
Episode 442 – Harry Potter and the inevitably abandoned fanfic

It was a nice apartment, well-lit, spacious and well furnished. A pair of nice, plush leather couches set the scene, arranged in a neat L-shape, with a small coffee table between them. What dominated the room, however, was the massive flat-screen against one wall, so big as to loom over all else around it. By comparison, the broad windows with views out over a strangely futuristic metropolis and the other doorways leading away to gods alone knew where seemed like afterthoughts.

“So it goes a lot further than I thought,” Rick commented as he and Rebecca entered the apartment.

“And here we go,” Rebecca simply sighed in reply as she shook her head.

“It’s not just that Justice Machine and Elementals crossed over,” Rick continued unabated, “but that they were unquestionably in the same fictional universe. Furthermore, Comico’s editors considered Mage and Grendel to also be in that universe.”

“Which is important because?”

“Well, both of those properties would have their own long-running and complicated publication histories,” he noted. “Which means that there’s the potential for this shared universe to be far more expansive than I had thought.”

“And you’re going to subject us to every one of your discoveries in this insane fractal rabbit hole, aren’t you?”

“Absolutely,” he confidently finished.

“I’m so excited,” Rebecca sighed.

“Is that for the fic or Rick’s discoveries?” Dan asked as he and Tsuneo entered.

“Either? Both?” She shrugged. “I’m worried that Rick’s insane fever dream is more involving than the fic we’re reading.”

“I’m not sure how to take that,” Tsuneo admitted.

“Me either, and that worries me.”

“Speaking of, that last part of the fic got me thinking,” Dan considered. “So we established that, in this fic, Panam Palmer is a witch, and that the Aldecaldos are a magic using nomad tribe.”

“Pretty much that,” Rick nodded. “They have at least two other magic users there in the form of Neville and his granddaughter. And while it wasn’t clear if Saul was also a wizard, I think it’s a fair assumption that he is one since he’s their leader and a lot of wizards are jerks about this sort of thing.”

“Extending that, I think we can extend that assumption to all the other ‘named’ Aldecaldos, like Mitch and Scorpion and so on,” Rebecca added.

“Entirely reasonable,” Tsuneo agreed.

“So then I got to wondering who else could possibly be a wizard,” Dan continued. “Since the fic is determined to push the Harry Potter elements over everything else.”

"After the revelation that the Biochip is actually a Horcrux, I see what you mean," Rebecca nodded. "It's really just a Harry Potter fic with some Cyberpunk 2077 set dressing."

"Going off all that, the most immediate and obvious answer is Misty," Tsuneo immediately replied. "Her Tarot cards and new age mysticism could easily all be real in the Harry Potter world."

"No arguments there," Rebecca nodded.

"Maybe that's why Mama Welles doesn't like her," Rick offered. "Because she's from a different school of magic to Jackie."

"You're saying Jackie was a wizard?" Tsuneo asked.

"Well, a pretty crap one, but yeah," Rick nodded.

"When you put it like that, it makes sense," Tsuneo admitted. "So who else?"

"Victor immediately comes to mind," Rebecca offered.

"How so?"

"Think about it," she explained, "he went from boxing to surgeon. That's not even a remotely logical career progression, especially given that the former would completely mess you up. But if he was actually a wizard, that'd make it a lot more viable."

"Well, I suppose when you put it like that," Tsuneo nodded. "Okay, I'll give you that one."

"I'll throw out another one and say that Kerry is a wizard," Dan offered.

"What makes you say that?" Rebecca asked.

"Look at how much younger he is than the rest of his band," Dan explained. "Plus how else do you think he manages to keep his hair that buoyant? If he was a Wizard, he'd have all of that covered."

"True that, but don't you think Johnny would have noticed?" Tsuneo asked.

"That would require Johnny to pay attention to somebody who wasn't himself."

"This is true," Tsuneo nodded. "Okay, so Kerry's on the list."

"I'll advance another one," Rebecca continued. "Regina."

"Hm," Tsuneo considered. "She does seem to know about every single Cyberpsycho incident as it's happening."

"And every time it turns out that her hunch is correct and it is indeed a Cyberpsycho," Rebecca replied.

"This is also true," he nodded. "Okay, that makes sense to me."

"I also think Claire is a Wizard," Rick offered.

"Any reason?" Dan asked.

"She has no cyberwear, which is pretty unusual in and of itself," he replied. "But what if the reason for that is because she doesn't want to reduce her Essence score and thus mess with her magic?"

"No, that makes perfect sense," Dan nodded. "So then what about the Peralezes? Wealthy, powerful, wielding incredible influence and all that?"

"Hm, good question," Tsuneo considered. "I'm going to say that they're not Wizards themselves. However, I'll also add that given their position and influence, they are aware of the existence of magic and the Wizarding world."

"I agree there," Rebecca relied, before adding "Maybe whoever it is that's messing with their memories is using magic to do so."

"Why not?" Rick shrugged. "Given the way that everything in this fic is coming down to being about magic, it makes sense."

"You know who else is a wizard?" Dan spoke up. "Flaming Crotch Guy."

"Okay, Dan, how do you explain that?" Rebecca asked.

"Simple. He tried to cast a charm in an inappropriate manner," Dan shot back. "And there were side effects"

"No, I can buy that," Rebecca nodded. "So what about River?"

"Who?" Rick replied.

There was a pause. "Good point, let's move on."

"Good morning everyone," the Voice butted into the conversation.

"And good morning to you too, SHODAN," Dan shot back.

"Careful with that," Rick commented, "you're just inviting more crossovers."

"What would be something appropriate to crudely shove SHODAN into anyway?"

"Hm," Rick considered. "Nineties, biopunk, techno-organics, insane experiments and secret societies... actually, that doesn't narrow it down."

"Cut it out before you two start actively helping the Voice find fics," Rebeca sighed

"...I mean, maybe Evangelion or something..."

Tsuneo shook his head. "Hopeless."

"So speaking of stupid crossovers," Rebecca glanced up at the ceiling, "I assume we're covering more of Death's Fixer today."

"We are, yes," the Voice confirmed. "We'll be reading the final part of it today."

"Final part, but not the conclusion, correct?" Tsuneo asked.

"Well, uh, no," the Voice admitted.

"Harry Potter and the inevitably abandoned Fanfic," Rebecca smirked. "I knew it."

"Maybe more of the fic is coming as a DLC pack," Rick offered.

"The end of the fic fell off the development roadmap," Dan shot back.

"But first the fic needs to undergo a year's worth of major patches to fix some of its many issues," Rick added.

"And yet, Harry continues to stand on top of his broom and T-Pose."

"Are you two done?" Tsuneo asked, clearly irritated.

"We're just getting warmed up," Dan replied.

"As always, I'd appreciate your reviews of the fic once we're done," the Voice managed to interject.

"Trust me, we're going to have a lot to say about this one," Tsuneo simply stated.

"So how far do you think we're going to get before the fic is abandoned?" Dan asked as he took his place on the couch.

"I'm hoping that V will do some sidequests and maybe put on some garish clothes to boost her stats," Rick responded

"That's assuming that V will actually do anything in this part," Rebecca countered as the big screen turned on, converting the world over to script format. "Something that I sincerely doubt."

> Chapter 7: Flying Motorcycles and Augureys

Rick: The weird aquatic Mobile Suit with the big head?

> V weaved between the nomads, snagging a beer, and a bit of food as she did.

Dan: My kind of diet

> The food disappeared quickly into her stomach,

Rick: Meanwhile, Johnny was demanding room service

> which left her nursing the beer as she looked for Harry.

Dan: Her beer looks lonely. She'd better get it a friend.

> She

> found him standing with his back to a fire, the kids of the camp surrounding him in a semi-circle as

> he told them a story.

Tsuneo: He'd just gotten up to the part where they fell in the trash compactor

> He used his entire body as he spun his tale, gesturing with his hands,

Rebecca: Accidentally cursing somebody's nose off.

> and crouching down to fully enrapture his audience.

Rick: [Kid] Is grandpa Harry drunk again?

> V smiled as she took a seat on the bench nearby to listen to Harry's tale. She wasn't sure why a

> golden egg would be important

Dan: V has been hired to kill people for less

> but out flying a dragon sounded rather impressive to her.

Rebecca: Briefly wondering what kind of loadout you use to hunt dragons.

> Granted V had no frame of reference for what wizards considered impressive.

Rebecca: Functioning toilets are apparently pretty high on that list

> But the way the kids seemed to hang off of every word probably meant that it was.

Dan: Harry seemed to take particular delight in telling them about Malfoy being a ferret.

> Either that or Harry was just that good a storyteller.

Rick: Wait till he gets up to Fantastic Beasts and then you'll change your mind

> "Alright you lot, that's all I got I'm afraid,"

Tsuneo: This is what life was like before extended cinematic universes

> Harry called out once he had finished. The kids groaned, some of them calling out for more stories.

Dan: [Kid] Tell us about the horse!

Rick: [Harry] You're too young.

> "Nope, your caretakers are probably looking for you, and I have to talk to Miss V here."

Rick: [Kid] Are you the next human sacrifice?

Rebecca: [V] Wait the what now?

> As one the kids turned their heads to look at V, causing her heart rate to spike just a little. Before

> they could attack,

Rebecca: They sensed fear

> Cynthia and a few other adults appeared, herding the kids back in the Menagerie's direction.

Dan: The lassos helped.

> They groaned and complained, but still followed leaving V and Harry alone.

Rick: Save for a dozen nomads sitting around the fire and drinking.

> Harry broke the silence first, "How're you feeling?"

Tsuneo: [V] Like there's an asshole in my head trying to kill me.

Rick: [Harry] I... actually have a frame of reference for that.

> "Fine, mostly," V grimaced and shook her head. "Head's still a bit... fuzzy but I suppose that's to be

> expected. Did you get Hellman?"

Rick: [Harry] Yep. He may be in a Russian internment camp.

> Harry considered her for a moment, an unreadable expression on his face. He nodded, "Yeah, we got him. He's being held in a hotel not far from here."

Rebecca: Well congratulations, V, you're now entirely redundant to the fic.

> "You talk to him at all yet?"

> "Not a lot" Harry ran a hand through his hair, causing it to stick up more at the front.

Rick: Harry uses a lot of product

> "Figured since we'll probably be asking a lot of the same questions, I would wait for you."

Dan: Though I'm not sure why V would be interested in his shoe size.

> "Thanks," V stuffed her hand into the pockets of her jacket. "Should probably head out then. Would
> like to get this done."

Dan: Quests aren't going to finish themselves, you know

> "Of course," Harry's grin had crept back onto his face. "My bike's just this way, we can ride
> together."

Rebecca: [V] I can call my car, you know. Comes in like, seconds, even if it's been blown up.

Dan: [Harry] Whoah. You sure you're not a wizard?

Rebecca: [V] Nope, just got good insurance.

> They fell into step together as they made their way through the camp. "Don't know if I'd be up for a
> ride yet," V said, "At least not by myself. Still a bit unsteady."

Rebecca: And I'm sure the beer isn't helping at all

> Harry glanced over at her, "You seem fine right now."

Dan: V's been faking it for weeks. Lot of gangers have just lied down and played dead to make her feel better.

> "Mostly am, just have moments," V smirked at Harry. "So, that story about the dragon. How much of
> that is true?"

Rick: He was indeed a man, and then he was a dragon man.

> "All of it. Was entered into a tournament when I was fourteen,"

Dan: A Yu-gi-oh tournament, that is. It was a lot less exciting then it sounds

> Harry had stuck his hand into his pockets again, a vacant expression on his face.

Rick: He's gone into bragging mode again. This will take a while.

> "The first task was to steal a golden egg from a dragon."

Rebecca: V is getting the impression that she's heard this story before, and that there was something about a Hobbit in it

> "That seems a bit... shitty to send a kid after a dragon.

Dan: Not really, kids are much tastier.

> Unless dragons aren't as dangerous as what I'm thinking."

> Harry laughed, "No, dragons are every bit as dangerous as you're thinking.

Rebecca: Funny, because every time V thinks of magic dragons, all she can imagine is Peter, Paul

and Mary.

> The tournament had been age-restricted,

Dan: You must be this tall to enter this wizard tournament

> but someone put my name in, and made it so I would be chosen."

> V raised an eyebrow, "Were they trying to get you killed?"

Tsuneo: In an exceedingly specific way.

> "Yes and no," Harry said with a shrug. "Really, they were trying to make sure I got to the end of the
> tournament

Dan: But was it double-elimination?

> so I could touch a portkey that would send me to a ritual to raise a dark wizard from the
> dead.

Tsuneo: Which, when you think about it, is a rather overly complicated plan

> The wizard would have killed me then."

Rebecca: [V] Uhuh, that's swell. I got my only friend killed trying to pull myself out of the slums, but you don't care, do you?

> V's brain screeched to a halt. Of all the things she had suspected Harry would say, that had not
> been one of them.

Rick: Probably because it sounded so stupid

> Her mouth opened and closed several times as she tried to come up with something to say.

Tsuneo: [V] Can we go back to the bit about the ghost in the bathroom?

> Harry seemed quite fine with letting her brain restart

Rebecca: Which given that she's a cyborg could be a literal statement

> as he started whistling a
> rather melancholy tune as they continued their walk through the camp.

> "What the fuck?" V said once she had found her voice again. "That's fucked up."

Dan: [V] Of course, I get shot at on a daily basis.

Rick: [Harry] Yeah, but I was in high school at the time.

> "Yeah, it was. But that was my life back then."

Tsuneo: It was a slow year if he only nearly died four times.

> The resignation in Harry's voice reminded V of the
> few times she had run across one of the older solo mercs.

Dan: Driving around in their garbage hauler spaceship with their Wookie and being in debt to the Kanja Club.

> The ones that survived into their forties.

Rebecca: Or Rogue, who had turned into a boozy grandma.

> The ones who had seen all the nightmares that Night City offered.

Rick: They had seen attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion, C-Beams glittering in the dark near the Tanhausser gate...

> It wasn't a tone she would have expected from Harry.

Tsuneo: Because so far she knows him so well.

> Though the more she learned about him, the more she realized just how experienced he was.

Rebecca: Something to do with him being nearly a hundred years old.

> He hardly showed it, not from the limited time V had been in his company.

Tsuneo: Guy was so wet behind the ears, he barely knew a patronus from a wingardium leviosa.

> "I got my first car when I was fourteen," V offered,

Dan: In what I can only assume was a classic coming of age story, complete with a deliberately nostalgic soundtrack

> figuring since Harry had shared a bit of his past with her, she should do the same.

Rick: And then she realised that she didn't really have anything beyond that

> "That sounds incredibly lame when put up against fighting dragons."

Rebecca [V]: And I know that sounds dangerous and all, but I had to learn to parallel park and everything

> "It sounds normal, which is good," Harry's grin was back.

Dan: [V] We were a free-wheeling nomad clan roaming the desolate wastes of outback America, so I guess normal is what you make of it.

> "Believe me, I would have given anything to have that kind of normalcy in my life back then.

Tsuneo: Harry, if you weren't a wizard you would have still been living under the stairs in the care of your abusive relatives. Do you really want that?

> Closest I can get was when I got my first broom."

Dan: He had to sweep out the dorm after one of Seamus' 'accidents.'

> V's face scrunched as she tried to process that, "Sorry, did you say you got a broom? Why is that
> like a car?"

> "I did say I was a broom riding wizard."

Dan: He's got his licence and registration, can even show you his insurance if you need it.

