters the living room completely. "You know," Dojima states as he looks at Adachi while placing the boxes in place, "I can still work you harder."

Adachi laughs nervously, "Good one sir...Good one..Ha...Ha."

Yui frowns a bit as she glances to her uncle who doesn't laugh along and just gives the younger man a narrowed look, "Just sit down."

"Yes sir," Adachi quickly responds and sits in the seat right by Nanako. Beside her Yui can feel the girl stiffen, she is still afraid of Adachi even after being introduced as her father's co-worker. Silently she reaches out and drags Nanako's mug across the table, setting it right in the seat beside her. Nanako stops squeezing her arm before looking up at her and blinks in surprise.

Yui gives her a small smile and winks at her as Nanako smiles back and nods gratefully as she begins to relax. The little girl scoots into her new seat cushion as Adachi snaps his fingers, "Oh yeah! I almost forgot!" he grins towards Yui who pauses from lifting her mug to drink, "You're friends with Yukiko Amagi right? They found her safe and sound! Tell all your friends at school okay?"

"That's a relief," Yui immediately replies as she sets her cup down, "I'll be sure to do that." Adachi laughs a bit as Dojima places, or rather loudly lets his box fall in front of him loudly as he continues on, "It's a huge relief for us on the force too," he sighs though and frowns, "Although...She's not off the hook just yet. The girl says she doesn't remember anything around the time she was missing. Now I might be looking into this too far, but it's like she's hiding som-"

Yui closes her eyes and winces as Adachi lets out a groan of pain as her uncle's fist hits the man's temple, "Ow!"

"Dumbass," her uncle mumbles as he glares to his partner, "Learn to shut your mouth."

"R-Right...Sorry sir," Adachi weakly agrees as he looks at Yui and Nanako. Obviously the man had forgotten just who was listening to him. Nanako takes a pair of chopsticks out from the center of the table and pulls them apart as she happily eats a piece of rice from her take out box. Yui stares down at her own box before staring at her uncle, the man glances at her for a moment before glancing away.

The man glances at her again and averts his eyes else where. She bites the tip of her tongue in her mouth before reluctantly opening the box.

Breaking apart her own chopsticks and eating a few grains of rice Dojima speaks up, "Now that the missing person's case is over and settled," he turns to Nanako as he speaks, "Looks like I can finally get break during Golden Week."

Nanako's face lights up again and her eyes widen, "Really Dad?!" Dojima nods in confirmation before looking at Yui, "You got a few days off too right that are free?"

"Of course," Yui immediately responds almost with as much excitement as Nanako as she leans towards her father, "Let's have a picnic lunch!" she quickly suggests as a smile grows on her face as Dojima laughs a bit. "Yeah...That sounds good," he agrees with Nanako before looking at Yui, "...I've been eating enough processed food as it is. I can tell you don't like it. Wish I was a better cook..."

"Isn't this why this girl here is for?" Adachi quickly interjects and pats Yui on the shoulder, startling her, "Wait that's right," Dojima realizes, "You can cook. I keep forgetting that you're not exactly like your mother in that sense. Looks like the picnic lunches are your responsibility now."

"...Wait what?" Yui glances at the two men before her eyes land to Nanako who beams up at her.

...Looks like she's stuck.

She nods her head as Adachi laughs and pats her on the shoulder as Nanako returns her attention back to her father, "We can all go to Junes too!" she suggests to her uncle as Adachi removes his hand on her shoulder and begins to hungrily eat his food.

"...I hope you know that you're not invited Adachi," Dojima quickly speaks up as the younger detective freezes his chopsticks, "Oh c'mon! I haven't had a home cooked meal or anything since being here!" Dinner was most definitely the liveliest it had been since she had been in Inaba.

Yukiko does not show up at school the next day, that was reasonable however. Chie had recovered in one day while Yosuke recovered around the same time, their exposure to the other side was shorter than what the other had to go through.

It would seem they were at a standstill on the case until the

raven-haired girl returned. "Hm?" Chie leans over and glances at the book on Yui's desk, along with the neat stack of notebooks ready to be taken out in accordance of each class that day and some textbooks, there is a small book with soccer illustrations, "Soccer? You're studying soccer?"

"Uh...W-Well," the silver-hair girl shrugs, "I thought I might as well...Know the basics. As the team manager I have to know what's going on." Chie snickers a bit and rests her chin on her desk as she looks to Yui, "Dang Yui-chan, you're so weird."

"How am I weird?" Yui questions and frowns before glancing behind to Yosuke who is nodding off before scooting her chair back a bit to his his desk slightly. The boy is startled and he immediately stands up, "Wha? Wha? Jirai-Oh." He sits down quickly and yawns and places his face down onto the desk surface, "What Yui-chan?"

"Quick, ask me anything about soccer, right now please Yosuke-kun," the girl urgently asks him as Yosuke yawns, "Uh...What can't you use in soccer?"

"Your hands," Yui immediately answers and sighs quietly, "...I just don't want to seem...Unacknowledged."

"Hey look at it this way," Chie leans into her chair and looks to the bewildered girl beside her as she stares at the small book, "At least you're trying. I heard that the new team manager over at the Basketball club isn't trying at all. She leaves during practice sometimes too early or lets the team do all the clean up by themselves. You're getting a little too

nervous over this Yui-chan."

"...I am? Yosuke-kun am I?" she looks behind her to see the boy lightly snoring before sighing a bit, "Yosuke-kun..." She sets the book down and turns a bit in her chair as she rests her chin at the top, her eyes widening as she stares at the boy. Yosuke grumbles lightly, opening his eyes before letting out a yell, "Yui! What I tell you about the stare!? No stares! God!" Chie laughs a bit at his reaction as Yui innocently blinks, "But you fell asleep..."

"Because I'm tired," Yosuke groans and rests his chin on his desk, "Aren't you feeling tired? At all? We've been in the TV for...At least four days! Man I still can feel the sting of Chie's and Yukiko's Shadow, why aren't you the least bit tired?" Yui shrugs as Chie smiles a bit, "Maybe she's just a lot more fit than you," she lightly taunts Yosuke who rolls his eyes, "Says the one who isn't working."

"Hey! I train," Chie objected as Yui returns back to reading her book, "I do a lot more than you do with all those box lifting. I'd kick those things!" Chie made a kung fu like sound and punches lightly on her desk, "Besides, maybe the reason Yui-chan isn't so tired is that she doesn't stay up some nights playing video games...Or breaking people's DVDs."

"Oh come off that!" Yosuke yells as he lifts his head off from his desk and glares to Chie, "I said sorry to you a million times! Give it a rest!"

"Nope! Dragon Killer!" Chie shoots back. Yui glances between

the two, amused before snapping her fingers, "A hare and a blood hound!"

The two stop their arguing and stare at her, "...What?" Yui frowns a bit, "No...Now that I think about," she quietly speaks as she looks to Yosuke, "Jiraiya's...A frog. So...You're a frog Yosuke-kun. I'm unsure what sort of person Chie-chan is...Perhaps she is a wolf? They seem to like meat." Yosuke's jaw drops a bit as Chie snickers behind a hand, "Wow...Yui-chan. You're so weird."

"...I am?"

Behind her Yosuke sighs and rests his head again on the desk, "I give up. Yui-chan...You...Are not like normal girls."

20. Dormant Rest

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

I apologize in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

Yui's eyes were scanning over the page of her book as she walked down the stairs, her mouth was pulled into a tight line as she took in the words.

Soccer looked less confusing on television, and the book made it pretty clear that it wasn't as simple as she had assumed. Sports were her average field, she participated in physical education well enough and when she did take part in sports it was mainly due to the school's sporting events.

Even then the only 'sport' she was usually placed in was basketball or the race.

Her steps were slow and light as she descended down the main staircase, her entire being absorbed on her reading until she reached the last step.

Her book collided into someone's shoulder or arm, causing it

to push right into her face. Startled she immediately dropped it and stares at the person she had bumped into in surprise. Eyes wide and mouth drawn into a frown the girl before her stares at her in silence before scoffing, "Watch where you're going!"

"S-Sorry," she quickly apologizes and quickly retrieves her book from the floor as the girl scoffs again and brings a hand up to flip her dark blond hair over her shoulder before looking Yui up and down, "Huh...Wait a sec, I've never seen you around here before."

"...I'm the new transfer student, Yui Narukami," Yui answers as she watches the girl study her up and down again.

In return she also looks at the other, if she could pick a word to describe her it would be pretty. The girl looked just as pretty as Yukiko, at least that's what Yui can assume. Yukiko had an elegant and grace sense of appearance and Yui had a feeling the girl with her look would fit just fine in the city.

Modern, sleek, and cool...Those would be the right words to use right?

The girl narrows her eyes a bit after a moment and eyes the book in her hands, "You're the team manager of the soccer team?" The question catches her off guard, but her head nods automatically, "Yes, I am. I've only recently took on the position a few days ago."

"Huh. They made you seem like a big deal," the girl suddenly

says before flipping her hair again and lightly huffing, "Either way...Word of advice, it'd be better if you keep your distance from those sweaty guys." Yui tilted her head a bit as the girl continues on, "I mean, you gotta be blind to yourself! You're pretty. Not as pretty as me at least, but pretty."

Yui's face turns pink and she quickly shakes her head making the girl laugh a bit at her action.

"Seriously? You don't think so?" The girl stops laughing before giving Yui a nod,"...Just don't get the wrong idea...Last thing I need is hearing the new girl is going out with some loser on the soccer team. Guys here, let's be honest they're crazy over girls like us." Yui's eyelids blink rapidly in confusion as the girl adjusts her bag and walks by her, "Well I've spent a good few minutes chatting it up with you. Later."

"Uh...L-Later," Yui hesitantly says as she watches her go around the corner and stands in place a few more moments, "...Weird..."

How did that girl know she was managing the soccer team?

Word got around fast in school that was for sure. Yui opens her book again, back to studying.

"Keep those kicks strong!" Mr. Kondo called out as he whistled from the sidelines as Yui sat on the bench a foot away from him, her head moving right to left as the players ran across the field. She watched as one player kicked the

ball into the goal of the opposing side and turned the score board.

Yui rested her hands together before clapping them and cupping them around her mouth, "Good job!" A few players glanced her way and grinned a bit as she clapped again as the game continued. She stopped when she noticed that a certain player wasn't on the field and glanced around.

Was Daisuke absent today?

Her train of thought is interrupted by the blow of the whistle as Mr. Kondo waves for the team to gather in front of him, "Okay, that's enough for today!" he announced as he smiles, "Not bad at all. Maybe we got a shot at this. Everyone clean up and go straight on home alright?" The team agrees in unison as she gets up from her bench and begins to reset the scoreboard's pages back to zero and picking it up.

"Hey. Narukami-chan! You take down the goals and clean up okay?"

The silver-haired teenager blinks in surprise at the player. He and the rest of team are glancing over at her, slight smiles on their faces, as she holds the scoreboard in her fingers before nodding, "Got it."

"Thanks! See ya next practice!" They all wave to her before hurrying off the field leaving her to stand alone. She glances around and takes in field's current appearance, it's...Quite messy. A few soccer balls rolled around slightly and the

goals...It would take her a long time to break them down.

For now she should put the scoreboard sign first in the gym, that would be the easiest thing to do for now.

Walking towards the open door she pauses a moment to hear faint sounds of a ball hitting the floor and edges close to the doorway, slowly peering inside. She lets out a quiet gasp and ducks just in time as an orange blur comes right at where her head had been seconds before. The ball makes a dull thunk against the metal door frame and she slowly extends her face around the corner, eyeing the object that had been close to granting her a concussion.

"Whoa! Hey sorry!" Yui glances towards the voice and smiles a bit in greeting, "Ichijo-san, hi." Kou grins at her and picks up the ball, "Sorry about that. You good?"

"Yes...Apart from the brief moment of my life flashing before my eyes, I've been well," Yui quietly humors him and he laughs. She looks behind him and spots the missing person from practice, "Nagase-san was here?"

Kou glances over to his friend as he makes his way over, "Oh uh..Hey. What are you still doing here shouldn't you be over at the field?"

"Practice is over," she informs him and holds up the small scoreboard in her hands, "I was going to place this in the equipment room before taking the rest of the things off the field."

Daisuke's eyes sudden widen and his face twists into a scowl, "Wait what? Why?!"

"They asked me to clean up?" Yui replies as she tilts her head a bit to the side, "I understand that's...One of my jobs correct? To clean up the field." Daisuke shakes his head as he angrily glances outwards through the doorway, "They just told you do the whole thing?" he scoffs a bit as anger begins to grow present on his features, "Everyone's suppose to take turns doing clean up!"

Yui watches as him shake his head again, looking down at the scoreboard in her hands before rolling his eyes, "Ugh screw it...Don't do anything. Just go on home."

"They told you to clean the entire field? Alone?" Kou raised and eyebrow, dripping the basketball for a bit before stopping, "Well, I mean as team manager it is sorta your job, but not helping you out. Tch, how predictable. Well...You should do it anyway."

Beside her Yui can hear Daisuke scoff again as he rests his hands on his hips, "How come? They got no right just dumping it on anyone really...Even if it's her..."

Kou sighs and shakes his head, "Daisuke, Daisuke haven't you learned at all?" The blue haired basketball player spins the ball on the tip of his finger, "Look, don't do it because they told you to, do it because you want to 'help.' That'll throw'em off guard. I'm pretty sure they don't expect Narukami-chan to do the whole thing by herself. Hey you know what, we'll help

Narukami-chan."

"We?" Daisuke stares at Kou for a moment as Yui looks between them, "Yeah 'we.' You skipped out on practice to help my team out, least you can do is give her a helping hand. Three people cleaning up will be faster! Oh. Wait!"

