

Preface

This is nothing more than a small insight to my incomplete NaNoWriMo 2019 attempt. Deeply influenced by the album "For a Sick Boy" by Yuyoyuppe as well as Dies Irae and urban fantasy light novels, particularly Kinoko Nasu and Kazuma Kamachi. I guess you can call this *chuunibyou*. I call it a flair for the dramatic. The entire story has been planned but has yet to come into fruition. I am not a fiction writer, I possess no skills, and this story seems like it was written by a delusional middle schooler. You decide, I think it's absolutely cool.

Ouverture: Memento Mori

The crimson clouds rose to the surface of the porcelain white abyss as my time on earth withered away. The world I have created was ripping at the seams, the weight of the stress being inflicted upon the sloppily built reality was finally returning to nothing. My life force was being drained from the wounds, the liquid proving my mortality squeezed out and soon nothing would remain. Closing my eyes, presumably for the last time, I embraced the unexpected warmth of eternal darkness and felt everything return to the void of death. I never felt regret before, but still was aware I lived a pitiful existence. That is why I chose to end it here out of my own volition, because that was the only power I had.

The artificial ocean the color of crimson washed over my still-clothed body, weak and frail as it were in life. Hair plastered over my face sloppily, I began to lose the sensation that proved I was still here. Finally, I thought to myself. The surface waves began to calm as did my heart, never wavering even in death. A part of me wished I could have fought onward but there was nothing left for me to pursue, I never had anything to begin with and never found anything while I was here. A meaningless existence never seeking meaning, that was how I chose to end my time spent here.

The lights were never on to begin with, and I never saw a light before me as my last strands of life slipped between my numbing fingers. There was nothing left for me afterwards and that filled me with a sense of comfort knowing that I never had to be me again. In my last moments, I heard the faint whispers of a violin caressing my soul. Perhaps it was a neighbor playing a tune that I will never hear the end of. It sounded almost like an angel was laughing at me.

Then I died.

† Be my sacrifice †

<Inside the Festung der Trauer>

All the world was a dream I couldn't shake, in a midnight reverie of which I'll never wake. I stared, distant and alone in a world that felt unlike anything I had ever seen. Bright green lights shone from every angle and I felt a cold stillness against my back. Walls were closing in on me from either side and the dark walls were lined with blue strips of lights, almost making it appear as if the walls themselves were floating in the starlight. Yes, I was alone once again. The temperature dropped.

I sat up easily and quickly noting my surroundings quickly realizing that my situation was completely out of my control. The otherworldly technology starkly contrasted the gothic architecture I was expecting yet it was undeniable that this was a fortress. I walked down the hallway as a faint humming emitted from the walls. There were countless server racks and storage devices lining every inch of this hallway but I quickly realized it was a server room. The temperature was low to accommodate for the hundreds of machines filling the room. Reaching the end of the walkway I turned and saw hundreds of other openings reaching as far as the eye could see. This was no hallway or room, this was a digital maze of madness and I was the rat trying to free himself. I knew I was being observed, so I slipped into the role of the man I always wanted to be. I decided on a whim to go to the left at the end of the row and see where it takes me.

I walked for what seemed like a kilometer when I approached what seemed like a new sight for my sore eyes. The endless sea of harsh green lights had been becoming stale and everything blended together, then I saw a glass door. "*Finally...*" I thought, though the door seemed too convenient, I approached ready to battle. There were bold red letters painted onto the dark tinted glass of the door, reading them filled me with uncertainty.

"..."

--ESQUEMA DE REALIDAD--

"Blueprint of Reality..." I whispered to myself.

This had to be important, perhaps a clue to where I was or what was going on. There was no keypad lock on the door and it resisted not when I lightly pushed it open. It swung open cleanly and made no noise. A drab yellow light emitted from the flooring and I noticed strips of LED lights lining the sides of the floor where the tiling met the walls. It was like a movie theater. But I lingered not on this little detail because the rest of the room took my breath away. A stack of computers lay in a pile in the furthest corner of the room in a tangle of wiring. A handful of monitors were set up sloppily on a folding table and stacks of reference textbooks covered the area around the table. The walls were lined with countless unframed reproduction renaissance paintings, some of which seemed to be hand painted by the owner of the room. There were no other lights in the room so the stack of electronics in the corner was slightly illuminated like the sun peeking behind the moon during an eclipse. The scene itself was not the most surprising however. Rather it was what was on the computer screen itself. "Maria..."

