

Lady Silence

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Lady Silence

by [DiYunho](#)

Summary

Frost's younger sister came to live with him 6 months ago; one could say Y/N is a bit of an oddball because she doesn't talk and she doesn't like to be touched. The Joker allowed her to help the crew from time to time without knowing that the only reason for the woman's presence amidst them was actually him.

Notes

You can also follow me on Tumblr and Wattpad under the same blog name: DiYunho.

Chapter 1

You could say you were lucky enough when your brother almost ruined everything with his carelessness; he didn't do it on purpose, but it could have had very unpleasant consequences at that point.

You were working at one of The Joker's warehouses when Frost noticed Richard behind you: Y/N was busy sorting out ammunition from a shipment received the previous evening and perfectly aware of his presence, still she decided not to react.

Jonny took Richard's gesture as insolence when in fact the guy was debating if he should tap your arm or not; after calling your name and being ignored, he was kind of out of options.

Your brother charged towards the clueless henchman and dragged him away from you, slamming his body against the nearest wall.

"Nobody makes fun of my sister, do you understand?!" the usually calm Frost lost his composure.

Richard was completely taken by surprise and immediately apologized for a mistake he didn't have a chance to commit:

"I wasn't making fun of Y/N, I swear!"

"Were you trying to mock her?" Jonny got in his face, panting with indignation. "She doesn't like to be touched and all of you jerks know it!"

"I wasn't, I really wasn't!" Richard defended his actions because it was rare to see Frost in such a state and dangerous to mess with him once aggravated. The goon's hands went up in surrender since he didn't want any trouble. "I wasn't mocking her, ok?"

The Joker saw the altercation from across the storage room and yelled:

"Frost, chill!" and Jonny muttered thru his clenched teeth, wishing for nothing more than to break Richard's neck:

"Do you know who my sister is?!"

"I said chill!!" J repeated and your sibling didn't have to look your way to realize you were unhappy with his comment. He wasn't thinking straight and blurred out a sentence that wasn't meant for anybody's ears. At least not yet.

Thankfully, The Joker was too far to hear the dialogue and Richard too preoccupied with his own safety in order to analyze words said in anger by an outraged brother.

"Hey Silence, are you done there?" The King of Gotham shouted because help was needed outside to unload the trucks; he often liked to use the nickname since you didn't talk.

You nodded a yes and stepped away from the finished chore, ready to take on the new task.

“What’s going on?” J growled as you passed by him, already in a very bad disposition. Three days earlier he dislocated his left shoulder and had to keep the whole arm in a sling; it was bothersome and certainly didn’t improve the mood.

You innocently blinked, pretending to be oblivious to the question.

“Move it faster!” he lost his patience with the quiet woman, opening the heavy metal door so she can get out. Straining himself with the injured arm wasn’t the best idea and the stiff muscles became even tighter. “Shit…” The Joker took a deep breath, the paralyzing ache making him see dark spots.

“Sir, are you alright?” someone close by asked.

“Boss, you OK?” another henchman inquired.

“Mind your own business!!” J barked and dragged his feet towards the office he frequently used as a bedroom too.

You discretely signaled Frost and you both followed The Clown Prince of Crime in his quarters; he was lying in bed and moaned in pain when he had to lift his head up to see who dared bothering him.

“What do you want?” he sneered at Jonny and his sister.

“Mister Joker, if you’re uncomfortable Y/N could make you feel better,” your older brother explained and The Joker sarcastically smirked:

“How? Is she a doctor?”

“No sir.”

“Good, because I don’t need a doctor! Get the hell out and let me rest! Make yourselves useful and aid with unloading the cargo!” he raised his voice and you approached the bed anyway. “Are you deaf, Silence?! Beat it!” The Joker pointed his finger towards the exit, aggravated you were still there. He was starting to sweat from the soreness and you knew that being feverish was an indication of things worsening for him in the next minutes.

Your sibling got out of the room first and you were preparing to do the same when J’s physical discomfort made him mumble:

“So what is it you can do to make me feel better, hm?”

You closed the door and signaled the left arm should be out of the sling. The Joker rolled his eyes and made an effort to indulge your instructions, then scoffed when he figured out the shirt had to go also.

“Do I have to be totally naked?”

You nodded a no and ignored the sassiness, gesturing for the crabby employer to roll on his abdomen.

Once J did what you required, he sensed your hands gently massaging his shoulder blade. “Lemme get this straight, Silence: you don’t like to be touched; how come you’re touching me?”

No sounds came out of the woman that was patiently searching for a certain pressure point under his skin in order to alleviate the throbbing ache.

“Did I answer my own dilemma?” The Joker frowned.

He sure did: you touching him was different than him touching you.

“Stuck up like your brother!” he admonished, pissed Y/N was calm and didn’t seem to care about his bickering. Suddenly, The Joker felt such a sharp pain in his shoulder he thought you stabbed him. He wanted to move but couldn’t: he was completely numb, courtesy of Y/N manipulating the pressure point she found. Before J could complain some more, your thumb unlocked the pinched nerves and his erratic breathing intensified before gradually returning to normal.

The tense muscles finally relaxed, your fingers giving the body necessary relief.

“Where did you learn to do that?” he groaned, actually enjoying the soft back rub.

Of course there was no acknowledgement from your part and he buried his face in the pillows, not understanding why he was so drained. You faintly pinched the skin on The Joker’s neck and his eyelids closed; by the time you got the third pressure point he was already asleep, yet you used it to make sure he will be out until morning time.

Frost was waiting for you in front of the room, impatiently biting on his lip.

“Did you see the birthmark on his hip?” your sibling whispered.

“Yes,” you confirmed in a low tone.

“Is it him?”

“It’s him,” you reassured and walked alongside Jonny.

“Are you 100% sure?”

“U-hum,” his sister underlined before taking a separate hallway that led outside to the south part of the warehouse while your brother paced in the opposite direction.

Once in the woods, you carefully listened to the noises: you knew they were there. Y/N walked into the darkness and the wind carried over hushed words:

“Mistress, do you need anything?”

One of your men emerged from the shadows and bowed, his black attire making him almost invisible in the murkiness.

“Master Shiro sends his love,” he clearly enunciated and you widely smiled because a confirmation wasn’t necessary anyway.

“Next week... at the club,” you gave out the information and the man was quick to pull out his sword when one of The Joker’s henchmen patrolling the perimeter yelled:

“Who’s there?”

40 more swords came out of sheaths in the same time but Y/N raised her hand and they all went down obeying her command.

The woman emerged from behind the trees, revealing herself to a goon freaking out for nothing.

“Jesus Y/N, you scared the crap out of me! I thought it was a wild animal or something!”

You just passed by him and headed back inside, pleased that half a year of infiltrating The Joker’s gang and numerous years of research were lastly bearing a fruitful outcome.

One week later

The music at the club was deafening and Antoine Mercier was enjoying the strip show; the French smuggler had no business being there after the negotiations ended, yet The King of Gotham allowed him to stay nevertheless.

“Oh my God Mister Joker, where do you find these girls?!” Antoine got J’s attention, lustfully staring at the twins leaving the stage in a hurry. The song changed and he anticipated the next vixen gracing the runway with her presence.

