

Living With Determination

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Living With Determination

by [Shianhygge](#)

Summary

The reader was granted the ability to reset the events. The ability to save the one person they love. But remember... it's not canon.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

“This isn’t a game anymore, Y/N.” the blue butterfly fluttered past you with it’s usual whispers as you ran past it, the echoes of a gun going off bouncing off the walls.

You wanted to go faster, your legs carrying you forward despite the exhaustion and desperation. For you, who had grown too confident in your abilities to fight off the enemy, it had all been like a game, the mortality of you and your comrades never hitting you in the face. You had been immature. You hadn’t treated anything seriously, always carrying on with that happy go lucky smirk and accepting attitude. But now, as you rounded the corner of the darkened coffin filled alley, you finally learned that the so called “game” that you were playing... was a game of life and death.

The scene before you only served to increase the impact of the realization. The still smoking revolver aimed at the figures on the floor. Cruel and mocking words escaping the Strega member’s filthy mouth. And...

“Blood” you whispered to yourself, mind barely able to process the sight of your lover on the floor, protecting the youngest member of SEES. The rest of your team sprinted forward as you backed away, thoroughly horrified by the sight of all the blood leaving from the wound in Shinjiro’s chest as Akihiko struggled to flip the taller male over. You were standing next to Minato, face the near exact same as the team leader’s; one of abrupt shock and disbelief, like someone finally made it apparent that this was reality. And then, you weren’t standing, you’d sprinted forward with a cry of despair, bringing your Evoker to your temple and summoning your Persona to cast Diarama on Shinjiro over and over again, to no avail. “Diarama!” You called out, beginning to feel weaker and weaker as you sank to your knees next to Akihiko and Shinjiro.

It began to get more and more difficult for you to breathe, and you felt as if your chest was being constricted, tears and sobs escaping your lips, “Shinjiro...” a hitch in your breathing as you struggled to speak, face growing warm as you grasped at your lover’s cooling hands, trying to warm them. “Y-you’re going to be o-okay.” you stuttered out, not really trying to convince the dying teen so much as you were trying to reassure yourself. “Don’t leave me...” you begged, bringing his larger hands up to your lips. “I love you... so much.”

And even when he was dying, those soft and kind brown eyes bore into you with understanding, always concerned about others and not himself. And you choked when Shinjiro gave you a weak smile, using the last of his strength to address you, struggling to move his hand to caress your cheek, where you held it, nuzzling the palm of his hand with desperation. “I’m glad... that I got to meet you... Don’t cry... Y/N... This is how it should be...”

The grip on your hand tightened for a moment as his eyes went glassy, before going limp and falling to your lap. “Shin-ji-ro?” your eyes went wide before scrunching up as you gave in to the sobs, leaning down to cry into his unmoving chest, not caring how much blood got on you.

“As I said, this isn’t a game anymore.” the phantom blue butterfly landed on your hand as you cried, but you could care less. Because Shinjiro was dead.

At first, it had been a game, to get close to everyone... to beat the enemy. But you weren't sure that you would get so attached. Your happiness when a mission went right, the drop of your gut if your team wasn't strong enough to handle a tough Shadow whilst in Tartarus... you should have known that everything was becoming a little too personal.

The times after school where you're run around with Koro-chan in the park... where you and Junpei joked around or decided to mess with Minato a little. And then, that sulky, off-putting senpai of yours decided to rejoin SEES. He'd been intimidating, what with the long unkempt brown hair hidden under a beanie which cast a dark shadow over his eyes, giving him his signature glower. Harsh words were thrown at everyone and scoldings whenever he saw something he disapproved of. At first, you wanted nothing to do with him except to become his friend, a challenge that you couldn't help but tackle.

A game.

But then, you saw more of him. That rough exterior of his gradually dissolved away with your enthusiastic attempts at being friendly. And underneath, you saw the man that Shinjiro Aragaki really was.

He held a soft spot for the young, the damaged, the ones that had a bright future. A passion for cooking and a natural instinct to mother hen anyone neglecting their health. That care to put others before himself. And it had enchanted you, the real Shinjiro. By the end of September of the first time, it wasn't a game anymore. You genuinely felt love for the stubborn, self-loathing Persona-user. You loved spending time with him, the faint smiles he sent you when listening to you talk about your day.

"Encore, encore!" He'd always exclaim, urging you gently to continue on your long explanations, as if he could never tire of listening to your voice.

Shinjiro... wasn't like the rest. He was always genuine with you. He was never bored of you; his attention never wavered, brown eyes, gentle and transfixed upon your form.