Yui watches as he turns and waves towards someone who is walking towards them, "Hey Ai! Think you could help us out?"

The person comes closer and Yui blinks in surprise as the girl also mirrors her expression, "Huh what a surprise? Your practice finished?"

"...You know each other?" Daisuke glanced between Yui and the girl as they stare at each other. The girl rests a hand on her hip and shrugs as Yui shakes her head, "We ran into each other at the stairs earlier..."

"Quite literary ran into each other," the girl replies and flips her hair as she gazes at Yui with indifference, "Sticking her nose in some soccer book too I might add."

Yui grips the scoreboard a bit as her cheeks light up a bit while Daisuke blinks a moment, "A soccer...Book?" Kou snickers, "No way really? You actually were studying about soccer Narukami-chan?"

"Laugh it up," Yui sighs as Kou lets out a quiet snicker before nodding towards the girl, "Well I'll formally introduce you then. This here is Ai Ebihara, she's our team manager."

The girl huffs a bit before shrugging, "Generally...I'm not even here most of the time," she lightly announces as she adjusts her bag, "I don't do favors. Why do you even ask?" She nods to Kou before walking out the door, "I'm done for today."

"W-Wait could you at least help us with the field!" Kou calls out to her as she continues to walk, "Not my problem!" She doesn't even turn to look at them and waves her hand dismissively as Kou lets out a sigh, "Sheesh...Well..I tried. Anyway we might as well get started!" Yui lets out a light protest as he grabs the scoreboard out of her hands, "You guys go on ahead to the field I'll put this away and catch up."

"Okay..." Yui watches as Kou walks towards the equipment room and starts to walk back to the field, Daisuke following after her. She glances at the soccer player before averting her eyes back down, it felt really awkward suddenly...

"...You know you could've asked me or Kou about soccer," he suddenly tells her startling Yui out of her thoughts, "Not like it'd be a bother...You seriously got a book about soccer and studied it?"

"I like to research about things..Occasionally," Yui admits as they step onto the field and picks up a stray soccer ball into her hands, "You seemed a bit upset that time I said I had no idea about anything in soccer so I figured I might as well try to learn about it. I'd be useless if I didn't know anything right?" Besides her Daisuke grunts, "Huh...It really looked like I was upset? Well...Yeah, but-"

Yui moves forward and sets the ball onto the dirt, positioning herself in front of the nearest goal.

Her leg flies back and she kicks it, as much force as she can. The ball rolls in the dirt at an acceptable speed, bouncing up a bit from the ground as it passes by the tall white stands of the goal. It slows and hits the white net weakly and she nervously tugs at her bangs, "Huh...I thought it would go a lot faster than that," she admits. Behind her she can hear Daisuke let out a light scoff, "Dummy, there's a lot more to kicking the ball than just a plain kick," he informs her as he walks over.

Picking up the ball from the ground and kicking it towards her. Her foot sticks out to stop it as he strolls up towards her, he motions her to step away and she complies. Daisuke adjusts the ball into place and looks at her, "See...Look."

Yui watches intently as the player sets his foot on top of the ball for a moment as his eyes narrow as he focuses on the goal before taking a step back. She barely has time to notice his leg swing back in one move and watches as the ball rolls, faster than her own kick, as it slams hard against the white netting. Daisuke grins and nods, "That's how you do it."

"I shall never doubt the skills of a true soccer player then," Yui replies as he shrugs at her words. "Hey! Sorry about that!" Kou calls over as he runs over to them, "I got uh...Distracted a bit."

His friend narrows his eyes, but a smirk grows on his face, "Oh really? 'Distracted' Kou? You were polishing those balls

again weren't you."

"Oh shut up!"

The basketball player kicks at the dirt lightly as his friend laughs at him he continues to defend himself, "I can't leave things like that. It's not my style."

"Yeah, yeah. But you gotta pace yourself man," Daisuke lightly scolded him as he glanced over to Yui, "But...Anyway, if you ever need anything about soccer. Just come to me. I'd be glad to help you out Narukami." Kou glanced at the two for a moment before grinning a bit, "What's this? Daisuke actually offering to help? This has to be a day of miracles." Daisuke rolled his eyes and punched his friend lightly on the shoulder as Yui giggles a bit, "Thanks," she tells them before nodding to the field, "We should get started huh?"

"Oh yeah, but don't worry with the three of us it oughta be easy to do all of this!" Kou cheerfully exclaims as he runs off ahead to clean up.

Yui smiles at his energy and begins to follow after him until she hears Daisuke clear his throat, "But I stand by with what...I uh..Said earlier," the soccer player told her as he glances at the dirt, "If you ever need to know anything about soccer let me know okay? I'm pretty sure a real person is a lot better than a good right? Even Kou will help you out so uh...Yeah."

Yui can feel her smile grow just a little bit as she watches

Daisuke kick at the dirt before nodding, "Right. I'll keep that in mind Nagase-san. You only told me about three times."

Daisuke lightly scoffs as he nods, "C'mon. If we let Kou do the work all by himself he'll get all the soccer balls only and doesn't help out on the other stuff."

Yui let out a satisfied sigh as she collapsed in front of her desk, stretching her arms up as the aches from the day eased with her movement.

It had been a rather uneventful day, but it didn't make it boring. In fact Yui felt relief that today had been so normal compared to all the times she and the others jumped into the television for a good full week. Her fingers run through her hair as she stared down at her open textbook, "Right...To work I go-"

A sharp knock at the door surprised her, "...Yes?"

"Um...Are..Are you busy?"

Nanako's voice chirped up immediately after she had spoken, "I..Need help..." Yui places a bookmark and promptly closes her book as she stands up, "What is it Nanako-chan?" Her cousin looked up at her, her face pink as her hands are tightly gripped on the handle of her hairbrush, "I...It got tangled..." Yui stares at the younger girl's hair for a moment, noticing the chocolate-brown locks tangled within the teeth of the brush.

The teenager opens the door wider and Nanako slips into her

room, stopping a moment to look up at her.

"You...Don't mind? I couldn't ask Dad because..."

"It's nothing to fret about," the older assures her and takes a seat on her couch, "C'mon over. I'll get it out." Nanako nods, wincing when the hairbrush still stuck in her hair bumped against her face before hurrying over.

Yui adjusts herself and reaches to grasp the handle of the brush after Nanako had taken her seat. The raindrops outside and the ticking of the clock are the only sounds the two girls hear as Yui teases the hairbrush out Nanako's hair. The girl tenses up on occasion, but doesn't make a sound of pain and protest as Yui continues on her task.

Her fingers carefully gather the hair she frees from the brush to the side to avoid the strands to get retangled all the while lightly tugging at the stubborn knots that latched onto the brush. Yui giggles a bit after a while, "...You know, when I was your age I had the same problem."

"You did?" Nanako asked curiously, turning her head a little, "But your hair looks neat."

"Well only because I brush it as often as I can...Mo-Your Aunt would always fuss at me," Yui tries to muster a grin as she frees the brush at last before running the teeth of the brush through Nanako's hair. The girl doesn't say anything as she brushes, she leans her head back a bit giving Yui an easier time to gather and separate her shoulder length hair, "...When

"I get older I'm going to have long hair!" Nanako suddenly declared earning a smile from the teenager behind her, "A- And I'll be sure to take good care of it too."

"I know you will," Yui agrees as she neatly takes a few strands into her fingers and ease out the tangles, "You'll be very pretty."

Her cousin's face lights up to a dark shade of pink and she shakes her head in denial as Yui lets out another light giggle. It was odd, even when that girl-Ai-had commented that she was pretty herself Yui was in the same position as Nanako. Perhaps the idea of being pretty was a hard concept for girls to understand, everyone had their own standards of being attractive. For Yui, she was average though the soccer team's glances her way conveyed other ideas about her appearance.

Nanako would be very pretty.

Her wide eyes, easy blushes, and shy smiles would win over anyone in a heartbeat...For some odd reason Yui felt a sudden surge of emotion as she thought about the little girl in front of her being her age.

Was this what older sisters felt?

Nanako pats her hair lightly and grins in happiness finding that Yui had taken care of all the tangles, "Thank you!"

Yui nods in return and hands the girl the brush before standing, only to have the sleeve of her sweatshirt tugged

hard and returning back to her seat. Nanako stares up at her with large eyes while holding up the brush, "Your turn. Um...If...You're okay with it?" Yui stares a bit in bewilderment before nodding.

Her cousin's lips turn up into a smile and she angles her older cousin in the exact same position she took before taking the hairbrush and gently brushing her hair. Nanako's fingers were smaller and on occasion would yank a bit too hard when she tried to gather some hair to brush properly. Yui kept herself composed and allowed her younger cousin to continue brushing her hair.

"W-When we go out during Golden Week with Dad," Nanako spoke up and the brushing stopped, "Is it okay if we go to Junes? All of us together during Golden Week to get the stuff we need for our picnic? Its going to be open during the whole week and..."

"And you like Junes," Yui lightly teases the younger girl, turning herself around and lightly poking a finger on the tip of the girl's nose, "It's fine. I have no plans at all during that time. I wouldn't mind spending the whole week with you and uncle."

Her cousin's eyes widen and nodded happily, "Yay! Junes!" Yui lightly snickers and pats the girl on the head, "So a picnic and Junes huh? We got a busy vacation ahead of us huh?"

"Yeah! And Dad'll be with us!" Nanako happily cheered as Yui covers a hand over her mouth to stop the giggles from spilling out as Nanako happily chimed out the Junes' song as she

swung in time. A knock at the door soon stopped the girls and they stare at it for a moment as someone on the other side clears his throat, "Nanako are you there? C'mon girl, time for bed, it's late. Don't bother your cousin so much..."

Yui smiles a bit at Dojima's voice before standing up along with Nanako who walks over to the door to open it. The man regards the two girls with curiosity before shaking his head, "Come on Nanako. Say good night to Yui."

"Night!" Nanako cheerfully responds giving Yui a large smile, "Thank you for helping me."

"Sleep well Nanako," Yui replies back as she watches the girl slip out into the hall and dash off towards her room. Dojima sighs and scratches the back of his head, "Ah...Sorry about her. I hope she didn't cause you any trouble." Yui shakes her head and she hears him sigh in relief, "Good...Well, it's getting late. You better get some sleep."

"Of course uncle," Yui nods in agreement as she watches the man yawn and shuffle forward towards his room, "Sleep well."

"Yeah..."

Yui's lips form into a small smile at her relative's exhausted reply and gently closes the door. The sound of rain and the ticking of her clock are the only sounds she hears as she leans against the door. Her fingers reach up and run through her hair, watching the silver grey strands slip through and shine before smiling.

It seemed she was getting closer to Nanako, the girl had been awfully shy and wary of her yet in a small amount of time she had started to warm up to her.

Yui wasn't sure if she gained the girl's trust just yet though. Her cousin was still timid about her even when Yui had assured her time and time again she didn't mind it. Her uncle on the other hand seemed to have accepted her presence in the home. He didn't protest as much with her cooking and he seemed to like that his daughter and his niece held some mutual bond.

Fingers rest on the top of her heart and she stares at the floor, surprisingly, the strange cards that appeared before her when she interacted with someone did not appear today.

With what she already knew...She had already established some sort of bond with Yosuke, Chie, Kou and Daisuke. All four were the only people in the school she had interacted with much more than anyone else since her arrival. Perhaps it appeared after she had spent a certain amount of time with them?

It made perfect sense to believe in such a theory. Yui wasn't all that surprised when the card didn't appear upon her interaction with Ai. The girl didn't seem all that interested in her or had expressed some minor interest in her, particularly her appearance, and did seem willingly to speak to her. Though it was a guess was unsure would be fulfilled. Ai had no problems leaving the gym after Kou asked for her help and didn't seem to care less...

Perhaps Yui would never establish some bond with her...

Then there was her uncle and cousin.

Why Yui had seen nothing was a mystery...

They were family, and family had a rather stronger impact upon someone than peers. Yet Yui saw nothing...

"...Perhaps they still do not like me?" she muses over and shakes her head as she pushes herself up, "No...That's not it..."

Margaret had commented that strengthen her relationships were the keys to her Wild Card. If that were the case, the appearances of the cards upon any relationship Yui would make in the future would appear after she managed to get some sort of strong bond. She sighs and shakes her head again pausing to look up at the clock.

11:57...

It was near midnight...

The teenager turns and walks to her window, her fingers brushing aside the heavy curtain to peer out into the night. A fog was slowly starting to settle outside as the rain continued to patter down on the glass. Yui lets the curtain drop before turning to stare at her television.

Stepping forward she stares at the blank screen as the minutes tick down to midnight.

The blank screen soon flickers and static appears as Yui stares at it hard. It looked like any normal sort of screen displaying signs of disconnection and her shoulders sink down as she notices no figure appearing through the interference.

No one was appearing tonight on the Midnight Channel.

It seemed that their rescue of Yukiko had been a great success against the criminal and it seemed that the criminal's failure would make them stand down.

"...For now that is," Yui muses as she watches the screen flicker and soon turn back to normal. Resting a hand to her chest and sighing in relief she turns away and makes her way to bed. She needed some well deserved rest...

Phew!

Wow I know this chapter isn't very lively and all, but it'll be back up to action after a few. I finally got out of my break and back at school, hopefully I won't lose my drive!

Okay until then guys, hope you enjoyed this update!

21. Moon Rise

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

I apologize in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

"Yui~ Yui~"

Her eyebrows twitch at the voice, who on earth...?

"No more...Voices..." She groans and tries to wave away whoever was calling her name, "Tired..."

The voice cackled and her eyebrow twitches a bit at the pitch.

Could it be?