The Joker was bored and quite irritated with the guest that asked the same dumb question every time he liked a stripper.

“Oohhhh!” the smuggler grinned when a girl wearing a short kimono style robe appeared on the stage, seductively walking her way up towards the two guys present in the Red Room. The Joker was texting on his phone and didn’t pay attention, too busy setting up another meeting for the next day; it could have easily made him about 2 million dollars richer.

The woman hopped off the stage and Antoine tried to pull her in his embrace but she dodged his touch.

“Come’ere sweetheart, I want a lap dance!” he reached for the cute mask covering the girl’s face; she eluded him again. “I love being teased,” he winked and scratched his crotch, ogling the mysterious creature in front of him. She bent over and the smuggler couldn’t take it anymore: he tried to get up while she pushed him back on the chair, allowing him to untie her

robe. A second later she slapped his hand away and her attention switched towards the green haired man.

“Not now, sugar!” J snarled when her legs popped under his nose. The girl took something out of her pocket and he still didn’t look up from his cell. “I said...NOT.NOW!”

She held the piece of plastic in front of his eyes and he couldn’t avoid glancing at it: an FBI legitimation with Antoine’s picture, the name “Frank Johnson - Special Forces Unit” printed right under.

The Joker sucked on his teeth and placed the phone on the table near him. He yanked the ID out of the dancer’s hand, his bad shoulder acting up since he didn’t keep it in a sling anymore. The woman went back to Antoine, distracting him for a few moments.

The undercover agent had no clue about the item and was wondering about it when the girl unexpectedly straddled his lap. She started grinding against him and he lost concentration, his mouth sliding down towards her lacy bra.

“How much for a night, honey?” Antoine groped her and immediately sensed his throat being pierced by something sharp. He struggled to throw the girl on the floor without success; the knife went out and back in his flesh again, both her hands twisting his neck to the left with such ferocity it snapped.

Everything happened so fast J barely saw the short blade she took out of her messy bun; he jumped off his seat and she got up also, the limp corpse collapsing to the ground with a muffled thud.

“What the fuck is going on?”

The woman didn’t seem startled by the loaded gun pointed at her and she slowly took off her mask.

The Joker forcefully exhaled, barely containing his surprise and managed to utter:

“What’s the meaning of this, Silence?”

The silky robe glided off your frame, exposing Y/N to a confused Clown Prince of Crime. You span on your high heels and the sight of the tattoo covering your whole back made him gasp: two dragons with intertwined tails, surrounded by cherry blossoms. The ink was a work of art and also the mark of the highest rank in the Ozunu clan: the Japanese mafia owned more than half of the major cities in the country and The Joker stayed away from them. Not because he didn’t want to do business with them but because they’ve never given him a sign they would be interested in a partnership so he gave up.

And now they were at his doorsteps.

You heard the beads moving and you knew J was gone without looking.

“Sir!” the henchmen waiting outside the Red Room gathered around their boss, thinking he has important instructions. Instead he rushed by them, fuming at the thought that the man in

charge of his security took him for a full: Jonny Frost was The Joker's target and he intended to get some answers before blowing his brains out.

Y/N stayed behind in the Red Room for a few moments and soon after another woman joined; she grabbed the robe from the floor and placed it around your shoulders. You tilted your head as a thank you and she asked:

"Mistress, are we following?"

You nodded a yes and she continued:

"Are you going to change in the van? Master Shiro is already there; we can take the shortcut."

You agreed and couldn't deny the feeling building up in your heart: it wasn't anxiety or distress, more like relief after almost losing hope that you'll ever find him again.

The Joker kicked the door opened, mad beyond control; he was so angry he didn't notice it wasn't locked.

Jonny was in the middle of the living room at his house, sipping on whiskey and waiting for his boss. Like it was hard to guess knowing the lovely temper he possessed.

"You son of a bitch!" J barged in, panting with indignation. "You Goddamn traitor!" he took the gun out from his holster and Frost replied:

"I'm not a traitor, sir."

"You're not?! Then how do you explain your sister has the symbol of the Ozunu clan tattooed on her back?" The Joker shrieked while your brother serenely admitted:

"She's married to their leader sir."

J was so furious his ears started ringing:

"Is that an insignificant detail you forgot to mention??!" he yelled and took the safety off his pistol, done with the interrogation.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you, sir," your sibling took another sip of whiskey which prompted more outrage from a very worked up Joker.

"Are you threatening me Frost?!"

"I'm not the threat sir," the truthful response accompanied someone's voice coming from behind The King of Gotham:

"Mister Joker, please don't point your gun at my brother-in-law."

J instantly noticed a lot of movement and realized he was surrounded by a lot of people dressed in black, their faces covered in the same fabric; only the eyes were visible from behind the dark veils.

The Joker lowered his arm and turned around, facing the man that stood by Y/N; maybe in his late thirties/early forties, dressed in a traditional Japanese kimono that matched yours.

“Mister Joker, we finally meet,” your husband smirked. “My name is Shiro Ozunu and I believe you’re already acquainted with my better half,” he introduced himself while emphasizing who the woman was. “I’m sorry it took us quite some time before answering your proposal; one can’t be too careful these days.”

J was debating on the whole charade, skeptical about the unexpected encounter.

“That’s why you sent your wife and her brother to spy on me?” the spiteful tone made Shiro cut it short: he had no patience for anybody else’s outbursts except his wife’s.

“Like I said, one can’t be too careful these days! I’m here now: would you like to talk or not?”

The Joker puckered his lips, sick and tired of his shitty day:

“Maybe,” he resentfully grumbled.

After four months, Monday - 6pm

“This way Mister Joker,” Frost leads the way towards the main residence belonging to the Ozunu family.

Located 3 hours away from Gotham on the outskirts of New York, the gated property is huge. It actually resembles a small village: the houses are built in the Japanese style and the sculptures decorating the vast gardens remind of the Meiji Era.

The Joker is here for the first time under the pretext of a business meeting: Shiro and his wife want him close for different reasons, not that J is aware yet.

Jonny takes a right on the path leading towards the terrace, when the sound of some kind of turmoil makes your brother shrug and the familiar noise causes him to quicken the pace.

The green haired guest is silent, mostly because he’s still irritated about his trusted henchman’s stunt. He keeps up with Frost though and when the row of decorative shrubs ends, they both see something that’s worrisome to your brother and puzzling to J: you and Shiro are engaged in a sword fight, relentlessly attacking each other.

“What are they doing?” The Joker finally bothers to articulate a sentence out of pure curiosity.

“They’re having a disagreement sir,” Jonny gulps, more and more nervous. “When they fight they don’t verbally argue; they do this.”

“Are those things sharp?”

“Very,” the short clarification makes J more interested.

Such display of skills The King of Gotham has only seen in movies; you could say he’s fortunate enough to witness a very different domestic dispute - courtesy of Shiro Ozunu and his spouse.

Your blade whooshes in the stillness and before your husband can dodge, you intentionally cut a piece of his sleeve, triumphantly snickering when it lands on the grass.

“This…this is my favorite kimono!” Shiro pants, vexed you did such a thing. He prepares to charge but he gets interrupted by a distressed Frost that can’t take it anymore:

“Shiro-san! Y/N! Mister Joker is here!”