And now that you thought back, it was like he knew. Shinjiro was always making the effort to preserve you in his memory, to cherish the time he had with you. He had a feeling what would happen... had listened to his heart to cherish the days remaining... but you hadn't known, too high off the euphoria that he brought you.

But that euphoria didn't last, did it?

The days after were spent in a depression, falling asleep in Shinjiro's empty room, going to classes and avoiding the other members of SEES, especially Ken, who you'd previously treated as a little brother. But knowing that it was Ken that had called Shinjiro out that night despite it being Takaya that had pulled the trigger... you couldn't bring yourself to face the young child, who was no doubt internally beating himself up as well.

"I think... this might be the hardest on Sanada-senpai... Shin-kun..." you whispered, laying on his bed and wrapped in his blanket, staring at the portrait you'd drawn of your late lover. You'd only been with Shinjiro for a month, so you didn't know him too well, but you knew enough to know that Akihiko and Shinjiro were as good as family. "Should I go to him?"

Akihiko was quite off-putting to you, what with his determination to get stronger and stronger, and the reckless lust to fight against the Shadows, but if there was anyone who could understand what you were feeling, it was Akihiko. Even still, your body resisted, and... in the end, you didn't go to see Akihiko.

The memorial service held at Gekkoukan High School was held a few days after Shinjiro's death. Almost fittingly, the weather that day was rainy, as if the gods were crying as well. All the students were gathered into the auditorium, yet no matter the mood of the student body, everything felt grey and empty. The first to go up and pay their respects were the third years, going up in groups of five to slowly lay down lilies on the table in front of Shinjiro's memorial portrait. Meanwhile, you were stuck sitting with your fellow second year SEES members, planted in between Minato and Junpei. The room was mostly silent, and you were content with simply staring at Shinjiro's face, until the two student in front of you started speaking.

"What a bummer... what does this have anything to do with us?" one of the male students muttered to another.

"Who knows?" his friend replied, equally bored with the memorial service.

"I mean, did you even know Aragaki?"

"How could I have known him? He never came to school, remember?" and you could feel your hands bunch up into fists. "Anyway, who knew that you could really get caught up in these violent incidents?"

"I don't know if he got caught up in it. Wasn't it probably just a fight?" You could feel Junpei shaking next to you, and you thought to stop your friend, but the next thing that the student in front of you said, made you lose it as well, "I mean, I'm sure he was that type of guy anyway."

Junpei stood up abruptly, muttering in a dark tone, "...shut up..."

Taken aback, the students in front of you turned around in confusion, "What?"

"SHUT YOUR FILTHY MOUTH!" You responded, beyond livid that the students had the gall to speak ill about someone they barely knew, at this point, you'd joined Junpei in standing, tears slowly cascading down your cheeks. Even going as far as to put your hands on the student, you screamed, "HOW DARE YOU! YOU DIDN'T EVEN KNOW HIM, SO SHUT UP!"

"Iori! Y/N! Sit down! Please!" Toriumi-sensei scolded, and begrudgingly, you and Junpei retook your seats.

From that day onward, it seemed to be a downward spiral of despair. Despite the support shown by the rest of SEES, the incidents that followed ended shaking your resolve. Finding out that Ikutsuki was behind Strega's existence and killing Kirijo-san... That Shinjiro would have died regardless because of the medicine he was taking... Watching as Junpei, your best friend, lost the love of his life in order to revive him... Becoming such close friends with

Ryoji only to learn that he was Death incarnate... accepting the cold truth that you would all have to kill Ryoji in order to save mankind... and then to lose all those memories after the battle with Nyx... only to regain them on the day that the third years graduated... to witness Minato fall into a coma... it all came crashing down when your friend died in the hospital the very next day. Suddenly, cruelly, without an explanation.

And as per usual, all you could do, was stand there, frozen, wishing to reset.

And then, a spell hit you, forcing your eyes shut at the nausea. But when it lifted, and you reopened your eyes, you found yourself standing in the Iwatodai Dorms, Mitsuru-senpai stood in front of you, explaining that a new student would be arriving that very night. You'd blankly nodded, dazed and confused, before sprinting up to your room from the first floor lounge, and popping open your laptop, your cell phone, anything to confirm the date.

April 9, 2009

"Impossible..." you'd laughed, hysteric with disbelief... "it... can't be..." It wasn't March 6, 2010? "N-no way." you whimpered, sinking to your knees. "It's just a dream... a really, really bad dream."