Two figures stood across from each other in an obsidian colored ballroom, dozens of rose bouquets arranged around the pillars contrasting the darkness. I rushed over to the monitor with the camera feed and squinted to make out all the details. But I wish I had not done so. My vision narrowed and my consciousness threatened to tear away from my mind when I saw her face. The face of the siren who stole everything from me. The last woman to pretend to love me, the destroyer of my sanity. My mind slipped into oblivion and I could no longer think logically. I didn't have the sense of self to glance at the other monitors and I wish I had, because there was more to the reality I was seeing. But in this moment I was falling headfirst into a pathological desire to extinguish this person before me. Revenge quickly enthralled me and tunnel vision was all I knew. Her face would be torn in my hands.

“AAAARRRRRRRGGGGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!” I screeched and my mind split.

Tearing past the limits, knowing not the destination, unknown desires never quenched, a life of terror, a life of sacrifice, the sacrificial lamb was I, woe is me, yet I wanted to feel, life slipping, blood on my lips, razor blade, angels falling in slow motion, heart racing, eyes flickering through rapidly changing spaces, destinations unknown, never faltering, gaze into the void, undetermined feelings, nightmares turn to reality, reality slipping, reality dictated, fate wound, scripts decided, life never lived, but moving away from the clutches, “Mom, why am I crying?”, broken promises, doors flying open, walls bursting into dust, nothing matters, everything matters....

Nothing could hold me back now.

In a manic frenzy I tore through thoughts racing through my unstable mind faster than my legs beneath me. Doors swung open at a dangerous pace barely hanging onto the hinges. Glass shattered as I stumbled through the building without any regard for my body anymore. “Ballroom, ballroom, I must... save... Maria... Maria... I must kill XXXX” I sputtered through ragged breaths. My sanity was nearly completely melted away and I no longer was able to bother clinging to it anymore. It flew away with the wind rushing through the air. So it goes.

I crashed into a large empty hallway with vaulted ceilings and a luxurious red carpet. Finally, I ran faster than before. No barriers. Eyes skimming doors. Signs read instantly. Ballroom. I think my boots were slipping off. Turn a corner. A large chandelier above but keep running. No windows. Sign with... “Sign!”

Time slowed down as I came to a sudden stop. My crazed hair slowly settled into a ragged mess atop my head and fell over my face sloppily. The sign read “Cubiculum de Indulgentia”, that could only mean one thing. Heavy black wooden doors sealed the entrance with a forbearing appearance. No matter though, as I hesitated not to throw them open and make my

grand entrance. What was contained within would where I would lay down all my cards, the place of my judgement.

The ceiling was higher than the lengthy hallways outside and nearly twenty meters high lined with countless chandeliers reflecting light at odd angles. Pillars stood irregularly around the room and were surrounded by elaborate rose bouquets, no other flowers it seemed. The dance floor and walls were completely black making the room feel infinitely cramped despite the spacious nature. And standing at the center of the room were the two women I knew all too well, and I was able to take everything in much more clearly now. Maria was chained to the wall and hung her head defeated while the other stood still but it seemed like I interrupted a conversation. My eyes unwillingly lingered over the other girl and I almost had to tear myself free from her clutches once more before my heart was destroyed once again.

“Yakira...” my voice was nearly inaudible but it drew her eyes off Maria and towards me.

She stood quite tall for a girl and had an athletic build but was terribly thin. She would often wear larger clothes to hide this but her current outfit only accentuated it. She wore a thin, black lace nightgown with a short skirt with red and black striped leggings underneath. She wore low heels and made her seem ever taller and her legs were more pronounced. Around her neck was a large choker. Finally, his eyes settled on the massive weapon she held over a shoulder that seemed to defy logic. It was a massive silver and black, three meter long cross that was almost comical in nature but gave off a dangerous aura.

