

I look down from the ledge I'm sitting at, completely soaked by the rain, and tense my legs, preparing myself. It's the only way I can beat it. But my arms won't move and my entire body is frozen while my heart is going a hundred miles an hour. Is it fear that's keeping me in place? Or is it the power of the notebook? Would I jump had I not written my name on its pages? I suppose it's too late to get an answer to those questions, so instead I sigh, and force my muscles to relax. I look up at the ashy sky.

As the cool droplets caress my features, I twirl the small wooden stick I'd brought with me between my thumb and index finger. On top of the stick is a chocolate-covered strawberry, the last gift Misa gave me, back when we said our goodbyes. The memory slowly creeps into my mind once again.

I was supposed to leave at 10:20am, but had changed my mind the day prior and instead took off at 9:30pm. Misa and I were outside the plane, all ready to take off as soon as I got inside. But I wasn't ready, I didn't want to go just yet. Misa and I stared at each other. It seemed like she was going to say something to me, something important, but I never got to hear it. Instead she just wished me a safe flight with a sweet smile on her lips.

I deflated a little. I don't know what I was expecting then, a declaration? That's a bit foolish, isn't it? However, I would be lying if I didn't say it was exactly what I wanted to hear. But I didn't, so I just nodded at her words and turned to leave, hoping my disappointment wasn't very evident.

"Wait!" Misa exclaimed as she grabbed my sleeve to make me turn around, and pushed something into my hands. "I know it's not much, but I wanted to give you something a little more healthy than candy and I thought you might like the taste."

I looked down at my hands, and in them there was a small plastic container with a big chocolate-covered strawberry inside.

"You know, you really should stop eating so many sweets. I know you say you don't gain any weight when you use your brain, but..." Misa kept talking, but I don't really remember what she said.

I didn't know what to think, since you see, I'm not one to receive gifts very often, and when I do it usually comes accompanied by a request. I thought that maybe she was expecting something from me, but I had nothing else to give her. I searched my brain for something I might have that Misa could want, but was coming up short.

"...Do you—do you not like it?" I raised my gaze to look at Misa, a subtle frown on her face as she waited anxiously for my answer. I looked back at the strawberry and at that moment, I felt quite silly as I realized she wasn't expecting anything from me. Misa gave me the strawberry because she thought it would make me happy. She wanted me to be happy...

Delight filled my chest at the thought, which was reflected in a small smile that tugged at my lips. When I looked at Misa, I saw the shock in her eyes upon seeing my face, and then a second later she had her arms around my torso. I remember how tightly she was holding onto me, so much that it was almost hard to breathe. I remember the sweet vanilla scent that reached my nose in that moment, and a strange warmth that was growing from within, one that I carried into the plane and that begins to embrace me even now, shielding me from the chilling cold of today.

"I'm going to miss you, Ryuuzaki" she said, her words muffled by my shirt. I was tempted to tell her then and there, my real name. It would've been quite pleasant to hear her say it, but I didn't.

Instead I softly pulled her head towards my chest, wanting to take her with me, or just feel that warmth for a second longer or two, or maybe forever. But I couldn't, I knew I couldn't. "Goodbye, Misa Amane."

When she pulled away, I felt that emptiness return, the one that had settled in my stomach recently, and that only she could fill. A sad smile was plastered on her lips, and there were tears threatening to spill from the corners of those honey-colored eyes. I can't help but smile at the memory. Sweet Misa, always wearing her heart on her sleeve. After a few seconds, I turned around and dragged my feet up the ladder, resisting the urge to look back.

My eyes were glued to the sky beyond the plane's small window while I kept my body rigid in its seat. But after a few seconds, I couldn't help but lean forward and allow my gaze to drift slowly towards the model. I wish I hadn't, because her eyes were full of grief. Even if it was exactly what I expected, it still made my stomach churn.

"She knows what I did" I say matter-of-factly to the skeletal figure that's now sitting by my side. For a few seconds, all the response I get is the white noise of the water droplets falling on concrete around us.

"Yes. She asked me to spare you, but I told her there is nothing I can do."

"I see." *There is nothing I can do.* I can feel the small ounce of hope I had hidden within die as those words echo in my mind. This was really the end. "Why are you here, Rem?"

"...I don't know."

"It would appear that's your favorite phrase, isn't it?"

Rem doesn't respond to my remark. I had come up here to die alone. Every pending task was already taken care of. I'd even said goodbye to Watari. However, I admit the Shinigami's presence is...strangely comforting, and relief passes through me when she doesn't move from her spot next to me.

I feel time itching closer and closer. It won't be long before I—

"What's it like?" Rem asks. I look at her expectantly. "To know you're about to die."

*Die.* I grip the stick with both my hands and bring the strawberry closer to my face, almost nuzzling it, as if its scent could chase away the dread that's forming inside of me. "I'm terrified" I blurt out, unable to control the tremble in my voice.

Rem looks at me like she wants to say something, but doesn't. So I turn my gaze back to the horizon. That's when I feel a weight on my shoulder, and soon realize it's Rem's huge hand resting there.

Seconds later, a sudden pressure squeezes at my chest. I gasp for air but it's as if my lungs refuse to function. As my back hits the cold, hard concrete and the sky becomes blurry and my eyelids turn heavy, images and memories rush through my mind: A six year old me playing with the kids at Wammy, the rush I felt the first time I solved a case, Watari's wrinkled face looking down at me with affection, Misa holding me tightly, that warm feeling...

I lose sight of the world, until there's nothing but pitch black.