But it wasn't a dream... the days past exactly as they had, meeting Minato Arisato, getting into a battle with the Magician Shadow... and you were suddenly hit with a realization. "I can change it..." You could change the events to come. "I can save Shin-kun. I can save them all"

It was then, that the cycle of restarts began, you living out the days with your fellow SEES members as you slowly tried to change what had happened the first time, only to fail in the end. A cycle of obsession. To save the man you love. To prevent Junpei from experiencing heartbreak. To stop Ikutsuki's plans. To save Minato.

One reset became two, then four, and soon six. Living through six years worth of mistakes, and on the seventh, you'd finally managed to do something right. You'd gone through great lengths, doing the most obscure things to return a pocketwatch of all things to the man you love. And it was a pocketwatch, out of all things that saved your lover's life in the end, putting him in a coma instead of outright killing him. And everyday afterwards, you visited him in the hospital, silently taking care of him, talking to him as he slept. And for the first time in six years, you felt relieved and content.

You buried your face in the sheets beside your sleeping lover, staring up at him with love and devotion, a smile on your face. "I held you as you died seven times in total, Shin-kun." you confessed to his sleeping face, devoid of the glower and hardened features, "And now, I've finally managed to save you. But..." you frowned, as you ran through your thoughts, "how do I stop Ikutsuki? He's untouchable." *Am I willing to kill him?* You were, but if you were caught, you would never be allowed to see Shinjiro again.

Selfish

That's what you thought as you let SEES kill the last Shadow. When you didn't warn any of them of Ikutsuki's true nature. You were able to spare Chidori's life, allowing Junpei his

happy ending... but you'd sentenced Ryoji and Minato to die.

But you had Shinjiro in the end right?

It was the assurance you kept telling yourself as you supported your lover as he was discharged from the hospital on March 2nd, wanting to scold him for being a self-sacrificing idiot, for not taking account how you'd feel if he died... but the thing was... with the disappearance of all their memories of the Dark Hour... of Shadows and Personas... was the disappearance of all the bonds you all had.

Shinjiro didn't know who you were... just that you were an underclassman that knew his best friend, Akihiko. In fact, he didn't even know how he ended up in the hospital. When you'd heard about this after he woke up, you'd laughed, earning a strange look from the older student in front of you, before dissolving into tears.

All that hard work... and he didn't remember who you were.

Always the sweetheart, Shinjiro had tried to calm you down. The poor man didn't know why you were crying, but he felt that he had to comfort you. Nothing he said could really stop the sobbing coming from your body, but it was a hug that calmed you in the end.

"Tsk, how troublesome. Don't make a sick person work so hard. Jeez." and you laughed, glad that, despite the disappearance of his memories for now, you would have your old Shinjiro back soon.

You didn't leave his side, always running to find him after his discharge, helping him, just being by his side. After six years of failure, you didn't ever want to leave him again.

Then, March 5th rolled around the corner, and you found yourself attending the graduation ceremony, supporting Shinjiro, who was getting to graduate despite all his absences. Then, when Mitsuru was giving her graduation speech, you felt Shinjiro's grip on your hand tighten, you turned, only to be met with lips pressing against your own fervently. Caught off guard for a moment, you hummed in delight and threw your arms around Shinjiro's shoulders, pulling him close and kissing him back, not caring that the entire student body was witnessing your kiss.

When the two of you pulled apart, Shinjiro whispered, "Come on." And you were dragged out of the auditorium with the rest of SEES following, because Minato was waiting for you all. All of you made it to the roof in time to see your leader close his eyes for the final time, looking like he was sleeping. But you knew that Minato Arisato would never open his eyes again...

Shinjiro gripped your hand tightly as Aegis and the others took Minato's body back to the dorms, and you leaned against the taller male's arm in response, saddened by your friend's death, but happy that you had Shinjiro. "Y/N?" you heard your beloved ask, his voice deep and gravelly.

"Hmmm?" you hummed in reply, closing your eyes in bliss as the wind blew soothingly on the rooftop of Gekkkoukan.

“Are you okay? Being with someone like me?” there was that tone of insecurity that you recognized, and you grunted.

“Someone like you?” your eyes opened briefly to lock with brown orbs as you grinned playfully, “You mean someone kind, compassionate, brave, and handsome?” there was a upturn of your lover’s lips, just the slightest, but definitely there as he grunted, “Yes, Shinjiro. I’d gladly spend the rest of my life with you.”

“I see...” The two of you sat and watched the city skyline for a long moment before Shinjiro suddenly spoke up. “Marry me, Y/N. You graduate next year, so say you’ll marry me and we’ll go travel wherever you’d like.”

You were surprised, unable to speak, just euphoric. So you responded with your body, tackling the man you love with a cry of “Yes!” as your lips met and your eyes closed.

... and then came the wave of nausea, and your eyes jolted open.