The couple gazes at the two men, trying to regain composure; after exchanging mean looks, you put the sword down first and your husband does the same.

“Apologies Mister Joker,” your husband growls, “we weren’t expecting you this early.”

“It was a smooth drive,” J lifts his nonexistent eyebrows, bummed the spectacle is over.

“Welcome,” he is greeted by the host and you acknowledge him with a faint bow before stomping in front of the small group. Your brother runs and catches up with you, closely followed by Shiro and The Joker.

“Trouble in Paradise?” J blurs out since he’s not a sensible person.

Your husband laughs at the bold question, deeming it to be amusing instead of rude:

“Not even close. We just had a small quarrel; marriage can be stressful sometimes and you have to let out steam.”

“Is it because you’re jealous I saw your wife at the club in a skimpy bra and panties?” The Joker nonchalantly mentions as a payback for the past and Shiro pretends to brush it off.

“Careful Mister Joker; at one point I might not find your remarks funny.”

“Just saying,” J grins and has to persist with his inconsiderate observations. “I’m sure you’re afraid another man might steal her from you.”

Shiro doesn’t lose his cool but lashes out in the most elegant way possible; he’s amazing like that.

“Steal her from me?! Y/N is not an object for someone to steal Mister Joker. And I really pity the man that would dare such an affront not because what I might do, but because she would

take it as unforgivable insult and she's far more despicable than I am."

J huffs, vexed he can't initiate trouble while Shiro purposely stirs the conversation in a different direction:

"I trust my wife more than I trust myself, Mister Joker" and he pauses for a second. "Did you know we grew up together?"

"Did ya'?" the visitor seems surprised.

"Yes. Her father worked for mine and they lived here. When her parents divorced, Jonny went to stay with their mother and Y/N remained here with her dad. There weren't a lot of children for me to play with; I was the only heir to the fortune and my father kept me under strict lockdown. When we were kids, she used to come to my house or in some rare instances, I was permitted to go over to her house. As we grew up, we became pretty much inseparable. One night when we were teenagers, she didn't make it home."

The Joker snorts, fully aware what it means and Shiro smiles at the cherished memory.

"I've been in love with her since I was old enough to know what it meant. Such a shame my father didn't understand... When he found out about us he chased her away simply because he couldn't accept an outsider as a suitable partner for his son."

"An outsider?" J repeats, not getting the idea.

"Y/N is not Japanese Mister Joker and my father was an old fashioned traditionalist," your husband recalls the ordeal. "He even had an arranged marriage in mind for me. Can you imagine in this day and age to be told whom you should love?!"

The Joker lifts his shoulders up, ignorant about the subject. What would he know about love anyway? Probably nothing.

Shiro reprises his story, upset the details are making him remember the struggle:

"Y/N's dad continued to work for my father and she was forced to move with her mother 60 miles away. It wasn't far, yet I was under surveillance 24/7 and couldn't escape. After a month of being apart, she showed up at the gates, begging for the security to let her in; she walked all the way here because she missed me. One of the guards went and told my father and you know what he did? He sent 6 experienced fighters to teach her a lesson which translated into beating her to death. Who would do such a thing?! Unleash a group of assassins against a defenseless 19 years old girl that just wanted to see the boy she loved..."

Your husband dwells on his thoughts and J is surprisingly immersed in the topic:

"Obviously she survived," he gives a hint he's waiting for Shiro to reprise the dialogue.

"Not thanks to me," the leader of the Ozunu clan gathers his long hair together and brings it to front on the left side of his body. The wind blows it back over his shoulder again and he sighs, frustrated. "A friend of mine, and like I said I didn't have too many due to my imposed social status, came to tell me Y/N was here and that my father ordered her demise."

He knew he will get in big trouble, but he still risked his life and told me. He also helped me sneak outside the property and I ran away with Y/N. My dad was mad beyond control and disowned me; I really didn't give a damn since I had what I wanted," Shiro proudly states. "The next five years weren't easy, but Y/N's mom took as in. My father sent messengers on a monthly basis, promising that if I abandon my stupid ambition it will all be forgiven. Since when loving someone is stupid ambition anyway?!"

The Joker doesn't answer the rhetorical question and ascends the steps leading to the covered terrace where dinner awaits.

"When I was 26 and Y/N 25, we got married. Later that year I received the news of my parent being severely ill. I was an outcast, yet the thought of leaving everything to someone else besides his own flesh and blood made him reconsider his decision regarding the estranged son. I suppose him being a traditionalist led to something good for once... First, Y/N wasn't part of the deal: he wanted me to divorce in exchange of the empire. But given the situation, I twisted his arm and got what I wanted: I was allowed to come home with my bride. Please take a sit Mister Joker," Shiro encourages J since they reached their destination.

A small table is set under the canopy with several dishes, chopsticks and regular dinnerware next to the plates.

"I hope you like the food Mister Joker," your brother makes small talk and his employer groans:

"I like Asian food or did you forget that?"

You start picking shrimp from your platter and move it over to Shiro's since that's his favorite. He might be on your shit list for the moment but you still love him.

The chat resumes and you quietly listen when suddenly Shiro's chopsticks pop up in front of your mouth: an oyster for his wife, which happens to be her favorite. You accept the peace offer and chew on the morsel, still not looking his way.

The Joker keeps on eating and scans the furniture scattered around the patio, inspecting the various framed pictures.

"Is that you?" he gestures towards the image closest to him depicting two young men and a girl.

"Yes, I'm the one with the blue kimono and the girl is Y/N. The other guy is the friend I told you about earlier: an orphan my father took in and used as a currier. After he told me Y/N was here to see me, he disappeared. Over the years we tried to find him but he just vanished from the face of the earth; I'm certain my father did something to him."

"He's probably dead then. Why are you still searching?" J yawns, rather exhausted after the long drive.

"My wife is alive because of him and we are together because of him; I wish I could repay his loyalty," Shiro explains. "He knew he would be severely punished but he still helped us."

“Hm,” J puffs. “Good luck then.”

The Joker is spending the night and after finishing dinner he was taken to the guest house near the main Ozunu residence.

You just took a shower and crawled in bed by your husband, debating if you should say anything.

“...Shiro... are you awake?”

He wiggles a bit and switches his position so he can face you, not having any objections when you take a strand of his long hair and twist it around your fingers.

“...I’m sorry I ruined your favorite kimono...” you apologize for what you did a few hours ago.

Shiro scoots over towards you and pulls you in his arms, pouting.

“It’s ok, I have so many...”

“But that was your absolute favorite...” the regret in your voice makes him cringe. You caress his face and whisper:

“He didn’t recognize us...”

Your husband kisses you and frowns:

“Do you think he’s faking it?”

“No, he’s not faking it. He doesn’t remember anything...” you sulk and the teary eyes disturb your spouse more than it should. What better way to improve the mood than using a silly request?

“Hey Y/N, you know what? Will take everything as it comes, but in the meantime you should seriously think about how to compensate me: either we make out and then we make love or we make out and make love in the same time.”

You burst out laughing at his antics, having a difficult time choosing:

“Take your pick !”