“Is that you... Zakai?” her voice swallowed him up once again into a river of memories.

Rage swirled within my chest and my eyes narrowed. “Shouldn’t you remember me?”

Maria was now looking at the scene unfolding but the fear in her face almost looked like a warning though I did not heed the warning. Instead my mind was being assaulted from every side by complicated feelings from a distant life but felt like they happened moments ago. One could never forget something like that...

Yakira softened her expression almost seeming sincere. “Of course I remember you Zakai. We were lovers...”

“In what sense of the word” I spat.

“I know our past is complicated, is that why you’re here? To set things straight?”

“How could I not? I’m only here today because of you.”

She slowly started to walk towards me as if approaching a wild animal. “Can we-”

“Not” I cut her off. Going any further with this girl would be a mistake. I was only here to repair the faults that past me could never realize.

“You must be aware of what you did” I started.

“I... know... that’s why I-” she started.

“That is why I want to tell you what I couldn’t bring myself to back then. The eulogy of the damned, the broken and heartless. This is my requiem.”

She only stared with eyes wide enough to make her eyes pop out of their sockets. That was true fear and it felt good.

“There was a sick boy once, and he lived perpetually in solitude. Moving slowly through life often stumbling through it all and barely making it through each day. Tormented by peers and battling with his own mind. The depression would never loosen its vice grip and every passing day strangulated him slowly. I was dying. But one day he met a sick girl and between blossomed a twisted rose of passion. But beneath it all were thorns. The sick boy believed this to be his salvation, finally somebody to extend a hand to save him from suffering further. The human warmth he was deprived of for so very long. But it was all a farce. The sick boy was chewed up and spit out to the wayside because of the selfish desires of the girl, and he could not stand the thought of being used. His sickness was her happiness. So he ended it all.”

A tear welled in her eye.

“However the sick boy was given a second chance to reprimand his mistakes, live a life he was proud of. And in death, the boy found true love. What you gave me was nothing of the sort. You used me, I was an object, an experiment, a toy, but a human should not be reduced to that state!” I shouted, words bouncing off the walls and finally resting in her ears.

“You will be my sacrifice!” the words tore at my throat but I could no longer feel pain anymore.

“You killed me...” I silently muttered.

A complicated expression covered her face as she stood unmoving even as the confessions of a suicide victim tore through the person who cornered him. No words came from her and it almost seems like she could not speak. There was a long stretch of silence that was interrupted by faint crying. Maria had tears in her eyes and was holding her face in her arms.

“Don’t force yourself Zakai...” she cried.

“I’m not. I would need to try harder to hold myself back... but not today...”

Yakira's thin limbs swayed as her body contorted. Her previously calm expression shifted to a complicated face of someone denying truth, and now it was completely unintelligible. Tears streamed down her cheeks yet her face was expressionless and no noise came from her throat. But in this state she looked incredibly vulnerable, like a rabbit in a hunting trap and I was the one ready to strike first. This is when I realized; "Every battle is won or lost before it's ever fought." Chaos soon erupted.

I shut my eyes gently, yet I did not see darkness. I only saw red. Isolating the tensed muscles in my forearms, I forced energy there. My heart was steadily beating as I willed it to quicken and broke free of its monotonous rhythm. The floodgates of my body were lowered and blood gushed forward into my arms. The energy welling within my body soon erupted into a beautiful geyser of red. "*Halt O time, for thou art most beautiful...*"

Reality folded onto itself and time contorted into a disgusting sludge that held reality in place. The power within me strengthened with every passing instant until I could almost not contain everything. I was coating the oblivion with my own blood, and it was time to taint it with the blood of my enemy.

"Time to break you completely" I growled.

Yakira was standing hunched over with a shadow cast over her face so I could not see her expression anymore, but her teardrops were frozen in time. The rest of her body, however, continued to move normally. I smiled, I was hoping for a massacre but at least a fair battle will prove to be more satisfying.

"Life is fleeting Zakai..." she breathed. "... you lived wrong and I almost felt pity for you. But I was selfish too."

"Don't say another word." I scoffed.

Yakira unfolded herself and an expanse of immense energy surrounded her body and cross. The stage was now set, let us dance.