She urges herself to open her eyes and lets out a gasp as the grinning Jack'o-lantern face presses up closer to hers. "P-Pyro Jack!" The Persona cackled and flies away from her as she sits herself up from the floor, "Hooray you are awake!" He lets out another cackle and flies off as she picks herself off from the floor. She glances around and spots Izanagi who floats after Pyro Jack, scolding him.

"I told you to leave her be!"

"If I hadn't gotten her up she'd never wake up~!" The pumpkin flies towards Yui and she ducks down as he squeals in delight as Izanagi stops himself in front of her, "...Forgive me. I thought he would leave you alone."

"It's fine," Yui assures him as she straightens up before sparring a glance at her other Persona.

This would be the first time he had spoken to her, no surprise that his cackling remained as he flies about. The lantern in his hands seems to glow dimmer and brighter depending on which direction he flew. Pyro Jack halts as her stare remains and faces her, his already craved smile seems to widen and he gives her a happy cackle before flying around again. Izanagi sighs before bowing his head, "Such a problem...He hasn't remained in one place when he came to be...I fear of the others."

"Others?"

"Yes, you are the Wild Card," her main Persona informed her, "As Miss Margaret had said, you are capable of wielding many Persona. You have already, myself and...Pyro Jack." Yui watches with some hint of amusement as he stares up above where the Persona is currently flying in loops and circles before shaking his head, "With your relationships...Come new Persona each bearing an arcana." Yui hums a bit and crosses her arms, "...So I was right. The more I interact with people, the more I gain power...It's quite

a funny condition..."

Izanagi nods in agreement, "Indeed...Considering..."

Yui blinks in surprise and stares up at him only to shake her head, "Ah...I keep on forgetting that you are a part of me. There is nothing for me to hide from you. Though...I question how I can gain new Persona. Pyro Jack came when we faced Chie-chan's Shadow...I haven't felt anything all that special like that afterwards. Do you think I have to go back to the Velvet Room?"

It would make more sense wouldn't it?

Margaret and Igor seemed to know that she would come back...Reason was, what would the reason to come back for?

"Perhaps that is right," her Persona agrees and nods, "Maybe you must go back during some time later after you established a good number of relationships. Pyro Jack and I cannot always be as useful in battle like we did before...This journey seems paved with uncertainties and power is needed..."

Yui smiles a bit at his words before nodding, "Well of course I understand, but...I still see you very important Izanagi and...In all honesty, I'm rather happy that I am forming so many friendships...It's nice. I've...Never had such an experience at all...You and I both know, it's a rarity and I want to..Cherish it."

The tall Persona seems to freeze at her words before

chuckling to himself, "Ah. Of course...Though it would be nice to have more Persona who weren't as...Flighty as Pyro Jack." Yui giggles and he stiffens as Pyro Jack floats by, "Hey hey Yui~" The pumpkin flies right up to her face and giggles before flying around her in a circle, "Yui~ Yui~ You sleepy head~ Did you know you drool in your sleep~?"

The teenager blushes and tries to lightly smack him, only to miss as the Persona cackles in glee before flying high, "Can't catch me~ Can't catch me~"

She and Izanagi can only watch from below as he happily floated around above. She glances towards Izanagi and stops herself from scoffing at the slight twitches of his shoulders the longer he stared up at Pyro Jack.

"...Would you miss him if I just-"

"No Izanagi," Yui firmly tells him as she gives his sword a long glare in his fingers, "You cannot play 'Smack the Jack' with him. You cannot act upon the thoughts I come up with from something that flusters me. Besides..." Yui looks up above them with a small grin on her face, "He seems to be having fun...There is no crime in that right?" Izanagi sighs and loosens his grip on his sword only to tighten them as he notices Pyro Jack blowing a raspberry his direction. The tall Persona stays silent and Yui has barely time to blink before he is gone from his place.

"Izanagi!"

"One whack!"

She stares at the two as they fly about the area, considering there wasn't anything for them to hide or dodge the chase was rather comical to see. Her usually patient and calm Persona swinging his blade with no direct aim while her second Persona cackles and lazily dodges the blade when it was a mere two inches close. "...Oh dear..."

Yui sighs before settling back down on the floor, laying down on her back as she watches them up from above.

Although the entire chase was made out of taunting, Yui couldn't help the ends of her lip pulling up into a smile at the two's antics. It was a sight to find the two act in such a carefree manner than seeing them fight for her in the TV World. Pyro Jack was a mischievous Persona, she understood that the moment she had summoned him. Seeing Izanagi's calm façade shattered by the rather carefree pumpkin was a sight worth giggling. She giggles again as Pyro Jack headbutts Izanagi suddenly as he steers towards a new direction causing the Persona to yelp.

Her eyelids start to grow heavy and soon they close as her body accepts the heavy want to sleep...

Yui yawns quietly, placing a hand over her mouth as she walks towards school. Nanako and her had parted ways as usual and the older had began to feel a little tired as she trudged the way to the high school. She had been fine earlier,

perhaps it was just the little bits of sleep she lost mentally when she communicated with her Persona. The last time she did talk to Izanagi it took her a moment to blink away the lingering sleep from her eyes...

She yawns again, this time a bit louder as she sighs.

"...What am I going to do today?" she suddenly mutters to herself as she realized that today after school she was free. Soccer practice wasn't today and Chie had texted her the night before that Yukiko was still not well. Knowing the short-haired girl, Chie would run right off towards the Inn with the absent girl's missed notes and homework. So Yui knew that asking the other girl out after school was out of the question.

The two were reunited and it seemed it would take a while for anyone to try to separate the two. They must have been using that time to talk about everything they had kept hidden from the other and reconnecting back to make their friendship stronger.

Yosuke came to mind suddenly as she grew closer to the school, would he be free?

The boy showed signs of being fine after they rescued Yukiko, grateful and happy that they managed to save her from the same fate as Saki-senpai and Mayumi Yamano. Though Yui couldn't help feeling a bit worried for him. He was always smiling and seemed at ease with everything after he had accepted his Shadow, but Yui still wanted to make sure he was alright. Also, she owed him a bit for saving her from

being late to class...

"Yo! Yui-chan!"

"Ah, Yosuke-kun," Yui smiled as she spotted the boy locking his bike in place on the rack, "Good morning. Did you sleep well?"

"Uh...Don't know if you could say that," he replied as they walked into the building, "My dad's been on my case a bit with me playin' hooky at work. I missed a few hours on my shift when we had to go on the other side. So...I'm stuck...Working right after school's done."

Looks like her plan to hang out with anyone just got shot down...

She opens her locker and begins to toe off her loafers as something on the billboard catches her eye. It's the poster for the band club that was pinned firmly right next to the posters for basketball and soccer club. She stares at it for a minute as she can faintly hear Yosuke grumble a bit about his sneakers before nodding suddenly, "I know what I'm going to do today!"

The announcement causing Yosuke to stop before staring at her, "...Uh Yui-chan? Did you not sleep again?"

Yui shook her head and closed her locker before pointing to the poster, "It's not that. I know what I can after school when I don't have soccer practice to attend! I can do the band club!"

"You play an instrument Yui-chan?" Yosuke questioned a small grin growing on his face as he closes his locker, "I mean, you seem the type. I bet your parents made you play the piano or flute." Yui shakes her head as they begin to walk again, "They were too busy to even consider giving me music lessons," she answers and shakes her head, "They seemed to favor more academic activities than anything like music...What about you Yosuke-kun? Do you know how to play an instrument?"

The other smiles and tosses his head up a bit, "Well I don't mean to brag, but I do know a thing or two about how to play a guitar. I mean, I'm not that great, but I think I'm pretty good." Yui can't help grinning a bit at his words and shakes her head a bit before waving to Chie who waves back to them at her desk, "Morning! Ah. Hey why's Yosuke all smiling and stuff?"

"Oh I just asked him if he played an instrument and he said he played the guitar." Chie raises an eyebrow as she watches the boy stroll into his seat before rolling her eyes, "And now's he got a big head. Yui you need to stop doing that," she scolds Yui lightly and tsked before smiling, "So I heard from Kou you managed to actually bond a bit with Daisuke yesterday. I'm surprised that he even talked to you with something other than player and manager business."

Yui shakes her head, "I don't think he likes me at all still," she can't stop the sigh that comes out, "I mean...I think he tolerates me because I'm being serious about the manager thing and soccer. Not that it's a problem at all. Though, what

do you mean it's a surprise?"

"Uh...Well, other than me. He doesn't talk to any other girls, he just turns them away."

"The guy's probably just focused on soccer that's all," Yosuke suddenly chimes in, "I mean, he wears the jersey everywhere and I haven't seen him anywhere after school other than the field." Yui and Chie glance at each other and shrug, perhaps that was the case...

Yosuke stretches and rests his head on his desk as he speaks again, "In other news, how's Yukiko doing? She's feeling any better?" Chie nods, "Uh huh. She's feeling a lot better, she's still a little run down and all. But she says to tell you guys that she's alright and she's perfectly fine!"

"That's good, thank goodness," Yui smiles as Yosuke nods, "I'm glad to know that she's alright." The red feather that she had kept pocketed from the TV World had been resting in one of her desk drawers back at home. For some reason it hadn't dissolved when she had left and Yui couldn't bring herself to throw it away so instead she kept it. Perhaps she could give it to Yukiko later when she came back to school.

The day started pretty much as any other after that.

King Moron began home room with his usual lecture and Yui for once was able to stand his words as she copied down notes, though she couldn't save Yosuke when her friend was spotted sleeping behind her and was told off. She could only

offer a sad smile towards the other as he sat in his seat after the verbal attack and looked drained. She made a mental note to herself to help him next time during any class.

It was during lunch when something new would occur for her.

She had decided to go return the book she had borrowed and started to go up the stairs when Ai suddenly turned the corner, bags on her shoulder and hand, and the two blinked in surprise at the other's appearance. "Well, well look who it is. The other team manager," Ai lightly said as she began to walk down the stairs, "Funny seeing you here, what were you doing?"

"I was just returning a book," Yui replied as she continues up the steps before Ai grabs a hold of her elbow, startling her. The other girl stares at her a moment before smiling suddenly, "Actually now that I think about..How about you come with me?" Yui blinks in surprise at the other's sudden change in attitude towards her. Yesterday she had been completely indifferent with her and today it seemed she was interested again.

"Come with you...Where?"

"Out," Ai continues and hooks their arms together at the elbow and starts to drag Yui back downstairs, "Actually the coach and guys wanted me to get them a few things, so I could use the help."

"But it's still-"

The girl shakes her head and giggles, "Oh come on, it'll be fine. You are a manager right, this is our job. Be a team player why don't ya?" Yui steals a few glances towards the stairs as Ai continues to lead her out of the school.

The day had now turned into a not so normal day, Yui had finally skipped classes for the very first time.

Yui had never at all in her life when she had started school, ever skip class. In fact she never had been absent from class at all, she was always on time and never got sick which lead to a perfect attendance from the start of primary school to the present.

How she allowed Ai to drag her out of the building without so much as stuttering, lead her to Okina City a train stop away from Inaba, and tow her around to all sorts of clothing stores...She was still stunned of her lack of protest to even try to piece together a possible answer or excuse why she let the girl do as she pleased. Perhaps it was because she was merely curious why the other seemed interested in her suddenly...Again.

"...Ebihara-san...I don't think the basketball or soccer team need dresses," she finally spoke up as she watched the girl press one dress to her body before returning it back to the rack, "Wouldn't a sports store be better?"

"Sports store?" The girl blinks before snickering, "Oh wow you still think we're out here on errands for the team?! What I said

earlier was obviously a lie!"

"...Oh," Yui can feel a slight warmth flood her face as she looks down, "Oh. Obviously huh?"

Ai giggles a bit before handing her a handful of dresses before going to another rack, "I mean, it's pretty much a given. Would anyone go out shopping for their sports teams DURING the afternoon?" Yui nods in agreement, "That's true..."

"Besides isn't it so much nicer shopping with someone, especially when they're helping me out with my stuff," Ai continues, "Also isn't it nice being out while everyone's stuck at school studying? It makes it so much more fun."

Yui pauses a moment as she watches Ai pick up a pair of sunglasses before putting them over her eyes. "...I guess you're right it is a nice change." The other turns to her for a moment, her eyes wide in surprise yet there is a huge grin on her face, "Oh wow! You're pretty open-minded huh? It's a bit of a surprise and I thought you were just a boring square."

"Well...I've never ditched class before," Yui admits to her as Ai motions her over and places a pair of dark tinted glasses over her eyes making her stiffen at the sudden accessory on her face.

"Oh really? You don't say huh?" Ai muses as she looks at Yui, "Heh, you know you're not like any of the other girls at school. They'd whine about missing class or just flat-out tell me I'm

being selfish...I don't get that vibe from you at all." Yui can feel her cheeks warm up at the compliment and gingerly removes the sunglasses off her face before returning them to their display.

Ai sighs in content before glancing at the clock, "Well we got enough time for me to grab myself a nice cup of iced coffee before we start heading back to school."

Yui stares at her as the girl sighs before grabbing a new pair of sunglasses and putting them on.

"As soon as school lets out, I'm number one on the guidance counselor's list," she explains as she turns her head at different angles in front of the small mirror by the display stand, "I've been placed on watch with my attendance and behavior and he's the one in charge of giving me a lecture. It's a pain..."

"Yet none of the teachers even realize you're missing," Yui points out as she follows Ai to the check out line, "They're pretty stupid if they can't figure that out."

"Exactly!" Ai exclaims as she puts the sunglasses on the counter as Yui to puts the bundle of clothing next to them, "I'm out here having fun and they don't know a single thing. How can you miss that?" Ai smiles a little towards Yui as she hands the cashier a credit card, "You know...I thought I'd be bored out today, but I actually had fun. You're really different from everyone else, I like you."

