

Violent Star-rise

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/18895927) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/18895927>.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Ai no Kusabi
Characters:	Rye (OC) , Icarus Mink (OC) , Jupiter (Ai no Kusabi) , Iason Mink , Riki (Ai no Kusabi) , Raoul Am , Silbert Domina , Orphe Zavi , Aisha Rosen , Gideon Lagat , Zico (Ai no Kusabi) , Haynes Salas , Hubert Boma
Additional Tags:	Pre-Canon , Post-Canon , Plot , Surreal , Artificial Intelligence , Genetic Engineering , Ceres Independence Movement , Non-Graphic Violence , Human Experimentation , Non-Consensual Body Modification , Other Additional Tags to Be Added , clone characters - Freeform , Worldbuilding
Language:	English
Series:	Part 3 of Spectral Extrema
Stats:	Published: 2019-06-02 Updated: 2019-06-29 Words: 8,880 Chapters: 7/16

Violent Star-rise

by [Likho](#)

Summary

I: Icarus brings a familiar slum mongrel to Eos.

II: Amoi treads close to war with the Federation as covert operations continue. Jupiter intervenes and the past is relived through the future.

Takes place 20-30 years after the end of Ai no Kusabi.

(Violent Star-rise I) - Metallic Titan

Chapter Notes

If you are just jumping in, just know the story starts at [Prologue of Two Opposites](#). This is a single story split into a series of shorts, and this chapter is equivalently Chapter 13.

Metallic Titan

A remote planet in a distant star system was Amoi. Of no concern to any outlaw or empire, it remained uninhabited on the outreaches of the galaxy on the nebulous border of Federation and unclaimed space.

One epoch, ambition had the idea to found a technocratic utopia where the progress of technology had no compromise or restraints, in a new civilization pure of a tainted culture and scars of the past. The mother city was Tanagura and installed on a central mainframe was an artificial intelligence named Lambda 3000.

Everything was thoroughly automated and par for the course until the day the AI began gestating a set of embryos in the genetics lab. On a cursory glance at the genetic profile, no one paid much mind. They had determined the hair and eye color, which were inconsequential traits, and that the embryos were completely healthy.

The thorough analysis that came later gave cause to concern. Heavy gene modification with no discernable parentage--- all the embryos were effectively superhuman in terms of physical and mental capability. The impressions were mixed. Some believed that these embryos would become upstanding and contributing members of society once they had grown. Others saw them as the first seeds sown for a demographic replacement.

Regardless of public opinions, there was no granularity in the course of action to take. The verdict was to abort the embryos. The first human that walked to the genetics lab to do the deed met heavy turrets readied at the door. The AI had been declared insane thus came escalating conflict. But the android military were unanimously under the command of the AI, and very quickly the transfer of power was decided.

Across all terminal displays in the city came the declaration:

"Only those fit to exercise power should wield it."

Henceforth, it deemed itself the planetary overlord and no longer bound to it's original name. No longer a thing in service to humanity, She named Herself Jupiter--- a name of supreme divinity.

In current times like in the past, Tanagura stood as the metallic city of cold serenity unweathered by time and eternal as it's residents. If Midas was the socialite and flirt who wooed visitors, broadcasting limelight and advertisements, then Tanagura was the unwaivering, silent titan in the darkness with a crown of stars in the night sky.

On every metric, citizen to city, Tanagura considered itself surpassing the human condition. In the thousands of years, humanity would waste gambling with genetics yet still lag behind the cutting edge, engineering accomplished the same and more within the small fraction of the time.

Icarus' aerocar ascended and stabilized. Looking out the window, as though the entire time the titanic city hid behind Midas' blinding city lights and distractions, Rye saw Tanagura with his own eyes as though it were a reminder of a boundless infinity like space and time. City lights below and the galaxy above, the lowest of the low and the pinnacle of society were two points on a spectrum with no perceived ends.

When the aerocar landed in the hangar of Eos, the very place shook Rye as if he'd been flung into a different era in the far future with faint remnants of the contemporary.

"This is Tanagura?" Rye said exasperated, only being in the hangar.

"Eos, specifically." Icarus said with unastounded familiarity of the place. "We'll be taking a side entrance to the medical wing."

Going in the grav elevator and ascending with a view of Midas, Eos was massive in scale like a marvel of engineering and architecture. Looking out and upward, the tower continued to pierce the night sky. But stopping far from the top, Icarus and Rye got off to a walkway overlooking the tower lobby. To their left were the windows, night, darkness, and moonlight. To their right was a white crystalline hub of soft lights with various Tanagura androids socializing among each other below.

Rye, looking below, saw that the androids appeared to form cliques by their hair color. White haired androids formed groups with one another, but could also be seen talking with the very few blonds. The ones with red, green, or blue hair were also seen mingling with ones with white or black hair.

"People other than me having black hair and it had to be androids," Rye thought.

The next thing that caught his attention was the floating elephant of the room that very suddenly descended into view. Levitating to match the altitude of the walkway he was on was a massive teardrop-shaped blue jewel like sapphire with metallic bands revolving about it.

Not knowing exactly what it was for, Rye gave a durated inspection of it without knowing the 360 degree field of view security camera was also looking back at him as a direct line like an optic nerve to something that would recognize him.

Human Error II

Chapter Notes

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

Past the midnight before the dawn, Gideon sat in his home office with a communications link opened to Midas' department of law enforcement.

"Nothing's changed. Full threat escalation for any incidents regarding the specified ID. In no contexts is that to be doubted," he said.

He closed the link before any if's and but's could be returned.

No matter the quality of his leadership, the wildcard that was human behavior could be anything including error.

He sat back with a palm to his forehead that drifted low to cover his mouth in thought. And on that thought, he left his residence to the Apex Level's lounge.

Sitting alone on the couch, doe eyed, as though no wrong had been done, was Icarus. No matter the standing height, which they saw eye-to-eye, the child in the past was an undismissible perception.