Yakira's cross spun cleanly in the twinkling light resulting in countless lights to shine endlessly in the space. It was almost beautiful. She twisted her body and turned to face me with the face of a judge about to close a case with confidence. Yes, she was... my;

sentencer of death

The concentrated energy building in my legs released and I launched forward with inhuman speed, nearly shattering every bone in my legs instantly. Blood twirled behind me and contorted into countless blades. Raising my arms as the distance closed the blades swirled together and focused on the target. But there was a sudden flash of silver and red liquid splattered onto my face. The taste was familiar. I clicked my tongue. Yakira had spun her cross so quickly it formed an impenetrable shield before and halted the attack. Her head hung down on her neck yet her movements were executed with impeccable precision. I dug my heels into the ground and spun around to stop my flight. *"The girl might prove to be a stronger opponent than I expected, but it doesn't matter."* I readied my consecutive attack with no hesitation before I would lose the offensive position. Yakira only slowed her blade from spinning. Rivers of blood flowed out of my arms and formed two medium-length blades that I held in my hands.

An unexpected swing on the cross fell in the spot where I stood moments ago but I was now sliding sideways on the left side of Yakira. I was close enough to smell her, and the scent only reminded me of pain. Two bodies intertwined on a bed of infatuation... How terrible of a mistake. I swung my blades towards her and managed to feel one strike.

“Urgh!” she cried, jumping back but stumbling upon landing.

Yakira was clutching her shoulder where my blade had sliced her flesh open, but I could now see her face. She was in pain and bit her lip, tears still swelling in her eyes. Blood trickled down her arm and dripped to the floor.

A bathroom floor...

A deep breath. I gathered my bearings and lunged forward with an intent to kill. I only focused on her chest and needed to tear it open. Her cross swung to cover her body but I foresaw this.

“The same trick again?” I chuckled.

Within that instant I was surpassing time beyond the comprehension of the universe itself. Time itself could never bend and freeze completely, it only slowed. Ten hours in this pocket dimension was one second in reality so it seemed as if time had stopped. Yet the frozen tears still fell. Yes, this wasn't the extent of my strength. Time itself would bend to me will if nobody else, so I forced it to crumble even further solely for me. Everything within the pocket dimension froze despite my acceleration seeming to increase. I gritted my teeth and felt blood seep through my teeth. I was vomiting blood now, humans should not move this fast. This is transcending the very limits God had placed on living things but it was no longer my limit. The only limits were those I place on myself!

“-----”

I spat blood and slid under Yakira's legs cleanly avoiding the silent cross blade. During my toes into the floor I came to a sudden stop and jumped upwards to lay my final strike. Her back was defenseless but that was too easy. I grabbed her from behind and pulled her into my arms, cradling her. I felt nothing anymore, there never was love for her. Her vacant eyes stared in horror but never moved. The tears in her eyes were genuine. But not that she was inches away from my I could finally see her expression, I choked blood onto her and realized that expression, I had seen it before. *“These are the tears she shed whenever she played the violin.”* Eyes clenched tightly, I forced more blood out of my arms and dug into her chest. I remembered all the pain, the overpowering control she seemingly had over me, and the despair I was thrust into. She was not my savior back then, she was a demon sent to drag me to hell.

“The fastest way to a girl's heart is through her ribcage”

And time unwound in layers around the final scene once again fell into chaos.

Yakira's chest erupted into a sea of gore. The wound I inflicted in the halted time caught up with her all at once and blood drenched her top. I stood silently a few meters away from her now convulsing body, a thick pool of blood forming around her. Maria had since stopped crying as she was probably struggling to comprehend the events that just unfolded instantly for her. I began to turn away when I heard a pained gasp coming from within the pool of red.

"...Za...kai..."

"..." I didn't bother acknowledging her anymore.

"You shattered my dream..."

".. you have no idea." I finished the thought.