Yui can't help, but smile back to the other a bit. Yes Ai had dragged her out of school a bit against her will, but at the same time she herself couldn't say she didn't have fun with the girl. The experience of skipping school should have horrified her, yet it didn't. It felt exciting.

Her vision goes double and a familiar blue hazy light takes over her eye sight as she watches Ai pay for her clothing.

THOU ART I

AND I AM THOU

THOU HAS ESTABLISHED A NEW BOND

OF THE MOON ARCANA

A card appears and flips over and her attention is drawn to the moon placed center on the surface as the Roman numeral for eighteen shines underneath. At the top in the left and right corners are two identical tower like buildings with a lobster in the middle.

The card shines at her before disappearing just as the many others as Ai hands her two of her bags while she keeps the smaller of the three to herself. "Let's do this again, but after school this time okay? Now let's get going, or you'll be on the guidance counselor's radar too!" The words were spoken in a friendly manner, but the tone Ai uses sounds much more like an order.

"Good plan!" Yui agrees quickly before taking the bags and hurrying after the rushing girl out the store doors.

"The hell were you all day?" Yosuke demanded after classes had ended, "Chie and I were ready to assembly a search party! We thought we lost you!" Yui and Ai had parted ways downstairs just as the bell had rung. Ai gave her a small grin before disappearing down the hall as students began to come out of their classrooms. Her legs made her rush back up the stairs to her home room where a very angry Yosuke came out, his cell phone in hand.

Yui hadn't even thought about turning her phone on as soon as she and Ai left the school grounds and listened to him lecture her.

"I-I'm sorry," Yui quickly bows to him as they continue to stand outside the room, "I um...I spent some time with Ai-san, Ai Ebihara. It was sudden and I didn't even think of...Turning my phone on.."

The boy's face turns from frustration to surprise at her answer, "Ebihara? You mean girl with dark blond sorta hair, wears pink choker and is the new basketball team manager? That Ebihara?" Yui nods as she watches him curiously, "No way...I mean, not that it'd be a surprise she didn't know you. You're both team managers, but she actually wanted to hang out with you?"

"Why would that be a surprise?" Yui quickly questions,

somewhat interested, "How do you know so much Yosuke-kun?"

"Uh...That shouldn't really be a big concern-"

"Is it because she's as pretty as Yukiko?" Yui's new question makes her male friend turn pink and he awkwardly laughs while holding his hands up, "Whoa, whoa that's not exactly...Okay. Yeah, maybe. I mean she has as many admirers as Yukiko anyway. I mean...I'm a guy too and as a guy, I mean what's not to like." Yui's face feels odd and she narrows her eyes at him at his words earning a nervous chuckle from him, "Besides that, why is it a surprise she were to hang out with me though?"

"Well...Not all the girls here like her," Yosuke quickly replied in hopes to appease her slight annoyance, "To be honest...There's a ton of rumors about her."

"Well she isn't that bad," Yui declares as she turns her face away a bit, "I mean...She's pushy, but I actually had...Fun skipping class." Now it is her turn to turn a light pink and she presses the tips of her index fingers together, "I never...Skipped class so it was oddly exciting."

"Yeah well your exciting moment made me and Chie worry," Yosuke pointed out before showing her the screen of his cell. Yui immediately feels a wave of guilt wash over her as she noticed the long list of unanswered calls and texts under her name is displayed. She clasps her hands together and bowed, "I know and I am sorry. Please forgive me oh awesome

Yosuke-kun."

"Be serious Yui-chan!"

They hear a snicker from the open doorway and look to see Chie holding a bundle of papers up to her face as if using them as a barrier to hide out the laugh that threatened to spill out, "Oh my god...Really Yui-chan? 'Oh awesome Yosuke-kun?' That's a major step up for him!" Yui smiles sheepishly as Chie finally lets a snort escape her and laughs loudly as Yosuke raises a fist to her, "Hey! I am so awesome!"

"Yes you are...If you didn't crash your bike so much," Yui quietly whispers earning another round of laughter from Chie as Yosuke glares towards her, "Hey! I'm still mad at you! Seriously...Don't..Go off without letting us know okay?"

Yui blinks and stares at Yosuke as he crosses his arms, his eyes averting down as he kicks at the floor. Her expression softens a bit as she recalled just what the boy had gone through and nods, "I understand...I'll be more careful next time okay? How about...Tomorrow after school we hang out, just you and me?" Yosuke's head snaps up and his eyes grow wide at her offer, "W-Wait really? You and...Me?"

The silver-haired teenager nods and claps her hands together, "Yeah. I still owe you for the few times you saved me from being late. Is that alright?"

For some reason the boy hesitates and it's only when Chie nudges him sharply with her elbow does he respond with a

frantic nod of his head, "Y-Yeah! Sure cool! Totally cool with hanging out tomorrow after school!" he exclaims with a huge grin and a thumbs up. Yui smiles before glancing to the clock, "Ah I better head to the band room. I want to see if I can still sign up for the band. Chie-chan, Yosuke-kun have a good day." She flashes them a grin before turning away and heading off to find the band room.

Another chapter done!

And a new social link has formed between Yui and Ai! I know this chapter and the last are a bit laid back, but the action will return later I promise!

I think the idea with Ai bonding with Yui will be a bit interesting. I see the bond as a more 'sister' sort where Ai takes more of the 'older sister' lead and Yui is the 'younger sister.' I know this chapter isn't, again, very thrilling but the IT will be back on track after a few more chapters! Thank you for reading!

22. A Little bit of Sunshine

Disclaimer: I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Ah been a while since last update huh? Writer's block, life and distractions all the way! Who else is hyped on up for all the Persona coming our way?!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

I apologize in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

Finding the band room was quite easy, all Yui had to do was follow the music being played from the end of the hallway.

The room was spacious, larger than the classrooms, and she finds a few people sitting in chairs tuning or playing their instruments while squinting at the music sheets on the stands in front of them. Stepping inside the silver-haired student glances around uncertain before taking another step, her eyes only scan around briefly until a small form hits her right in the chest. "Ow!"

Yui lets out a grunt of discomfort as someone right in front of her quietly groans while holding a hand to their forehead. The

girl flushes a light pink as her eyes meet the taller and she backs away immediately, "Ah, I'm..I'm so sorry!" she exclaims as she looks up to Yui, "I wasn't looking...Um...C-Can I help you?"

There's no mistaking it, this was the girl Yui had helped putting the band poster up.

The girl is very small compared to her and reached only at her shoulders by just a centimeter. Her face was framed with dark green hair that was cut rather short with the tips barely covering her ears. After a moment of silence the girl's grey eyes widen at realization of who Yui was, "Oh I...I remember you! You helped me!"

"I remember you too," Yui nods with a slight smile happy the other recognized her, "I actually came by to join the band club. Is there still a chance to?" The girl nods, "Oh r-really? Um, wait right here for a moment please. Captain!" Yui watches as the short girl runs off towards a male student that stood by the piano.

The girl points over to her and Yui could hear them whisper about her before the boy straightened up and started to walk towards her. The girl follows after him, her hands up to her chest with the finger tips touching together as she nervously watches them both. "So I heard you wanted to join the band huh?" the boy speaks loudly as he looks at her carefully, "I haven't seen you around before. What's your name?"

Yui smiles and bows, "I'm the transfer student. My name is

Yui Narukami, a second year. This is actually the first time I wanted to join a club. Is there anything I need to do specifically?"

The boy looks surprised and laughs a bit, "Really? I would think the students from the city had more clubs and stuff than us in the boonies...Well, don't worry. You don't need to do anything at all. Got any experience with playing an instrument?" Yui shakes her head, "Sadly no...Though I am a fast learner. I'll try my best to keep up."

The boy claps his hands together, a smile on his face at her answer before nodding. "I like your attitude Narukami-chan," he announces before nodding again, "That's what we're looking for. Really dedicated team players! How about you just sit out and watch for today? We'll have an instrument and other stuff for you tomorrow. Hey Ayane, think you can handle helping her out?"

The girl salutes, her mouth drawn into a tight line and her eyes narrowed giving her an expression of determination, "Yes sir!"

He laughs at her before walking away, "I'm going to get the other guys and call practice to start up again. Fill her in."

Yui glances at his retreating figure before focusing her attention back on the smaller girl who looks up at her and offers her a shy smile, "Um...It's nice to meet you Senpai. I'm A-Ayane Matsunaga. I'm a first-year. I-I play the trombone and...Well uh..."

Ayane's voice began to slowly lower compared to her earlier tone and Yui can see the girl starting to grow more and more nervous the longer she speaks to her. "Well...Oh! Right, we meet on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursday. But we don't take attendance so if you can't make it it's alright practice makes perfect so..."

Yui nods, "Got it." The girl laughs a bit at her words and shakes her head, "But I'm not the best example of that. Um...D-Do you have any other questions Narukami-senpai?"

Yui crosses her arms and looks down at Ayane, the longer she stares the more red the girl's cheeks start to turn. The silver haired teenage chuckles suddenly, "You're adorable Ayane-chan."

"H-Huh?!" Ayane's face is as bright as a tomato and Yui continues to giggle as she stutters, "N-No I'm not! I don't think...A-Are all people from the city like that? So forward? You caught me off guard." Yui can only smile as the first-year shakes her head, "I-I'm not a-adorable!" she manages to exclaim before flinching at the sudden loudness of her voice, "A-Ah...S-Sorry I didn't mean to yell at you senpai, um...Oh we do performances sometimes too!"

The girl makes a quick recovery and turns the topic back on track, "They're usually for the hospital and senior homes, we're not a big enough band to enter any competitions, but!" Ayane grins shyly as her face turns a darker shade of pink, "People really enjoy our performances! We pour our hearts into the music!"

"That's an accomplishment," Yui compliments as Ayane nods in agreement, "I can't wait to play with you. I bet you're really good on the trombone Ayane-chan." This makes the girl's blush drain back immediately at her words and Yui blinks in surprise as Ayane ducks her head down. Had she said something offending?

"...Actually," Ayane quietly whispers as she glances towards the other band members that reënter the room, "When I say 'we' I don't mean myself either...Um I don't usually play. Ah, but I do take care of most of the paperwork around here." Yui watches as the girl fumbles around with her fingers as her face turns a bright pink, "But I d-don't mind at all so...Um...T-That's about all you need to know really senpai. Any questions?"

Yui shakes her head and Ayane smiles, "O-Okay, well I should get back to work. I'll see you later Narukami-senpai." The shorter girl bows and begins to walk away as Yui blinks immediately at a very familiar sound.

Blue floods her vision again as she watches Ayane disappear as she leaves the doorway and a card reveals itself to her. Izanagi's voice echoes in her head as she tries to keep herself from blinking any further.

THOU ART I

AND I AM THOU

THOU HAS ESTABLISHED A NEW BOND

OF THE SUN ARCANA

The card flips and like many of the cards before, the Roman numeral appears on the bottom of the image. This time it says XIX, fifteen, and displays a picture of the sun before disappearing from her view. She blinks again and tries not to rub her eyes as her vision begins to reset itself. So for today, she had created bonds with both Ai and Ayane representing the moon and the sun.

The silver-haired teenager can't stop herself from smiling at the irony as she turns around towards the band leader as he introduces her to the band.

Yui headed towards the shopping district right after she could leave the band club, by now she had five arcanas through her interactions and she was curious just how this would work to help her in terms of power with help from the Velvet Room. She stopped where she could see the blue door only to stop a moment and glance about. There were a few people lingering in the area yet none seemed to be staring at the odd grand door.

"Odd...Ouch!"

She tumbles down onto the ground as someone lets out a grunt, "Oh...Oh sorry Narukami-chan!"

"Hm? Ah, Ichijo-san...Where are you going in such a hurry?"
The basketball player helps her up and nervously glances at

his cell phone, "Uh...It's...It's nothing. Just something I totally forgot about. I'll see you in school later 'kay!"

Yui raises an eyebrow as she watched him run off and frowned, "That's...Odd..."

"Sheesh, he didn't even let me finish."

Yui turned around and noticed Daisuke staring off in the direction his friend had bolted off in, "Nagase-san?"

"Huh? Uh Narukami, what are you doing here?" The soccer player shakes his head, "Uh...Never mind. Actually, hey do you got some time? I really need to get this off my chest...It's about Kou."

"Well..." She stops herself, "...Alright. I got time."

She could take this time to know a little bit more about the duo, and it was in fact the first time Daisuke openly asked if she and him could speak to each other. "Great, just come on in." The smell of Chinese hits Yui's nose as she enters the building Daisuke had reentered and she glances around a bit.

"Hey, over here," Daisuke beckons her over towards the counter and nods towards an empty seat next to him, "Take a seat...Uh...You want anything?"

"Oh...No thank you it's fine," she assures him as she sits down and crosses her ankles before looking at him. He glances at her for a moment before glancing away as she

turns her head to study the bright red interior around them. After a few moments she turns back to him, "What was it you wanted to say about Ichijo-san?"

The soccer player glances down for a moment, his expression falling into one of concern. Brows furrowed deeply and his arms crossing over his chest as he looks up towards the ceiling before heaving a sigh. "Well," Daisuke sighs as he finally makes eye contact with her, "I don't...Really like talking behind his back like this, but...I...I think it'd be better this way. I want you to help him out."

Help Kou?

Yui tilts her head a bit as a perplexed expression forms onto her face for a moment. Kou did seem to be in a hurry earlier and he had left Daisuke alone. "...Just tell me how," Yui finally replies with a faint smile, "I'll try my best."