> "I mean, I kinda thought you were joking," V shrugged,

Rick: She had him figured for a magic carpet kind of guy

> "Plus I had other things on my mind then."

Tsuneo: The revelation that her entire perception of reality was wrong and that the world she knew was just a front for something far deeper was somewhat distracting

> "Well, I'll just have to take you on a broom ride someday then," Harry said as they reached his bike,

Rick: Brooms are so out of fashion. Modern wizards surf on Roombas.

> "For now this will have to do."

Dan: So is this whole chapter just going to be them repeating backstories we already know?

Rebecca: No, it's just going to be Harry repeating backstory we already know.

> Again, V's eyebrow raised, "I've been on a bike before. Went riding with Jackie plenty of times."

Rick: Even passed a speech check to help him improve its performance

> Harry shook his head as he swung a leg over his bike and settled onto the seat, "Just get on. I

> promise you won't regret it."

Tsuneo: The sort of phrase that creates instant regret

> V rolled her eyes, though she still settled on the spot behind Harry.

Rick: Wondering why it smelled vaguely of owls.

> She wrapped her arms around him, using him as an anchor

Dan: Harry Potter is also useful for stopping ships

Rebecca: I thought that was JK's job

> since the old bike didn't have any other handholds for a second

> person. The bike rumbled to life, the twin cylinders popping out an uneven rhythm.

Dan: Three Aldecados appeared out of seemingly nowhere offering to tune it up.

> Harry shot a glance at V over his shoulder, "You may want to hold on tighter than that."

> "I think I'll be fine, magic man."

Dan: [Harry] Try, try, try to understand. I'm a magic man.

> "Suit yourself," With that, Harry popped the clutch, causing the back tire to spin in the gravel.

Rick: [Harry] Heh. Had it in reverse.

> The bike shot forward as V laughed.

> "Really? that's all? Gonna have to try harder than that."

Rebecca: V thinks his bike is 'quaint' and 'cute.'

> "I did warn you," The engine roared as Harry pushed it to go faster. However, instead of following

> the dirt road that wound down through the smaller hills, he headed right for the cliff.

Rick: All of a sudden she was having flashbacks to Scorpion's funeral

> "Harry."

> The edge of the cliff got closer.

Rebecca: And to make it worse, Thelma and Louise were right behind them

> "Harry!"

> V contemplated hitting him, if only to get him to pay attention.

Rick: Normally I'd say that hitting the motorcycle driver is a bad idea. But this time I might make an exception

> "HARRY!"

> They flew off the cliff, V clutching onto Harry with a death grip, eyes closed as she waited for the
> inevitable drop.

Dan: This is how Wile E. Coyote lives his life.

> It never came.

> V's eyes opened, squinting against the wind as she tried to see what was happening. The desert
> landscape raced past far below them. There was nothing between them and the ground, and the
> bike showed no signs of wanting to meet it soon.

Tsuneo: They hadn't arranged a second date, and were keeping their options open.

> They were gaining altitude; the camp getting smaller as Harry brought the bike higher into the air.

Rick: This often happened to V when she was driving. She'd accidentally bump something and then next thing she knew her car was catapulted miles into the air.

> V could feel Harry's body shake as he held back laughter. She swatted his side, "The fuck was that
> about?"

> Peals of laughter escaped Harry's mouth, "That was brilliant."

Rebecca: The way she was terrified that she was going to die was hilarious

> V huffed, and went back to holding onto him, "Some warning would be nice before you go off and
> do crazy shit like this."

Dan: [V] If I'd have ralphed all over you back, it'd be your fault.

> "But then I'd miss that wonderful face you make."

Tsuneo: Her latest expression is 'about to murder you.'

> V swatted him again, only succeeding in drawing out more laughter, "You're an ass sometimes,

Rick: Especially when someone turns him into a donkey

Dan: Magic world. It could happen

> you know that?"

> Now that V knew she wasn't going to die a fiery death,

Rebecca: There were no fuel tanks within a city block, so she figured she might be safe

> she lifted her head to have a better look around.

Dan: [V] Yep, sky's still there. Had to make sure.

> The sky was painted purple and blue, as the sun had just disappeared below the horizon.

Rebecca: It was a lovely skybox this evening.

> As they climbed higher, stars started appearing.

Tsuneo: At this point the lack of oxygen was beginning to get to both of them

> This far up, away from the light pollution of Night

> City, the stars spread out before V, filling the entire sky with pinpricks of light.

Rick: [V] I suppose wizards have got weird names for the constellations.

Rebecca: [Harry] I don't know about weird. I mean, over there are the two house-elves, and if you look right above you, you can see Dumbledore's Sweet Fanny.

Rick: [V] Forget I asked.

Rebecca: [Harry] Oddly, he named that one himself.

Rick: [V] So did not want to know that.

> "This is amazing," V said, as she looked up in wonder.

Dan: There are literally no other flying vehicles at all!

> Harry looked back at her, his mischievous grin softening, "Yeah it is, isn't it."

Rebecca: [Harry] I mean, we could have taken my broomstick instead.

Rick: [V] What's that like?

Rebecca: [Harry] Well, it's just like the bike, except instead of a solid chunk of metal underneath you, you've got a flimsy old branch.

Rick: [V] Yeah, I'll pass.

> In a moment of pure euphoria,

Tsuneo: Or possibly oxygen starvation.

> V let go of Harry. She spread her arms out, feeling the wind rush past her.

Rick [V]: I'm the king of the world!

Dan [Harry]: I'm gonna sink this bitch

> Nothing she had experienced before compared to this. Even the few time Jackie had let

> her ride his Arch,

Rebecca: Even the ones when they didn't crash

> she was always aware of the road and traffic around her. Up here, away from all the noise, V felt
> free.

> It ended when she nearly toppled backward off the bike.

Rick: It's the little things that get you

> Her reflexes acted as she latched onto
> Harry's coat and once again plastered herself onto his back. She laughed, fueled with adrenaline
> and glee.

Dan [Forced]: Ha ha ha wheeee

> "Careful there," Harry said. "Would much rather have you wrapped around me than embedded in
> the ground."

> V hummed and leaned in, bringing her mouth close to Harry's ear, "Keep showing me things like
> this and that can be arranged," She said in a low sultry voice.

Rebecca: I'm beginning to figure out the entire point of this crossover

> Harry chuckled, though V could make out a faint redness in his cheeks, "Gotta at least buy me
> dinner and a drink first."

Tsuneo: Isn't he meant to be married or something?

Rebecca: I think that would require any explanation of what's happened to Harry in the last eighty
years or even the author to care.

> "Isn't that the guy's job?"

> "I buy, you buy, doesn't matter as long as the dinner and drinks get purchased first," He said with a
> shrug.

Dan: Does it count if the food and drinks are stolen?

Tsuneo: Dan, you are all class

> "Kinda old fashioned," V said, "But then again you are an old man so..."

> "Oi, I'll show you old man."

Tsuneo: I'll just point out that Harry and Johnny are about the same age, with the latter having spent
the last fifty-something years as a computer program after dying

> "Promise?" V whispered into Harry's ear.

> "Keep distracting me and we'll both end up in the ground."

Rebecca: Meanwhile, River Ward sighs to himself and gets another beer.

> V chuckled and leaned back, pulling away from Harry though still kept her grip, "Alright, alright, I'll
> lay off for now."

Tsuneo: And hopefully for the next... However many chapters we've got to go through.

> V sighed, a stray thought reminding her of something she still hadn't told Harry.

Dan: So about the option to select genitals on the character creation screen...

> "Listen, I also promised Hellman to some else.

Rick: [Harry] Is this going to be a problem?

Rebecca: [V] Not as long as he's still in shape for the wedding.

Rick: [Harry] Oh good. [Pause] Wait, what?

> Gonna hav'ta call him once we're done."

> Harry looked back at her eyebrow raised, "Who?"

Rick: Garth Ennis. It's one of his lifelong dream projects

> "Takamura," V's brow furrowed.

Tsuneo: [V] I know. Guy's got a lot to say about cats.

> She still wasn't sure about the corpo. But she gave him her word

> about Hellman. "He was Saburo Arasaka's bodyguard,"

Dan: Guy could punch out paparazzi like nobody's business

> She felt Harry stiffen once she mentioned

> Saburo, "But due to recent... management changes, he's on his own."

Rebecca: He was offered a sideways promotion into another department, but he knew that it was just a way of forcing him out of the job

> "That's... Interesting," Harry chewed on his words as they came out.

Rick: Trying his darndest to be polite and still not managing it.

> "Might want to talk to him too."

> "Don't know how much he knows," V said with a shake of her head.

Tsuneo: Takemura will confidently tell you that he knows nothing.

> "Seemed like he's more interested in why Yorinobu offed him than anything.

Rick: This raises a lot of questions, actually. Did Yorinobu know it was a Horcrux? If so, how much does he know about the magical world? Is he a wizard himself? Who was he going to take the Horcrux to? And most important of all, why is Harry such a total tosser?

> Pretty sure he's just using me to get back at him."

> "Probably, but if he was close to Saburo, he might know..."

> "Know what?"

Dan: The average annual rainfall in the Amazon basin

> "Who's making the Horcruxes. Has to be a witch or wizard,"

Rick: For all you know, they could be Taiwanese bootleg Horcruxes made in a sweatshop

> Harry leaned forward as he started their descent to the ground.

Tsuneo: Being sure to make the flying motorcycle as obvious as possible.

> The Sunset Motel sat in the middle of the desert, looking just as despondent as V remembered.

Rebecca: The Sunset Motel had been depressed and not talking to anyone. People were getting worried.

> The neon lights did nothing to hide the decay years of neglect had left behind.

Tsuneo: The bedsheets were so stiff with stains they could be used to stop bullets

> Harry circled above the motel twice before landing in the back.

Tsuneo: Gave them time to haul out the AA guns.

> The bike jerked as they contacted the ground again. V dismounted as Harry shut off the bike.

Rebecca: [V] Still don't know why we couldn't take my car.

> A quick stretch loosened the muscles

> that had tensed up during their take-off. Before either of them could do much more than take a few

> steps towards the motel, Panam came barreling around the corner.

Dan: V immediately points out that it was all Harry's idea.

Tsuneo: She doesn't even know if Panam's angry.

Dan: Oh, she knows.

> "What the fuck are you thinking," Panam said, trying her hardest not to yell. "Why did you think

> flying a bike here would be a fucking good idea?"

Rebecca: If Cyberpunk 2077 had a profanity filter, it would have just muted Panam

> "Did anyone see us?" Harry asked.

> Panam scowled and crossed her arms, "No, pretty sure most of the assholes here are too drugged

> up to notice.

Dan: And those that did would have probably just been all 'wow man'.

> But that is not the point."

Tsuneo: You live in a cyberpunk dystopia where everyone has digital optics that record everything they see and megacorporations are above the law. So you know, risks of exposure and all.

> V shrugged, smirking slightly along with Harry, "If no one saw what's the problem?"

Rebecca: I mean, it's still a grotesque violation of wizarding law and all...

> Panam growled but dropped her objections about their mode of travel,

Rick: Panam drives a truck the size of a city block. She's got no room to complain

> "Your guy is this way." She waved at them to follow her and stalked off.

Dan: The air turning blue in her wake.

> Harry and V shared a glance before going after Panam.

Rick: [V] You first, I'm using you as cover.

> She led them up to the second floor of the motel.

Rebecca: To the luxury suite. It had a working toilet

> Mitch and Scorpion,

Dan: How's it going, guys? I see you're still alive there, Scorpion.

> two vets that were part of the Aldecado's, stood on either side of the door.

Tsuneo: You remember, those guys you met when you captured Hellman with Panam? And not the wizard?

> Mitch gave V a nod as he stepped away from the door, "Good to see you up and about. Was
> worried when Pan here dragged you back in that state."

Dan: And by that, he means pantsless

> "Thanks, Mitch," V clapped a hand on his shoulder,

Rick: [V] I have no earthly idea who you are.

> "You keep her out of any other trouble?"

> Mitch gave V a rueful smile as he shot a glance over at Panam who was rolling her eyes, "Yeah, we
> did. Was pretty simple with your friend there.

Tsuneo: Given how the mission went in the original game, at this point the fic's just rubbing it in

> Course now everyone's curious how the no-maj merc
> from Night City teamed up with Harry fucking Potter."

Rick: The player put her piece onto the Lego Dimensions console. Next she's teaming with Scooby Doo and Batman

> "Mutual interests," Harry said,

Dan: It turns out that they're both really big Jane Austen fans. Who knew?

> nodding towards the door to the motel room. "Speaking of which..."

Rebecca: Are we actually going somewhere with this, or does Harry have more wizard crap to show off?

> Mitch nodded and stepped back to his post at the door, "Go right ahead. He's been pretty quiet so
> far."

Dan: [Mitch] Especially after we told him he can't use the mini-bar.

> "Won't be for long," V said as she slid past the two and through the door. Hellman was sitting on a
> chair in the middle of the room. He was slumped over and seemed to mumble to himself. The suit
> he wore was dirty and rumpled.

Rebecca: Which meant his Colombo cosplay was coming along well

> Harry moved behind Hellman while v grabbed a chair and sat in front of him. She leaned forward,
> slapping him into wakefulness, "Hey."

> Hellman jumped, his head swiveling around as he tried to take in his surroundings,

Dan: He was genuinely surprised by the lack of a black bag

> "Where am I? What is this place?"

Rick: [Hellman] And who are you meant to be?
Rebecca: [V] Actually, right now I'm not sure myself.

> "Motel, middle of nowhere,"

Dan: Next to the wooden house with the elderly couple and their little pink dog.

> V said as she pulled out her pistol. She wasn't planning on having to
> use it, but she had found the threat of a gun was often enough for the cushy corpo types.

Tsuneo: It's usually enough for most people

> "Any particular middle?"

Rick: Here's a hint. None of us are Malcolm.

> "Doesn't matter, You're not leavin' here by yourself, anyway."

Dan: [V] We've got three eligible bachelors lined up, each with a perfect date planned.

> Hellman adjusted the glasses perched on his nose, "Then... Why are we here?"

Rebecca: Essential story quest.

> V scooted her chair forward, shooting a glance up at Harry who was standing facing the window,

Tsuneo: [Harry] Don't mind me, I'll just be over here, brooding.

> "Wanna talk about a little invention of yours. A biochip you made for Arasaka."

Dan [Hellman]: Bitcoins aren't going to mine themselves, you know

> "Fine," Hellman spat out, "But let's get one thing straight. Yorinobu Arasaka didn't send you?"

> "No."

Rick: What about Kei Arasaka?

Dan: Well that was pointlessly obscure

Rick: I try.

> "And," Hellman gave a furtive glance around the room again. His eyes lingered on Harry. "The
> Augurey?"

Rebecca: [Panam] What, that sick looking green bird?

Dan: [Hellman] What?

Rebecca: [Panam] We've got one back at the menagerie. Really stinks the place up.

Dan: [Hellman] Look, I'm trying to be ominous here.

> "Who?" V asked.

> "If you do not know," Hellman relaxed, his shoulders slumping.

Tsuneo: [Hellman] Cool. Now I get to talk down to you too.

> "Then you must have an offer for me. If your boss-"

Rick: -is your favourite coffee in a can.

> "I'm going to stop you right there," V cut Hellman off, "No one hired me. I need help with a problem.

Rebecca [V]: I've got this jar and the lid is stuck.

> And you're the guy to help."