Yakira was now choking on her own blood in a pool of filth. Her pale features were painted in dark red, tears had stopped flowing now and she rested atop the massive cross. But I felt nothing anymore. I might have once been able to feel sympathy towards her but I could not force myself to retain my humanity anymore. The wounds inflicted upon me in life were enough to force me to submit and lose all humanity. Was I justified in going this far? What is justice? What is crime? I had enacted both simultaneously. I only wished I felt regret, but nothing of the sort was left in my heart anymore. I turned my back on Yakira for the last time and made my way towards Maria, arms hanging loosely by my sides and an incredibly weakness overtaking me. She looked at me with pity as if she was sorry for what I had to do.

"Are you satisfied?"

"I suppose..."

"You do not seem happy."

"I don't know if I'm capable of that right now."

"Will you ever be happy again?"

"Perhaps, but it's always misbegotten happiness holding my heart. Revenge is pointless, but it was all I could do."

"...Zakai-"

"..."

“Your heart-- it’s growing dark.” she spoke in barely above a whisper.

“Maybe you’re just recognizing what I have been all this time.” But I knew my lies were nothing but empty attempts to justify my insanity. “*I’m not capable of murder... right?*” Yet here I stood amidst a travesty resulting from my own two hands. There was blood on my hands now and I don’t even know if I am a person who should be trusted. Am I becoming a monster?

“You don’t have to shoulder all the time Zakai.” her words broke my midday reverie.

“I don’t want you to get dragged down with me too.” It pained me to try and comfort her now.

But she just looked at me like always, a smile unchanging that lit up my darkening world. The abyss was pulling my in yet this angel was my anchor to reality. “Do not try and be the tragic hero... We both will have blood on our hands before this is all over.”

“...!”

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She sat alone in the highest room overlooking the skyline of the city- **Abenddämmerung**. A massive window covered the entire east facing wall and allowed for an unobstructed view. A clear night like tonight with the lights off it could almost feel like there were barriers to this overlooking view. The woman sat reclined in a luxurious armchair with her high-heeled feet were crossed atop a matching ottoman. She wore an elaborately designed dress, countless frills and artificial roses decorated nearly every inch of the outfit. It exudes immeasurable elegance yet the deep black of every piece of fabric gave off an ominous air to it all. With a glove of thin veil she held an empty glass in one hand lazily. The expression on her face was enough to surmise everything she felt-- she was unbearably bored. Nights like this languishing away in the **Crimson Spire** away from the excitement of the madness below made her feel like it was not worth it.

“Perhaps it was a sin that I was born so strong...” she muttered, staring into her empty glass briefly.

She could see her own reflection in the glass window and she only saw someone undeniably unhappy with the situation she was in. Yet, she was able to smirk and shrug it all off because it was nearing her moment to be called upon the stage for a chance at proving her existence. The Festival of Madness was well underway and such it was the final obstacle for the Right Hand of God to overcome. No matter how powerful this new Post-Mortem was she would step over them. This unsaking confidence only fueled her ego further. Nothing could stop her now.

“This world will know ruin, the pain it has been deprived of for so long. Divine judgement has never been passed and now it is our duty to realign reality.” she recited, words well worn in her memories.

“I have been forced to resign myself for much too long... Holding back is not like me. That is why I am elated to know that I will no longer be asked to hold back. Say, my dear Post-Mortem. ‘*Do you understand true power?*’”

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I felt a shiver down my spine. We had exited the Fortress of Sorrow already and left the scene of gore behind us yet I knew it was not the memories of the massacre that crept into my psyche. No, it was something more significant than that. I felt a primal fear that I could not shake the feeling of Death’s icy fingers running down my back filled me with the most despair I had ever known. I was walking down a path of destruction. No matter how long I toiled away I only would stray further from myself and be forced to fight foes of insurmountable strength. Nay, that is the path I chose myself. But in this moment, I felt like running away. Something terrible was awaiting me...

~Interlude~

The words for these complicated feelings never failed to escape me.

Like the faint smoke of a candle blown out by a draft.

And much like the fading light of the room, my heart closes itself off and grows dark.

Pushing myself further into the void to protect those closest to me.

A flame that will never be extinguished...

A light that will not fade or lead me astray.

Worlds collide in slow motion of the crazed lover met under the starlight.

The stars that flicker before me now hold reason for existence.

The existential terror of losing you to the wind never ceases to slip from my mind.