Daisuke scoffs a bit, perhaps at her easy acceptance or how she sounded so formal. As if she was accepting a mission, "Thanks." He takes a moment to think before opening his mouth again, "It's about Kou's family. He lives by himself, but his parents' place is right next door. Once a week or so, he drops by there, like today. He almost forgot about it and that was why he bolted on out of here."

Yui watches as he pinches the bridge of his nose for a moment before continuing on, "His family is...What's the word I'm looking for...Distinguished? Very traditional, very strict. You'd never know just by looking at 'em, though..."

She takes a moment to imagine that.

Kou was a very honest if not blunt person. He was always upbeat now that she thought about it and was very expressive. She tried to picture his parents as Daisuke had described and she nods for him to continue.

"The head of the Ichijo family is Kou's grandma," he explains as he taps his fingers on the counter and his shoulder slump, "They follow her orders like she's the law. Problem is, the old cone doesn't approve of him playing basketball. She calls it 'barbaric.'"

"What?" Now Yui was taken aback, "But how can she say that? It's just a sport."

She saw no harm in her schoolmate's sport being at all 'barbaric' at all. There were many other sports that she found rough and basketball was by far the most rough. Daisuke nods in agreement before leaning back a bit, "Well...According to her, there are sports that are 'proper' and those that...Aren't. He's been forced to quit a lot of things since he was a kid. But not basketball. He can't give that up. So...I'm...Asking you to help him out."

Daisuke gives her a glance, "I mean...If you can't I understand, but I feel like I can't really help him out all by myself...So think you can lend a hand?"

"Leave it to me."

The words come out so easily that both Daisuke and she herself is surprised at how quick she was to accept. The soccer player stares at her for a moment before snickering, "Heh..Okay. I'm glad I came to you then. I know it's a lot, but...Thanks. It makes me glad I can rely on you."

Yui grins a bit, "It's not a problem. Oh..Wait what time is it?" She brings her cell phone out before quickly standing up, "Nagase-san, I should get going now. Don't try to worry so much. You're a good friend to Ichijiro-san." For a moment she sees a faint pink come to his face, but it disappears immediately as he frowns at her, "Well yeah of course! A-Anyway get home safely...And...Thanks again."

Yui nods and gives him a slight wave before leaving.

A sense of warmth spreads through her body as she smiles a bit at how it seemed she had progressed closer in her friendship with Daisuke.

"Hm? Uncle?"

The older man at the table looks up in surprise as Yui entered the doorway, "Ah you're home...Nanako's over at a friend's house at the moment I'll be picking her up later."

"I see," the teenager glances to the ground before looking back at her uncle as he let out a cough before looking back at the paper.

"Ah, this is the first time we've been in the house together without Nanako," Yui thought as she slowly came forward and took the seat across from him noting that her uncle stiffened at the sudden action. She crosses her ankles as she nervously looked at her hands on her lap before looking back at her uncle.

Dojima continued to stare at the newspaper though Yui can see his eyes glance to her before quickly looking back on the page. After a few more minutes she can hear her uncle clear his throat, "So...Uh..How's school?" The question surprises her a little bit, but all the same she answers.

"It's been going well. I've joined the band club actually today," Yui replied with a small smile, "I know I'm the manager for the soccer team, but...It's nice to join something in my extra free time."

"I uh, yeah I agree," her uncle nodded as he began to close the newspaper and placed it aside. Yui glanced at the front page curiously before allowing herself to meet his stare. Another heavy silence fell on them as they continued to stare across from each other before she finally broke contact and stared at her hands in her lap. She could hear her uncle clear his throat again as he shifted the newspaper slightly on the table creating a soft rustling sound.

"How are you holding up here?"

Yui blinks at the question as Dojima finally lifts his head up to look at her, "I mean...Not that I'm trying to pry, but I haven't

been home long enough to see how you've been adjusting. Nanako and you seem to be getting along just fine though so...That's a good thing." Yui smiles and nods as her uncle pauses again, "I'll try to make it up during Golden Week to you both," he continued as he nervously taps his fingers on the table, "So...I..Uh...I just hope you understand I'm not trying to be that much of a workiholic."

"It's alright," she laughed quietly at his apology, "I'm used to it." The remark makes Dojima frown for a moment before she realizes her implication. It wasn't an exact secret her parents were always working.

"But I'm alright," she quickly reassured him again, "It's been an easy adjustment...I'm just glad you accepted me into your home." Her uncle lets out a grunt as his frown slowly disappeared and they sat in silence again. After a few moments more Yui got up and made her way over to the kitchen to make her usual mug of warm tea. Her uncle continued to stare at his paper before glancing up to her in surprise as she set a warm mug of coffee by his head and offered him a smile.

Despite the awkward conversation, at least she felt a little closer to her uncle.

23. Don't Starve

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

I apologize in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

She freezes in place for a moment as she catches a sight of red right by the school gate the next morning.

The owner of the bright red cardigan shifts her weight onto her left and right foot every few seconds as students walked by her. Her fingers fiddling with the handle of her school bag as her head lifts up as she turns slightly in all possible angles to try and find someone.

"Yukiko-chan!"

The raven-haired girl immediately snaps out of her fidgeting as she looks towards Yui's direction as she quickens her pace to stand before the other girl.

Yukiko's face still holds some signs of exhaustion, but not as badly as it had been when Yui had first met her. The bags and shadows under her eyes were gone and the smile that came

up as Yui closed their distance seemed much more genuine. "Good..Morning," Yukiko greets her though her fingers don't stop loosening and gripping her school bag's handle, "I'm...I'm all better now. I'll be coming to school again so..That'll be nice."

"Yes it will," Yui agrees and gives the other a small smile, "I'm glad to see you're feeling a lot better Yukiko-chan."

Yukiko stops fidgeting for a moment before looking up at her. A new expression comes up as she bites her lip a bit and averts her eyes down.

"I caused some real trouble for everyone. I'm sorry," she finally spoke up before looking at Yui again. There's a pause before she quickly shakes her head, "No wait...It's not 'sorry,'" the raven-haired girl quickly corrects herself before giving Yui a small grin, "It's thank you. I want to thank you.."

"...Your welcome."

Yukiko blinks for a moment before allowing her grin to grow as Yui nods for them to start walking into the school building. Yukiko nods in agreement and they both begin to enter the courtyard.

Around them she could see a few students glance in their direction, more specifically focusing on Yukiko.

However the raven-haired girl ignored their stares and continued to talk with Yui. "My mother's back working," she

informed her, "Everyone at the Inn's been really supportive and I think things are going a lot better than they have been before. I wonder...I might have tried a little too hard." Yukiko glances up at the sky for a moment before looking to Yui, "I may have been too caught up in the idea of doing everything myself. Since the incident...I feel like I can think about things more calmly...You know?"

Yui watches as suddenly a red blush comes to Yukiko's face, "But...Oh..It's still embarrassing you know? You all saw everything...Even things I didn't want to admit and..."

"That's only one part of you," Yui assures the girl and lightly pats her on the shoulder. Her words immediately allow the red blush on Yukiko's face to fade as she nods in agreement, "Yeah...I'd like to believe that."

The two smile again before stopping as they hear footsteps coming closer to them.

"Yukiko!"

Both of them turn to see Chie waving at them before, grinning, "Hey you made it today!" the brunette happily laughed as she hugged her friend, "It's great to see you back!" Yui's smile remains as she watches the two converse for a moment before Chie looks towards her. The smile and the energy from the short-haired girl seemed to have been identical to Yukiko's own as they start to file into the building.

"Oh right!" Chie gasped as they began to slip their shoes into

their lockers, "Now that Yukiko's back we can do that shopping trip."

"Shopping trip?" Yukiko questioned as she glanced to Yui who nervously laughed, "Well you see," she explained to the other, "Chie-chan and I thought when you got better we could do that. We don't need to do it right away though as you just got back of course...Do you think that would be a good idea?" For a moment Yukiko seemed surprised at her question and for a moment Yui wondered what sort of face the raven-haired teenager was seeing from her.

It had come to her attention she was slowly letting her facial expressions form more and more during her stay at Inaba. She was still 'deadpan,' but she could just feel her expressions shift more than usual.

Heat began to flood her cheeks slightly the longer Yukiko stared before letting out a small snicker, "Of course it'll be fine," Yukiko finally answered making Yui release the air she had kept inside as she looked to Chie, "Just let me adjust and we can all plan this out. It's been a long time since I did hang out with my friends." For a moment the words caught Yui by surprise as Chie and Yukiko slipped by her and were already chatting about the possible things they could do when their 'girls day out' could happen.

Friend...

Yui stared at her locker for a moment and her lips tugged as she allowed the warmth in her chest grow as she repeated

the word. It felt nice...

"Hey Yui-chan! If you're done staring at the lockers c'mon," she heard Chie yell before giggling, "Don't tell me you wanna be scolded by King Moron." Chie and Yukiko giggled a little bit as Yui jumped up at the very nightmare of facing their home room teacher and hurried over to them with her eyes wide and her face slowly turning paler by the second. Yukiko struggled to keep her laughter in as Chie teasingly poked Yui who in turn tried to protest her heart almost gave out by the very thought of being confronted by their home room teacher.

However all three of them were all smiling and giggling as they made their way to class.

It had been decided their group would be eating on the roof today. With Yukiko back they thought it would be a good idea to at least talk a little more in detail about her kidnapping when she still had a good grasp of it in her memories.

While Chie seemed uneasy to let her friend talk about it so soon, Yukiko assured all of them it was alright and gave Chie a smile to let her friend know it was alright for her to talk about it. With how they had all seen Yukiko's Shadow it seemed she had finally gotten comfortable enough with Yui and Yosuke now than before. In the present moment Yui was making her way through the slightly crowded hallway to the roof, her fingers wrapped around her bento as she passed two boys who were having a rather loud conversation.

"-What's a delinquent like that doing in our school anyway?" She paused for a moment as another boy, one much taller walked by her and seemed to be heading straight to the two, "It'd be so much better if he'd get kicked ou-"

Yui could only watch as the taller boy stared down at the two others ones, silently challenging them to continue their conversation. While she couldn't see the taller boy's face her two schoolmates' quickly turned pale as they quickly turned away and hurried away from his gaze.

Seeing no conflict she began to walk towards the roof when she spotted something fall out of the taller boy's pocket. Though it seemed he didn't even notice it had fallen and was already walking away.

Quickly she held her lunch in her left hand as her right reached down to the floor to pick up what was dropped and hurried after him.

"Hey wait."

He stiffened immediately and turned around, his expression twisted in one of annoyance before changing to one of alarm to whatever it was she held out to him in her open palm. Yui's eyes widen in surprise as she finally took a good look at his face.

Blond hair...Dark roots...Really tall...

This was the boy from before at Junes that saw her fold her

cranes!

It seemed he also remembered her and backed away from her a bit before looking at what was in her hand. This time Yui looked at what she held and she blinked.

A small little pink rabbit stared up at them both from her palm.

From how the strap was attached to the top of its head Yui could guess it was a charm of some sort for a cell phone before it was snatched out of her hand.

Her mouth opened a moment as if to say something, but the boy was already walking away from her as his hand stuffed the rabbit back into his pocket. When he was about to round the corner he gave her one last glance, his eyes narrowing as she could only stare at him in confusion. It was only when a little nudge at her side made her snap out of her daze and she turned to find Yukiko holding two small bowls of instant noodles in her hands as she gave Yui a smile.

"So this was where you were."

Yui glanced back down the hall for a moment before giving Yukiko a quiet chuckle, "Ah yeah...Sorry. I forgot which way to go," she told her as they began to hurry back to Chie and Yosuke.

"Where have you been?" Yosuke greeted her as she and Yukiko finally appeared on the roof. Yui could only give him a

shrug as Yukiko handed Chie one of the bowls, "She just forgot which way to go," she replied, "Chie yours was soba right?"

Chie nodded eagerly as she set the bowl onto her lap, "Thanks Yukiko. Oooh, this smells so good!"

"Just wait a few more minutes," Yukiko quickly told her friend as she sat next to her as Yui took a seat next to Yosuke who cleared his throat. Glancing at Yui she raised an eyebrow as he nodded to Yukiko. Understanding what he was asking her she only nodded before looking to the girl as she studied her noodle bowl.

"Now that we're all here," Yosuke finally spoke up as after they all had settled down, "We can get started." There was a pause as he glanced over to Yukiko who was looking at Yui and him, "I know you said you're fine talking about this Yukiko-san, but if you want to stop you can. Just tell us anything you recall when you were kidnapped."

Yui watched as Yukiko frowned for a moment, her eyes narrowed as she tried to recall the details. Beside her Chie was staring at her friend intently, her hand now resting on her shoulder as a way to give her some sense of support as she tried to remember.

It was a few moments later before Yukiko sighed, her head lowering a bit as she finally spoke.

"No."

The word echoed throughout the empty space as she looked at them. Her dark eyes filled with worry as she continued.

"I thought I might remember if I let it sit for a while, but it keeps get hazier as time goes on," she admits before looking to Chie. Her friend only gave her nod and Yukiko inhaled again. This time her eyes were closed as she tried to remember.

"...I think the doorbell rang at the entrance and someone...Called for me," she finally told them as she opened her eyes, "But after that I woke up in the castle already." She shakes her head before looking to Chie with her lips pulled into a frown and her eyes downcast. Her apologetic expression was only greeted by Chie's smile who patted her lightly on the shoulder, "It's okay. You told us everything you could."

Yui smiles as Yukiko nods to Chie's words. Despite not having remembering things clearly Yukiko at least gave them an idea of what had happened to her. Beside her Yosuke sighed as he lightly rubbed his temple.

"So...Does that mean her visitor was the culprit?" Chie questioned and Yosuke shakes his head, "I don't think so...If that's the case, that's one daring criminal don't you think? What kind of killer would ring the doorbell?"