> Hellman's brow furrowed, "And what does that have to do with the biochip?"

> "What does the biochip have to do with an augurey," Harry asked.

Tsuneo: You know, the talking monster plant puppet

> He still hadn't turned around, "Pretty sure a muggle shouldn't know what an augurey is."

Rebecca [V]: Hey, I'm right here.

> Hellman's shoulders tensed and he turned to look at Harry, "Not an augurey. The Augurey.

Rick: She of the definite article

> She's a person, a witch involved heavily in the project."

Tsuneo: She was hired on as a consultant for a staggering fee

> His eyes locked with V's, "My question still stands. If you don't have an offer?"

Rebecca: [V] Do you people mind, I'm trying to save my life here?

> "Your tech's tryin' to kill me, pretty sure that's not how it's advertised," V said. "Got Johnny

> Silverhand's construct wormin' its way into my brain."

Rick: Right now she's convinced she needs to find Ice-T and a talking dolphin.

Dan: Wrong Keanu Reeves cyberpunk character called Johnny.

Rick: Is it? Is it really?

> Hellman's eyes widened, "Silverhand... That's impossible... Where did you?"

Rebecca: [V] You know, that whole thing with the hotel room... Geez, read the cliff notes!

> His face paled, "I need to leave."

Dan: Which is totally an option these nice people are giving you right now.

> He tried to stand but V slammed him back into the chair, "You're not going anywhere till you answer

> our questions."

Rebecca: V didn't last long as an exam supervisor

> "You don't understand-"

> "Then tell us so we do."

> "She'll find me, she'll find us-"

Rick: Doing a great job of it so far.

> Harry's wand snapped out. Thick ropes tied Hellman to the chair he was sitting in.

Dan: [Hellman] Oooh, do these have a massage setting?

> An unnatural stillness descended on the man as Harry walked forward into his line of sight.

> "Who will find us?" Harry asked calmly.

Rick: His arch-nemesis, Dora the Explorer. It's a long story

> Hellman didn't answer right away. His eyes were locked onto Harry's scar, "It's... you..."

Dan [Hellman]: Percy Jackson!

> "Jeeze, is everyone going to know him?" Johnny said.

Rebecca: "Everyone who matters," V replied bitterly.

> He glitched into existence, taking a seat in a chair to the side. "It's pissing me off."

Rebecca: Johnny's realised that he's not the most important person in the universe, and he hates it

> "She talked about you," Hellman continued. "She was obsessed."

Dan: She wrote lots of creepy fanfic

> The Boy who Lived..." Harry

> scowled. It was the first time V had ever seen him do that. It didn't seem to fit his face.

Rebecca: They'd deep faked Daniel Radcliffe onto a stand-in.

> He grabbed the ropes now bound around Hellman and leaned down to be face to face with him.

> "Don't call me that," Harry pushed away from Hellman, turning back to face the window.

> "Would you prefer the Man Who Conquered?"

Rick: What about the guy with the horse?

Dan [Harry]: Can we never mention that again?

> Hellman asked. "You are Harry Potter, are you not?"

> "Who told you about me?" Harry said through clenched teeth.

Tsuneo: Well, there's a Harry Potter wiki for starters

> "The Augurey," Hellman shook his head. "I do not know her name. She never gave it to me."

Rebecca: It made staff meetings very awkward

> She told me about you though."

Dan: [Hellman] Yes ma'am, I'm sure he got a broomstick as a Christmas present from his secret godfather, but I'm not sure how that helps with the chip.

> "Why were you working with a witch?" V asked,

Rick: Arasaka doesn't discriminate on the basis of religion.

> attempting to take over for Harry when he didn't respond.

> Hellman regarded her for a second, "If you have Silverhand in your head, then I'm sure you know.

Tsuneo: It was an effort to develop a new audio player. In retrospect they may have over-designed a little.

> The Augurey was the one to rip Silverhand's soul apart and put it in the chip.

Dan: Something something Soullkiller something Alt Cunningham something.

> She wanted to

> combine magical and non-magical techniques and was using our research to experiment."

Rebecca: In short, god-damn Transhumanists ruin everything

> "With what?"

> Hellman gulped, his glasses sliding down his nose, "True immortality.

Rick: No artificial colours, flavours or preservatives

> She wanted to shore up the pitfalls of our original biochip by combining them."

Rebecca: It's better because a wizard did it. The fic in a nutshell.

> "What pitfalls?" V asked.

Dan: They wanted to proof it against existential angst

> "The biochip had trouble with installing an engram into the new body. Every time we did, the person

> would slowly lose their grip on reality," Hellman answered.

Dan: [V] Is that why you were using it on fresh corpses?

Rebecca: [Hellman] I'm sorry, are you the one expositing here or am I?

> "Makes sense," Harry chimed in. "Without a soul. There's nothing there."

> "We didn't know that at the time,"

Rebecca: At that point they were focusing purely on the mad science aspects of the project

> Hellman twisted in an attempt to look at Harry. "We knew an

> engram was capable of living in the digital space.

Dan: You can put a digital copy in digital space? Who would have guessed?

> Alt Cunningham proved that upon her death."

Rebecca: But she became a crazy digital murder god, so take that with a grain of salt

> Johnny growled but stayed silent, allowing Hellman to continue,

Rick: Don't worry Johnny, nobody's listening to you anyway.

> "We thought it would be simple. The brain is just another type of computer after all."

Tsuneo: Just with a very complicated operating system and it's very hard to upgrade the hardware

> "Death is very protective of those it has claimed," Harry's voice was flat as he said this. As if he was
> reading from a book.

Tsuneo: ...a script. I meant, reading from a script.

> Hellman nodded, "She said much the same. She joined the project soon after Cunningham's death.

Rick: [Johnny] Which was totally not my fault in any way and why would you even say that?

> And took it in directions we never thought possible."

Dan: And that's how Arasaka became the market leader in frost-free fridges. [Ding!]

> "And of course they never thought maybe they shouldn't fuck around with this stuff," Johnny said, a
> deep scowl on his face.

Tsuneo: I think we can safely say that nobody's happy with the results.

> "Always gotta be fucking pushing, don't they?"

Rick: They'll click their dials all the way to the end that way

> Hellman continued, "By twenty twenty two we had a prototype ready. But we didn't have a test
> subject.

Rebecca: It turns out that lab monkeys are not good at handling the big questions of mortality and
eternity

> Then Morgan Blackhand bombed Arasaka Tower."

Rick: You saw the real estate prices? It was bombing already!

> "What about Johnny?" V's brow furrowed. Johnny's memories never included Blackhand, which was
> odd. Even V knew Blackhand had been the one behind the bombing.

Dan: V read spoilers on the internet

> So why did Johnny remember it differently? And why had she never questioned it till now?

Tsuneo: Because the authour only just put it in?

> "Johnny was part of it.

Rick [Gruff]: I'm a badarse supersoldier mercenary killer who has never been defeated and leaves a
trail of carnage in his wake

Rebecca [Gruff]: I'm a whimsical playful hacker who will still destroy your system and kill people by
remote control

Dan [Johnny]: I can play the guitar real good!

Rick [Gruff]: That's nice.

> And he did end up being our test subject," Hellman squirmed again, causing
> his glasses to fall off completely. "We had wanted Blackhand initially,

Rick: Although we would have taken Kargath Bladefist or Killrog Deadeye at a pinch

> but Smasher killed him during
> the assault on the tower. Silverhand was captured, however."

> "That's not what I remember," Johnny's eyes were wide, and his face was pale.

Tsuneo: It was a Retcon

Rick: Just be lucky you're not living in 203x.

> Helmsman took a shaky breath. "I don't know what the Augurey did,

Dan: I'm going to go out on a limb here and guess it was some kind of magic.

Rebecca: You might be onto something there.

> but after Saburo Arasaka

> finished with him, she was allowed free rein. I... I had never heard a man make sounds like that
> before.

Tsuneo: Weird, squeaky noises. It was kind of awkward, really.

> His screams still haunt my dreams."

Rebecca: It turns out that the evil megacorporation is evil. Who knew?

> "Fucking bullshit, I'd remember something like that," Johnny shot up and stalked towards Hellman.

> "Ask why I don't remember that shit."

Rick: Simple. A wizard did it.

[Pause]

Dan: Well okay then.

> V held her hand up, "I think we get the picture.

Tsuneo: [Hellman] Really? Because I'm got a whole load more gruesome details.

> What I want to know is how to get him out of my head."

> "You can't,

Rick: He's all that you can think about.

Dan: Na na na, na na na

> the best I could do... Is refer you to a clinic in Switzerland. They will make you

> comfortable these last few weeks-

Tsuneo: On the upside, you get all the Toblerone you could ever want

> V slammed a hand on Hellman's chair, cracking the wood with the force of her blow, "That's not
> good enough. I will not go off and die in some fucking clinic."

Dan: [Hellman] But it's got four and a half stars on TripAdvisor...

> "I'm sorry there's not-"

> V pushed Hellman's chair over, causing him to land on his back. She stuffed her gun in his face,
> and growled, "Listen here, you corpo shitstain. You're going to help me-"

Rebecca: This is basically the HR process at Amazon

> "V," Harry said, catching her attention. She blinked, her brain taking a moment to process what she
> was doing.

Rick: [V] C'mon, good cop, this is your cue.

> "Fuck," She pushed herself up, leaving Hellman on the floor. She stalked across the room, trying to
> bleed off the rage that had built.

Dan: Took it out on the air conditioner, not that it made much difference.

> "I can give you my schematics," Hellman said from the floor. "Both of the original design for the chip,
> and the modified one.

Tsuneo: And this is how Playstations are made

> But that is all I can offer you."

> V glared at Hellman before stuffing her pistol back into its holster. She walked over and pulled
> Hellman's chair back up,

Rebecca: [Hellman] And if you could find where my teeth got to, that would be swell.

> "Fine, give it to me."

> Harry flicked his wand and the rope surrounding Hellman fell off. He reached a shaky hand into his
> suit and pulled out a data shard.

Dan: [Hellman] I carry it on me at all times.

Rick: [V] Because you were going to sell it to Kang Tao?

Dan: [Hellman] Sure. That's why.

> After taking it from him, V wasted no time in jacking it into her cybernetics.

Rebecca: Since this is the future, she didn't even need to type in some fake Linux or click her mouse
first

> Lines of data streamed across her vision. Everything from chip structure to the lines of
> code embedded into it.

Rick: As well as all the dummied out dev statements

> Harry was looking over at her now, his face unreadable as he watched her.

Dan: [V] Please tell me you're not peeping on my optic display.

Rebecca: [Harry] I could, but I also don't want to lie.

> "He's all yours," V said, taking a step away from the man. "I'm done with his bullshit." With that, she
> shoved the door open and stomped outside. Mitch and Scorpion spared her a glance as she rushed
> over the railing.

Tsuneo: Scorpion still not sure if he's in this scene

> Panam was leaning against the railing as well, "Get what you needed?"

Dan: [V] Got a bunch of wizards talking wizard stuff at me. So, no.

> V grimaced and tried to nod. Unfortunately, the world glitched around her. Her legs gave out,
> leaving her arms to hold her up.

Rebecca: She tried standing on her arms, but that didn't work out so well

> Her lungs burned as she coughed, blood splattering onto the railing.

Rick: And they just cleaned it too

> "Fuck, V!" Panam called out. The three nomads had rushed to her side, even as the contents of V's
> stomach made themselves known.

Dan: When did she eat that much corn?

> She collapsed to the balcony, her limbs shaking as she tried to get them to cooperate.

Rebecca: Unfortunately, none of them could agree and each had their own conditions

> Through the bars of the railing, she saw Johnny sitting on a cement bench, waiting for her.

Rick: And even though he's just a digital ghost, he's still uncomfortable on that thing.

> "V, what's going on?" Panam asked.

Tsuneo: Crappy crossover fic. I thought you'd have figured that out by now.

> "Johnny wants to talk," Was all V said as she stumbled off, brushing Mitch and Scorpion aside as
> they tried to help. The stairs proved trickier than she thought,

Rebecca: They were a cunning and deceptive lot

> given how fast she found herself at
> the bottom. Panam's shouts registered in her ear, but the static that filled them made it impossible
> to make out what she was saying.

Dan: But she guessed there was a lot of profanity involved.

> V dragged herself to the bench, pulled herself up to sit beside Johnny, "What'd'ya want," She
> slurred her word like she was drunk.

> "I wanna know why you didn't ask him my question?"

Rebecca: [V] Um, because I hate you?

Rick: [Johnny] Okay, yep. Fair.

> "Cause you and I both know the answer to that question," V said, "Harry's messed with other
> people's memories.

Rick: See? A wizard did indeed do it.

> Not too far of a stretch to say this, Augurey wouldn't do the same."

> "Still, there's a difference between guessin' and hearin' it for ourselves,"

Rebecca: Ever considered that V just doesn't like the sound of your voice?

> Johnny pulled out a
> cigarette and V mimicked him. "This whole thing's already gettin' to be over both our heads V."

Dan: If you don't geek the mage then this will happen

> "You think I don't fucking know that?" V spat back. They both lit their cigarettes, the smoke
> dissipating into the air. "I know you thought Mikoshi was the answer-"

Tsuneo: Unfortunately, this was a maths test.

> "It still is," Johnny interrupted, "Gonna be our best shot."

> "How can you possibly know that?" V scowled at her cigarette before throwing it away. "Part of me
> wonders if you're just blowing smoke up my ass to get me to finish your dirty work for you."

Rebecca: Johnny just remembered that he forgot to do the dishes fifty-something years ago.

> "Believe me, I'd rather be outta your head as soon as possible," Johnny flicked some ash off of his
> cigarette.

Dan: This time share was a bad deal after all. Who knew?

> "Been trying to figure you out in the meantime."

> "Oh, this is gonna be good."

> "Thought you were just unlucky at first,"

Rick: I mean, how can one person be peed on by that many passing dogs?

> Johnny scratched at his beard, "But now? You're just a
> chick from the badlands, usin' your family as crutch and cushion."

Rebecca: [V] The family I've never once mentioned?

Rick: [Johnny] Okay, let me start over.

> Now you got no one behind you. Just another nobody merc, like every other, wanna be in NC."

Dan: I didn't want to be a merc in NC. I wanted to be... a lumberjack!

> "That's rich comin' from you," V crossed her arms. "You're right, I'm nobody unless I got someone
> standing beside me."

Rebecca: [V] Just as long as it's not some trumped-up, self-important, show-off, smug, posturing
wizard!

Rick: [Harry] Sorry, am I interrupting?

> Better that, then standing alone at the top." V gave Johnny a lopsided grin,
> "Tell me, how's the view from that mausoleum you're standin' on?"

Rick [Johnny]: It's very nice. I got a good view out over the city from my crypt and... oh.

> "You're missing my point, V," Johnny leaned forward, dismissing V's jab.

Tsuneo: But deep down, he was hurting

> "You work best with others. This is why we need to work together to take down Arasaka."

Dan: Let Harry do everything, is what he's saying.

> "There it is," V spoke in a whisper, "The crusade, get to Mikosi, smash the system."

Rebecca: [V] Raid the gift shop.

> Same story different day."

> "Ok," Johnny said slowly, chewing on his words like he might regret them.

Tsuneo: Regret has long since left his vocabulary.

> "I'll tell ya why I wanna destroy Arasaka, but I'll only tell ya once. Wanna hear it?"

> V narrowed her eyes at him, "Alright."

Dan [Johnny]: Saburo cut me off at the lights once.