Yet, no matter how long I fight I know one truth...

Yes. No matter how long I stare into those endless eyes, I cannot put into words... my---

My Fxxkn desire for you

Madness seeped into every crevice of reality as the day toiled onwards, counting down to the inevitable night that would signal the start of the second act. Doubt has introduced itself into the feeble hearts of the damned and their will begins to falter. The abyss stares back but can the blameless will himself to return to empty stare for all eternity?

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The lone tower pierced the darkness of the eternal night, and not a single star illuminated the stage tonight. The City of Abenddämmerung stood silently under the curtain of darkness, the abyssal stage welcomed none. The colors of red slid down the sides of the tower in beautiful curves. Large windows showcased the lives of the chosen divine beings of the world in all their exuberant luxury. Running through it all was a single elevator shaft that served as a spine to the serpentine building that rose from the ashes of the curse soil of the city. The city that knew no light. The most holy city in the world and bound by its own curses.

Zakai and Maria walked by each other's side, strides matching as they slowly worked down the main avenue of the city that led directly towards the main entrance. There was no moon or stars to smile upon them tonight. God has turned his back towards the crazed lovers, and they have returned the favor acting in defiance. There was no light left for them anymore but this required no assistance. The world needed naught but the reason for one's existence to be justified and everything would make sense. Zakai's angel, his lover, his raison d'être...

"*Maria--*" he breathed gently, words sliding out of his heart.

The darkness that encroached upon the couple was nearly as insignificant as the ground below them. Reality was no longer bound by the rules that they used to understand. Their understanding was law. The law was dictated by those living who were strong enough to manipulate their own feelings. Reality was simply a game created to crush the weak. And even in the face of an unknown terror with immeasurable strength, Zakai could feel the strength within him and laid all his cards down. This was his mission, he was the only person strong enough to defy fate. Fear was for the living or those weak enough to submit before even trying. The icy fingers of Death that toyed with his heart in its hands was simply a delusion. Someone, or something, wanted to force him to his knees... But tonight was not the time he planned to fall to the will of another mortal. That was what the world wanted but tonight fate would bow to him. That's because--

"We will not go gentle into that goodnight" words scraped past his gritted teeth as the welling temptations to destroy escaped his throat in a low growl.

A human he was no longer. No matter what there was no avoiding the darkening heart growing within his chest. But the purity of the angel holding his trembling hand was enough to justify it all.

“Are you scared Zakai.” Maria asked me, not shifting her eyes from the spire in front of us.

My hand continued to lightly tremble within hers. Yet-- “You are mistaken, Maria. For I have discarded all the fear within my heart. I am trembling because I do not know if I can stop myself from breaking reality tonight. And that possibility excites me.”

Somewhere along the way I had ceased to be human. Though perhaps it's better to consider that I had not been human for a long time. When did I stop being qualified as a human again? Those days tormented by peers, the lack of love, the shadows that haunted me, parents that discarded their blood, being rejected at every turn... And now God had rejected me. Had I ever truly been a human? Perhaps my humanity was simply a farce and I was playing into the hands of those around me the entire time. Clinging to the rules predetermined by the world that rejected me only proved my worth as a marionette. No longer would I dance in their palms like a clown. Nothing could suppress my rage tonight.

The Spire slowly rose out of the ground with every step we took towards it. The deep red of it all was almost comforting. My heart was no longer wavering. The gaudy lights that displayed a scene of indulgence before me almost made me vomit. All those people playing into each other's images of perfection was enough to ruin my evening. The absolute silence of it all only highlighted my steady heartbeat that I felt deep within my chest.

There was emptiness around the base of the spire. A circular road curved near the entrance but no vehicles were parked and there was no signs of life. Lights flickered within but the isolation around was unnatural. Low rose bushes lined a garden in the center of the circular turn around, and at the center lay a dying tree long forgotten by reality. It's branches withered away like the time that slipped through our fingers and showed it no mercy. It was truly unsightly but reminded me of the transience of it all. Above the entrance way was a sign with gold letters reading:

The Crimson Spire

“The stage has been set, shall we make our entrance?” I asked Maria, gently squeezing her hand.