While the couple is reconciling from the fight they had earlier, The Joker is getting ready to go to sleep. He drags his feet on the carpet, studying the exquisite decorative items adorning the bedroom. He stops in front of the picture placed on top of the fireplace, recognizing a duplicate copy of the image he asked Shiro about at dinner time.

J glares at the frame, still not realizing that the 20 years old young man that joined Shiro and Y/N for a group picture almost two decades ago is actually him.

Chapter 2

You stretch a little bit and yawn, wanting to cuddle up in Shiro's arms when you realize he's not in bed; that makes you open one eye and after a few moments of confusion you see your husband standing by the windows.

"What time is it?" a sleepy Y/N inquires.

"Almost 6," he smiles and you get on your elbow, signaling him to return by your side.

"It's still early," you slide down the pillows and he doesn't need another invitation when you propose: "Let's have a lazy morning."

Shiro glares at the sunrise while running his fingers through his long hair, perfectly aware of how attractive you find his gesture. You even opened both eyes to savor the view: wearing nothing more than a pair of boxers, the head of the Ozunu clan knows that he doesn't have to put too much effort in order to get his wife's attention.

He snickers as soon as you yank him in your embrace and start covering his face in soft kisses; there's nothing Shiro enjoys more besides the intimacy of a marriage he risked everything for, including succession to Yakuza leadership.

"I saw The Joker walking by," he informs and you don't seem surprised.

"Probably he can't sleep and decided to explore the property."

"Most than likely; maybe some stuff will look familiar," your husband agrees and wants to share his thoughts on yesterday's events but something about the tone in your voice stops him.

"I couldn't have asked for a better partner in life," you whisper and peck his lips. "I really don't know what I would do without you."

Shiro touches your nose with his, paying attention since he knows you too well: you're getting upset and he has an idea why.

"The honor is all mine," he growls and hugs you tighter when the question echoes in the quiet bedroom:

"Do you know what I miss the most?" and your bottom lip quivers as you continue. "Our son sneaking in here at the crack of dawn and his little feet thumping on the floor..."

Shiro caresses the small of your back in a faint attempt to soothe you.

"Me too," he snuffles and you start crying on his shoulder.

"I m-miss our b-baby," the heartbroken Y/N barely manages to utter. "There's so much silence without him..."

“I miss him too... more than anything...” the other grieving parent admits and wipes your tears. “I’ve been thinking lately...” and he hesitates for a few seconds,” that I would I like us to try for another baby. Hm?...”

“I’m...I’m scared...” you stutter because he brought it up in the past and your feelings haven’t changed. “What if something happens again?...”

“Just think about it, OK?” he kisses your temple. “There’s always a risk... yet I want us to try again when you’re ready...Alright?”

You nod a yes, grateful the man you loved since you were teenagers can be such a comfort after all the hardships life has thrown your way.

“Shiro...” you sigh, “can we get married again?”

Your husband tucks your hair behind the ear, having absolutely no objection to the candid request.

“Just you and me...I don’t care if we have a priest, a monk or a pastor... And my brother as a witness, just like the first time. I just need to say the words again, that’s all. Do you want to?”

The answer doesn’t disappoint:

“Of course I want to; who else am I going to remarry if not my girl?”

“Can we do it at The Shrine?” the emotional Y/N suggests.

“No better place,” he sadly smiles. “We can have someone here in the next hour. Are you sure you don’t want anything big this time though? When we got married 11 years ago, I was an outcast and we didn’t have money for a proper reception; now we could organize a lavish party.”

“No,” you shake your head. “Only me and you again, please.”

Your husband squeezes you closer to him, repeating your words:

“Only me and you...”

The Joker is taking a third left on a convoluted path towards the guest house, enjoying the labyrinth –like maze. He’s been inspecting the estate for almost two hours now and boredom didn’t settle in; pretty rare for The King of Gotham not to lose interest in such a trivial activity so here he is, still roaming around at 7:53am.

J suddenly sees you and Shiro emerging from an alley bordered by lighted Japanese lanterns; the breeze carries over bits and pieces of a dialogue he can’t understand. You are wearing a white summer dress and your husband opted for a light blue suit; his hair is gathered in a ponytail and yours is braided.

Not that he's spying on purpose, but there's something going on that makes The Joker stay behind the granite sculpture he happened to pass by. He sees Shiro breaking a small branch from a cherry blossom that he offers to his bride in exchange for a kiss and the couple resumes walking after a few seconds.

J leaves his temporary hiding spot and lingers by the statue before reprising his stroll, already having a goal in mind: go down the path you came from because it's a new sector to investigate. He scarcely makes a few steps when he hears a stern command:

"Apologies Mister Joker, this area is reserved for family members. No exceptions," one of the guards entrusted with securing the perimeter makes his presence known. J didn't notice the man perfectly blending in with the landscape and he sure likes to think he has a sharp eye.

"I'm just going that way for a hike," the stubborn guest tries to push it and as soon as his foot is up in the air for the next step, six more guards surface from the slight mist, completely blocking passage now. They are dressed in black and their faces are covered with a dark veil, just like the ones that The Clown Prince of Crime encountered at Frost's house when he met Shiro for the first time.

J frowns, displeased at the small group's action; they are actually part of the clan's most skilled assassins and they take their duty very seriously. Something hard to comprehend for The Joker that believes no rules apply to him.

"I'm just taking a hike," he sarcastically smirks.

"No trespassing!" another sentinel reiterates and touches his sword as a last warning they are ready to act if the visitor doesn't turn around. "Family members only unless you have special permission from them to go to The Shrine! Please go back Mister Joker."

"And what happens if I don't, huh?" J cracks his neck, defying all common sense like he always does.

"Let him pass! Mister Joker is with me!" Frost yells and quickens the pace; he is going back to the main house after spending 5 extra minutes at The Shrine in order to make sure the monk called to officiate the short ceremony was properly escorted back at the eastern gates.

The guards obey and J rushes by them with contempt, pissed he didn't manage to control the situation without Jonny's intervention.

Frost waits for his boss then they start walking together.

"What's with the restricted area, hm?" The Joker grumbles.

"It's a private area, sir. Nobody is allowed here unless they're family or has Shiro's or my sister's consent," your brother tries to explain the privacy concept to a grouchy employer that has trouble grasping such notions.

"Oh yeah? Why?! Is there a secret treasure buried here..." and he halts his tirade as soon as he sees the Japanese style Shrine filled with burning candles and incenses "...or something?"

he finished the sentence, not sure about what he's looking at.

"Sir..." Frost respectfully lowers his voice and leads The Joker near the sanctuary. "This is a shrine build in the honor of my nephew Haruto, my sister and Shiro's only child. He died almost two years ago from leukemia..." Jonny bites his lip and lights up more incenses from the pile waiting to be burned. "He was three years old," Jonny gestures towards the picture of a cute little boy decorated with Kanji alphabet symbols for his name: Haruto Ozunu. Next to the picture there's a glass case containing a grey teddy bear: your son's favorite toy.

The Joker stares at the multitude of flowers and bonsai trees beautifully adorning The Shrine, rather curious about the revelation.

"I saw your brother-in-law and your sister earlier," J informs. "Were they here?" he asks although the reply is evident.