"A confident one," Yui points out earning a nod from him as she continues, "And the police are sure to be looking for witnesses. From what we know, there's not a lot to expect

from them." Chie's eyes narrowed and she shook her head, "I just wonder why whoever is doing this is doing this," she points out as Yukiko nods in agreement.

"We won't know until we confront 'em," Yosuke answered before looking at Yui who in turn also nodded as he looked over to Chie and Yukiko, "But we know one thing for sure. It's no coincidence that people keep ending up in that place. There's someone here on our side that's kidnapping them and throwing them into the TV."

"Teddies did say that," Yui added, "So for now...We have to be careful."

"...We?"

Yosuke grins as Yukiko glanced at all three of them, "Oh right, you don't know all the details yet right?" he nods to Yui and Chie, "All of us...We're going to find the culprit. The police are out of their league on this case, but we got Personas and we can get into the TV."

Yukiko blinked in surprise at Yosuke's explanation before nervously putting her fingers to her lips, "Personas...?"

It was then Yui realized what Yukiko was thinking about.

She had seen her Persona after her Shadow had disappeared. A figure that was bright pink. "Could you lend a hand?"

Yukiko's head snapped up at Yui's offer, surprised she was being offered a spot on their 'team.' Yui could only stare back at the bewildered girl before a look of determination formed on her face.

"...Yeah, I'm going to help too," Yukiko finally confirmed startling both Chie and Yosuke, "I want to know why this is happening. Especially if someone hates me so much they want to kill me. I...I don't want to run away from myself anymore."

The two of them nod and share a smile as Yosuke clapped his hands together, "Alright! Then let's all work together to catch this asshole!"

"For now," Yui quickly spoke up as they all looked to her, "We should think over what we have so far, piece together what we may think is possible that connects all the victims together and meet up at another time. What we have so far may not be enough for a lead, but we can figure out some sort of pattern."

"Heh good thinking partner!" Yosuke cheered and lightly slapped her behind the shoulders making her stumble forward in her seat as she gave him a light glare. He laughed nervously before turning his attention to the food on Yukiko and Chie's laps, "Uh hey aren't those done by now?"

Both girls glanced at their bowls.

"Oh right, we don't have much time," Chie realized before

opening the top of her bowl. The heavy scent of soba and udon was easily overpowering on the roof as Yui also opened her own lunch.

While not as heavily strong in smell like Chie and Yukiko's lunches, hers looked just as appealing as she began to use her chopsticks to place in one mouthful of rice.

The sounds of slurping and chopsticks hitting plastic soon echoed out through the roof as the three girls began to eat their lunches quickly. It took Yui a while to notice Yosuke was looking back and forth from the noodles to her bento.

It seemed he was the only one out of the four of them to not have a lunch.

Yui paused in her eating as he eyed Chie's noodles and for a moment she swore she saw a small trail of drool escaping out of the corner of his lips as he continued. Chie seemed to have caught on and immediately pulled her lunch closer, "Oh no you don't," she growled at him, "Hands off the soba, pal! Go get your own if you want some."

"I didn't even say anything yet!" Yosuke protested as he continued to look at her noodles, "Just one bite, just one!"

"Hell no!" Chie snarled as she scouted a little closer to Yukiko who looked a little worried herself and gripped her udon noodles a little tighter. Yui sighed and glanced at her own lunch before staring at her friend who was torn between leaping towards the two girls or to beg some more. She

sighed again before staring at her lunch one last time.
"...Yosuke-kun, here."

He blinked in surprised as Yui handed over her bento to him, "Just a few bites right?" Yosuke nodded before taking her chopsticks and quickly scarfing down the contents of her bento. After two minutes passed Yui felt an odd sinking feeling in her stomach when she finally noticed Yosuke was not stopping.

"H-Hey you asshole!" Chie yelled as Yukiko let out a quiet gasp as Yui's bento continued being devoured by Yosuke. For a moment the silver-haired girl twitched, her right shoulder jumping as chopsticks met his mouth with the last bits of rice as he let out a sigh of relief, "Man that tasted...Oh crap." Yui snatched her bento box away from him and stared at it. The once filled lunch box was as empty as it had that morning before she put food in it.

There wasn't even a single grain of rice left!

"You idiot! You ate her whole lunch!" Chie hissed as Yosuke held up his hands, "I-I didn't mean to!" Yukiko reached out and lightly patted Yui's knee as she stared at her bento box in what looked like despair, "I...I could share some of my noodles with you," the girl weakly offered. Yui only shook her head as she continued to stare at her box. With the pace Yukiko and Chie had done earlier and the amount of time left, Yui was certain the udon her friend had only had bits of noodles and tofu left in just one gulpful of soup.

It was at that moment her stomach growled loudly as the warning bell rang signalling that lunch was over.

Beside her Yosuke had already begun to push himself off his seat beside her to run away, she wasn't having that now.

Her hand shot out and grabbed hold of the bottom part of his school jacket making him jerk to a halt as he looked back at her. Her eyes were wide as she stared up at him making all the blood leave his face as he gulped nervously. "...You and I are hanging out after school like we promised...And you're making this up," she silently snarled as she gripped the fabric in her hands, "Is that clear Yosuke-kun?"

"Y-Yeah," the boy nervously answered as he tried hard not to tremble as she continued to stare at him. Off to the side Chie and Yukiko watched in amusement and confusion as to just how much emotion Yui was displaying now. Considering Chie and Yosuke had teased her many times before about her 'falling' into the television, Yui had kept a blank face to their teasing and held kept her temper in check. It was surprising to see her so angry, though it seemed she had trusted Yosuke to at least leave some of her lunch.

One thing was for sure, it would be wise to never try and steal any food off her bento in the future.

24. Bite Your Tongue

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

Am I alive? Yes I am! It's been finals and papers on my end so yeah I've been a tad not into the zone, but alas...I HAVE SURVIVED! Forgive me for taking a really long time to update!

There's so much Persona news to look forward to though! Persona 4 Dancing All Night and Persona 5?! I can't wait! I'm also very grateful and happy that all of you are enjoying the story so far and your reviews mean so much! I hope that you all stay with me as I continue on this story. So without further ado I really hope you enjoy this update!

I apologize in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

When she had told Yosuke that he had to make up for eating her lunch, she was actually surprised he had followed through.

Granted perhaps he decided on actually correcting his mistake since she continued to blankly stare at him as they

slowly made their way back to homeroom after the incident and tried his hardest to avoid looking at her as best as he could when she turned to glance at him. Chie hadn't been much help to Yosuke either and snickered whenever she saw him shudder under Yui's gaze.

When the bell had rung Yui's hand had been raised just in case she'd have to grab the boy's jacket as he ran out, but instead had her wrist grabbed by her friend and dragged out of the classroom before Yukiko and Chie could speak.

Now they were both in the shopping district in front of a food stand known as Souzai Daigaku. Yui was sitting at a small table, her fingers tapping lightly on the surface as she studied their surroundings with Yosuke waiting for their food order at the counter. The smells that had slowly breezed through the area from the stand were promising and Yui resisted the urge to let her mouth drop open as grilled meat filled her nose.

Maybe that's why Chie had become so carnivorous, just the scent of meat was enough for Yui to reconsider vegetables as a part of her diet.

She giggled lightly at the idea just as Yosuke approached their table, "Here ya go, just made fresh!" Yosuke grinned as he sat while placing their orders down, "An apology for eating your lunch and also my promise to you way back for you to try out the local delicacy here."

Yui raised her eyebrows at his comment before looking at the food placed in front of her.

The freshly made croquettes had steam rising from their golden brown exteriors something that instantly made her mouth salivate as she stared. Her stomach seemed to have waited too long and finally released a rather large growl that stopped her from gawking at her food. Across from her Yosuke laughed loudly as her hands flew down to the top of her stomach, "Hey now. The longer you stare at them the less they'll be fresh. Just eat 'em already."

"I was going to," Yui protested as she picked one up and bit into it. Her teeth sank into the crisp skin, only to let out a muffled sound of surprise as her teeth were met with a rather large chunk of meat. Again Yosuke laughed at her as she struggled a bit with her food until she succeeded in taking the bite safely into her mouth. "Yeah I know right?" Yosuke spoke up as he picked up his croquette and pointed at it, "Sticking chunks of steak into this...Man, this really is the country huh?"

With that he began to eat as Yui swallowed down her first bite. She chewed on the croquette in small bites, her cheeks pink from the embarrassing display of her eating habits. Yosuke seemed to have caught on after finishing his before shaking his head, "Hey, don't worry about it," he assured her as he grabbed another from his plate, "I was the same when I first tried this too. Pretty tough huh?" Yui shrugged as she patted her hands together to get rid of the slight oil and crumbs that clung to her fingers and palm before starting her second one.

"Chie called this stuff 'tender and juicy.' What kinda teeth does she have?" Yosuke recalled as Yui smiled before speaking

up, "She must have tough teeth, just like her personality. She's not the kind to let anything get in her way."

Yosuke shuddered a bit, "Ah...That doesn't make me feel any better!" Yui laughed, covering her mouth with her hand as he grinned at her reaction, "So do I have your forgiveness for your lunch? I...Really didn't mean to eat the whole thing, but it was just really good." Immediately Yui stopped laughing causing Yosuke to nearly choke on his food at the sudden change of her facial expression, "H-Hey!"

A smirk came to her lips as she again giggled at his reaction, "Yes Yosuke-kun, you are forgiven. As long as you don't do it again it's all said and done. These croquettes saved you from my wrath."

Yosuke could only grunt at her words before rolling his eyes, "Sheesh, you know how to make a guy nearly die you know. I thought you'd rip my soul out with that weird blank stare of yours!" he pointed out as he slumped in his seat, "Ya know, if it isn't Chie's kicks and temper I have to worry about, it's you Yui-chan. Why do I get stuck with friends who are girls that can potentially end my life at any given moment if I screw up?!"

"Perhaps it's karma from all your sins you did in a past life," Yui suggested only to earn another grunt from him, "Though you could say you're also lucky too. I mean you hang out with three girls so you can always get advice from us."

"Oh really what sort of advice?" Yosuke scoffed only to give a

low chuckle, "Probably...You, Chie and Yukiko are actually pretty cool to hang around with."

They both smiled at each other before Yosuke turned his head in direction of two women who were standing right by their table. Yui herself also directed her attention towards them as Yosuke spoke up, "May we help you?"

Both women jumped up at his words before lightly chuckling, "O-Oh-no young man," one in an apron quickly spoke up as her friend shook her head, "Just keep...Talking to your friend. We were just passing by. Have a good day!"

Both teenagers nodded as they watched the women quickly rush towards the corner where they were partly hidden behind the neighboring store close by the eating area. From where Yui sat she could still see one of the women's ponytail peeking around the store's edge and her ears were straining to listen to their voices, "That boy...He's from Junes isn't he?" one of the women whispered though at this point Yui wouldn't consider it a whisper. It was loud enough to carry over to where she sat and it sounded as if she had made her voice louder on purpose for the teenagers to hear.

The woman's friend seemed to have nodded as her own words followed after her friend's, "Yasogami High School huh..."

"I heard his classmate," her friend continued with a loud sigh, "You know, Sato-san...Went out of business." Her friend let out a slight click of her tongue as they finally began to finally

disappear from Yui's sight, "The shopping district could disappear and yet-"

Yui's eyes widen and for a moment she had slowly begun to stand only to have Yosuke chuckle, "Sorry about that."

She sat herself back down quickly as her friend forced a smile before leaning back in his seat, "If you remember, I'm pretty infamous around here."

"...I remember." The memory of the TV World's version of the shopping district came to mind as Yui's skin prickled at the many voices that echoed in the district. The hostility towards Yosuke had been strong and much to Yui's disbelief unbelievable really. He did nothing in particular to deserve such an attitude and judgement from the people as she could see. It wasn't his fault that his parents were in charge of Junes and he was their son.

"It must be tough," she finally spoke up as she focused her eyes onto him, "It's a bit unfair too..."

She watched as Yosuke shook his head, his smile still plastered on his face as he waved a hand. "Nah, it's nothing," he assured her as he turned his head towards the direction the women had gone in, "It's mostly my parents and I'm not personally involved. There's nothing I can do about it anyway. I don't think there's anyone in Inaba who doesn't know me at school or around town."

"That's why it's unfair," she pointed out as he crossed his

arms, "All this resentment shouldn't be on you at all...It isn't right. That and they're cowards for talking behind your back thinking you don't know what they say." For a moment her words seemed to have stunned her friend.

His fake smile had disappeared and now his eyes were wide. The tension in his shoulders had been released and he was slightly slouched forward in his chair as he stared at her, had he expected her not to take his side that quickly?

He quickly shook his head, regaining himself, before giving her a sigh, "Well...I don't mind, but it sucks," he says as he looks down at his plate, "I always gotta mind my manners." A new smile appears as he looks up at her, this one a very familiar one that she knows is not forceful, "Thanks anyway...So uh." He points to the pile of croquettes still on her side, "You gonna finish those? These are pretty good."

"Didn't you just complain at how tough they were?" Yui quickly placed an arm to block his line of sight on her food, "You try to take my food again Yosuke-kun, and I will bite you." Her friend's face lost color and smile at her threat as he pushed his chair back immediately, "Whoa, whoa, whoa! I was gonna ask if you wanted more okay?! Seriously, I thought I was forgiven!"

Yui took a croquette from her pile and bit into it with a huff. "You are, just don't ever try to come near my food again. I made that very clear earlier."

Yosuke rolled his eyes as he set his elbow on the table, his

chin resting on the palm of his head as he sighed in defeat, "Sheesh, again. Yui-chan I don't even know what to think about you...You're definitely not like normal girls. But...Guess that's why I'm probably cool being friends with you."