> Johnny regarded her for a moment, his eyes hidden behind his sunglasses, "I saw corps strip
> farmers of water and eventually of land." He looked out toward the looming city. "Saw them
> transform Night City into a machine fueled by people's crushed spirits, broken dreams, and emptied
> pockets." He stood and started pacing back and forth like a caged animal, keeping his back to V.
> "Corps have long controlled our lives... and now they're after our souls."

Rebecca: Johnny is the very model of a Fox News Liberal

> "Which is why we're going to stop them," Harry said. Both V and Johnny looked at him, mouths
> agape.

> "You can... hear him?" V asked.

Dan: [Harry] It's getting him to shut up that's the problem.

> "And see him," Harry smiled

Tsuneo: Any reason why you didn't mention this before?

Dan: Same reason why he does anything in this fic. He's an arse.

> and stepped up to Johnny, looking him in the eyes. "Good to see you again, Robert."

> Johnny scowled, "Fuck you."

> "Just as civil as I remember,"

Tsuneo: Yes, I can see these two would have been great friends.

Rebecca: Harry and Johnny have so much in common! Like... their first names end in the letter 'y' in their colloquial shortened form.

> Harry tilted his head towards V. "Panam and Mitch were worried about
> you. Said you fell down the stairs?"

> "I'm fine, just a tumble," V waved him off as she stood,

Rebecca: A common excuse used by victims of domestic abuse.... which is actually a good summary of V's relationship to Johnny

> "Can we go back to the part where you can hear and see Johnny.

Rebecca: [V] Any chance you could switch that off? For me?

> Is that a wizard thing?"

> "No, it's a me thing,"

Rick: So does this mean Luna Lovegood would be able to see Johnny?

Dan: Actually, that would explain an awful lot.

Rick: It would.

> He spun a ring, embedded with a small black stone around his finger.

Tsuneo: [Harry] Oh look, here's another amazing thing that I have.

Rebecca: [V] Yeah, okay.

Tsuneo: [Harry] The point is that's mine, and not yours.

Rebecca: [V] I get it!

> "Wasn't exactly my choice either."

Rebecca: He got crappy mutant powers

> "Right yeah sure," V ran a hand through her hair, pushing back the few strands of purple in her face.

> "You got a flying motorcycle and can see my hallucinations. This is just my new normal now."

Tsuneo: Careful; you'll summon the anti-vaxxers that way

> "Why didn't you tell me all this before," Johnny said as he glared down at Harry. "Could've used you

> during my... our... fuck." He turned away. V could feel his rage course through her.

Dan: She's not sure which one of them wants to slug Harry, so she's going to go with both.

> "Now I'm

> doubting myself. Who the hell is this Augurey that Hellman was talking about, and why was she

> fucking with my head"

Dan: Mostly for laughs.

> Harry sighed, "I don't know. This is the first I've heard of her."

Tsuneo: [Harry] My reputation as an insufferable know-it-all is at risk.

> He rubbed at his eyes, "I knew there had to be a magical involved.

Dan: Because we can't leave this fic to the muggles.

> But it sounds like she's not directly related to the Arasaka's like I had been thinking."

Rick: She's a second cousin at best.

> "Again, coulda used this info back then," Johnny said. "Why didn't you tell me?"

> "Because you're a loose cannon," Harry snapped at Johnny,

Dan: You're playing by your own rules, but damn it, you get results.

> "I knew your reputation. I heard about what happened to Alt."

Rick: But what about Control and Delete?

> "Don't talk about her," Johnny shoved his finger into Harry's chest. "You have no right."

> Harry took a step back, holding his hands out in an attempt to calm Johnny down, "I didn't mean it

> like that. I know you made a mistake, Johnny, it happens-

Rebecca: You didn't mean to kill her and cause her ascension to homicidal digital entity

> "Shut the fuck up!" Johnny roared. V's cybernetics glitched, and she lashed out at Harry. Her blow
> connected, snapping Harry's head to the side.

> "Shit! Fuck!," V yelled as she tried to control her limbs. "Johnny, calm the fuck down."

Dan: [V] I want a go at hitting him.

> "It's ok V," Harry said. He wiped away at the blood that had trickled out of his mouth. "Probably
> deserved it. You got a pretty good punch, by the way."

Tsuneo: What with the killer robot arms and all.

> Johnny growled, "What's makes you think you know what happened. You know jack shit about me."

> Harry shook his head, "I know more than you think.

Rebecca: [Harry] I'm the omniscient pet character, remember?

> Because I would have done the same thing if someone I loved was in danger.

Dan: Storming the tower it is.

> Hell, I did the same thing. And it ended the same way."

Tsuneo: But what's a few accidental homicides between friends?

> Harry's

> head dropped and he let out a huff of air, "I blamed myself for a long time for what happened."

Tsuneo: Oooh, he has a dark and tragic past.

Rick: You mean the whole thing with the dark lord and the wizarding war?

Tsuneo: Oooh, he has a darker and tragicker past.

> "That supposed to make me feel better?"

> Harry shrugged, sticking his hand into his pockets as he sat down,

Tsuneo: [Harry] No, it's meant to garner me sympathy.

> "Take it however you wish.

Dan: [Johnny] I'm going to take it with a whiskey.

> But

> that's why I didn't tell you. I knew it wouldn't change your mind. Both you and Blackhand were
> hellbent on bombing the tower. Though for different reasons."

Rebecca: Johnny wanted revenge. Blackhand wanted to end the edition and go to his new job at Microsoft

> V, by this point, had regained a semblance of control again.

Tsuneo: Enough to flip off Johnny and Harry simultaneously.

> She sat down beside Harry, "That brings up another point, Johnny and I were wondering about.

Dan: [V] Why does Dumbledore look different after your second year?

> Blackhand wasn't in Johnny's memories. Got an explanation for that?"

Rick: Simple; he was dummied out. His character model's still in the game files.

> Harry waffled about with his head, trying to come up with something to say, "I.. Don't know. Not for
> sure, at least. Could be any number of things. From a memory charm to true legilimency. Possibly a
> potion.

Tsuneo: Did he just say 'a wizard did it?'

Rebecca: Might as well have.

> Might even be a consequence of whatever ritual this Augurey used to get a piece of your soul.

Dan: Maybe Johnny just got hit on the head.

> I still don't have enough information to do much more than guess."

> Johnny threw his hand up, spinning around to face away from V and Harry, "Well, that's great. What
> the hell was all this about then?"

Tsuneo: Mostly filling up space and repeating quest text.

> "We didn't learn nothing. We got a name now. And schematics,"

Dan: Plus a card for a free Slurpee.

> V said. "Plus, considering
> Hellman's reaction. I'd say this Augurey has got more pull than even Yorinobu. Seemed more
> terrified of her than him."

Rebecca: Yorinobu is living the idiot rich son dream.

> "We'll need someone to look over them," Harry looked over at V. "What about that friend of yours,
> Judy. Think she could glance at them."

Dan: Making porn, highly experimental mind-altering technology... same stuff, right?

> "Possibly," V shrugged. "Evelyn's awake, so that was going to be my next stop."

> "Good," Harry's brow furrowed, "And this Takemura person?"

Rick: Given that you're doing the quests all out of order, he's going to be really confused.

> V groaned, burying her head in her hands, "Damn it, that's... Should we even call him?"

Rebecca: Smash cut to Takemura at a noodle stand, staring down nibbles and waiting for V's call.

> "That's up to you."

> "But... I'm not entirely sure Takemura has cut ties with Arasaka completely.

Tsuneo: He still gets Christmas cards from them

> If Hellman gets back to this Augurey..."

> "You let me worry about that," Harry placed a hand on V's shoulder.

Dan: [Harry] Don't you go trying to contribute now, y'hear?

> "You gave him your word didn't you?"

> "Kinda... There was a lot going on at the time," V sighed.

Rebecca: [V] It was a long day, we'd done some shots, things got out of hand, but at least we got an annulment in the morning.

> "We had just saved each other's lives. Then I got told I was still dying.

Dan: Truth being told, he did a terrible job of it

> Suffice to say, he was the only one at the time that seemed invested
> in actually helping, even if it was for his own gain."

Rick [Takemura]: V, I need to borrow five bucks

Rebecca [V]: I'm a bit short this weekend...

Rick [Takemura]: I saved your life, V.

Rebecca [V]: Damn it

> "Call him then," Harry said. "We'll leave Hellman here with the Aldecado's for now."

Dan: One look at Neville should be enough to ensure he doesn't try anything

> The two of them fell into silence.

Rebecca [V]: So, um...

Tsuneo [Harry]: Yeah.

[Pause]

Rick [Johnny]: I like Zabanya

Rebecca [V]: God damn it Johnny, we talked about this!

> Harry shifted in his spot. His mouth was stretched into a thin line and his brow was
> furrowed when glanced at V and spoke again, 'Listen, I know our deal only extended to Hellman-'

Dan: Anything beyond Hellman would require an extension and be billed by the hour

> V held up a hand to stop Harry, " I know what you're going to say. And I agree. Seems both our
> spaths are heading in the same direction and... I'll be honest,

Rebecca [V]: You're a jerk

> we'll probably need you again. Might as well team up properly."

> Harry's bright grin returned. He stuck out his hand, "Partners?"

Dan: Then Harry reached for a knife to 'make it official.'

> V nodded and took Harry's hand into her own, giving it a firm shake, "Yeah, partners."

Tsuneo: [Harry] V... Um... Those robot arms of yours...

Rebecca: [V] Yes?

Tsuneo: [Harry] They've got a... reaaally strong grip...
Rebecca: [V] I know.

> "Great," Johnny lit another cigarette as he scowled at the two of them, "Now I'm stuck with the both
> of you."

Rick: Wah-wah

> A/N: Chapter 7! I've gotten so far on this story and this chapter is the longest yet.

Tsuneo: They said as if to indicate length was a measure of quality.

> For those of you that recognize the character, I'm introducing...

Dan: It's Crookshanks, isn't it?

> Just wait, I'll think you'll like what I have in store for
> her. As always, drop a comment if you feel like it, they're always appreciated. And I'll see you all in
> the future.

Rick: In the year 2525, if the fic is still alive...

> -----

> Chapter 8: Dragons in Memory
> It was noon by the time Harry and V made their way back to the city.

Rebecca: There would have been there sooner, but they stopped off for waffles.

> Dark clouds had rolled in, threatening Night City with rain and covering the sun.

Dan: Night City, where reduced visibility can only be an improvement.

> The city streets were washed out to a dull
> grey, broken only by the harsh neon that lined the buildings.

Tsuneo: Oh no, it's pretending to be noir.

> Harry's bike rumbled to a stop next to Judy's van. V hopped off,

Rebecca: And kissed the ground in gratitude.

> already texting Judy to let her know they were there.

Dan: Her text read 'Judy, we're seconds from the door and will be there before I send this.'

> Her response came back before Harry had gotten off the bike as well, inviting both
> of them up.

Rebecca: In the future, doorbells will not be a thing

> She opened the door for them, greeting V in a groggy voice. She rubbed at her eyes
> even as she glared at Harry,

Dan [Harry]: You erase one person's memories and all of a sudden you're the worst or something.

> though a quick nudge from V had her rolling her eyes and walking away.

> Judy's apartment looked the same inside as it had a few days ago. Even the red armchair was still
> there, with Evelyn curled up on its seat.

Rick: Evelyn had been hanging out with her new friend, Sho's Mother.

> Her off-white sweatpants and shirts left her less vibrant
> than the fancy dresses she usually wore.

Rebecca: She rarely got all dressed up for lounging around the house

> She looked over at V and Harry, her dull green eyes widening as she took in V's appearance.

> "You're bleeding," Was the first thing Evelyn said.

Tsuneo: [V] Hello to you too.

> V cursed, reaching a hand up to wipe at the blood that had trickled out of her nose again.

Dan: [V] Oh yeah, that silly little thing. Don't mind that at all.

> Harry produced a handkerchief from somewhere in his coat

Rick: Along with a white dove

> and handed it to her.

> "You gettin' worse?" Judy asked from her spot at the kitchen counter.

Tsuneo: [V] If I was, we wouldn't be talking.

> V shook her head, "Nah, just happens from time to time now."

Tsuneo: Her head is only lightly exploding

> She tried to give Judy a reassuring
> smile, though the effect was ruined by the cloth now shoved up her nose,

Dan: Despite the tragic events and horror of the last few days, Judy is still trying really hard not to
laugh at her.

> "Still just dying slowly."

> "Dexter told me you were already dead," Evelyn said.

Rick: Dexter learned that trick from Fist of the North Star

> "Yeah, well," V leaned against the counter. "I was only mostly dead."

Rebecca: Miracle Max recommended against going through her pockets.

> Not that it stopped him from throwing me out with the trash."

Dan: Worst part was that she woke up next to Cyborg Nick Nolte

> She pulled the handkerchief away, checking to see if her nose bleed had let up.

Rick: Slightly worried that it came away blue.

> "He got his due in the end, though I wish I could've been the one to do it."

Rebecca: At the very least, she should have had a chance to loot the body

> Evelyn nodded as she curled into a tighter ball, "Listen V... For whatever it is worth I am sorry about
> my part in all of this."

Tsuneo: Sorry I got you shot in the head and all that

> V chewed on her lip as she scuffed at Judy's kitchen floor.

Dan: [V] Man, this place needs a wash.

> She could feel rage bubbling within her,
> which she fought to keep down. She knew it was mostly from Johnny.

Rebecca: Johnny is the very model of fragile masculinity

> While Evelyn was the one
> that had hired her and Jackie, she wasn't the reason he was dead. With a shrug, she answered
> Evelyn's unspoken question, "Wasn't your fault. Things just went to shit. It happens.

Dan: [Evelyn] The most powerful man in the world was murdered right in front of you.

Tsuneo: [V] It happens.

> Consequences were a lot higher though."

Rick: For starters, V didn't get her deposit back on her rental suit

> "Oh," Evelyn's eyes flicked over to Judy. "Judy said you wanted to talk to me, and I thought-"

> "That I wanted revenge?"

Dan: [V] Maybe like, my payment? Because we still technically got it...

> Evelyn nodded, keeping her eyes to the floor, "That seemed likely. I know I would, in your position."

Tsuneo: But Lucas said that revenge is not the Jedi way.

> "Revenge is rarely worth it in my experience," Harry said,

Rebecca: Something about a wizard war and all that

> drawing Evelyn's attention. Her eyes widened once more.

> "You... I remember you..."

Rick: In the mountains

> Her voice trailed off as she stood and walked over to him. "You were in my dreams."

Dan: Evelyn wrote so many Harry Potter slashfics as a kid. So many.

> Harry tilted his head, his eyes twinkling, the edge of his mouth twitching upwards as they usually
> did, "That's odd. Though I suppose I am a bit dreamy."

Rebecca: Harry's goal in this fic is to get everyone to slap him

> The flat glare Evelyn gave him would have had most people backpedaling to save face. Harry,
> however, seemed unperturbed by the woman.

Tsuneo: [Harry] Ha ha, silly side characters, you're not allowed to have dignity.

> She shot a glance over at Judy. "I see what you meant."

Rebecca [Evelyn]: He is a total arse

> "Talking about me behind my back?" Harry raised an eyebrow at Judy.

Tsuneo: [Judy] Oh, just catching her up on how she's still alive.

> He leaned against the wall,
> a lazy smirk on his face. "That hasn't happened for a while. Brings me back to my school days."