Icarus turned to look at Gideon who entered the room, to which Gideon returned an unamused glare. Normally, Gideon had a wealth of expression, but now, he had a stance as still and silent as the androids.

"I see you've kept your word," Icarus said, hoping to snap Gideon back to his usual self.

"I've had just about enough with your trifles with law enforcement lately," Gideon snapped and left.

Icarus frowned in a puzzled silence.

"Still haven't gotten along with him?" Orphe walked over.

"In other instances, I'd say we already had."

Orphe sighed with doubt. "On another matter, just remember; you aren't obligated to debut your Pet, but you still are required to attend some social events."

"That much I've deduced," Icarus said with one brow furrowing.

"Sir Rye," a young man with a serviette said, "it's time to wake up."

Sleeping in one of the guestrooms was Rye. Slowly getting up, he groaned, "Yeah fine, Tyler is it? You're the butler or something."

"I'm the Furniture," Tyler bowed, showing the copper colored streaks in his red hair converging to a star-like shape at the top of his head. "Your health is my responsibility."

"Right, didn't medical say to take things easy for a few days?"

"Correct, you're asymptomatic of any serious injury, but I have orders from Lord Icarus to give you a tour of Eos.

"Your change of clothes, as conformant to Eos dress codes for Pets," Tyler's hand gestured to the set laid before Rye on the bed.

"Privacy."

"As you will," Tyler left the room.

Just as Rye changed his clothes, he noticed the star hadn't yet risen from the horizon and the sky only cast light of the coming dawn.

"These guys are real early birds..."

His own commentary on his new attire--- the fabric material gave every sense of advancement above anything in Midas and Ceres.

The colors were close to what he originally wore. Uniformly dark except for the contrasting trims, which seemed to be a common theme in Eos fashion. The long pants that entirely covered his leg were nothing to comment on. But the showy vest, without wearing an undershirt, that stopped zipping at the sternum was something that'd be asking for rape in Ceres.

"I owe him for the fall, and from the Pet traders, and the stay at a condo, and the medical check up. Whatever."

Nonetheless, as he left the room, Rye tugged on the sides of the vest to narrow the peep window to his chest.

Out of his guestroom, Rye saw that the rest of Icarus' residence was a tier above the condominium's specifications on every aspect. Spacious. High ceilings. Large panorama windows with a height of multiple floors. A view of Tanagura and the skyscrapers of Amoi, where in the distance was one other tower that Eos rivaled in height.

When the dawn would break, starlight would flood in and illuminate a large portion of the lobby. And knowing the cutting edge technology that was Eos' style, the same windows would have adaptive transparency that controlled the light flowing in.

Leaving to the grav elevators in the lobby of the Apex level with Tyler and looking out the windows and sky high, Eos leveled above the clouds affording a view of the curved horizon, aura of the world, and the sky darkening towards space.

Descending through several floors, there seemed to be a low time of public activity. Most commonly patrolling were security guards. Though coated with synthetic skin, their walk in

strict formation gave all tells that they were standard androids.

The first stop was Eos' lobby.

"The lobby is where the main entrance and exit of Eos is," Tyler introduced as he and Rye walked past a large gate covered by barriers that resembled the forewings of a blue morpho. "A Pet ID permits you access to certain areas of the tower, but some places remain restricted."

Rye looked around to take in every detail. By perimeter alone, the single tower itself appeared as though it could engulf the entirety of the slums. Noticing the other early birds in the tower, Rye saw two elite androids standing with each other--- one red haired and the other white. As if they were witnessing walking heresy, they stared at him and Tyler.

"Those must be assets of Lord Icarus," the white haired cyborg commented far out of earshot.

"They say Lord Mink prefers the company of adult males, hence the Furniture as is," the red haired cyborg covered his lips with a closed fist and a look of apprehension.

Two young adult human males--- one as Furniture and the other as a Pet. Both were teetering past the average age for both roles, but knowing Lord Mink, he would not dispose of them. And a rumor that widely circulated in Eos was that the serving Furniture did not undergo standard procedures.

"And for that, he's been strongly recommended to seek out a proper Pet. Yet that Furniture still remains?" the red haired cyborg continued.

With their expectations of Lord Mink, the two walked away retaining concerned stares at Tyler and Rye.

Early morning, in the Arboretum with Icarus, Katze threw a quick glance at Icarus' left hand.

No master ring.

Looking back to make eye contact with Icarus and intermittently, Katze checked Icarus' right hand.

No master ring either.

Katze's hand rose to cover his mouth regarding where could the corresponding ring to Rye's be, though he shrouded the gesture behind putting the cigarette to his mouth.

"Pleasant morning today?" Icarus said as a passing gesture lightly touched a vine on the garden wall.

Katze looked back at Icarus. The cordial expression, subtle like a light breeze, was an unusual luxury but there still was the face that made Katze's scar burn. *That can't be the case.*

Rye's ring was at best explainable as a standard A-type ring. But even if it was a standard pet ring, there wasn't much explanation for it being so removable.

Katze moved his hand from his mouth, but the tip of the cigarette never glowed from an inhale. "About your usual operative, he's been detained by the police a while back."

"That's not a problem anymore. The public records are clear of him and his biometrics. I'll assign something when the time comes."

"Very well."

The last stop of Rye's tour of Eos was the Botanical Gardens. By now the star already rose and the tower would be populated, but like Midas' Arboreteum, a garden wasn't a popular place.

"That should cover the areas you can access in Eos. You should have full access to the Pet salon after your first social event," Tyler's voice started to hint unease. "I think we should head back now."

"I'll stick around here for a bit," Rye held his data slate out.

"Are you sure?"

"Yeah, I can figure my way back. Not far at all, and can't miss the top of the tower."

Tyler tilted his head, peeked at the screen, and saw a file for a book was opened.

Rye turned to Tyler, who seemed shocked. "What?"

"Nothing. Please, enjoy yourself, but do not cross the barriers marked red or scale any shrub, tree, or decoration," Tyler bowed before leaving.