"Yes, sir. They renewed their vows, a spur of the moment thing."

The Joker is somewhat surprised at the news simply because he doesn't see the point of remarrying your spouse; maybe if he would have had someone's unconditioned love and loyalty after what happened to him, he could have a better understanding of such matters. Maybe his fate would have been different too. But he didn't, thus things are the way they are.

Frost rearranges some candles that are almost out, replacing them with new ones.

"Losing Haruto was very painful for them," he continues. "My sister didn't say a word for months; both didn't really eat or sleep. I mean, even now she only says things to me and Shiro; doesn't talk to anybody else unless she truly wants to."

Jonny pauses while taking a deep bow in front of The Shrine, preparing to leave.

"Are you going to get in trouble for bringing me to this place?" J inquires even if he actually doesn't give a damn about it.

"No," Frost confidently responds. "Y/N and Shiro won't object to my decision."

"You think so?" The Joker smacks his lips while wishing for the opposite.

"The guards alerted them they let you trespass seconds after it happened; it's their job. Since they weren't sent to kick you out of here or worse, it means my sister and her husband were ok with you being at The Shrine."

"I'm humbled by such unexpected privilege," the ignorant answer makes your brother reprimand his boss's conduct for once:

"You are the first guest they ever let back here, Mister J! Think about that!" Jonny furrows his eyebrows and the annoyance is so obvious it makes J hiss:

"Are you lecturing me Frost?!"

Your brother decides not to deepen the apparent surfacing conflict and instead diverts the discussion towards another topic:

“Let’s return to the house, sir. I’m sure they are waiting for us.”

The Joker barely hears the conversation you’re having with Shiro in Japanese and the chat stops when his presence is detected.

“We started without you,” Shiro announces when Frost and The Joker finally join the table for breakfast. “I think it’s good to eat outside again since the weather is so nice,” he takes a bite from his plate and J has to comment:

“I hear congratulations are in order,” he grins and your husband takes your hand and kisses it, loving the smile flourishing on your lips.

“Thank you,” Shiro replies.

You play with your hair, J’s attention switching towards the delicate cherry blossom received from your husband earlier: you keep on caressing the delicate flowers twisted in your braid, already planning to save them since they are worth more than all the diamonds you possess.

“Mister Joker,” your spouse addresses the absent minded Clown Prince of Crime, “the merchandise will arrive tomorrow night. There is a slight delay due to the fact that I am adding more trucks to the convoy.”

“That’s fine…” J mumbles, averting his eyes when he realizes you caught him gazing your way; not because he’s shy or anything similar, but because he’s inexplicably puzzled about the strange feeling in his heart: it’s almost like those flowers remind The Joker of something, yet he’s not sure of what.

“Are you still having the poker party tonight?” Frost asks and you nod a yes.

“Of course,” Shiro reiterates. “Would you like to join us?” the invitation is extended to the guest.

J lifts his shoulders up, picking some food to eat from all the varieties nicely arranged in the middle of the table.

“Yeah, sure. I have nothing better to do.”

“Excellent,” your husband grins. “I must tell you traditional Japanese attire is required for poker night.”

“I don’t own a kimono.”

“You can borrow one, Mister Joker; we have a room full,” Shiro suggests.

“I suppose I can,” the proposal is accepted without too much debate; for some reason the green haired man doesn’t detest the idea.

“Yes?” your husband encourages the hesitant guard that just arrived at the gathering, not sure if he should interrupt or not.

“Shiro-san. Mistress,” he bows and hurries up to your side. He whispers something that makes you frown and there is such an evident change in your spouse’s mood The Joker actually wonders what the heck is going on.

“Bring him here,” Shiro grumbles and the guard bows again, disappearing shortly after.

“Something wrong?” Frost looks at both of you, uneasy.

You scoff and the leader of the Ozunu clan sucks on his teeth, deeply bothered about the news.

The Joker sips on his orange juice, watching two women bringing over a young man in his early twenties. He keeps on trying to escape their grip but it’s useless; they won’t let go.

The captors forcefully drag him over near the table, the woman to his left kicking his shin so hard he falls to the ground on his knees, not daring to struggle anymore.

“I heard you talked about my wife and referred to her with a certain term that I hate!” Shiro snarls, his eyes burning with disgust.

Takeshi nervously tries to explain his mistake, aware he landed in very hot waters due to his own stupidity.

“I... I swear I didn’t mean it like that, Shiro- san. Mistress...” he calls while you ignore him. “Mistress, I swear it was completely taken out of context...”

You don’t seem to care about his reasoning and your husband shouts with such intensity it makes the guilty party shrivel up.

“And what context would make it acceptable for you to disrespect my wife by calling her an outsider??!!”

The Joker is watching the scene quite fascinated first of all because he loves this kind of stuff and secondly because your husband seems to have transformed into an entirely different individual: Shiro Ozunu might be different than his father, but it’s not necessarily a good thing.

“I’m ...I’m sorry... I really didn’t...” and Takeshi doesn’t get to finish his apology.

“Who gave you a second chance when you messed up badly, hm?” your husband slams his fist on the table, fed up with the useless conversation.

“Mis... Mistress did...” the young man stutters, more and more anxious.

“And who insisted we should keep you because you have nowhere else to go when you majorly fucked up a third time?” the interrogation resumes.

“Mistress...Mistress did...” the faint reply makes your husband snap:

“You mean the outsider??!!”

Shiro grabs a knife from the table and stabs the kneeled offender with such brutality his collar bone loudly cracks. Takeshi screams in pain, bending over until his forehead touches the grass.

“The cut runs deep and the blade is aimed towards your heart,” your husband describes what he just did. “It’s very close to one of the main arteries; if you take the knife out yourself, you will graze it and bleed to death. I know how to take out the blade without killing you, but I don’t want to. The other person that can do that is the outsider,” he ironically underlines the word. “It’s up to her if she wants to give you a fourth chance. I wouldn’t!”

The young man is absolutely terrified and gathers his strength in order to lift his head up, the throbbing ache making him shiver.

“Mistress...Mistress please...” he begs and you calmly drink water, neglecting to react. “I’m v- very sorry, I meant no disrespect,” he touches the injury, his fingers wrapping around the handle sticking out of the flesh. “Mistress...please...” he pleads again and you finally glare at the victim.

You snatch one of the silk napkins from the table and get up, irritated at Takeshi’s whining. The Joker sees you going around his chair and stomp louder once you are closer to the young man; he actually wonders if you’ll forgive him. There is so much resentment written on your face it totally delights The King of Gotham: he has to admit that being around Shiro and Y/N Ozunu is not boring at all.

Takeshi whimpers when you lift his chin up, immediately closing his eyes when you slap him; it stings badly but doesn’t compare to the stabbing wound. You push his fingers aside from the knife, firmly clutching to the handle for a few moments while trying to balance the compression applied to it. He groans when the blade tilts inwards and screams as the knife is taken out of his injured muscles. A few drops of blood stain your white dress, the red liquid quickly soaking the napkin you cover his lesion with.