> "Were you just as much of a gonk back then?" Judy shot back.

Rick: Yeah. People hooked him up to power spaceships and stuff all the time,

> "Depends on who you ask," Harry said with an unapologetic shrug.

Dan: Do yourself a favour and never read anything by Rita Skeeter.

> "As well as the day of the week in some cases."

> "Judy said you removed my memories," Evelyn said as she turned back to Harry.

> "I assume she also told you why?"

> Evelyn nodded, "She was rather light on the details, but I was able to read between the lines."

Rebecca: Really, if you don't remember seeing Crimes of Grindwald it's for the best

> Harry slipped past Evelyn and gestured to the red chair, "If you wouldn't mind, I would like to
> examine you once more.

Dan: He needs to pad out his doctor's bill.

> You seem fine, but you can never be too careful with things like this."

Rebecca: [Evelyn] I mean, you have done this before, right?

Tsuneo: [Harry] I've... read up on it.

> Evelyn stayed where she was, her arms crossed, "I don't know how I feel about you going through
> my head again."

Dan: Again; so many slash fics.

> "Understandable," Harry took a seat on the couch, crossing his legs as he sat. "A mind is a very
> private place.

Rebecca: [Harry] That's why I went gallivanting through yours unannounced.

> I've been on the receiving end of... Non-friendly intrusions before,

Dan: That's why he wears a tinfoil hat.

> so believe when I
> say I don't take things like this lightly." He leaned forward, folding his hands together.

Rebecca: [Harry] So, who wants to see her embarrassing school photos?

> "You will be in safe hands Ms. Parker I assure you."

Rick: What with your friendly neighbourhood Spider-Man and all.

> Evelyn glided forward, using every bit of grace she had as a former doll.

Tsuneo: So she walked like a normal person then

> "Why should I trust your
> hands at all? It's easy for you, to spout off some honeyed words and get what you want."

Dan: [Harry] Wow, just because I erased your memories, suddenly you don't trust me.

> She stopped in front of him, eyes glaring, "What assurances do I have about you?"

Rebecca: He can show you his OWLs if that helps.

> Harry said nothing. Instead, he reached into his coat and pulled out a glowing vial.

Rick: It's Lance Armstrong's last drug test

> The contents swirled and writhed around the small space like trapped worms.

Tsuneo: [Evelyn] What have you got in there?

Rebecca: [Harry] Worms.

> He set the vial on the coffee table with a resounding thunk

Tsuneo: The vial was apparently full of depleted uranium

> before settling back into the couch.

> "What's this?" Evelyn asked, her eyebrow arched imperiously.

> "Your memories of the last few days," Harry folded his hands again, gesturing at the vial with his
> head. "I saved them when I took them out of your head. If you want them back, they're yours."

Rebecca: The wizard equivalent of an off-site tape backup

> A thick silence descended on the four of them. Fear flitted across Evelyn's face for a moment as
> she looked at the swirling memories.

Rick: He also took your memories of Agatha Christie's books, so you could enjoy Poirot again for the first time.

> Then it twisted into a rage. She grabbed the vial and chucked
> it against the wall, a scream escaping her lips as she did. It shattered, the pieces of glass exploding
> outward as the glowing memories faded into nothing.

Dan: Great. Now we need to vacuum the place for glass shards.

> Judy rushed to Evelyn's side as she collapsed, her screams turning to muted sobs. The sound
> echoed around the apartment, filling the space with an almost tangible weight.

Tsuneo: It was quite literally a heavy conversation.

> It bore down on V, reminding her just how far the heist was reaching into their lives.

Rebecca: She also vaguely remembered something about Mama Welles, but figured it wasn't important

> Harry scooted forward, sliding off the couch to kneel beside the two women.

Tsuneo: Unnoticed and largely unregarded, V had taken the opportunity to raid the fridge.

> He kept his distance,

> though V could see his lips moving and hear the low thrum of his voice even if she couldn't make
> out the words.

Dan: He was telling them about his bulk billing.

> Evelyn looked up at him, tear tracks staining her face.

> V stayed where she was, unsure of how to react.

Rebecca: Or if she was in the scene.

> She didn't know Evelyn well enough to offer

> comfort. Nor was she heartless enough to just watch with a detached eye.

Tsuneo: Generally she settled for sneaking beer while they weren't looking.

> Which left her awkwardly hovering by the kitchen, fiddling with the hem of her jacket.

Rick: Quietly mashing the 'skip conversation' button

> After a few more words with Harry, Evelyn let herself be guided back to the chair. He produced
> another handkerchief from his coat,

Rick: This one came with a bunch of flowers.

> handing it to her as he spoke, "I'd dare say you're fine for the
> moment. Though if you have questions...

Tsuneo: [Harry] Preferably questions that aren't about Dobby.

> Call V, you'll probably have a better chance of reaching her."

Dan: It's not that he's busy or anything. It's just that Harry keeps leaving his phone on silent and never answers it

> He shot a wink at V, a smile on his face again.

> V huffed, letting some of the tension ease off her shoulders, "I'm not your answering service."

Tsuneo: It's not like you're doing anything else for the fic right now.

> "So what happens now?" Evelyn asked.

Dan: [Harry] Well, I don't know about you but I could go for a steak.

> "Well," Harry moved to sit on the coffee table across from Evelyn. "That's up to you. I mean, I can't
> tell you how to live your life after all. Get a job, run a strip club, hike out into the hills and live as a
> hermit.

Rebecca: It's almost like she's past any point where she contributes to the narrative or something

> Really, the possibilities-

> A loud smack interrupted Harry as V slapped him in the back of his head,

Dan: Given that she has Gorilla Arms she probably just catapulted him halfway across the room

> "Shut up, Harry. For fuck's sake, that's not what she meant."

> "Ow, bloody hell, V," Harry rubbed his head. "That's the second time you've hit me today."

Tsuneo: Amuro Ray is wincing in sympathy

> Judy chuckled, "Probably deserved it."

Rebecca: V nods vigorously.

> Once again, Evelyn was the one to bring the conversation back around, "I meant, what do we do
> now.

Dan: I mean, Judy's sidequest is pretty much invalidated.

> I know at least V wanted to talk to me. Though I still don't know what about, I have a guess."

Rebecca: Your shared love of baroque period interior fittings

> "If you guessed the chip

Rick: You know, the one you need to fix the Vault's water purifier

> you'd be right on eddies," V said, "It's... still in my head, killin' me slowly. And I want it out."

> Evelyn's head tilted, "I had thought your partner Jackie was the one to slot the chip into his
> cyberware?"

Dan: Be honest here. Would you trust Jackie with a sensitive piece of tech like that?

> "He was," V sighed and rubbed her eyes. "But, he gave it to me, before he passed.

Rick: Does that mean she's got a piece of Jackie in her head?

Rebecca: Yeah, but aside for an occasional craving for nachos it doesn't make much difference.

> Then Dexter shot me. Now I have Johnny Silverhand eating his way through my brain."

Rick: Johnny's a Zombie, you see

Dan: He should have been in the last fic then

> "Ain't by choice, believe me," Johnny said.

Tsuneo: Johnny wanted to be stuck in the head of someone more influential, or at least with a better apartment.

> "I don't know if I can help," Evelyn said. "I was hired for the job myself. By someone from the

> Voodoo Boys."

Rebecca: Your basic ethnic stereotype-based street gang

> "Shit, fuck," V spun, stalking back to the kitchen and leaning against the counter. "The Voodoo
> Boys? Are you sure?"

Rick: [Evelyn] Well, I think I might have noticed.

> Evelyn nodded, "Yes, though I'm not sure why. All they wanted was the Braindance of Yorinobu's
> suite.

Dan: They wanted to know what sort of snacks were in the bar fridge.

> I was the one to set up a heist on my own. I thought, considering the amount they were
> offering for my BD,

Rebecca: [Evelyn] They were going to cover my bar tab for a year. Those candy cocktails really add
up.

> that they would pay even more for the chip itself."

Tsuneo: In retrospect this might have been a bad plan

> Judy shook her head, "Come on Eve, you should know better than dealing with those gonks."

Rebecca: [Evelyn] Did I mention I wanted to stiff one of the city's best fixers in the process?

Rick: [Judy] Somehow, you didn't have to.

> Harry raised his hand, "Er... Sorry, who are the Voodoo Boys?"

Dan [Harry]: Are thy the guys in green whose boss drives around in an armoured hearse?

Rick: Eh, close enough

> V looked over her shoulder at Harry, "Seriously, with the number of people you seem to know, the
> Voodoo Boys never crossed paths with you?"

Tsuneo: [V] I just found out there's magic all around me and now you're saying their gang name isn't
literal?

Dan: [Harry] I don't know what to tell you.

> He gave V an apathetic shrug, "I don't spend all my time in Night City you know.

Tsuneo: Despite all evidence to the contrary

> I have spent the last sixty-odd years traveling. Seeing sites. Helping people, living life."

Dan: His life has been a non-stop Seventies action show

> "They're a netrunner gang," Judy said.

Rebecca: That particular brand of futurism that becomes instantly dated

> "Used to be just a bunch of gonks trying to scare people through the net.

Rick: They'd send people animated gifs of pop-up skeletons

> Now though, they have the culture to back up that name, as well as a ruthless reputation."

Dan: They pull the meanest pranks

> Harry rubbed his chin, "Huh, I wonder..."

> He trailed off, leaving the three women in silence.

Dan: [V] Gin tasting night at Totentanz?

Rebecca: [Judy] Oh, totally.

> Judy looked over at V, her eyebrow raised as she jerked her head at Harry.

Tsuneo: Much eye-rolling occurred.

> V shrugged and stepped up beside him, snapping her fingers in his face,

> "Hey, got anything you wanna share with the class?"

Tsuneo: Want to take a break from being a smug, all-knowing git to demonstrate how smug and all-knowing you are?

> "Hmm, oh nothing important," Harry waved V away.

Rebecca: A succinct summary of V in this fic.

> "Considering I didn't detect any outside magic on Evelyn before. I doubt they actually use voodoo."

> "Wait, so voodoo is an actual thing?" Judy asked.

Rebecca: Given that you know wizards and dragons exist, I don't see why it wouldn't be.

> "Yes, though it's not practiced much outside of certain areas. Too... unpredictable."

Dan: And yes, they use dolls and everything before you ask.

> Harry clapped his hands together and gave Evelyn a warm smile,

Tsuneo: Which is somehow the most worrying thing he could have done.

> "But like I said. I didn't detect any other magic on you, so you should be safe from that direction."

Tsuneo: But he's going to back away a little, just to be sure

> "Is there a way to be sure?"

> Harry ran a hand through his hair, causing it to stick out to the side,

Dan: Harry's hair defies the laws of physics

> "Well, we could check your

> memories associated with them. See if they did anything while you were with them."

> Evelyn scratched at her arms, avoiding Harry's gaze, "I don't know about that. I still am not sure I

> want you in my head."

Rick: What's a little invasive memosugery between friends? Sorry, a little *more?*

> "I won't have to be in your head," Harry said brightly. "We can view those memories in a pensieve."

Dan: [Evelyn] I mean, I recorded my meeting with them so we can bring that up –
Rebecca: [Harry] Nope. Everything's gotta be magic. No alternative!

> "A what?" V asked.

> "A pensieve," Harry repeated. He bounced to his feet, "Here, I'll show you all. Vispy!"

Rick: [Evelyn] Does he do this a lot?

Rebecca: [V] What, make us watch while he shows off his cool magic stuff?

Dan: [Judy] All the damn time.

> There was a soft pop, and Vispy appeared. Her too-large eyes observing the room around her as
> well as the occupants. Judy and Evelyn stared gob smacked at the strange creature.

Rick: And then went for their guns

> She gave V a quick nod before turning to Harry, "Yes, what is Master Harry be wanting?"

Rebecca: Some basic grammar, for starters

> "I need the pensieve, Vispy. Could you grab that for me and bring it here?"

> Vispy nodded, her large ears flapping against her head, and disappeared with another pop.

Dan: Thank god that's gone.

> Judy scrambled up from the floor, "What the hell was that?"

Rick: Wait, you saw that too?

> "House-elf," V and Harry answered together.

Dan: You don't spray and you'll get those.

> Judy stared at V, her brow furrowed, mouth set to a thin line, "You really ok with this?"

> "Yeah, I am," V crossed her arms. "You don't seem to be."

> "Why are you?" Judy gestured at Harry while she stalked towards V,

Tsuneo: [Judy] You want to ask before you drag that thing into my house?

Rick: [Harry] No.

> "Why do you just accept his fucking magic juju shit like nothin's wrong?"

Tsuneo: At this point V is so at ease with the whole thing that I can only assume she's stoned out of her mind

> V held her ground, straightening up as Judy approached, "Maybe 'cause I got bigger things to worry
> about."

Rick: V is really concerned about global commodity prices

> "This seems like a pretty big fucking deal," Judy said in an angry whisper that was quickly climbing
> in volume. "Makin' chairs outta nothin'

Rebecca: Judy's not a big fan of arts and crafts

> weird creatures popping in and out. What part of that doesn't scream big deal?"

Dan: Yeah, well wait until he conjures all the rocky road you could ever want. Then you'll change your tune.

> "Yeah, well, I can rip sheet metal in half.

Tsuneo: So can hundreds of other people in Night City. Your point?

> So he does those things," V shot a glance at Harry.

Rebecca: [Judy] Cool. Yeah. But you've got something called physics on your side.

> "I trust him. And he hasn't betrayed me yet."

Rick [V]: He even told me that he doesn't have any evil plans.

> "Well, that's good. Glad your standards are so high,"

Dan: It's not a good look when the fic criticises its own motivations

> Judy threw her arms out and backed up a step.

> "Hey! You don't get to question my standards," V yelled,

Tsuneo: Is this going to turn into 'whose apartment is worse?'

> "I already feel like I'm selling my soul just to

> try an' live. Makin' deals with just about everybody I can.

Dan: Mephisto already promised her one more day

> So far Harry's been the only one here with

> me. Not just waiting for me to do something for them, or sittin' back givin' me empty platitudes while
> keepin' their distance."

> A hurt expression crossed Judy's face,

Rebecca [Judy]: Fine, no scuba diving for you

> but before she could respond, Vispy popped back into the

> room. She had a shallow basin that looked to be as wide as she was tall.

Rick: Why she'd bought a bedpan was another matter

> She let it float out of her

> hands and up to about chest height. Whatever liquid was in the basin was so still and silvery that it
> reflected the room perfectly.

Rebecca: But only actually worked if you used the interaction button

> "Is Master Harry needing anything else?" Vispy asked.

> "No, thank you Vispy," Harry said. Vispy nodded and disappeared. Harry clapped his hands

> together as he stood, "Well, not to be a mood killer

Dan: I think we passed that point long ago

> but I would like to show you all how this works."
> He stepped up to the basin and pulled out his wand.

> "What is it?" Evelyn asked. She had stood as well and approached the edge of the basin.

> "A pensieve,"

Rick: I got one of those because I thought it'd change my life. Ended up just gathering dust on the shelf

> Harry waved his wand over the basin, causing the surface to ripple and shimmer.
> Flashes of Harry, usually with a few other people, flitted in and out of existence.

Dan: Oddly enough including him shaking hands with Kim Jong-Un.

> "It's a way to store
> and view memories. I was going to show you one of mine. Get you used to the idea of it."
> "Like a BD?" Judy asked, her head tilted as she stared at the pensieve in reserved interest.
> "Sort of," Harry answered.