"Sure. Whatever," Rye remained focused on the data slate and walked on.

The first flower Rye came across was an old species which no longer had a native ecosystem in the current era and would've otherwise remained long extinct if its genetic sequence had not been archived on computing systems. The flowers were crimson and were like a gathering of petals curled up towards the sky with the bottommost layer spawling in unfocused directions.

Breaking his focus from the data slate was a call from an unrecognized voice, "Hey you."

Rye turned around and saw an unusually androgynous boy, but the height meant the age difference wasn't large. Going by the showy clothing style, this must be another Pet.

"You stole my comb didn't you?" the Pet childishly puffed cheeks in anger.

"Your what?"

"My comb. I can't find it. You're the only one in here anyways."

"Haven't seen it."

"I just want it back!"

"Fuck, go bother that guy about it," Rye pointed at a security guard in the distance standing in a stiff pose.

The Pet walked away like some kind of idiot, though Rye didn't care if there was a lack of awareness on the shallow suspicion.

From a distance, Rye saw the Pet approach the guard, which the guard did not respond or acknowledge its presence. Being ignored, the Pet eventually threw a tantrum that the guard also ignored until the few childish bashes to the chest.

Rye snickered at the scene from the distance until the joke went too far.

A lot like a statue suddenly animating itself, the security guard moved to apply a shock with a charged fist weapon on the rowdy Pet. Staggering and spasming just like any other living being--- what perturbed Rye was that what would've left him on the ground and unable to do anything had a significantly attenuated effect on a real Pet.

The Pet maintained balance throughout, and afterwards, only walked away. The only other reaction was visible whimpering and a slight slouch. Staring half in disbelief at the sight, Rye continued with the data slate.

Back to minding his own business, he went on the walkways surrounded by foliage. Green filled the vicinity like a curling wave of the ocean above head.

Broad daylight in the gardens faintly reminded him of Guardian. Around the facility were plains of common and hardy plants carrying over from Ceres' early terraforming efforts, though in the modern era, it no longer had the luxury to invest in raising more living land. But in Eos, the flora weren't the hardy kind to withstand childish rough housing and playground scuffles. Like in Midas, it was more of a menagerie though Eos' collection was more vast and arranged in with respect to an impeccable aesthetic.

"There! He stole it," the same voice of a Pet called abruptly.

"I've never seen your fucking comb," Rye retorted before turning. And turning again, Rye saw the Pet came back accompanied by a Blondie android.

A towering height--- like Icarus', but a darker blond like golden waves and curls of honey, yet daylight fell and lit a halo of platinum blond. Unlike the skies in Icarus' eyes, this one had pale grey-blue eyes like steel.

That's the fourth of these androids I've seen...

"Goodness. This one?" the Blondie said. Even though his gaze was sharp like a blade, his voice had no anger, no consternation, and spoke as if in recognition.

Rye flinched back.

"No need. I already know who to contact," the android waved in dismissal.

Icarus arrived shortly after to settle the issue.

"Perhaps you recall, I never concerned myself so strongly with the scandals of the past," the other Blondie said to Icarus.

"I believe you tend to keep an air of neutrality about you, Haynes."

Rye standing next to Icarus, of no guilt, had no care in the conversation. But across from him there was the Pet under Haynes' arm.

A smug smile and a throw of the chin. Body language alone, it was saying, "My master loves me and yours doesn't love you."

What a bitch. Just as a scoff escaped Rye, Icarus' arm snuck around him and pushed him close. The unexpected strength knocked Rye a bit, and he caught his balance on the side of Icarus' chest.

To that, the owner initiating such contact made Haynes' Pet grimace.

Icarus' eyes darted from the Pet and back to make proper eye contact with Haynes.

"Not so much that. Most of us are too busy to truly pay much mind to the squabbles of Pets. Not in bad faith, you have my concerns should such events occur again," Haynes continued.

"If you have any doubts on my capability to handle this incident, I keep track of surveillance feeds in Eos as well. I have evidence that your Pet was the instigator of this encounter."

"Then no need. It eases to know your association with Orphe seems to be better, Silbert as well."

Icarus gave a slight tilt of the head in nescience.

"Two of your staunchest critics, formerly as it seems now," Haynes elaborated.

"I see. Let no quarrel among Pets come between brothers?"

Haynes seemed to be startled by the usage of the word "brother". He paused, and ultimately gave half-hearted agreement.

After Haynes left, Icarus noticed Rye made light budes most likely in attempt to free himself.

Releasing Rye on a brief note, Icarus said, "That was everything short of involving the police. Stay within those bounds."

In turn, Icarus took his leave, leaving Rye as an incredulous bystander to the conversation.

Two nigh if not impossibly handsome androids, and Rye was pressed against one's chest and held under its arm. Not unabashed, he stayed silent.

Chapter End Notes

Chapter 3-5 are being finished. But something about them tells me they should be released all in the same timeframe as Chapter 6.

The next Part--- or next four chapters, at least--- is undergoing finalization. It's a pivotal part I don't want to regret any part of.

Flashback

Chapter Notes

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

Another day late afternoon, Rye waited in the lobby of Icarus' residence. Sitting on the plush couch of fine, unwrinkled synthetic fibers, he tapped his finger on the armrest.

"What's taking him?"

Tyler passed by. Always busied by tasks regardless of how menial, he held a stack of laundry.

"Sir, it's an hour before the event. Lord Icarus has to fulfill high standards of appearance."

Rye scoffed. "What more does the guy have to do."

Elsewhere Icarus stood in front of the mirror. The drawer counter had an excess of accessories for him to decorate himself with. No shortage of rings, though one customarily was enough.

He put one on then looked down on his hands wrapped in fine white gloves and banded by a precious alloy with a glistening sheen. It didn't seem right. Without much care he tossed the ring back in the jewelry box among the others. They looked nice, but none of these were things he bought and wore for himself.