The young man tries to cling to you because everything is starting to spin so fast he can’t process how close he is to lose consciousness. Takeshi opens his mouth because he wants to thank Y/N for having mercy on him, yet no sound comes out. The ache is so unbearable that it makes his body convulse and he collapses at your feet, hearing Shiro barking at the two women before fainting:

“Get this idiot out of my sight and patch him up!”

J is trying on a sixth kimono, not being able to decide if this is the one he wants to wear at the poker party. The color and patterns are very nice: gold and blue koi fish against a light grey, velvety background. He turns and admires himself in the huge mirrors, thrilled that this particular garment makes his eyes stand out.

The Joker puckers his lips, straining to find some energy for the evening planned ahead; he's been awake since 3am and now it's past 7 o'clock at night. He slowly spins so he can analyze his reflection from all angles, vanity making him smirk wider.

"Maybe this one," he yawns and crashes on the couch, shoving the decorative pillows around until he's comfortable enough to relax. J was told the other guests will arrive in less than two hours so there's time to take a nap. He punches the pillow under his neck to fluff it up on the sides, paying attention to the noise: Shiro just told you a joke and your laughter reaches the room where The Joker was left alone to try kimonos.

The sound fades, J's eyelids getting heavier despite his efforts to stay alert. He impatiently bounces his legs and the movement diminishes soon along with his will to fight off exhaustion. The Joker's tired brain doesn't even acknowledge the ruckus created outdoors by the crew appointed to get things ready for the poker party on the terrace.

A few minutes pass and J mutters in his daze, clenching his fists together.

In the dream he sees his hand reaching for a branch full of cherry blossoms, breaking a few flowers and playfully shaking them to make sure no petals will fly in the wind.

"For you," The Joker discerns his voice saying as he places the delicate flowers behind Y/N's left ear. She looks so young, just like in the pictures scattered around the Ozunu residence, only 17 back then.

The girl sweetly smiles as he keeps on caressing her hair and the 20 years old Joker can't help it:

"You're so pretty..." he confesses and leans over to kiss Y/N; she doesn't reject him and his heart is beating so fast it's deafening. "I'm sorry; I didn't mean to do that..." the excuse follows his bold gesture simply because he realizes why he wasn't pushed away: Y/N seems petrified and definitely taken by surprise.

Why are you looking at him like that?!

The Joker feels his cheeks burning, embarrassed at you reaction.

"Just... just forget it, ok?" he grumbles and takes a step back, regretting his dumb decision of kissing Shiro's girlfriend.

"It's fine," you smile again, not knowing what else to say. "Where are you going?" Y/N sighs when he starts walking away. "Damian, come back please!"

J sprints towards the parking lot, his legs stiff from the humiliating experience he seeks to forget as soon as possible. He's so distracted he bumps into someone and the impact abruptly

wakes up The Joker: he gasps for air, his head pounding with the most horrible migraine.

He tries to get up from the couch but he's so dizzy he falls back on the cushions.

"Dammit..." he moans when the confusion in his mind is not clearing up.

The knock on the door makes a bit more attentive to his surroundings and merely utters:

"Yeah?..." he pauses and you enter the room to check up on him. "Hey Silence," J greets and strenuously exhales. "I have a terrible headache," he rubs his temples and you approach, a bit worried since he seems completely drained. "Can you help?"

You nod a yes and swiftly move near the couch, pulling him up against the soft frame. Y/N begins to massage The Joker's shoulders and searches for the pressure point under his skin, quickly pinching the tissue once it's found. He senses the intense pain that comes with the procedure and then numbness takes over as The Clown Prince of Crime enjoys relief given by the skillful Y/N.

You notice J is feverish and the glossy eyes indicate that something's not quite right: physically he might be fine, but the current state he's in makes you wonder if he should rest instead of attending the party.

Frost's sister has no idea that The Joker's present situation is due to a simple fact: what he dreamed wasn't just a strange dream, but a triggered memory about something that happened many years ago.

Chapter 3

Shiro takes a look at the new cards facing down in front of him, glad to see 3 kings in his pile:

“I’m in,” he slides a stash of hundreds towards the middle of the poker table, distracted by your kiss in the next second: you’re sitting in his lap and make it hard for him to concentrate since you won’t stop teasing.

“Mistress, are you going to play?” Kiyoshi asks and Frost throws a handful of chips in his direction:

“Shut up! She cleared us up last time so it’s fine if she doesn’t!”

Miyuki giggles, taking another glance at your brother: you don’t have to be a genius in order to notice she’s still in love with him. They dated three years ago and it didn’t work out; God knows why: in your personal opinion they were perfect for each other.

“I fold,” she sighs because there is no way she could win this round with the lousy hand she got from the dealer.

“I’m in,” The Joker growls, quite happy with his cards. He keeps sipping from the herbal tea you brewed especially for him: he doesn’t like the taste but it’s sure helping with the migraine. He was told that most of the ingredients could become poison in one’s body if not measured accurately; thankfully Y/N is mastering this skill too and strangely enough J didn’t even doubt her expertise, glad the splitting headache is almost gone.

There’s a bunch of small talk and laughter going on between the 12 people gathered outside the terrace for the poker party: mostly important Yakuza members in charge of different branches under your husband’s leadership. He’s silent for the moment though since you just whispered something in his ear that suddenly made the rest fade:

“I’m not wearing anything under my kimono”.

You feel his grip tightening around your waist and you peck his cheek, pleased to see him simmer under the apparent indifference. Shiro’s eagerness is reaching new heights once you stand up and discretely leave the table; he takes another shot of sake, slamming the cup in front of Akihiro:

“Pour me another one, please!”

“Thirsty?” the head of San Antonio network winks and obliges the request.

“Very,” your spouse admits, guzzling down another shot of his favorite drink and tosses his cards to the side. “Play a few rounds without me!” he announces and abandons the poker opponents in search for his wife.

J watches Shiro stepping inside the house, then walking on the long hallway attempting to guess in which room you are; a hand abruptly snatches him and he ends up inside the walk-in closet with Y/N locking the door for more privacy.

“Hi,” you rush in his arms and he smirks.

“Hi,” he kisses your neck and begins untying your kimono, satisfied when it glides on the carpet revealing a naked Y/N he wants immediately. “This wasn’t a part of tonight’s plan,” your husband points out but he surely enjoys the spontaneity.

“It won’t affect the outcome,” you unwrap the kimono in a frenzy and he pushes you against the wall, impatient to get it out of his system.

“U-hum,” Shiro agrees while lifting you higher against his body. “Plus I think we can consider this our second wedding night since we renewed our vows today, right? This can be a little preview,” his cheeky remark makes you giggle.

“If you think you have the energy for more than a preview...” you taunt and pull down on his boxers, causing the proud spouse to conclude:

“I’m on a roll!”

“Are you?” Y/N bites her lip and debates on something she’s been struggling with for months.

“I am and I can prove it,” Shiro confidently reaffirms and you tangle your fingers in his hair, aware that the next statement will render him beyond ecstatic.

“...Then maybe we should start trying for...for another baby...”

His eyes get big, taking in what you just said; he wanted this for a while and didn’t expect such a nice surprise anytime soon.

“You make me so happy,” Shiro confesses and rests his forehead on yours. His heart is beating so fast it’s impossible to ignore the overwhelming feeling of bliss washing all over him.