Yui scoffed before lightly patting him on the head causing him to scowl, "Hey! What the hell's that for?!"

"I'm home!" Yui called out as she entered the house, her fingers holding onto the back of her shoes to slip out of them. From the living room she could faintly hear the sounds of a game show as Nanako's voice quickly greeted her. She smiled as she set her shoes neatly onto the side next to Nanako's tiny shoes before putting on her slippers. She was in a much better mood now and as she entered the living room, it seemed she wasn't the only one.

Nanako had turned towards her as soon as she stepped into the room and quickly muted the television as she ran up to her, "How was your day today?" her cousin asked with a wide smile on her face, "Are you excited for tomorrow!"

Yui giggled as she walked over to the table and settled down onto the cushion, "Yes I did," she replied as she watched her cousin hop back down in her seat, "I had some croquettes with a friend. They were really yummy." The older girl could only return her cousin's smile with one of her own, "And yes, I am excited for tomorrow. It is Golden Week isn't it?"

Nanako nodded, her small pigtails bouncing at the motion as

she clapped her hands together, "Yeah! I'm really really excited, we're going to spend the whole day with Daddy!" Yui giggled as her cousin began to ramble on the plans she was looking forward.

It was nice seeing her so excited.

Yui suddenly relaxed her smile, her eyelids lowering as she thought back to past holidays back home for her at her cousin's age. Yes there was the occasionally trip, but most of them were purely for business. Her parents barely interacted with her on those few trips and most of the time there was nothing for her to do, but wait at home and read.

It was lonely and Yui for the most part was looking forward to spending her holiday with just her uncle and cousin. It was something she had been looking forward to...Just a time to spend with family.

"Ah, did you know what to make for the picnic?" Nanako suddenly asked her causing the teen to jolt out of her thoughts, "For the...Oh! I didn't," Yui realized before making her smile a bit wider as she looked at her cousin, "What sorts of foods would you like Nanako-chan? This is my first picnic too and I don't know what foods you and your Dad will like. I was thinking I'd make some sandwiches, but if there's anything you and your Dad might prefer..."

"Dad will eat anything," her cousin giggled before letting out a quiet hum as she furrowed her brows to think over her answer.

Yui placed a hand over her mouth to stop the giggles from escaping as Nanako crossed her arms and pouted, she looked absolutely adorable. "Why don't you surprise us!" her cousin suddenly exclaimed as she sent look of admiration towards Yui, "You always make yummy food!" A sudden wave of warmth washed over Yui at her cousin's words and her smile grew as she reached over to pat the girl on the top her head, "I won't disappoint you," she told Nanako as she earned another cheerful grin from the young girl.

"It'll be the best picnic ever!"

Her cousin's words only fueled her determination as Yui began to think over the various dishes that would be suitable for a picnic. Having hearing Nanako praise her food was just the push needed for her to get an idea on what to make.

"Good thing we stocked up from Junes huh?" Yui joked as Nanako nodded in agreement. The older girl stretched her arms up before hopping off her cushion to head towards the kitchen. It was about time for her to make dinner for her and Nanako, even though her uncle hadn't shown up yet. It had only been a few days after Yukiko's kidnapping that the man had shown up earlier at the house. Having him disappear and come home so late was starting to make Yui worry a little bit.

Tying the apron around her waist firmly she paused in mid-knot as the phone rang.

In an instant Nanako was up on her feet and sprinting over to answer it.

"Hello? Dad?"

The girl's tone was still high pitched, excited, after her talk with Yui as she held the phone in both hands. Yui forced herself to keep busy in the kitchen and started to open cupboards to find the cutting board.

"Uh huh! We're both home and we're okay," Nanako replied before pausing, "Uh huh...Yeah...Eh?"

Yui glanced over her shoulder as she froze with the cutting board from the top shelf to find her cousin suddenly tense. Her tiny shoulders were up and her eyes had widen at whatever Dojima had said on the other end.

The young girl's shoulders slowly began to lower the longer she remained silent along with her smile until her lips were pursed into a tight line.

Yui slowly lowered the cutting board onto the counter as she kept her eye on her cousin as she slowly hung her head, "I understand..."

Nanako slowly walked over to her and offered her the phone, "Dad wants to talk to you..."

Yui nodded and extended her hand out to grab the phone, only to have Nanako drop it too soon and have it clatter onto the floor. The teenager quickly bent on one knee to retrieve it just as her cousin turned on her heel and ran towards the stairs. Yui could only cradle the phone in both hands as she

watched Nanako dash up the stairs before disappearing from view on the last few top steps.

As a door slammed shut Yui careful pressed the phone to her ear, "Yes, Uncle Dojima?"

"Hey, uh what happened? I heard something," her uncle questioned as she heard the faint sounds of phones ringing and paper being moved around on his end, "Is everything okay?"

"Uh yes! I dropped the phone," Yui lied as she continued to stare at the empty staircase, "I didn't hold onto it hard enough and it fell, I'm so sorry." Her uncle let out a grunt before continuing, "Anyway, I'm here working late and I might be here for a while. Don't cook me dinner, just make enough for you and Nanako and don't forget to lock up."

"Of course," Yui replied as she let her hand rest on the counter as she turned her head from the stairs, "I thought that would be the case. I'll be sure Nanako-chan and I will both go to bed right on time."

"That's good..." A pause came from her uncle as Yui waited for him to continue. He cleared his throat and Yui could hear him drop something, papers perhaps, on top of something. He was probably at his desk reading over a police report...

The silence continued until Yui cleared her throat, "Was...Was there something else Uncle Dojima?" she finally spoke making him clear his throat again for the third time, "Ah...Well," her

uncle hesitated for a moment until sighing, "About those days off I said I could take, one of the younger guys got sick and the case he's been handling...It doesn't look like we can let it sit."

Yui felt a lump form in her throat as she stole another glance towards the stairs, "I...I see."

"I'm the only one who can take over for him," he continued and for a moment Yui could picture him leaning back into his chair with his free hand settling on the side of his face as he forced himself to keep speaking, "Sorry to spring this on you all of a sudden."

"Sorry this was so sudden Yui-chan. But you'll be fine won't you?"

Instantly Yui bit the side of her tongue before she could speak, "I see," she forced herself to say as she fit her hand on the counter slowly curl up into a fist. Now she understood why Nanako had ran upstairs to her room.

Her lips tremble as she forces herself not to get angry, why wouldn't she be?

She wasn't...She...

"How's...How's Nanako holding up? I'd appreciate it if you could watch over her for me."

Yui immediately pulled the phone away from her ear and

mouth as she exhaled sharply at his request. How was Nanako holding up? Oh how else was she holding up? Yui exhaled again, this time through her mouth as she pressed the phone back into place, "Yes Uncle Dojima, I'll look after Nanako."

Her tone is exactly like her mother's.

The tone she would use when a deal didn't go on the right track she wanted or if she was dealing with a rather incompetent co-worker or client. She wondered if her uncle noticed her change in tone since he hadn't replied back to her answer right away.

Nanako had been looking forward to this break, and so had she. Yui wanted to shout into the receiver as loud as she could even if he was at work and could potentially punish her as he was her guardian. It wasn't fair to Nanako whose hopes had been built up only to have them crashing down. Yui could picture her cousin in her room, perhaps in a corner or on top of her bed. Knees pulled up to her chest with her arms wrapped tight around them as she forced herself not to cry.

There were always other Golden Weeks and holidays, just this one...Just this one he couldn't make it.

Yui inhaled sharply as the image suddenly changed and instead of Nanako she briefly could see herself at her cousin's age forcing herself not to cry. The resemblance was scary and Yui let out a cough to hold back hurtful words she wanted to tell her uncle. On his end she could hear someone call for

him which could have been Adachi with how her uncle finally sighed in frustration to break the silence.

"...Alright," he told her, "Thanks, see ya."

The dial tone sounded much louder than usual as the call ended.

The following events after the call were rather blurry to Yui.

She had tried to coax Nanako out of her room and only succeeded to have her cousin's door up a crack to have her announce she wasn't hungry before closing the door shut. The older girl had placed a tray of rice and fried chicken along with a warm mug of milk outside her door a few moments after that, hoping Nanako knew that she was being looked after. Her own dinner had been just a small bowl of rice and some chicken hidden underneath the mass of white.

There had been no taste and Yui's stomach couldn't take in her dinner leaving her to throw out a half of her food into the trash can.

Her uncle's words echoed in her head as she forced herself to sleep that night. Her eyes refusing to close shut and only did just as the rays of the sun entered her room through the blinds.

Now both girls were sitting in the living room watching television in silence. Yui didn't quite understand the cartoon,

but didn't ask Nanako who stared at the television screen with a look of indifference. Even when the cartoon's antagonist, a coyote with what seemed had an endless supply of explosive traps, had it backfired onto him Nanako didn't even crack a smile as the roadrunner ran away in victory.

Yui had only moved from her seat twice to get some tea and Nanako's milk and taking the barely touched mugs back to the sink in the kitchen a few minutes later.

It was when the doorbell rang did both girls snapped out of their trances.

Nanako looked at her and for a moment Yui hoped that maybe her uncle managed to get home and had forgotten his keys, but that was only wishful thinking. "I'll get it Nanako-chan," she told her cousin as she pushed herself up and walked to the front door.

"Yo!"

"Ah Chie-chan," Yui smiled before glancing down at her clothes before letting out a weak laugh, "Ah...Nice to see you. Sorry you had to see me...In this."

She had completely forgotten she was still wearing her night clothing.

Her t-shirt was a dark gray color with a printed image of a calico kitten playing with a ball of yarn in the front. The pants she wore were a pale yellow, faded with age, with black and

white cats running all over the fabric playing.

Chie snickered before shaking her head, "No, no it's cool. You're only enforcing the fact you are a cat person. I got a few dog related clothes too." The girl cleared her throat before speaking again.

"Anyway, it's cool that you're home."

"Well...I don't have any plans," Yui sighed as she remembered how last night went, "So...Here I am."

"That's the thing though," Chie continued, "Since you're free wanna go somewhere? Yukiko's coming too so we could do that girl's day out thing we wanted to earlier."

For a moment Yui was about to nod, only to stop before shaking her head, "I'm sorry, but...Not today. I'm sorry Chie-chan." A faint pair of footsteps came up behind her making Chie lean over to the side.

Yui glanced over her shoulder to see Nanako stare at Chie. Her expression curious, but also worried as she stared at the other girl.

"Ah, wait are you Nanako-chan?" Chie asked before smiling, "Aw you're adorable!" Yui's cousin squeaked and shook her head as her cheeks began to turn pink. Chie giggled as she glanced at Yui who nodded. "Hey Nanako-chan, want to come hang out with us?"

"Um...But..." Yui watched as her cousin could only glance up to her and then to Chie, her fingers clasped together as she nervously fidgeted. It was obvious to Yui that her cousin did want to go out, but she was nervous. She would be too if she had been Nanako's age again and was asked to hang out with a group of girls much older. Nanako stared at Yui, biting her lip as if to wait for her to say something.

Yui gave her a smile, "Let's go together, okay?"

"I...I can come?" Nanako asked, rather surprised at Yui's answer as she took one last glance to Chie, "Is...Is it really okay?" Chie threw her head back a bit to laugh before putting her hands on her hips, "You bet! Of course it's okay," the teenager told her, "More the merrier!" In that instant Nanako's face lit up as she clapped her hands, "Yay!"

Yui giggled as she quickly made her way towards the stairs, "Just let me change real quick and we'll be out in a jiff okay? Chie-chan could you-"

"No prob!" Chie called out as she motioned Nanako to come over to her, "Hey, hey Nanako-chan how old are you?" Yui smiled as she continued on her way to her room as she heard her cousin's voice chirp out an answer.

It seemed that today wouldn't be such a downer after all...

Did you enjoy this chapter? I hope you did! Bonus points on what kinda cartoon I was referring to in the chapter that the

girls were watching! I have not seen that cartoon in so long I suddenly felt like referring to it.

Again sorry for so much inactivity, this has been one heck of a school year for me.

Thank you guys so much for reading and I hope you'll continue. Until then, take care!

25. Everyday is Great

I DO NOT OWN PERSONA!

Warning: FeMC for Persona 4!

A bit to note this chapter isn't very long, but I hope you enjoy!

I apologize in advance for all possible missed grammar mistakes and spelling. Please enjoy~!

"Tad-ah! One steak, Junes styled, for you!"

"Ah! It looks good!" Nanako exclaimed as Yosuke set down the rest of the steaks in front of them. Yui smiled at her cousin before looking at Yosuke, "Thanks." Her friend only gave him a wide grin as he shrugged, "No prob!"

"You're seriously slow," Chie huffed after he placed the last plate in front of her making Yosuke lose his grin and scoffed as she snatched the offered napkin with the utensils wrapped inside from his apron pocket. The brunette's annoyance disappeared as she smiled to the youngest member of their group at the table and offered the bundle to her, "Here Nanako-chan, eat up!"

"Ah, I will thank you!" Nanako eagerly took the fork and knife as Yukiko smiled, "Just be sure to chew good and hard since this isn't quality steak," she informed her earning a gasp from Yosuke at her words.

"Hey seriously?! How could you say that right in front of me?! That's cold!" the boy protested as Yui giggled. "Nanako-chan let me cut it for you," she offered as her cousin nodded in agreement, "Thank you."

"Your welcome," the silver haired girl replied as she carefully took the girl's knife and fork into her hands. She stuck the ends of the fork right into the steam meat and slowly slide the knife back and forth until it was cut into perfect small squares.