Rebecca: Though without the seizures

> "Though I understand Braindances are a lot more... pliable than actual memories are."

Dan: He said to the professional braindance editor.

> "How does it work?" V asked.

Rebecca: [V] Do I plug it in somewhere? Does it need batteries?

> She had approached the pensieve as well, her hand itching to reach
> out and touch the smooth surface of the liquid.

> "It's quite simple, really.

Rick: [Harry] First you get mercury poisoning.

You take a memory," Harry lifted his wand to his temple. There was a
> moment as his face scrunched in concentration. Then he drew his wand back. A silvery, thin thread
> was attached to the end of his wand and was being drawn out of his head.

Tsuneo: Oh yes, of course, it's that simple.

> It detached from his head and floated in the air like a single strand of spider silk.

Rick: Harry needs to dust inside his skull more often

> He pushed it down, "Then you place it in the pensieve."

Dan: It puts it in the pensieve or it gets the hose again

> As the strand of memory touched the surface, the liquid clouded up before resolving itself into an
> image. A small boy stood in what looked like a tent

Rick: It could have been a yurt

> with his back to them. He wore strange robes
> and had messy black hair, a familiar brown stick held in his hand.

Rebecca: Harry doesn't often talk about his early years as a concert conductor

> "Is that... You?" V asked.

> "Yep, my fourteen-year-old self, actually."

Tsuneo: This is the wizard equivalent of his awkward high school photo

> V's head snapped up, "Wait is this..." She trailed off as Harry nodded.

Dan: V can't wait to make fun of how much of a nerd he was.

> She looked back down, eagerness written on her face, "How do we view it?"

Rick: We can cast it to a compatible device. Got any crystal balls handy?

> "We can view it just like this," He gestured at the image. "Or we can view it from inside the
> memory."

> "How?" V asked, her eyes wide with excitement.

Rebecca: After all the people who have been through her head of late, V is eager to do it to someone else

> "Well, you just-" Harry suddenly dunked his head into the liquid.

Dan: [V] So you just drown yourself, huh?

> His body went still, with his face fully submerged.

Tsuneo: Like everything else Harry does, it's incredibly stupid.

> "Did he just do that," Judy asked as he crossed her arms. "I don't know how you deal with this
> gonk."

Rebecca: Judy, you make porn for a living. You have no room to talk

> "Generally, I just roll with it," V shrugged her shoulders and gave Judy a lopsided grin.

Tsuneo: V gave up on dignity a while ago.

> "Plus, come on... it was kinda funny."

Dan: I mean, it's not every day that you see the stupidest thing ever

> "Do you think he can breathe?" Evelyn asked as she leaned in to look over Harry's head.

Rebecca: [Judy] Do you think we could push him in?

> A quick scan with her kiroshi's had V fighting back a smile of her own. "It looks like he's asleep," she
> said in answer.

Dan: [Judy] I'll get his pants.

Rick: [Evelyn] I'll get the sharpie.

> "Seems to be breathin' just fine though."

Rick: To prove the point, Harry snored loudly, rolled over and scratched himself

> "Please tell me you're not actually considerin' this?"

> "I'm more than considerin' it," despite even the protest of Johnny in her head.

Tsuneo: V has taken to listening to everything that Johnny says and then doing the opposite

Rebecca: That's the best plan

> V walked around the pensieve, trailing a finger along its edge.

> Judy huffed, and mumbled under her breath, "Fucking of course you are."

> "Ah, come on, Jude, I know you wanna check out a magical BD,"

Rick: She makes BDs for a living and even she wants to skip them.

> V said in a pleading voice. "It'll be a learning experience."

Rebecca: Evelyn just had a learning experience. She'll pass.

> Judy huffed, blowing a few strands of hair out of her face, "Still don't know how I feel about all this.

> You really don't find this weird?"

> "I've got a dead rockerboy in my head," V tapped her temple.

Rick: He is literally living rent-free in her head.

> "My capacity for weirdness is far above what it probably should be."

Dan: You can't really argue with that

Rick: Do you think she would have done it if she had, say, a dead chartered accountant in her head instead?

> "For once I find myself agreeing with your little techie here," Johnny said.

Tsuneo: If she could hear that, Judy would suddenly think it was a fantastic idea.

> He was sitting on the kitchen counter, fiddling with his sunglasses. "Not sure if this is a good idea."

Tsuneo: Just remember that Johnny killed his own girlfriend while trying to rescue her and then nuked a city for revenge. His judgement is a little suspect.

> "Not too long ago you were chompin' at the bit for more info about Harry," V said.

Rick: Yeah, and then he got it.

> Both Judy and

> Evelyn gave her questioning looks that she waved away. "Sorry, Johnny had to have his say." She

> approached the pensieve, looking down into its depth. "I know you all have something to say but I'm

> doin' this."

Dan: V was determined to annoy everyone

> With that, V plunged her head into the pensieve. She felt herself fall for a second before landing on

> her feet. There was no impact on the ground, no knees bending like they usually did when she

> jumped off something.

Rick: Like all the time she spent pointlessly jumping on the spot during cutscenes.

> One second she was falling, the next she was standing next to Harry.

> "Took you long enough," He said.

Rebecca: [V] Aaand I already want to leave.

> "Thought I might have gone a bit too far with that last antic."

Tsuneo: [V] Would it kill you just to explain something for once?

> V gave him a flat look, a hand on her hip, though she could feel the corners of her mouth twitch
> upwards, "Really, don't know why people might be weirded out by you tryin' to drown yourself."

Rebecca: Most people do it in the ocean, not in their own kitchen

> Her eyes drifted to the second Harry.

Rick: [V] Dear god, they're multiplying.

> The first thing that came to V's mind was small. This Harry was a good foot shorter than she was.

Dan: As kids often are

> Scrawny too, considering the way his robes, while not overly large,
> still hung off his frame, giving him a scarecrow-like appearance.

Rick: The stash of fear gas and pumpkin bombs only emphasised the point

> V walked around the younger Harry till she was facing him.

Rebecca: [V] So if I gave him a wedgie now...

Tsuneo: [Harry] Doesn't work like that.

Rebecca: [V] Damn.

> His face looked much the same, though
> contained some of the awkwardness that teenage years usually did.

Dan: The point where he was alternating between acne and needing to shave

> The scar on his forehead was more prominent, though. More vivid than it was now.

Rebecca: Harry's secret? He uses lots of product

> There were also wire-framed glasses perched on his nose. Something that Harry didn't have now.

Dan: Charisma?

> The glasses dulled the green eyes to something less than V was used to seeing.

Tsuneo: Harry wore his sunglasses inside for no reason at all

> "You look..." V trailed off as she tried to find a word for what she was seeing.

> "Young, skinny, pale, like a stiff breeze could blow me over."

Dan: But with terrifyingly big shoulders

> "Scared."

Rick: They were visiting Hagrid again, only this time Hagrid offered to cook.

> V looked up at Harry, her Harry.

Dan: The one on the ad, as opposed to the one she got in the mail.

> He had an eyebrow cocked at her, the corner of his mouth

> upturned just slightly, "Well, you'd be right. I already knew I would be facing a dragon.

Rick: He knew that he needed more dots and to deal with the whelps

> Even had a plan in place.

Tsuneo: Screaming was a plan

> Sure didn't stop the fear."

Rick: Half the stadium was hoping he got gruesomely dismembered, and those were his friends.

> V nodded. She remembered feeling the same way for most of the jobs she would take on.

Dan: And by that she means she ran into the mission area, sprayed everyone down with indiscriminate gunfire and then picked up the quest item

> It was something she learned to deal with in time, even before she entered Night City.

Rick: She learned to fight dragons.

> Though it was

> something they had eased her into. Even if she had been doing jobs with her clan as soon as she
> could drive,

Rebecca: She counted delivering Uber Eats as 'doing a job'

> it was never anything that would put her life in serious danger. At least until she had
> proven herself capable.

> A feminine grunt drew their attention away from the young Harry.

Dan: That's Hagrid tuning up.

> Evelyn stood there with wide

> eyes as she looked around at her new surroundings. Judy appeared as well, seconds behind
> Evelyn.

Rick: Evelyn owes her twenty bucks.

> She looked around, her eyes quickly falling on the younger Harry.

Tsuneo: They both realised that they weren't going to contribute to the fic otherwise

> "This you?" She asked, pointing at the memory of him.

> "Yes," He answered with a nod.

Rebecca: [Judy] So if we give him a –

Tsuneo: [Harry] Why does everyone ask that first?

> "You're... so small,"

Rick: He only has the short child legs that don't bend at the hips.

> Evelyn said as she circled the memory Harry. She reached out to touch the
> memory, but her hand passed right through Harry.

> "You can't interact with the memory like that," Harry passed his hand through his younger self as
> well. "The only thing we can do is observe."

> "So we gonna just stand around starin' at you?"

Tsuneo: Why not? It's what the rest of the fic has been about.

> Judy had her arms crossed again, with an annoyed
> expression on her face. "You dragged us all here. Thought you wanted to show us something."

Dan: [Harry] Just this amazing time when I was incredibly cool, that's all.

Rick: [Judy] Figures.

> "Right, we should probably get started, shouldn't we," He raised his hand to snap his fingers. The
> roar of a crowd from somewhere outside the tent washed over the group. The memory Harry came
> to life, bouncing on the balls of his feet and absently turning the wand in his hand.

> A loud whistle sounded out through the tent,

Dan: Yabba-dabba-doo!

> making Judy and Evelyn jump at the sound.

Rebecca: V on the other hand was already at the concession stand.

> "What the hell was that?" Judy asked.

> But the memory didn't care if she got that answer. The young Harry had already started moving
> towards the tent flap, pushing it open with a shoulder as he disappeared through it. The older Harry
> gestured towards the flap, "Ladies first."

> The three ladies pushed the flap open,

Rebecca: So they can't interact with Harry, but they can with the tent he was in. I have a lot of
questions about how this works.

> revealing what laid beyond. A large arena spread out before
> them, with high walls enclosing the area they were standing in.

Rick: Don't want to get blood on the spectators.

> Row upon row of stadium-style
> seating rose above the main area, packed full of people.

Dan: Bad news is that Harry is about to fight a dragon. Good news is that it's not Quidditch

> The roar of the crowd drowned out everything else.

> That wasn't what they were focused on, however. Their eyes were locked on the massive dragon
> that was crouched at the other end of the arena.

Tsuneo: Benedict Cumberbatch in a surprising cameo.

> Its head alone was nearly as big as some of the
> personal AVs that V had seen flying around Night City.

Rebecca: But only as distant background objects

> Horns covered its body, especially its tail, which looked like a medieval mace.

Dan: In as far as it was round and on a stick.

> "She's a beauty, isn't she," Harry said from behind them. "A Hungarian Horntail.

Rick: Whatever. What Treasure Type does it have?

> Rather aggressive though."

Tsuneo: Beautiful plumage

> The memory Harry raised his wand and shouted out, "Accio Firebolt."

Rebecca: Yeah, we saw this movie. Can we get the cliff notes?

> This was enough to cause the
> Horntail to swing its head towards him. Its mouth opened and a gout of flame shot out.

Dan: To burninate all their thatched-roof cottages

> The memory Harry leaped out of the way, narrowly missing the fire.

> "What the fuck!" Judy yelled as she and Evelyn backpedaled away from the now glowing rocks.

> Harry chuckled, "Don't worry, a memory can't harm you."

Rebecca: Nice of you to let the fragile, post-traumatic victim know that ahead of time

> V's eyes stayed locked on the memory Harry as he darted between the rocks that littered the arena.

Tsuneo: [V] I mean, I know he's going to survive, since he's showing this as a memory, but I can hope a little.

> His head would occasionally dart to the sky, even as he dodged more gouts of flame from the
> dragon.

Rick: DEX Save, DEX Save some more...

> "What are you looking for," she asked.

> "My broomstick," Harry answered. "I knew I couldn't fight the dragon head-on.

Dan: For Harry had realised that he was conveniently snack-sized

> So I thought I might have more luck if I took to the sky."

Tsuneo: [Harry] Broomsticks fly, by the way. Did I forget to mention that?

> "Why are you fighting a dragon?" Evelyn asked.?

> "I wasn't technically fighting it," Harry pointed to a small nest between the dragon's feet.

Dan: [Judy] Sure looks like it's fighting you.

> "There's a golden egg in her nest. And I'm trying to grab it."

> "Why?" Judy asked.

Rick: I mean, why not? Some Sundays, you've just got to get out of the house and do something.

> Her eyes were still locked on the dragon as its head twisted around, trying to

> keep the memory Harry in view. "Why would anyone do this?"

Tsuneo: A question I have been asking about this fic for some time.

> "I got little a choice in the matter," Harry said with a shrug. "This was supposed to be an age-

> restricted tournament, considering how deadly it was. But I still got chosen. So I had to compete."

Rebecca: Wizards aren't big believers in opt-out clauses

> V had heard part of this before,

Rick: She was chewing on popcorn and cheering for the dragon.

> after Harry had finished his story of the event with the nomad kids.

Rebecca: Although he was at least a foot taller in that version.

> Judy and Evelyn hadn't and the expressions on their faces fell somewhere between horror and

> disgust. Kids were a strange subject in night City.

Dan: They tended to all look the same and wear identical clothes

> Often they were treated more like adults than

> kids, though they were still protected. Usually, by whatever neighborhood or gang they belonged to.

Rick: Or their parents' bodyguards.

> Suffice to say, if they ever caught anyone in Night City messing with kids, they would bring down the

> full wrath of the entire neighborhood upon their heads.

> You never messed with kids in Night City.

Rebecca: Besides which, they were protected NPCs

> A low whistle was heard from somewhere outside the arena. The real Harry pointed up to the sky at

> a small dot that was quickly getting bigger.

Rick: Meteor strikes were a common hazard in these sorts of things

> It coalesced into an odd-looking broomstick. The wood

> handle was polished and shaped more like the silhouette of a motorcycle than a broom.

Dan: In that it had wheels

- > The bristles

- > were swept back as well, giving the whole thing a streamlined appearance. Two metal prongs that
- > looked like footrests stuck out on either side.

Tsuneo: So we get a detailed description of a broomstick used in a memory sequence that's meant to serve as an example for another memory. Meanwhile, I vaguely recall V having brown hair.

Rebecca: Purple hair.

Tsuneo: There you go.

- > The memory Harry had just dodged more flames, his back against a boulder that was turning red
- > from the heat. As soon as the dragon stopped shooting fire, memory Harry was moving.

Rick: His Boss Mods meant that he knew the cooldown timers for the Dragons' abilities

- > He

- > scrambled over the small rocks before leaping into the air. The broom swooped underneath him at
- > the last second and he shot off again to avoid another jet of fire.

Rebecca: Suddenly wishing he wasn't clinging to a highly flammable stick of wood.

- > The memory Harry pulled the broom up, ascending far above them and out of the range of the
- > dragon's fire. "Why did you go so far up?" V asked

Dan: Turns out that the dragon has a fear of heights. Who knew?

- > as she craned her neck to keep the memory

- > Harry in view. She could barely make out where he was against the blue sky.

Tsuneo: Judy was still trying to figure out the camera controls.

- > "Just trying to get some perspective," Harry said. He walked over beside V.

Tsuneo: [V] Speaking of, shouldn't we be seeing your memories from your perspective? Like way up there?

Dan: [Harry] Hey, I don't make the rules here.