You smile at the genuine revelation, your teary eyes making him slowly guide his spouse towards the only furniture in the walk-in closet: a comfortable loveseat that witnessed many previous escapades of the Ozunu couple.

“You know what I think?...” he softly kisses you. “That we conceived Haruto in the same place...” Shiro mentions the lost first born and you cling to him at the bittersweet memory. “I didn’t mean to upset you,” he instantly apologizes when tears roll down your face, reckoning that maybe he shouldn’t have said it.

“I’m not upset,” you reply while being picked up because he’s not at fault. “I just miss him...”

The leader of the Ozunu clan walks around the spacious room holding his most valuable possession: the woman he loved for so long he can't remember a single day when he felt different about her. Even when they fight and they don't speak for a few hours.

"Wanna go back to our guests?" your husband suggests and you sniffle on his shoulder, considering the proposal yet you don't like it.

"No, I want to make love," you hop off his arms and push him on the couch. "Even if it's just a little preview," you wipe your tears and the joke evokes a grin.

"Com'ere then," he signals for his Y/N, understating it's the only thing that will alleviate the grief for both of them.

Shiro is the first one to return to the poker table, shortly followed by his wife; he's already playing again and you carefully circle the table, halting behind your brother.

"You're not playing, are you?" Frost inquires, worried you might and it makes you giggle. You nod a no and he relaxes, glad for the confirmation. "Thank God! It will be nice to end up with some money instead of nothing," the grumbled words prompt the older sibling to rectify his bitterness with a quick peck of your wrist.

The Joker sees you bend over and your lips barely moving when you tell Jonny under your breath:

"Baka!" which means idiot in Japanese. Nobody else heard you, including the King of Gotham and your brother snorts, amused.

Shiro gathers his hair and brings it to the left side of his body, the long strands hanging down past his waist. The gesture is swiftly noticed by Y/N and it means she has the approval to resume with the plan.

You leave Jonny's side and observe the players, pretending to be interested in the game. As soon as you are by Kimura, you patiently wait for him to stretch and create a gap large enough for you to squeeze in and land on his knees. The man in charge with the Memphis network nervously glares at your husband as you keep on caressing the collar of his kimono, savoring the shocked expression on his face.

"Why so anxious, Kimura?" Shiro sneers, fiddling with his cards. "You never had a woman sitting in your lap?"

"Umm..." he tries to think of something smart to utter before it's too late.

"Or maybe you're tense for a different reason?" Shiro hints and intensely stares at the reason for tonight's gathering.

"I'm not sure what..." Kimura wiggles in the chair and you walk your fingers across his chest, ready to intervene if he tries to stand up.

“Last month FBI raided my property with a warrant following an anonymous tip that I got a shipment full of smuggled artefacts from Japan. Do you know anything about that?” your husband’s voice is increasingly more and more menacing, his patience running short with the traitor. “Almost got arrested and placed in federal custody since they are always on my tail. You see, the authorities have this weird idea that I have something to do with Yakuza. Rumor is I’m their leader. Me?” he innocently chuckles. “Just the descendant of a very wealthy family with the best attorneys money can buy, offering employment to various law abiding citizens. Am I right?” Shiro addresses everyone and there’s only silence; Kimura realizes why: they all know but he tries to lie nevertheless:

“I swear...”

“You swear?!!” your husband shouts. “On the oath you pledged to me and the clan?!!”

The Joker has no clue about what’s going on; he’s not part of the Yakuza and wasn’t briefed on tonight’s events yet his instincts warn about a simple fact: this is not a poker party, but an execution.

“Why did you betray me? You really thought I wouldn’t find out?!” Shiro growls and Kimura pushes you away, managing to escape your grip just because you allow it.

He takes a few steps back and the members of the Ozunu clan get up from the table, only J and Frost don’t. Your brother could participate since he’s considered part of the organization thou loyalty towards his employer dictate Jonny’s decision of inaction.

“Where are you going?” your husband shrieks. “Don’t you have any dignity left?”

Kimura watches everybody approach, noticing a faint movement in the darkness surrounding the terrace: the assassins are there also, making sure he won’t flee.

“Shiro...” he lifts his hands up asking for truce. “If you let me explain...”

“Explain!” the unexpected reply gives him a few seconds of fake impression he might twist the truth in his favor.

Kimura opens his mouth and the knife whooshing by your ear stops the words before they come out: Miyuki aimed for his throat and she never misses, just like you. The man gasps for air, his shaky fingers struggling to cover the blood oozing out of the wound. One of the assassins dressed in black emerges from the shadows, handing over his sword to your husband. Kimura stumbles on the decorative lanterns scattered around the patio, the gurgling noises coming out of him intensifying when he tries to take the blade out.

Shiro stomps towards him, mad beyond control after simulating a calm attitude for hours: there’s nothing worse than a scorned leader with zero tolerance for treachery.

The Joker catches himself admiring the sharp steel moments before it cuts the viper’s head; the fluidity in Shiro’s movement is quite hypnotizing for a person not accustomed to such capabilities. The Clown Prince of Crime is no exception.

“Goddamn snitch!” Akihiro kicks the corpse, disgusted at his former friend’s behavior. “I can’t believe he did that!”

“He got what he deserves!” Kiyoshi barks and takes the sword from your husband’s hand. “Master Shiro, thank you for avenging all of us,” he bows and the rest of those present do the same.

Your husband scoffs, glad the charade is over with.

“No need to thank me. Ensure it doesn’t happen again!” he indirectly reminds them of the fate they could share if they ever dare follow the same path Kimura did.

You continue to comb Shiro’s long hair, only The Joker left to keep you company in the office belonging to the main house after the others split.

“Can you braid it?” he hums and takes another sip of sake.

“U-hum,” you oblige and start twisting the locks; you can tell by his tired eyes that J is nearly ready to call it quits for the night too.

“I think I’m gonna crash soon,” he yawns and curiosity mixed with boredom makes him inquire about the several boxes filled with folders on Shiro’s desk. “Are you working on another project? Anybody else that betrayed and needs a lesson?” The Joker winks, sticking his nose where it doesn’t belong.

Shiro feels the pressure of your palms on his shoulders and although it’s not part of tonight’s agenda, might as well bring it up:

“No, not at all. These are actually files and information gathered over the years about our missing friend, the one that saved Y/N’s life and helped me run away with her.”

“Oh, him!” J remembers the previous conversations on the topic. “Probably dead, why bother with the research?”

“He might not be,” Shiro places his cup on the coffee table next to him, preparing for a short interrogation. “Does the name Damian Johnson ring a bell?”

“... Mmm, noooo...?” J frowns, not comprehending the reason for the strange question.

Your husband reaches for some papers on his desk, handing them over to the guest.

“That was his name,” Shiro adds. “I told you he vanished because most than likely my father found out about what he did. Ryota Ozunu couldn’t stand traitors either, not that my friend was a traitor per se. But he was in my parent’s eyes since he never approved my relationship and that was enough.”

“What am I looking at?” The Joker turns the pages of the thick report, confused on the shared data.