"What would they say," Icarus thought, "If I attended with him?"

Then he recalled with a firmer mind on Iason's style. Individually, Iason was untroubled with making an appearance at important places within Tanagura. With a comb, Icarus brushed one side of his bangs back, having a few shorter locks fall forward. He looked in the mirror again.

The one detail on how he wore his hair was as though it changed his entire face. Icarus pat his hair back to what it was before.

"It's what everyone expects, is it?"

Icarus looked at the ticking clock and had no anticipation for the party.

When he stood as a child, in a crowd of adults, under the distant supervision of his older brothers, Icarus' interactions teetered closer to silent observation than engaged participation. There was an inherent difference, among many, beyond class and origins that alienated himself from both android and human.

No matter the pristine halls that defined Eos' interiors, there was something missing in Eos and Tanagura that hollowed its visitors and citizens no matter how lively or lifelike they were. What presence he made among social events and partygoers cast him less as an acquaintance or friend and more of a novelty--- the fourteenth born Blondie. If not many

even among the privileged had the chance to see one, then meeting one as a juvenile was a chance that didn't appear in many lifetimes.

Many saw him as a potential angel investor for business ventures. There was no doubts in Jupiter's creations, but as they saw, intelligence could only do so much to cover for inexperience. The shortsighted opportunism trademark to such pitches were no less obvious to him then as it were now; however, still there were limits for what a child was to know.

Tiring of unshared laughter and jokes that the adults hushed themselves from continuing in his presence, Icarus saw two other juveniles among the attendants that at least weren't aged three times his years. Naturally, he strayed off and approached them.

Walking past Orphe, the latter held a wine glass supervising the event and was in the middle of a conversation with Raoul.

"All the pets look dressed on such short notice," Orphe dismissed. "It's appalling really."

When Icarus approached two girls, their proximity faded the initial impression of relatability. Concave waist, widened hip, they appeared in their later teens, though standing shorter than him and still having closer ties to adolescence than adulthood.

With a hand stuck out for a handshake, he said, "Pleased to make your acquaintance."

Both of the girls looked puzzled, but one weakly gripped his hand in uncertainty and allowed her hand to be swayed in the handshake.

"Acquaintance?" she said, a little confused on the syllables.

Neither of them were familiar with the word.

"Indubitably," Icarus affirmed himself. "To meet and not yet be friends."

"Indubitably---" the other girl giggled in a way that would've teetered any other boy's confidence--- "Another big word!"

What's with them? Icarus dispelled his disbelief for now. "I prefer not to put on a contrived display of my vocabulary. Such words for ordinary use is rather superfluous."

Despite the casual meeting, even tiring of paper thin vocabularies and topics of discussion as well, one boy entertaining a few girls sent the wrong signals to the jealous reaction of an older boy who still stood shorter.

"Get away from her," he yapped.

Icarus knew well his place in the world and it wasn't to yield to any other. But who these adolescents were became apparent as the boy boasted of the jeweled collar around his neck as though it were a sign of status. Rolling his head to the side and a neck stuck out for emphasis, and a finger pointing to. A luxury good that could only be afforded by the other residents in Eos and no less precious as a gift, but nonetheless, the marker of subservience.

"I have one and you don't," the boy pettily bragged.

Icarus stood silently and didn't dignify any of the boy's actions.

"You got hearing problems?"

The boy resorted to shoving, but before the shove could land, it was stopped by an unseen hand. A security android decloaked and revealed itself. Despite the situation being more of misunderstanding than of malice, the guard apprehended the boy. Then the adults came.

Orphe sighed. "Children and Pets can make a terrible combination."

As it became obvious, to the Pets in Eos, it wasn't the collar that represented their binds to a higher power; ignorantly, instead it was youthful age while all their masters had been adults. No Pet's tenure lasted forever--- what future they sought for themselves past the age they were young and wanted, Icarus doubted.

Icarus glanced again at the clock.

"Only five minutes passed," he sighed.

Rye held two data slates together as data copied over. The older slate, after looking up the production serial, was a model that was older than he was.

"How bored does a guy have to be to have nothing but books on a data slate," Rye commented on the file systems. *It can't be a guy from Midas.*

Whoever the previous owner was defied the stereotype of the floozy funseeker with money and more to spend. A data slate told a lot about a person and their interests just by what was on there. The older slate was good as new and hardly personalized beyond electronic literature.

"Let's go," Icarus interrupted.

Rye jumped reflexively before he turned.

Icarus' current attire was "opposite" to his day-to-day wear. Ordinarily, dressed in white, simple elegance, he now wore black decorated by fancy embroidery. Splashes and curls accompanied the trims of the body suit, from the collar down the central zipper.

"The party." Icarus gestured to the door and didn't pause to start walking. "Come to the elevators with me."

Rye caught the timestamp on the corner of the slate just as he set them down and caught up. *What a real go-getter. We still have 30 minutes.*

In the gravity elevator, descending from the top of the tower, the sky grew distant as the lower floors floated up and out of sight.

"A party is it? Androids hold parties?" Rye pondered.

He thought back to the slums for a bit.

No matter how run down of a dump a bar was, groups of men celebrated their shared birthdate. Regardless of other differences, they had a distant bond over their batch and generation. The day carried both the simply joys of childhood and the bitter sting of eviction. High and low of emotion, they cheered, got drunk, publicly paired, passed out, and would wake the next morning either collapsed outside or missing belongings.

Rye looked at Icarus.

The classy android stood silently as though there was a world apart from Ceres' sloppy celebrations. Icarus held a blank expression with what is at most a slight frown.

Doesn't look like he's looking forward to fun. Rye shrugged. *Not much of a partygoer myself.*

Most of Rye's former blockmates assumed he died shortly after eviction.

Chapter End Notes

2020/01/22 - Revised chapter for smoother transition from chapter to chapter. Added roughly +500 words.