- > The memory Harry

- > dived before pulling up again, narrowly avoiding another stream of fire. "I knew I needed to get the
- > dragon to move away from her nest, but I didn't know how I was going to do that."

Dan: Did you consider putting her rent up so she was forced to move out?

- > "Great Scott he can fly," the announcer's voice boomed out around the stadium.

Rick: No wizard has ever done that before! We certainly don't have a whole sport centred around it!

- > "Mr. Krum, are you watching this?"

- > "It's like a game to them," Evelyn was turning on the spot, watching the surrounding crowd.

- > "Fucking sickos," Judy growled as the memory Harry took another dive. Once again he avoided the
- > fire, but wasn't so lucky with the tail.

Rick: [V] Yeah um, so we get how it works and all. Do we need to sit through all this?

- > It grazed him, ripping through the shoulder of his robes and

> nearly spinning him off course. "Thought corpo's were the only ones that enjoyed this kinda crap."

Dan: Corpo Lifepath V, anything to add?

> The memory Harry stayed low this time, flying back and forth across the arena. The dragon's head
> followed him, weaving back and forth through the air. "What are you doing now?" Evelyn asked.

Rebecca: It's not enough that we've got to sit here and watch what's basically an excerpt from a book.
It's that we've got to watch them stand around a watch an excerpt from a book.

> "Trying to get her to fly after me. Again I needed her away from the nest."

Tsuneo: Of course, she'd still be chasing you

Rebecca: His plan seemed better in his head

> The dragon, apparently annoyed with the flying nuisance, unfurled her wings. With two gigantic
> flaps, she was up in the air and flying after the memory Harry. He was already moving, however,
> diving past the dragon to scoop up the golden egg.

Rick: To make sure it'd work, Harry cast the 'look behind you' charm

> The crowd went wild, with the announcer
> screaming to be heard over the noise, "Will you look at that. The youngest champion is the fastest
> to get his egg.

Tsuneo: A twist that you only see in every shonen anime ever

> That'll certainly shorten the odds on Mr. Potter." The memory froze as the memory
> Harry dismounted his broom far away from the dragon.

> "Wha- What happened?" Judy spun around. "Why did it freeze like that?"

Dan: Harry's memories froze. He needs to reboot his head

> "End of the memory,

Rebecca: Mild concussion would do that.

> not much else happened after this," Harry walked over to stand beside the memory Harry.

Rick: [Harry] Can't believe I was such a geek.

> "Got my wounds treated with the other champions. Got my score, was tied for first
> place with Viktor Krum after this first task."

Rick: While Tottenham were lingering on the verge of relegation.

> "First task?" Judy's eyes widened, "You mean there was more of this shit?"

Dan: [Harry] Sure, I can show you the rest...

Others: NO!

> "Three tasks altogether," Harry nodded his head absently.

Rebecca: Hercules just snorts with derision

> "Spread throughout the year. I did pretty well for how young I was."

Dan: [Harry] Almost completely avoided grievous bodily harm.

> He gave another look around, a wistful smile on his face. "Well, we should probably head back up."

> He snapped his fingers, and the world lurched around them. It twisted into grey smoke as they
> ascended back up into their bodies.

Rick: So they all had their heads stuck in the same basin? Was there even room?

> All three women gasped for air, more out of reflex than any genuine need for oxygen.

Dan: Haha, oxygen's for losers

> They stumbled back from the pensieve, with V nearly tripping over the red
> chair in the middle of the room.

Rick: What moron left that there?

> "Everyone alright?" Harry asked from where he stood.

Tsuneo: [Judy] Only that I'm never getting this stuff out of my hair.

> He didn't appear to have the same trouble as
> the rest of them if the slight smirk he sported was any sign.

Rebecca: In this fic that's basically his default expression

> "Fuck you," Judy growled from where she was clutched onto the kitchen counter. "You couldn't have
> warned us?"

> "Nope," Harry said with as much giddiness as V had ever heard from him. "Think of it as a rite of
> passage."

Tsuneo: There you have it. In his own words, Harry's a jerk.

> "You mentioned other champions," V was still trying to process what she had just seen. "What
> happened to them?"

Dan: Also, who were they and what context do we have for any of this?

> Harry sighed, sliding out his wand again to wave it over the pensieve, "Most of them survived the
> tournament,"

Rick: That 'most' qualifier tells you all you need to know

> an image of a severe-looking man with a crooked nose and thick black eyebrows
> faded into existence, "Viktor Krum is still alive. Last I heard, he had a house somewhere in Bulgaria.
> My friend still keeps in touch with him occasionally."

Tsuneo: Which is basically Harry admitting that he doesn't care

> He waved his wand again and the image of a beautiful woman with platinum blonde hair replaced
> Viktor Krum, "And then Fleur Delacour, later Weasley. She died in twenty, thirty-seven.

Dan: Largely from being connected to the Weasleys

> A disease ripped through much of the magical world that was still around.

Rick: [V] Is that anything like the massive plagues in the regular world?
Tsuneo: [Harry] Oh no, ours was magical so it's much better.

> Killed a lot of people, though Veela and those with Veela heritage were the most affected.

Rebecca: It killed so many fanfic characters

> Thankfully her children survived, but she didn't make it."

> "And then there was Cedric Diggory,"

Rick: He moved to Gotham and became Batman

> a young man with a chiseled jaw and grey eyes

Dan: And a hint of sparkle.

> replaced the woman.

> "He died a few months after this memory. The first casualty in the Second Wizarding War."

Dan: He has a plaque in the Wizarding War Memorial in London

> Judy pushed away from the pensieve, "I need a fuckin' drink."

Dan: And that is *my* review of Death's Fixer.

> She opened one of her cupboards

> and pulled down a bottle of whiskey, "Your life sounds like shit by the way."

Rebecca: Judy has realised that her crappy childhood didn't feature any dragon chases and she feels strangely robbed

> "What happened to the firewhiskey," Harry asked having noticed the whiskey bottle wasn't the same

> one he had left a couple days ago.

Dan: Ironically they pawned it for booze

> "Drank it," Judy said before taking a large swig of the bottle. "It was preem stuff though, so thanks."

> Harry stared at Judy, eyebrow raised, then shrugged,

Rick: Seriously, what did you think would happen to it?

> spinning instead to Evelyn, "So what did you think?"

Rebecca: [Evelyn] She's right, it was good whiskey.

> "It was..." Evelyn paused for a moment. Her head tilted as she stared at the pensieve. "An

> interesting experience."

Rick: Really?

Dan: No.

> "Would it be something you'd be willing to try for your memories?"

Rick: Evelyn suddenly remembers her senior prom date and vigorously shakes her head.

> Evelyn nodded, "Although, I would have one condition." She looked at Harry,

Rebecca: If it means Harry isn't a total dick about it, then I'm in

> "I want to see what you talked about when you said you had someone in your mind."

Tsuneo: [V] Alright, but fair warning, he is far less interesting than you think.

> A/N: Hello all! This chapter kicked my but. Hate writing angst as I keep feeling like I'm either laying it
> on too thick or not thick enough.

Tsuneo: So here's an idea. Don't write angst.

Rick: Brilliant.

> Either way, I got through it. I will also be doing some sweeping edits across the fic again.

Rebecca: The fanfic equivalent of save-scumming

> Nothing super major, though I will be getting rid of mentions of Jackie's
> arch. I really want to include his funeral in this fic

Tsuneo: I can only assume that Mama Welles would not approve of Harry

Dan: It seems to be a fair bet

> so I had to do a bit of retconning.

Rick: Turns out that Harry was a Mutant all along

> Anyway, hope ya'll enjoyed the chapter. I'll see you in the future.

> ----

> Chapter 9: Down on the Street

> Evelyn had been the only one who had wanted to continue to view Harry's memories.

Dan: [Evelyn] These are really cool. Someone should make a seven-movie series of them with the last one split into two parts.

> V was sure Harry would have let them all view it,

Rebecca: Except for the bits with Moaning Myrtle.

> but something about using memories to learn about someone seemed wrong to her.

Tsuneo: She's been in Johnny's memories. No way she's doing that again

> Like trying to fix a car with a manual when the guy who built it was standing next to you.

Rebecca: Likely mansplaining every step of the way

> It felt too cold and clinical.

Tsuneo: She also suspected they were getting an edited highlight reel.

> V had always preferred to get to know people as they were. A holdover from her nomad days.

> Where you trusted your gut more than anything else.

Dan: Especially when it told you not to eat roadkill

> She had adapted as she worked in Night City,
> but old habits were hard to break. Especially now with Harry.

Tsuneo: She was not going to let the knowledge that magic was real and that there was an entire secret world of wizardry and fantastical creatures that she didn't know about change anything

> Everything she had learned about him so far had only raised more questions.

Rick: Questions like 'what's with that hair?'

> He didn't act like most people in the city

Rebecca: He didn't perform simple idle animations in an endless loop

> or even the ones outside of it. He acted more like those heroes that V
> remembered from campfire stories.

Dan: Usually after all involved had a few.

> Swooping in to save the day, fighting dragons and other
> monsters. It didn't help that he had fought an actual dragon.

Tsuneo: He was like somebody who fought dragons in as far as he had fought a dragon

> But he never boasted about it.

Rick: Harry Potter is the king of the humblebrag.

> Most people she knew would sing their own praises to anyone who
> would listen. They would definitely get a drink named after them in the Afterlife.

Dan: What would a Harry Potter be like?

Rebecca: It's the sort of drink that you enjoy at the time but regret the more you think about it

> It would have been
> everything Jackie would have wanted. It was everything Johnny had been.

Rebecca: It was everything Johnny claimed he had been.

> "Can we talk?" Judy's voice broke through the swirling thoughts.

Dan: [V] Depends. Is there booze involved?

> V looked up from her navel-gazing on the couch. Judy was standing in front of her, arms crossed
> more for her own comfort than anything else. "Sorry," V shook her head, "Yeah, we can talk."

Rick: V can always hit the skip button if she need to

> "Not here though," She shot a furtive glance at Harry and Evelyn.

> "I don't think they can hear us," V said.

> "V, please."

Tsuneo: [Judy] It's just that they look so silly like that, and it's really killing the mood.

> V sighed but nodded as she stood, "Yeah, alright. Need to talk to you too."

> Judy cast another look at Harry and EveylN before slinking through the doorway to her editing den.

Rick: Judy had it set up during lockdown with the idea she would be completely professional while there. Within a week she was working in her pyjamas and leaving dirty plates on the console

> V followed, her attention straying to the custom hardware Judy used for editing her BD's.

Tsuneo: [Judy] You have no idea what any of this does, do you?

Rick: [V] I do not.

> It all looked impressive to V's eyes, but considering what her own rig consisted of

Dan: Hell of a rig you got there

> it was probably better if she didn't judge.

> Judy closed the door and took a seat in her chair. V found herself a wall to lean on.

Rebecca: She had four to choose from.

> An

> uncomfortable silence descended on the two of them. Judy still hadn't turned her chair around to
> face V.

> "Ok so, usually when someone says they need to talk, they... You know... Talk," V said

Rick: Hold on, Judy's glitched again

> Judy slid something across her desk. It was small and shiny. It took a moment for V to recognize it

Rick: [V] It's a Lincoln dollar?

Dan: [Judy] Hold on, not that.

Rick: [V] You've got an old mood ring?

Dan: [Judy] Wrong one, sorry... Here.

Rick: [V] A sinker? You want to go fishing?

Dan: [Judy] No! Okay, got it this time.

Rick: [V] Sure, that's nice, but I'm not sure how a plastic tiara will help.

Dan: [Judy] Dammit!

> for a piece of cyberware. Even longer to identify the type of chrome it was.

Rebecca: It used to belong to Flaming Crotch Guy. Best if you don't ask what it was.

> "Found this after you two left the other day," Judy said. "Apparently your friend out there didn't just
> get rid of Evie's BD implant."

Rick: [Judy] Dumped it in the trash, can you believe it? Still got a good resale value.

> "And I'm guessin' you got something off it?"

Tsuneo: That'll happen if you don't wash before handling it

> "Yeah, I did," She turned her chair just enough to glance sideways at V. "You remember that
> ripperdoc? Fingers?"

> "Yeah, course I do."

Dan: Voted skeeziest guy in Night City three years running

> "He had EveyIn four days. But accordin' to Tom, she was out for a week before you turned up."

> "Yeah," Pieces started fitting together in V's mind. She didn't like the shape they were fitting into.

Rebecca: They looked like a dinosaur

> "Woodman," Judy said with more venom than she had ever heard her use. "Had three days where
> he did whatever he wanted to her till he was bored.

Rick: He made her beta-read his Naruto fanfic, the fiend.

> Then he pawned her off."

> "You saw that?"

> Judy started to nod her head, but stopped halfway through and shook it instead, "Kinda.

Tsuneo: [Judy] Read the cliff notes.

> The stuff I

> got was corrupted. Barely usable. I cleaned it up enough to get the gist of what was goin' on
> though."

> "Shit, I knew he was a sleazy fuck, but I didn't think he'd do something like that." V said.

> "Yeah, puts on a convincing facade.

Tsuneo: And you now you can trust a guy who runs a brothel. Completely above board there
Rick: Plus he had a fake Australian accent

> I knew him, but I never thought him that sick in the brain," Judy
> paused for a moment, chewing on her lip as she looked for the words to say. "I wanna do something
> about it... about him."

Dan: By this point, V would have killed him, looted his corpse and possibly shoved him in a nearby
rubbish bin

> "Like what?"

> "Dunno yet. Was gonna talk to Suze but... Pretty sure I'm on thin ice with her right now," Judy said.

Tsuneo: [V] Because of the job Evelyn was trying to pull?

Rick: [Judy] Oh no, completely unrelated. [Pause] Also don't look behind the couch.

> "Harry might-"

> "I don't want him involved," Judy spun around to glare at V.

Dan: This is a strict no-Wizard thing

> "This isn't his business. Besides, you heard him before, with his anti-revenge bullshit."

Rick: Winners don't do revenge

> "Judy..."

> "No, V. I know you trust him. That's fine. I don't though.

Dan: [Judy] He's just too British.

> And this is my business," Judy looked down at her hands. "I was hopin' I could trust you though."

Rebecca: When you've killed a factory load of murderous scavs together, you know who's got your back.

> V wanted to say that Judy could trust her. It was almost a gut reaction to respond that way. But she
> fought that down. Would it do any good to get involved with whatever Judy was planning? Time
> wasn't something she had a lot of.

Rick: Eh, you can do all the sidequests you want and you'll be fine

> Neville's words from the cliffside came back to her.

Dan [Neville]: Wow, we're a long way up

> About having the power to help.

Dan: And looking after Aunt May for him.

> She was sure this wasn't exactly what the old man had in mind when he told her this.

Rebecca: Neville's advice did not amount to "when in doubt, shank a bitch."

> But the sentiment applied itself well. Judy had been sucked into V's shit show of a life.

Dan: V would never again ask herself 'what could go wrong?'

> If V was dead in three weeks, she
> would be damned sure to at least leave those around her better off.

Rick: V's plan was to make a lot of charitable donations

> "Yeah, what do you need from me?"

> Judy let out a relieved sigh, "Don't know yet. Just needed to know you were on board. Got some
> details to work out first."

Dan: Those are the sorts of statements that should produce instant regret

> "Got any specific details you want to share?"

> Judy leaned back in her chair, "You know Clouds.