“Police and hospital reports; that’s Damian,” your husband points out and The Joker recognizes the face from the pictures he saw around the residence. “It says John Doe since they couldn’t identify him. A lot of the orphans my father used as carriers don’t legitimately exist. He gave them names, but nothing official.”

“Fascinating,” he mutters because there’s no way in hell he will read all that. Why bother? Not his problem.

Shiro is not discouraged:

“Two weeks after I ran away with Y/N, his body was fished out of Hudson River: it seemed he has been tortured for days and then thrown in the water to drown but he didn’t die. I had no idea; back then I was nothing more than a disowned outcast with no connections or any influence whatsoever...Damian was in a coma for 7 months and when he woke up he had no memory of who he was. Took another year for him to sort of recover, but he wasn’t doing well; he kept on being moved from mental institution to the next, placed on suicide watch since he tried to kill himself repeatedly. Among others he was treated for paranoia and disillusion, the medical report stating it was a result of the severe psychological and physical trauma he couldn’t recover from. I’m certain my father did a great job at cruelly punishing a young man that had no other fault besides helping his friends.”

The Joker lifts his gaze from the documents only to see a flustered Y/N quietly crying next to her husband’s recliner.

“I think you’re upsetting your wife,” J correctly guesses and Shiro ignores the sentence.

“Damian disappeared from Lane County mental hospital two months after being a patient there, this particular John Doe resurfacing from time to time in police reports, accused of acts of violence, robbery, murder and arson. Then two years of absolutely no trace before he reappeared again...completely changed...” your husband sighs and The Joker turns another page, stunned at the image depicting his own mug shot for the FBI most wanted list.

“What exactly is this?!” J snarls, not a huge fan of Shiro insinuation.

“Damian was two years older than me and three years older than Y/N. Are you 39 years old, Mister Joker?”

“That’s none of your business!” J hisses.

“It’s none of my business because you don’t want us to know your age or because you have no idea yourself?” Shiro raises his voice and won’t stop the tirade: “Do you have a star shaped birth mark on your left hip?”

“What are you doing?!” The Joker throws the report on the floor, antagonized. “Are you playing games with me?”

“No, otherwise you would know the difference; trust me.”

“Is that why I’m here?! For mind games?!” J disregards Shiro’s honest remark, getting up from the couch and dashing towards the door. He’s so furious he’s about to explode which doesn’t help when you block the exit with your body. “Out of my way!!” he yells and violently pushes you. You almost collapse on your knees but regain your balance and try to stop him from getting out when he charges again, mad beyond control.

“MISTER JOKER!!!!” your husband yells. “DID YOU JUST ATTACK MY WIFE?!!!”

The Joker turns towards Shiro since he never heard anybody screaming so loud, panting from the effort of making you move; certainly not as easy as he thought it would be.

“So what if I did, huh?” J sarcastically responds.

“GET OUT!!” Shiro rises from his spot, striving to contain his rage before it’s too late. “Get out of our house and don’t come back until you have learned some manners!”

“Or else what?” The Joker retaliates, shaking from the indignation poisoning his reasoning. “Are you going to unleash your assassins on me?”

“Believe me when I tell you I don’t need anybody else in order to drag you out of here!”

Things are getting out of hand and seeing there’s no other solution for the imminent altercation, you finally move out of The Joker’s way. He hesitates for a split second before opening the door and slamming it in your face when you want to follow.

“Let him go!!!” Shiro commands.

“We’ve been searching for years...” you plead and choke on the words.

“I don’t give a damn!”

“Shiro...” your voice breaks under the burden of guilt. “Shiro please...”

He fumes at the state you’re in, not that he’s doing better; it definitely didn’t go well.

“Shiro... He’s leaving... and he might not return,” you underline and your husband debates on the words.

“That’s not Damian! Or are you blind to the fact that he’s not the same person?!”

You bite on your lip, not giving up.

“Shiro...” you whisper, “...it’s not his fault... You know what happened to him...Please... Please?...”

Your spouse is pacing around the office, attempting to calm down.

“Fuck!” he has another outburst and knocks the boxes containing years of research on the floor, various pictures with young Damian sliding on the marble. Shiro glares at them with contempt, deciding to listen to his wife:

“Go...”

You don't need a second invitation and sprint out of the office, merely paying attention to the warning:

“Take an umbrella; it's pouring outside!”

But Y/N doesn't care for an umbrella: she tosses her sandals down the hallway so she can run faster, lifting her kimono in the process for a hasty speed. You rush past the terrace and jump over the railing to avoid the stairs, darting towards the parking lot. The Joker is already gone and you can see his car heading for the south gates; nothing left to do but hurry after him on the slippery road while the crazy rain intensifies.

J adjusts his rearview mirror, accelerating when he sees you following the vehicle. Your reflection is getting smaller and smaller, yet he still sees you chasing after the car.

“What the hell are you doing?” he mumbles and the windshield wipers can't even catch up with the amount of rain falling from the sky. A few neon lights illuminating the stormy night go out, the path behind scarcely detectable: Y/N is now a black dot on The Joker's rearview mirror and he slams the breaks, puzzled.

Why aren't you returning to the mansion?

You're slowing down, the soles of your feet hurting from the hard concrete; it's cold and you're soaked to the bone, that's why you hope Shiro alerted the guards to keep the gates closed: if he didn't, it was all for nothing.

A few more steps and you halt, exhausted. You can't see the car anymore and you sure wish The Joker won't be able to vacate the premises. Or maybe he's actually on track and driving back to Gotham if your husband changed his mind and determined The Clown Prince of Crime is not worth the trouble. If the gates were opened, he's gone.

You're looking up and down the road, no other option but to return to the house. You barely find the strength to walk, thinking about the tremendous efforts and resources spent over the years to find Damian and how ugly it turned out.

The sound of splashing water gets your attention and you tilt your head to see The Joker's SUV slowly cruising to catch up with you. You wait until the car is next to you and he gets out, staring at the drenched Y/N.

“Why are you following me Silence?” he grumbles. “Did your husband send you to kill me? Do your worst but I can assure you I can hold my ground!”

You nod a no.

“What is it then, you're afraid I'll steal the kimono I borrowed?!” J snaps as he struggles to untie the garment he's still wearing. “Here, you can have it!” He's so frustrated his fingers keep on missing the knot.

You approach and touch his hand with yours, making him stop.

“You can keep it,” you sadly smile and The Joker is not fussing anymore: this is the first time you ever talk to him and the first time he’s hearing your voice. He’s stunned and you take advantage of the situation and wrap your arms around his neck, hugging him. “Stay...” you whisper. “Don’t go...OK?...”

It’s not easy to surprise The Joker and for the moment he doesn’t even care he’s completely wet too.

“Stay...” you repeat and release the embrace. “OK?”

J notices your red toes, scraped from running barefoot.

“Get in the car, Silence...” he pauses. “...I’ll drive us to the mansion...” he grouchyly offers and watches you clean your face with the sleeves of your kimono. It’s pouring but he realizes you’re crying: the drops trickling down your face are not just water beads.

“I’m not the person you’ve been searching for,” he mentions as soon as you are both in the car and you glance at him, sobbing: it hurts so bad looking in his eyes and seeing no trace of your childhood friend but a complete stranger gazing back.

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