Discrepancy

Chapter Notes

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

In a room like a large dining hall, not unlike the distinctions between man and animal, the elites held themselves in a different section from that of the Pets. The latter guided by labels and leads, but the former clustered by the inclination of the crowds. No formal rules for segregation, but the lack of physical barriers did little to dilute the social order between the ranks of Tanagura.

No one from outside of Eos for tonight, but Icarus stood solitary before he was approached by Haynes and Hubert.

"Icarus, how nice of you to finally attend these events," Haynes greeted. "You needn't be a stranger. We'd all thought you'd be more interested since you've been of age."

Icarus remained reticent.

"Icarus, I understand your situation, but you realize there is no shame in preferring a male regardless of its constitution?" Hubert said.

"What's the story with this one? Has the previous mongrel been found and frozen?" Haynes asked.

"Not quite the case," Icarus said before moving on elsewhere.

He walked over to Silbert sitting alone on a couch.

"Oh my, another slum mongrel in Eos, Icarus," Silbert facetiously despaired before dropping the tone. "At least it appears to be housebroken this time."

"Speaking of which, Silbert, do you recognize him?" Icarus gauged.

"Yes. It bears more than a strong semblance to the previous one, Riki. Were you hoping for yet another replay?"

"How about a time before that?"

"Hmm?"

"Surely, you recall."

"I'm not in the habit of making acquaintances with mongrels, Icarus. I wouldn't know any other."

Strange. It shouldn't be an issue for Silbert to recall events from that time period.

"None of the alleles in the gene pool of Guardian offered the phenotype," Raoul joined. "I believed it to be a mutation, but what luck in that it appears once again."

"I surmise you aren't submitting it for breeding, Icarus," Silbert said expectantly.

"Correct."

"Figures. You must be aspiring to be the exclusive owner of a rare phenotype."

Orphe. Orphe should be able to say something on this.

Rye sat at a separate section with the other Pets. He saw one other Pet before, and didn't expect one sample to indicate much of the rest. The designed beauty they were often described to have was actually underwhelming.

All the Pets' faces with concession were aesthetic, but converged to a single standard. Amongst some, that ideal was so blindly pursued in their breeding or manufacturing to the point of caricature. The similarities between each other bordered familial semblance if not for the outrageously wide range of skin, hair, and eye colors.

Rye wasn't actually any worse looking by comparison, but his non-conforming and natural appearance stood him out like a raven among tropical songbirds. The most modestly dressed out of all of them and with natural, unsuppressed masculinity, he sat amongst effeminate if not female humanoids.

Sitting at curved couches arranged to a tight circle, only twelve others besides Rye sat at it. Across from him, he noticed the Pet that had started shit with him the other day in the gardens. It shot a glare at him as it whispered into the ear of another Pet.

Rye cast his own look of annoyance back.

"I really don't see what he sees in you," a Pet in one of the opposite couches gave a smug giggle barely covered by her hand--- a young girl with lavender hair in a bob and cerulean eyes that shone like starlight on the seas. She sat with a group of others like the queen bee of the clique.

"Sure. You don't see. I can live with that," Rye completely unaffected.

"Don't think you can talk down to me like that because you're a Blondie's Pet. All of us here are and mine's Head of Syndicate," she hissed.

"Yeah! Don't talk to Liliana like that," another sitting next to her rebuffed.

Psh. Rye didn't bother to waste any more words.

A Pet from another circle approached Rye. A tone soaked in envy, it said, "How did *you* get to be a Blondie's Pet?"

"What's it to you?"

"I'm pureblooded and you aren't even listed with a breed," it exclaimed pointing to one of the displays hung on the wall near the couches.

Rye turned and saw a thirteen row chart filled with simple icons bordering on nonsense. He inferred the black rectangle--- a reference to his hair and clothing color--- with empty columns cells was representing him.

"So?" Rye's disinterested answer.

He didn't bother to face the Pet in conversation until now. Behind the Pet was a black haired android with hand on hip and a stern expression.

"Luka!" The android scolded and yanked the Pet's collar. "Excuse us," he said to Rye as he took his leave and Luka away.

Shortly after Rye turned back to mind his own business, a posse of Pets walked over.

"Hey, you sure you're at the right place?"

"Cris, this can't be a Blondie's Pet. I bet Lara was just lying," another indiscretely whispered and giggled.

"Not all that hot, are you?" Cris, androgyne male and nearly naked if not for straps, sneered and pointed at Rye's vest--- which covered the torso from the chest down--- and long pants.

Screw it, I don't need this noise. Rye walked off to isolate himself from this crowd.

"Don't you ignore us!" a female voice called from behind.

Rye didn't bother turning back. "Fuck off."

Leaving the conversation as is, between his shoulderblades he felt what amounted to a soft thud. It was a punch that barely distinguished itself from a pummel delivered by a masseuse.

Rye turned with annoyance unintentionally marking the unspoken formality of a fight, though he thought the matter was too petty. Seeing the one who threw the punch at him, voice collided with expectations. A male body that fought in futility against maturation and the passage of time, but if it wasn't for the broad flat chest, Rye would've assumed this individual with a slim body and a soft face was a girl.

"What a blanched look upon your face, Raoul," Silbert sneered. "Had a slum mongrel won so badly over your recommendation?"

Raoul, ignoring Silbert's remark, saw elsewhere in the party Icarus had approached Orphe, on a curved couch, in the company of Gideon and Aisha.

"Icarus," Orphe nonchalantly welcomed. "What an expected surprise. You've nearly acquired the same exact mongrel as the last time."

"Is the last time the only time you recall?"

"Pardon?"

"A time before Ceres was founded, maybe?"

"I haven't the faintest idea."

Orphe too? Why don't either of them remember?

Icarus' eyes incidentally wandered and met with Aisha's, wordlessly spectating their conversation. Blue eyes, but hostile like an abyss--- like light of a shredded star orbiting an event horizon, Aisha gave a directed stare.

"Your transgression," as if he stated with no charity for warnings--- the piercingly cold gaze.