Yui had been a bit nervous taking Nanako to meet her friends and her friends meeting her younger cousin. Thankfully Nanako had actually gotten along easily with Yukiko and Yosuke just as she did with Chie. Yukiko smiled and complimented at how adorable Nanako was earning a polite yet flustered 'thank you' from Nanako. When Nanako had learned that Yosuke was the son of the people who looked after Junes, her smile widen and she beamed up at Yosuke with so much admiration that caused him panic. Yui could only giggle behind her hand as he insisted on bringing them food despite still being on the clock at work.

"Thanks again by the way Yosuke-kun," Yui quickly told her friend as she handed Nanako her fork back, "You really didn't have to do this."

The boy huffed, still bitter about Yukiko's remark, before yanking his apron off to sit in the remaining chair at the table. "Yeah, yeah ugh...No problem I said." Yui raised an eyebrow as he narrowed his eyes at her, "Taking a break. No shame in that."

She only shrugged at his words before cutting into her own steak as Yosuke sighed, "But seriously, why did you bring Nanako-chan to a place like this on Golden Week? It has to be the most boring out of all the things in town..."

Chie swallowed loudly as she rolled her eyes, "Where else is there to go?" she pointed out as she shoved another bite of steak, "There's no where to go at a time like this."

"Chew Chie, chew," Yukiko scolded her friend as she smiled at Nanako who was attempted to eat just as poised as her. Again Yosuke sighed before staring at Nanako, "Still, don't you feel sorry bringing her here?"

"...You actually got a point there," Yukiko agreed only to cause Yosuke to cringe, "Well don't go rubbing in the salt into my wound why don't ya?!" Turning to Yui he lightly hit the table, "What about you Yui-chan, are you okay with this?"

"Hm?" Yui blinked at his question before looking to Nanako who had a smile on her face as she continued to eat, "No actually. Nanako-chan actually does-"

"Ah!" Her cousin's head snapped up as the store's jingle came out from the speakers, "*Everyday's great at your Junes~,*"

she sang right as the woman's voice came up. Gripping her fork and knife tightly she bounced a bit in her seat, "I love Junes!" Yui laughed at her cousin's cute display as Yosuke's mouth dropped open and he eagerly leaned forward onto the table towards the direction of Nanako, "And I love Nanako-chan~!"

This time it was Yui's turn to scoff at his statement and shook her head, "Easy there Yosuke-kun..." Beside her Chie giggled as her cousin continued speaking.

"We were suppose to go on a real trip somewhere today and have a picnic though," she informed the group. This perked up Yukiko's interest as she spoke up next, "Do you know how to cook Nanako-chan?"

"Nuh uh," her cousin shook her head before turning her head towards Yui causing all her friends to look in her direction just as she popped another piece of steak into her mouth. Her face began to turn a light pink at their stares as she nervously swallowed, "...Yes?" Chie could only grin as she rested her elbow on the table, Oh ho, so you're the family cook huh? Actually...Yeah, you did make me that lunch last time. Pretty impressive, 'big sis!'"

At the corner of her eye Yui could see Nanako tilt her head at Chie's words, "...Big...Sis?"

The grip on her fork loosened a bit and she scrambled to catch it in time, grasping it in both hands to her chest as her face turned even redder at the sudden praise from Chie and

hearing Nanao's whisper. Her ears were starting to get hotter just as her friends laughed. Yosuke leaned back in his chair and let out a whistle, "Cooking is a pretty good skill to have. You already got Chie beat then!"

"Hold on a sec, what the heck does that mean?!" Chie yelled as she pointed her fork towards him, "I-I'll have you know I'm a pretty good cook too, you know...What makes you think I can't cook huh?!"

"Really?" Yukiko and Yui asked earning a nervous smile from Chie who laughed quietly as she looked toward Yosuke for his answer.

The boy tapped his chin lightly with his finger, "Lemme think about-No." Chie let out a cry before falling back into her chair, "Well then, I challenge you to a cook-off and we'll see for ourselves!"

"My, my doth the lady protest too much? And hey, I never said I could cook," Yosuke protested before smirking, "But ya know what, you're on!" Yui quickly placed a hand to her mouth to muffle her giggles as she glanced over to Yukiko who was also trying to silence herself from laughing. The other girl's hands were on her stomach and her lips were trembling as she nodded slightly to Yui.

This was entertaining.

"I guess that means we oughta make Nanako-chan our judge right?" Yosuke proposed causing Nanako to look up at the

two in confusion, "Judge?"

"They're going to do a cook-off," Yui told her as Yosuke continued, "We might even whip up something better than your mom's cooking!" All the laughter in Yui left as her eyes widened at his statement.

She never did tell them about her deceased aunt and glanced towards Nanako as she poked at the last of her steak with her fork before looking up at all of them. "I don't have a mom. She died in an accident."

Instantly her friends' lost their smiles.

Chie immediately reached over and hit Yosuke on the shoulder, "Yosuke!" she hissed as the boy stuttered, "R-Really? I...Uh sorry. I didn't know..." Yui sighed a bit as Chie again reached over and smacked Yosuke on the shoulder, "Guys..."

"No I'm okay!" Nanako quickly spoke up causing them all to freeze again, "I don't have a mom, but I still have Dad and...And I..." The young girl turned her head towards Yui, her face a light pink as she offered the older girl a smile, "And now I have a big sister too."

The hold on her knife and fork instantly loosened at her cousin's words. Both fell right onto her plate with a loud clink as she could feel all the heat return back to her cheeks and ears.

"And I'm having lots of fun today!" the little girl continued, "I got to visit Junes and I'm having a great time with everyone!" Chie and Yukiko immediately were leaning over the table towards Nanako, Chie grabbing hold of Nanako's hands as Yukiko rested a hand on her shoulder.

"Nanako-chan, we'll play with you whenever you want okay?" Chie insisted as Yukiko nodded in agreement, "Yes, let's hang out more often okay?"

Nanako's eyes widen as a smile formed onto her lips, "Really? Thank you very much!"

"Hey, c'mon Nanako-chan," Yosuke stood up and held out a hand for her to take, "Let's go get you a soda. You must be thirsty from all that eating huh?" Nanako nodded and slid off her seat, pushing the chair in, before hurrying over to Yosuke. Her small hand rested on his open palm before wrapping her fingers around his own, a smile on her face as they left the table.

The girls watched with smiles as their male friend lead Nanako away before looking at each other. "She's a strong girl," Yukiko finally spoke up as she rested her elbows on the table as they kept watching Yosuke and Nanako. Yui glanced over to Chie who nodded in agreement.

"Yeah. She makes me feel like I'm the little kid here," the short haired girl laughs a bit before looking over towards Yui, "You got a pretty mature little 'sis' there big 'sis.'"

"And I'm proud of her," Yui replied earning a wider smile from Chie who gasped, "You know what...That's it! I'm gonna go get something for Nanako-chan!"

"That's a great idea Chie!" Yukiko quickly stood up, "Let's do that today. We can get something for Nanako-chan, each of us."

Yui smiled as she watched the two girls push their chairs in and began to chatter over what to get her little cousin, "Ah Yui-chan, are you alright with this?" Yukiko asked when they noticed she had remained seated, "We don't have to go get something today if you think it'll bother her..."

"Not at all," Yui shook her head, "I think...I think she's happy to have met you all today. How about this I distract her while you and Chie-chan go get your gifts for Nanako-chan and later you get her attention while I get mine for her. Seem fair?"

She hadn't brought anything with her when she first came to Inaba.

It seemed fitting now to do so.

Her friends nodded before quickly slipping out of the food court just as Nanako had appeared. She took a moment to stare after the two older girls before turning her attention back to Yui.

"Do you want something too, Big Sis?"

Those words made Yui freeze, her eyes began to slowly become unfocused as she stared at Nanako as blue began to fog up her vision. In the distance Izanagi's voice echoed. The ease of the bond establishing had slowly become natural as she listened.

THOU ART I

AND I AM THOU

THOU HAS ESTABLISHED A NEW BOND

OF THE JUSTICE ARCANA

Yui slowly got up from her chair, allowing her vision to readjust as she tucked her chair back at the table. Blinking away the last of the blue that had clouded her eye sight she slowly extended for Nanako to take.

Before her younger cousin was hesitate to take her hand, but this time Nanako immediately grasped her tiny fingers around her longer ones. Her bright brown eyes looked up at her as she swung their arms a bit, "Wanna share some takoyaki?"

"I would love that," Yui smiled down at her as they began to walk away. The deep feeling in her chest from last night had disappeared as she stole glances at Nanako's smile and listened to her humming the Junes' jingle.

Perhaps...Nanako would be lucky enough to not be as lonely as before. Yui gently squeezed their hands before earning a

light squeeze in return from Nanako who giggled.

Yes...Her cousin wouldn't be alone.

After parting ways with Yosuke and reuniting with Chie and Yukiko in the shopping section of the department store, Yui could now slip away and buy Nanako's gift. She had seen the small plastic bag in Yukiko's hand as she held it behind her back as Nanako had ran up to them both and greeted them. The raven haired girl gave her a wink just as Chie leaned forward and asked if Nanako wanted to come help her get a present for a younger cousin of hers whose birthday was coming up. Nanako agreed to help and was reassured by Yui, who made an excuse to get more groceries for them, that they would meet up outside.

Chie took Nanako's hand and lead her away as Yukiko quickly also took her cousin's other hand, both of them swinging their arms back and forth as they walked away. Yui wished she could stay a bit longer to take a quick picture, but time was not to be wasted for this mission.

Now she stood in front of a small display of hair accessories, studying each hair tie and clip carefully. She spotted a pair of bright pink elastic hair ties that also included a bright pink bunny hair clip. Yui smiled and immediately took it off the stand and made her way towards the cashiers only to stop short as she caught sight of something on a high shelf.

It was a metallic colored thermos shining under the store

lights among other thermos and mugs. Nothing all too unusual except there was a design of a golden dragon carefully placed on the sleek surface. The detail of the dragon was incredible for something as simple as a thermos and immediately Yui felt the dragon could slip off the metal and fly away as she stared.

For a moment her mind went to her uncle and the familiar clench in her chest returned.

However it disappeared the longer she stared up at the thermos. While he did break his promise...

Setting the hair ties down onto a lower shelf Yui began to stand on the tips of her toes to grab the thermos. Despite being tall she could barely grasp the thermos and let out a grunt as she tried to grab it. Her left arm ached as she kept her right hand on one of the lower shelves to give her at least a small inch of a boost upward. Her toes bounced as she could feel her finger tips almost touching the cool metal. Just as she felt the pads of her fingers rest on the thermos the touch had only given a slight push to make the thermos slide even further back on the high shelf.

"Darn..."

She quickly went back onto the flats of her feet before trying again. She froze mid reach as she felt someone come up behind her and reach up on the shelf. Whoever it was had a much taller height and had a much better chance of getting the thermos than her.

The stranger pulled the thermos into her waiting hand before stepping back from her.

Smiling she settled back on her feet when her hand grasped the thermos. Her smile dropped as soon as she turned around to thank the stranger, she had come face to face to the familiar face of the student who she had returned the rabbit accessory to yesterday. He also stared at her, his lips pulled downward into a disapproving frown and his nose scrunched up slightly as they stood in silence.

Yui inhaled a bit before nodding to him, a smile forming as she spoke up, "Thank you."

This caught him by surprise and he cleared his throat quickly as he backed away even further from her, "It...It ain't no big deal," he quickly spoke as he began to look down at the ground. Her eyes traveled downward until she caught sight of the bright pink yarn gripped tightly in his fingers.

"...Are you going to knit something?" she spoke as she took the hair ties from where she had placed them earlier, "Is it for another rabbit?"

"T-The hell? Oh this?" The boy scoffed as he held up the yarn, "Nah it's for my Ma...Sent me out to get it." Now it was her turn to frown as she stared at the yarn and back to him. His eyes continued to look downward as he waited for her to speak again. "...Are you sure it's for her and not-"

"Look you better not tell anyone about it! And for the last time

yes it's not for me!"

The yell startles them both, her for his sudden change in tone and him for forgetting they were in a public place. The other quickly glanced around before returning back to his glaring at her.

"Listen here," he quickly continued with a finger jabbed into her face, "Whatever you saw or were thinking, it ain't true. I wouldn't make anything like that."

Reaching out Yui gently used her hand to push his finger away from her face before crossing her arms, "I don't even know you," she pointed out as she looked up at him, "And also...What's wrong with that rabbit? It was cute."

Her words cause him to flinch and drop his arm as he stuttered a few more words before huffing. "Shit...Whatever. J-Just don't get any funny ideas got it?!"

"Promise," she replied back as he seemed to nod. Showing one of his hands into his pockets he quickly walked away from her, his shoulders slouching forward as she watched. He only gave her one last look just as he turned the corner to go into the next aisle leaving her alone. *"What on earth is his problem?"* she wondered as she continued to stare down the way he had disappeared to.

Surely he didn't think she thought the rabbit was disgusting! Whoever had done it-if not done by him-was very talented and she found no reason to say anything ill of him or the rabbit he

had in his possession. Yui could only frown as she thought over what had happened.

There must have been more to why he went out of his way to speak to her and shout at her not to tell anyone of the rabbit. Her being the new girl at school did not help her case as she tried to figure out who the boy was. He wasn't from her class obviously so she would have to ask the others and a few other classmates about this angsty schoolmate of hers...

The vibration of her phone snapped her back to reality and she quickly took it out of her pant's pocket to read the text.

-NANAKO-CHAN LOOKING FOR YOU. HURRY! Oh by the way this is Chie! MEET US SOON!-

"Ah right!" She quickly grabbed her two items before rushing towards the registers, she would have to look into this mysterious boy later.

A shorter chapter in order to move us a bit along~ That's right, we're about to get into Kanji's involvement in the case!

I really hope you all don't mind this quick chapter, until then! Thank you for reading!