“L/N, tonight we’ll be expecting a transfer student.”

And there you stood, shellshocked, listening to Mitsuru-senpai explain that a new transfer student would be moving in that night. And like clockwork, you ran up to your room, in denial.

“No. nononononononono. NO!” You screamed, clutching at your head in tears, “What happened? I didn’t reset! I finally saved him! No!”

A blue butterfly fluttered past you.

No matter what you do. You will reset. Because it’s not his fate to live.

“TO HELL WITH THAT! I LOVE HIM!” You burst into angry tears, yelling after the phantom blue butterfly. “I’ll save him again!”

And you will continue to reset. Never able to continue forward. Stuck. And I will not stop you.

You sank to the floor in despair, “Then, what was it all for? To dangle something that I couldn’t have in front of my face? Only to take it away?”

To make you see the he was not the only one. That just because your moon has disappeared doesn’t mean that the stars have as well.

“Stars?” you whispered in confusion, “What?”

Cherish the moments you have with the ones you love. And then walk forward with those you have left. To a future given to you by those who sacrificed themselves.

The butterfly faded away, and you were forced to take a deep breath to calm your tears, “One more time.”

Months later, in October, you found yourself wrapped in Shinjiro's arms, enjoying the night air outside the temple. You'd eventually come to terms that you couldn't save the man you love and have a future with him, and that realization made it so much harder to move on. And then, you'd resolved to do as the butterfly had advised, to cherish the time you had left with Shinjiro.

At first, you were probably a nuisance, constantly popping up wherever Shinjiro was even before he rejoined SEES. But slowly, you'd managed to weasel your way into his heart again, initiating a relationship with him in June. Every day that you could was spent with Shinjiro, getting to know him more, being close with him, even spent in embraces of blissful passion. If you were to be parted from him, you would love him for all he was. And in October, after being together for four months, you were hardly ready to say goodbye.

"Y/N?"

You hummed in reply, enjoying the warmth of your lover's embrace while you still could. *I wish I could make this moment last forever.* You lamented internally.

"I want you to move on, Y/N." your eyes opened lazily, confused at what brought this conversation on. "If I'm no longer here, I want you to move on, Y/N." Shinjiro clarified, his brown eyes meeting yours seriously. "Mourn me. Don't forget me, but move on. Look for someone else to make you happy. Because more than anything, I don't want you to live in the past."

Your only response had been to nod and kiss him passionately, not really wanting to let him go, but knowing that you had to. It was like he knew that his body was dying regardless. That his end would come in a mere three days.

And three days later, you held his dying body to you, crying as he died. This time, his last words to you were, "Remember my wish, Y/N."

It had been difficult, but you'd honored his wish, moving on slowly, but surely. You didn't turn into a social recluse after Shinjiro's death, but you'd mourned properly, prone to bouts of crying, but also seeking comfort from your friends. Then, one night, you went out on a new moon to gaze at the stars, thinking over the words from the blue butterfly all those months ago... "*Just because your moon has disappeared, doesn't mean the stars have as well...* huh?" you mumbled, sitting on the steps of the temple where you and Shinjiro used to sit. "What did it mean by stars?"

"Y/N!" your head turned so fast that it almost gave you whiplash, and your eyes found the figure of another senpai as he made his way towards the steps of the temple, "What are you doing out here? It's chilly." Akihiko looked as if he'd been training, panting a little from his late night marathon around the city island, but in his hand was a red sweatshirt... with white star patterns on the hem. *The stars...* you came to the sudden realization.

Noticing your stare fixed onto his sweatshirt, Akihiko offered it to you with a gentle smile, "Here, you must be cold."

You could feel the heat rush to your face as you accepted the sweatshirt, slipping it over your head and feeling the warmth rush over you. “Thank you.”

Akihiko stood in place for a moment, debating his options before motioning towards the empty step next to you, “May I join you?”

Surprised that he asked to be in your company, you stiffly nodded, “Be my guest.”

The two of you sat in silence until you spoke up, “I miss him.”

Akihiko didn’t need you to elaborate, a far-off look taking hold of his features. “I do, too.”

“I want to be angry, but it’s so tiring. It’s tiring to be sad, too.” You confessed, bringing your knees up to wrap your arms around. “I don’t really know what to do.”

“What else can we do?” Akihiko started, “We move on.”

“How?” your voice choked a little as you glanced sideways to meet silver orbs.

An uncharacteristic smile lit Akihiko’s face, and your heart sped up. “Together.”

And for the first time in a long while, you found a reason to truly smile from the bottom of your heart.

End Notes

Wrote this not as a request, but because I was feeling super sad after replaying P3P...

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!