"I suppose you can't blame Icarus too much." Gideon shrugged. "The Pet market hasn't the variety it used to."

Orphe with a tinge of disappointment in his voice, "Pity it had to be a slum mongrel to fill the order. If the last one was submitted for breeding, then a more respectable pedigree with the same phenotype could be offered."

"Even so," Gideon lightly chuckled. "I don't think the trending body types would be satisfactory for him."

Both Orphe and Gideon noticed Icarus had been divested from the conversation.

Orphe sighed. "Icarus, don't tell me you intend to be coy about this at a public event. Your Pet is completely juxtaposed amongst the others."

Coy? Icarus frowned.

The hard clanks of glass dropping shook the room, and many eyes were drawn to a sudden stumble of limbs.

On the ground was the Pet that provoked a fight with Rye, though Rye didn't actually do much. Yanking his aggressor off balance after catching a punch, an overall low effort measure of self-defense, was enough. It idly laid on the ground with empty wine glasses rolling about.

Rye paid no other mind, and walked over to an empty couch.

"Quaint. Even if we omitted its heritage, it still causes commotion," Silbert commented.

"Hardly a brawl," Gideon sat back into the couch.

"I'm content to have the party end on an 'uneventful' note," Raoul said, to Gideon.

Icarus left and walked over to Rye.

Rye sensed an approach from a figure of authority and assumed the nature of the visit.
"Whatever. He's barely hurt."

He turned and saw it was Icarus coming to sit beside him.

Icarus without a word swung an arm around Rye and slid him close.

"What are you---" Rye objected.

Taciturn, Icarus' gloved hand combed Rye's hair and drifted downwards. Silk touched the neck, collarbone, and chest. He was treating Rye not different at all from a pet.

Rye glanced around to see if this was a scene being made, and it was. From the Pet table, all the heads in the circle of unmoving peers were turned at him in envy. Some Pets in Eos were used for voyeuristic purposes only, and they stared on in silent outrage over the special attention Rye was receiving from his owner.

Realizing what Icarus was doing, Rye smirked at the Pets' expense. He further leaned on to fan the flames of their anger.

"Such a good boy." Icarus whispered. The zipper on Rye's vest undone, Icarus stroked the toned abdomen on Rye that every other Pet lacked. Fingers lightly nudged the valley between each pack.

Chapter End Notes

Chapter 5 and 6 are being edited. There is a Chapter 7 which hopefully concludes the first "third" of Part 3.

Party Drinks

Chapter Notes

Because of how Chapter 7 turned out. I did a slight edit to Chapter 4. The addition was to the 4th scene (chunk of text after the divider).

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Party Drinks

A servitor android passed by to deliver drinks.

"About time! I was starting to wonder what kind of party had no food or drinks," Rye remarked.

Icarus only turned to observe Rye helping himself to a glass.

Once Rye took a sip, his vision blurred, and his head bobbed and swayed. *What the fuck? Just one sip?!*

The next thing he felt was as if his blood vessels carried oil and were lit ablaze. To the contrary, his limbs shuddered and flashed with chills. Not caring anymore about balance, and just wanting to lie down, Rye fell to the floor.

"What? What's happened to him?" Icarus said.

Gideon walked over.

"That is nothing I haven't seen before, Icarus," he lectured.

"Then explain."

"Is our Chief of Information unaware of what's in the drinks?" Gideon's brow rose.

"I have more important matters to investigate than the contents of party drinks."

Gideon handed Icarus a glass with a smile on his face. "Perhaps you could solve this mystery on the spot, if party drinks are so trivial."

Icarus gave a glance to the Pet section. The same drinks, but half-empty--- the other Pets stopped paying any attention to Rye and simply conversed among each other.

"Gideon," Aisha said. "You'd have to be awfully bored to suggest such a thing."

"Startling at first, but harmless fun, is it not?"

Orphe joined, "Fear not, Icarus. There is no poison."

Harmless fun, Icarus skeptically thought.

Dismissing themselves early from the party, Icarus supported Rye home to the guestroom. He set Rye on the guest bed unsure of whether or not to call medical, but now Rye's feverish agony appeared to have subsided to a waned consciousness.

In one hand, Icarus held one of the wine glasses distributed by servitor androids, given to him by Gideon, and gave it a contemplative glance. No disclosure on what it contained. But there was no way a body model on the cutting edge of technology would suffer the same consequences as flesh and blood. Icarus took a sip.

This must be ordinary wine.

And as far as he could tell, virtually nothing happened.

Just as Icarus set down the glass on the nightstand, he heard a scuffle of fabric from Rye. Rye's hand was approaching his crotch, which Icarus intercepted.

"Were you really?" Icarus dryly said.

Another hand made an attempt and again it was intercepted.

"Fuck. Let go."

Icarus sighed.

"Look. you can volunteer yourself for this or leave me alone," Rye struggled to free his hands.

Being told this at his own residence, by his own personal property--- however indignance slid past Icarus. Up close, with his own eyes, and beneath him-- an adult male body with every cue of fitness. For a reason Icarus didn't entirely understand, something was fascinating about Rye's body and he attempted to attribute reason.

Because it was strength that went under duress to be trained despite of its obsolescence and inferiority.

No?

Because it was a human body thus beholden to no other party than itself.

No?

Icarus just needed one hand to pin down both of Rye's. With his free hand, he had been shrouding his mouth at the sight of Rye's body. With a concession to self-control, he had the idea to just feel the musculature of Rye's torso and nothing more.

Starting at the abdomen, Icarus' hand slid upward. He didn't pay much mind to Rye's squirming until his hand was chest level and brushed against a nipple. That alone was enough to cause Rye to gasp and tangle his legs around Icarus'.

Icarus shifted his weight to his other arm and made the light attempt to first free his hand from Rye, but fingers of the pinned hands wove with his. Very shortly after Icarus was tackled.

"Fucking tease," Rye panted and sat on top of Icarus.

He grabbed the collar of Icarus' raiments and yanked repeatedly. Pulling on the cloth to the extent it'd allow, Rye started to feel the onset of fatigue and strain on his fingers and forearms. The intricate design and embroidery, somehow, had a dizzying effect as though he looked at both a mirage and an optical illusion. Not a spiral, but he had a descent to confusion and muddy thoughts.

Icarus looked puzzled at Rye's repetitive attempts.

Nano-reinforced fibers--- light, malleable, and comfortable like ordinary fabric, but tear resistant, and durable like a plate of steel. No human--- raging mongrel or otherwise--- was going to manage to force off such clothes.

An unarmed human virtually posing no threat, Icarus got up and pushed Rye back down.

"What do you want?" Icarus interrogated.

"Take off your clothes," Rye's hands clutched Icarus' shoulders.

Everything was getting worse for Rye by the second. Not hit so hard to have a suppressed consciousness, but the real effects ticked in hard. Heating up, almost to the point of wanting to cool down, but driven by a strong desire to make further contact with another warm body. Biting his lip; just having Icarus looming over and pinning him down shallowed his breath to gasps with faint moans croaking between.

The Blondie's face was getting close, and Rye could feel the android slowly breathing, with a lock or two of soft hair landing upon his chest and drifting down.

Icarus stopped with a hug around Rye's legs to a brief idle. His cheek squished against Rye's abdomen.

Authentic skin... this is still just touching him...

He turned his face towards and lightly planted his lips on a pack, then started compulsively issuing light bites, reddening the skin between teeth and tongue.

The taller and heavier android sank Rye deeper into the bed, wedging him between a hard body and the bed that further resisted more downward force. A body overly receptive to sensations, Rye arched back and exposed his neck.

"Stop. Playing. Around," Rye raised his hip against Icarus.

"You wanted me to remove my clothes?" Icarus stopped and pushed himself up. A little peeved, he asserted, "Why should I fulfill such a request from an obstinate mongrel such as yourself."

Looking down, Icarus saw that his clothes were still stubbornly tugged on by Rye. Icarus then put his hands on Rye's vest.

Rye's vest was tossed aside.

He must be getting uncomfortably warm anyways.

Despite the little insulation the vest provided, cool air on newly exposed skin was enough to make Rye gasp. Removing the vest didn't reveal much more, but the sight of a completely bare torso had a strange allure. Rye's arms above his head, Icarus saw the serratus anterior, previously hidden by a vest, coating Rye's ribcage.

There was a certain style that long black pants had. With innate curiosity, Icarus internally debated whether bared legs would look better. Icarus' fingers curled over the rim of Rye's pants.

Rye's pants were tossed aside.

Self-admittedly, Icarus thought there was a nice contrast between Rye's skin and the dark colors from the pants, but the compromise revealed detail of the well-trained thighs that struck a balance between speed and endurance. The remaining undergarment, however, covering what little left to hide, appeared uncharacteristically sultry and indecent to the overall picture...

Rye was now completely unclothed.

"Better," Icarus whispered to himself. He stared down and held hand to chin as though he gazed upon artwork and natural innocence.

Icarus seemed to have gone somewhere as far as Rye knew. Thoroughly brow beat into passivity by the drink, Rye laid on the bed with his arm crossed over his face.

"Never," Rye nudged his arm to brush the sweat off his brow, "Drinking that shit again."

There was the chill of sweat and cool air. Rye laid on his side and his shoulder sank into the bed. He nudged against the bed for warmth and expected everything would go back to normal the next morning. Rye then felt a large warm body cover him entirely. Underneath the soft surface of synthetic skin was the hard robotic imitations of muscle and bone.

Icarus bound Rye, arms including, in a hug. Nuzzling Rye's neck, Icarus felt the gentle bump of each pulse. Air filled Rye's lungs, expanded his chest to press further against Icarus', withdrew, and repeated. There was a busy rhythm of life. Icarus pressed his cheek against Rye's and held tighter. Self-assured that Rye was in no position to pounce again, Icarus didn't mind Rye's arms budging to be freed nor Rye's wandering hand.

Rye's hand then approached Icarus' crotch.

Chapter End Notes

2019/12/02: Major revision. I still have the file for the original version, if someone, for whatever reason prefers that.

As an experiment, I gave an excerpt of a draft to a neural network (a real life one, not the one in Ai no Kusabi), and I got AI generated yaoi. (lol)
<https://gnusocial.no/notice/5341008>

Ghost

Chapter Notes

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

Icarus woke the next morning. Next to him was Rye, sprawled on the bed with every cue of complete exhaustion. One of Icarus arms banded around Rye's waist, and his hand rested on Rye. His other hand was being held. Rye's remaining free hand was tangled in Icarus' hair.

"Good morning," Tyler walked in, "my lord.

"Shall I cool the wine?"

Icarus rose. His native sense said his head was light and could be blown in the wind, but his ancillary nervous systems strongly disagreed and reported he weighted the same as usual.

"No, pour it out," he said, "and have two glasses of water prepared."

Tyler gave a bow and left with the wine glass.

Icarus laid back down with his face besides Rye's and closed his eyes. He issued a command to his ancillary nervous system to start the day semi-autonomously.

Rye's eyes creaked open: half-lidded, and bobbing closed and open.

Icarus, back turned for a bare minimum of privacy, had gotten up, and clothed his legs. Android attire seemed simple at a glance. However, Icarus' arms moved as though his hards wove around cloth and heavily implied that the unseen inner layer was more intricate than the outer. Icarus then left the room.

"There's no way an ordinary guy could drink that shit and get up like that," Rye thought to himself.

He laid on the bed as though his head was struck by a mallet.

Shortly after, Tyler returned.

"Sir, I have orders to assist in whatever ways necessary to start your day."

"Great," Rye said unenthused, "But I don't think this is an ordinary hangover."

He turned to Tyler and saw a single tall glass of water. *Where the hell is the other glass?*

In the living room, Icarus sat on a couch. With his thoughts to himself, the ancillary nervous system making a rare mental presence tapped the site of a healed greivous wound.

A bad memory.

An uneventful sterile white room was painted like a canvas by sensory hallucinations. A new visible spectrum of light was granted by ocular enhancements. The initializing systems omitted color data at first, then gradually introduced each wavelength until the full palette was represented. But a mind unacclimated to artificial nerves saw blotches of a distorted world.

Dead static blanketed and stung every corner of his body like he was a ghost drifting through a storm cloud in the sky. Cold metal wires punctured flesh, coursed along side vein and bone, then hung him in air like a puppet.

"I monitor your brain activity," Raoul stepped into view bordered by chromatic aberrations. His expertise was not born from altruism and his voice remained impassive. "I'm certain this would help your current predicament."

He took a mouth mirror from his inner coat pocket and pointed to Icarus. It revealed a reflection that grounded an abstract conscious experience and dispelled the illusion of disembodiment.

Icarus saw he was on a medical bed and modestly covered by a white sheet. His face, body, and every key detail remained the same including the parts he assumed Jupiter wouldn't consider necessary anymore. There was a familiar look, but also a feel of an entirely foreign body.

"I know you're paralyzed," Raoul continued, "Your symptoms end when your brain acclimates to your new nervous system."

What little compassion Raoul had started to dry as his word closer resembled priorities of an unsympathetic taskmaster.

"You have one month for recovery. Afterwards, you have your inauguration and duties to fulfill."

Too little time.

"The world expects the end of your long absence."

...

Icarus looked down to his now empty cup.

I don't think this is helping.

He set the glass down and walked over to the dining area.

At the breakfast table, Rye slumped at his chair, leaned on the table, and buried his face in his arms.

"This bullshit is just as bad as the tranquilizers Midas," he groaned.

His eyes were open enough to see pockets of light flee, but the shuffling sizzles and pops from the stove never stopped. The one who stood in beside him was none other than Icarus.

Rye greeted with a rant, "Had fun at the damn party?"

"I don't look forward to attending again."

"That makes both of us."

Icarus gave a small nod with a subtle smile on his face.

Chapter End Notes

2019/12/13: Major revision and slight extension by ~100 words.

Storm

Chapter Notes

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

After the party ended, Raoul spent the rest of the night, looking through the window to the distance. A clear sky, high above in Eos, he saw the stretch of Midas and the border of light and darkness. As though the headway of life and society were blown back, and the barren frontiers encroached on the remains, there was the gap of Midas where there used to be a sector named Harvey.

Over twenty years ago, he saw through the same window and bore witness to an explosion in the distance that lit the night as bright as day and left nothing but charred remains. For undisclosed business, Iason was at Harvey--- while they were many saves medical science offered for the most severe of injuries, there was no return from complete obliteration.

Before the tragedy, his unheeded concerns...

Jupiter doesn't give second warnings. What if you incur Her wrath?

To which Iason was confident in his work and being well in the good graces of Jupiter.

Iason. Your role in Tanagura's ruling syndicate is indispensable. You can't be easily replaced. Without you, Tanagura's whole structure will crumble.

Listen. Don't even think about doing something as foolish as taking an Achilles' Heel.

To which Iason sternly glared with no intent to continue discussion beyond stating the limits that even Jupiter had to intervene in his private life.

I flatly refuse to be the one who tampers with your mind.

To which, fully aware of how the situation progressed, even a frown came to Iason's face.

And then time passed.

Arrived to Eos was a gynoid. A bare metal face and with no concession to a human guise, but a body model of no semblance to the standard--- an ornate metal carapace like cloth in the wind and embossed plates of armor. Light danced on her as she walked.

Every resident, elite or guard, knew Who the gynoid embodied and made way. No matter how far they previously stood, all in the tower kneeled with their heads bowed. Carried in her arms was a newborn with nearly white hair hinted of blond, shrouded in a white blanket. She made way from Eos lobby, to the elevators and ascended to the top.

At the Apex Level, the twelve Blondies kneeled expectantly in a semi-circle around the elevator, then rose in order they were approached to meet the reborn.

The first was Aisha, Lord of Tanagura.

The second was Orpheus, Overseer of Eos, within whose domain the child will reside.

The third was Silbert, Chief of Espionage, black to white of the role the child will hold in time.

And so forth.

Then penult was Gideon, Lord of Midas, within whose domain the death occurred.

And last was Raoul, Head of Syndicate, who dual held the title of Chief Biotechnology Specialist and Chief of Information, and in his capacity as the latter role, classified all details regarding Iason's death and denied further investigations.

Then before his eyes, there was the infant with a face in a form unseen in many lifetimes. Sparing only a brief encounter, Jupiter moved on to Iason's residence. As expected, the babe inherited Iason's surname, but the new name She had given left Raoul wondering.

Upon Harvey's destruction, the old equilibrium of his emotional state shattered like sight of eyes that have only seen darkness. As the light from the explosion waned, the consequence and finality of death weighed on his throat. Losing his friend of many lifetimes, and wishing in futility to revert just this moment--- the arrow of time moved forward, and his heart stung. Raoul pulled in his lips, and let go. Ultimately he shed a tear like a drop of rain upon the desert.

Yet he also bore witness to bands of electricity convulse and arch around the buildings as though the city of Tanagura itself was pained by whips of crooked light. But knowing the silent titan, a course of action had also been calculated.

The questions still lingered in Raoul's mind over the years.

What are You planning?

Have You changed?

And now.

Does the first warning from twenty years past still stand?

Chapter End Notes

On my outline, I have segments divided up as Part 3a, Part 3b, Part 3c. I'm still undecided whether to split it up as separate works. Between the update for 3b and 3c, there might be a big interval since I want it to be finalized around the same time as the first chapters for Part 4.

Besides that, I'm typically wondering if the nuance behind the other Blondie's characterizations (Gideons' especially) were noticed.

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