Rick: Hang up there in the sky, cause rain, sometimes form into funny shapes

> Evie thought she'd be safe there. You saw how far that got her. I'm glad she's alright,

Tsuneo: And still conveniently absent from the scene.

> but I can't just let that go. Can't stop thinking about the other dolls.

Rebecca: Skipper, Skooter, Christie, Nikki... even Blaine

> Pretty sure any one of them would get the same treatment. Can't let that happen."

> V whistled through her teeth, "You tryin' to start another Lizzies Bar Jude? That's a pretty tall order
> for one person."

Dan: [V] And frankly, I'm not that much of a bartender.

> "I know someone at Clouds who'll take our side," Judy said.

Rick: It's that Starscream guy. I'm sure we can trust him

> "When you planning on talking with this contact of yours?"

> "Tomorrow, in the morning. She'll be the only one there that early."

Rebecca: It's a strictly nine-to-five illegal brothel

> "I'm comin' with you then, how early you thinkin'?"

> "Before eight,

Rick: Maybe seven fifty-nine.

> was gonna sneak in, didn't want anyone else to know I was there."

Dan: Which is the usual approach of anyone going to a cathouse

> "How long have you been planin' this?"

> "Since you and your friend left," Judy crossed her arms.

Rick: [V] I didn't think you'd met my cat – Oh, you mean Harry.

> "Had plenty of time to think, waiting for Evie to wake up."

Rebecca: She finally got around to working on that book she was always going to write

> It didn't seem like Judy had much of a plan. She'd have to pull off some kind of miracle to take
> Clouds from the clutches of the Tyger Claws.

Dan: Or money. Lots and lots of money.

> That's what it took when the Mox fought back against
> them. And apparently, if the information Judy had grabbed out of their servers was true,

Rick: Bigfoot was the one who killed JFK. Judy had her doubts

> Harry had played some kind of role in that.

Tsuneo: For no adequately explored reason.

> Considering what V had seen him do so far, it was easy to imagine what the role had been.

Dan: He delivered pizzas for them

> "What about the Mox?" V asked.

Rick: Well, they help you practice for your finals, but they don't actually count for anything

> Judy needed more than a dying solo on her side if she was going to pull something like this off.

Tsuneo: V has to mention that she's dying every opportunity she gets.

Rebecca: I mean, I know it's a big thing for her and all, but come on! Get a life.

> "You planin' on getting them involved?"

> "Maybe," Judy said. "Wanna have some kind of plan in place 'fore I approach Suzy about all this."

Rebecca: Judy was already working on her PowerPoint presentation

> "Probably a good idea," V pushed off the wall. "I would like you to look at something for me though,
> 'Bout my situation." She pulled out the shard from her jacket and handed it to Judy.

> "What is it?" Judy asked as she inspected the shard. "I ain't gonna get a virus in my system 'cause
> of this will I?"

Dan: [V] Absolutely not. It's perfectly safe, I checked it myself, and besides, the last three times were all flukes.

> "Nah, it's the schematics of the relic," V pointed at her neck.

Rebecca: Judy is already lining up buyers.

> "Ya know the one that's killin' me."

Tsuneo: So it's totally loaded with viruses

> "Chrome ain't exactly my specialty," Judy said even as she slotted the shard into her computer.

Dan: [Judy] I mean, obviously I still know more than you.

Rick: [V] Hey!

> "I'll still take a look but... Don't get your hopes up."

> V found another place to sit as Judy went over the data.

Tsuneo: [Judy] Wiley's Jeep? The hell?

> It didn't take long for Judy to let out a low

> whistle and push herself away from her desk. "This is... Some real shit V.

Rick: Like premium grade garden fertiliser

> I barely understand most of it."

Rebecca: Why they wrote the specs in Sanskrit is another matter

> "But you can understand some of it?"

> "A bit. Seems almost like really primitive braindance tech,"

Rick: It's the spec for Google Glass

> Judy shook her head. "I'd have to look it

> over more to really be able to tell you anything. Do you need that shard back?"

Dan: [V] I mean, people died for it –

Rick: [Harry] No they didn't!

Dan: [V] – so yeah, I guess it's kind of important.

> "Yeah, I wanna show it to Vik, my ripperdoc, see what he can make of it," V said.

Tsuneo: [Vik] Reminds me of the time I went three rounds with "Bigfoot" Walker.

Rebecca: [V] It's a schematic for a biochip.

Tsuneo: [Vik] Boxing's a complicated sport.

> "Can I make a copy then? I'll need something to look over."

> V shrugged, "Yeah go ahead. Keep it overnight, I'll grab it from you in the morning."

Dan: The shard would sit under a pile of junk for months, completely forgotten

> There was a knock on the door causing the two women to whip their heads around. Harry's voice
> emanated from the other side, "You two ladies done in there?"

Rebecca: Harry needs to go and he's all out of teleport spells

> Judy scowled as she jumped up and slammed the door open, "The fuck do you want Juju man?"

Rick: Juju Man is where Judy gets her daily detox smoothie.

> Harry reeled back, raising his hands in the air, "Woah, just wanted to check. Evelyn and I are done.
> She's clean by the way."

Rick: Full rinse and shampoo

> Judy crossed her arms and leaned against the doorframe, "Well that's somethin' I suppose." There
> was a pause as she looked down to the floor and scuffed the carpet with her shoes.

Dan: Trying to build up a static charge before she shakes Harry's hand.

> "Thanks, by the way. For what you've done for Evie."

> Harry shrugged his shoulders, a wry grin on his face, "Just trying to be helpful."

Tsuneo: In the most smug and obnoxious way possible, of course

> "Nuh-uh," Judy pushed off the doorframe. "Don't start with that humble bullshit.

Rebecca: Firstly because you're terrible at it, and secondly because it's way too late.

> I ain't buying it for a second, not in this city."

Dan: Judy hates it when people are nice to her

> "As I may have pointed out before, I'm not from this city," Harry said.

> Judy shook her head as she brushed past him, "Don't push it Juju man."

> V stood, patting Harry's shoulder as she entered the main room,

Dan: [V] Down, boy.

> "So you said Evelyn was clean. That mean the Voodoo Boys aren't actually magic?"

> "Ah, actually..."

Tsuneo: So is anyone here not actually a wizard?

Rebecca: Maybe Nibbles. Maybe.

> "Apparently, while they didn't curse me, they did use magic to obscure themselves in my memory,"
> Evelyn said from her spot in the armchair.

Dan: [Evelyn] Now all I can remember is Kenneth Branagh in a silly cape.

> "Shit," Judy said.

> "So I could be walkin' into a Voodoo den now?" V said. "Well, that's just great."

Rick: Last time she went to a Voodoo den she kept getting funny looks from all the other patrons. It was so embarrassing

> "Good thing you have me then," Harry said. "Besides, Vodou practitioners are rarely dangerous.

Dan: But you provoke them and they will bite

> They mostly focus on tricking the senses and such."

Rebecca: Oh no! Not dangerous in the slightest!

> "Well, I can assure you the Voodoo Boys are dangerous," V said. She gave Harry a pointed look.

> "We're gonna need to tread lightly with them."

Dan: Smash cut to V kicking in the front door of the Grand Imperial Mall, guns blazing.

> "Why are you looking at me like that?"

> "You haven't really shown me a subtle side," V said.

> Harry spluttered, "I can be subtle. Maybe I've been so subtle you just haven't seen it."

Rick: Maybe his plan is to be so stupidly obvious that nobody believes him

Dan: Cunning

> "Says the guy with a flying motorcycle."

> Judy snorted from her spot on the couch, "Really? Thought you said you rode broomsticks?

Rebecca: [Judy] Sounds really uncomfortable.

Tsuneo: [Harry] I mean, they tend to ride up and – hey!

> A flying motorcycle is almost preem."

Dan: Imagine if you could make a flying sofa

Rick: You could be a literal couch surfer

> V's holo rang as Harry tried to formulate a response.

Tsuneo: No, Lester, I'm not interested in your next heist right now. Nor do I want to buy an arcade

> Takemura's name popped up in her hud. She

> turned away from the group and answered the call.

> "V? Can we talk? It is important," Takemura said as soon as the connection had been secured.

Dan: Takemura wants to know what the local dumpling scene is like.

Rick: And that's important?

Dan: Life or death important!

> "Yeah, just give me a sec," V switched the line, putting Takemura on mute, before addressing the
> room. "Gotta take this call."

> "More leads?" Harry asked

Rebecca: [V] No, just my dry cleaners.

> "Yeah, it's Takemura," V said as she moved towards the door. "Sorry to just bail on ya Judy. I'll keep
> in touch." She saw Judy nod slightly before she slipped through the door.

Dan: [Deep] She was never seen again.

> She switched the line back to Takemura, "Alright I'm free. What's so important?"

Rick: [Takemura] These napkins. How do they fold them into swans?

> "I may have found a solution... to the problem we share," Takemura said.

Rebecca: Nothing to do with the relic. They both have the same fungal toenail infection.

> V skipped down the steps, nearly barreling through people

Dan: Hey, I'm performing looped idle animations over here!

> as she got out of the apartment building as he continued, "I
> have established contact with an old friend from Arasaka.

Rick: [Takemura] We are going drinking. He owes me a round.

> He is here in Night City now. He is well-connected to certain influential people."

Tsuneo: Like Ted from Accounts

> "Alright," V said as she stepped outside. "You're bein' more cryptic than normal.

Rick: He's drunk with added power – it goes to one's head. Six letters. Hm.

> How exactly is this gonna help us?"

> "There will be a meeting, you, me, and this friend of mine.

Dan: [Takemura] Bring your cat. This is important.

> You will tell him the truth about what happened at Konpeki plaza."

Dan: And where they got that warthog from

> "And this friend of yours will believe this?"

> "I have little hope for that. But it will be a start."

Rick: [Takemura] Oh, and I am mostly sure that I am not leading you into a trap.

Tsuneo: [V] Mostly sure?

Rick: [Takemura] Somewhat sure.

> V leaned against Harry's motorcycle, her arms crossed, "Of all people you oughta know, Night City
> tests everyone's reliability. Even that of old friends.

Rebecca: Like when you gave your bank details to your elderly aunt and she cleared you out.

> Sure about this guy? Trust him?"

> "Many times we have had the opportunity to kill one another,"

Tsuneo: Not helping

> Takemura paused as he rethought his words. "Yes... I trust him."

Rebecca: You trust him to try and kill you

> V sighed. She didn't like the way this sounded, but at the moment she had little choice,

Rick: It's that point in the investigation where leads have dried up, you know there's a piece of the picture you're not seeing and the chief is riding you to put this to bed because his arse is on the line.

> "Fine, when and where?"

> "Japantown. After sunset. I am sending you the precise location,"

Dan: Wait, that's just where he found a Poliwhirl. Never mind.

> The coordinates popped up on V's hud. "I will see you there."

> With that, Takemura ended the call, giving V no chance to clarify what he meant by after sunset,

> "Great, well there goes tonight."

Rick: She was all psyched up for another round of beer pong with Nibbles

> "You sound frustrated," Harry said from behind her.

Rebecca: [V] Just a minute's privacy. That's all I'm asking!

> "Thank you captain obvious," V snarled. She took a quick breath in an attempt to quell the anger

> that Johnny had pushed onto her. "Sorry, just... Johnny doesn't like the idea of working with a

> corpo.

Rebecca: She's also learned that he doesn't like artificial sweeteners, flatpack furniture or the Outer Hebrides. Johnny will use any opportunity to run his mouth off

> I don't either, but he has decidedly stronger feelings about it."

Rick: [V] He says we're not going to this meeting without backup or a nuclear device. I think Johnny's a little obsessed.

> "That's fucking putting it lightly," Johnny said. He materialized against the building, a cigarette

> already in his mouth. "I'm just waiting for the sudden but inevitable betrayal."

Dan: And that's why Johnny was barred from family dinners

> "For once we're in agreement," V said.

Tsuneo: Treasure this moment, as it will never happen again.

> "Especially after learning about the Augurey and everything
> that entails." She let her gaze wander over Harry as he leaned beside her against the bike.

Rebecca: [V] Anything you know that you care to share with us?

Tsuneo: [Harry] Nope.

Rebecca: [V] You actually don't know anything?

Tsuneo: [Harry] That's not what I said.

> "Didn't
> know about any of that till I met you. And it seems pretty important to everything, so why didn't he
> mention it before."

Tsuneo: It's almost like it's been crudely forced into the story or something

> "He might not have known, though considering his position..."

Rebecca: He's a bodyguard. His main jobs are to open doors and punch out photographers

> Harry trailed off as he stared into the distance.

Dan: [V] What are we looking at?

Rick: [Harry] Shush, I'm trying to be deep and meaningful.

> "It's highly fucking unlikely," Johnny finished for him. "Wouldn't put it past the corpo bastard to have
> kept that information back just for the last laugh."

Dan: And so, as he lay on his deathbed, surrounded by his grieving relatives, Takemura admitted that he knew about the Relic all along

> "I doubt that's the reason," Harry shot back at Johnny. "Did you want me to come with? Or make
> myself scarce?"

Rebecca: How about 'not be an obnoxious prat'?

Tsuneo: I think that's asking a but much

> "You said you wanted to meet Takemura didn't you?" V asked. Harry nodded in agreement. "Then
> you should be there, though... Can you hide till after we have this meeting with whoever Takemura
> is in contact with?"

> Harry's grin grew, "I have a few things up my sleeve."

Rick: Harry spent the entire evening lurking behind a dumpster. He never said it was a good plan

> The coordinates Takemura had given V lead her to a backroad on the west end of Japantown.

Dan: It was a noodle bar, and frankly, V wasn't surprised any more.

> The
> water of Monterey Bay was calm this far inland. The neon lights of night City offered no illumination
> this far down.

Tsuneo: Light only ever goes up

> A piece of trash blew across the pavement like a tumbleweed in those old westerns
> that used to be popular.

Rebecca: As opposed to nowadays when people just watched a few seconds of the Wild Bunch on an endless loop

> V fiddled with the necklace Misty had made for her. Turning it this way and that, watching how the
> suspended bullet moved around in the makeshift holder.

Rick: Misty had an Etsy store filled with this sort of crap

> It was weird to think that this was the thing
> that almost ended her. That it had technically ended her. Yet she survived, thanks to a piece of tech
> that was now killing her.

Dan: V isn't grateful for much, but mostly that Dexter was a lousy shot.

> What did it mean to be killed by the thing that saved you?

> "Knut for your thoughts?"

Dan: What's a Knut?

Rick: Well, when you tie two bits of string together...

> Harry asked from where he stared out over the bay.

> V clenched her hand around the bullet. She gave Harry a sidelong glance before tucking the
> necklace underneath her shirt, "Nothin' important. Just soul searching."

Tsuneo: Please fic, no more wangst

> "I often find soul searching brings the most important thoughts,"

Rick: [Harry] Of course, in my world it's a lot more literal.

> He pulled out a small stone from
> somewhere and flicked it across the small section of the bay. The two of them watched as it skipped
> three times before disappearing under the water.

Tsuneo: [V] We're that bored, are we?

Rebecca: [Harry] Yyyup.

> "In that war, you fought in," V leaned against the railing next to Harry. "Did you ever come close to
> dying?"

Rick: Every couple of chapters

> The stone came flying out of the river and into Harry's hand before he answered, "I did die." Again
> he flicked the stone out.

Dan: [Harry] Hey, look! I've found a new way to show off.

Rebecca: [V] What, that you died?

Dan: [Harry] I mean, the stone, but that too.

> "What does that mean?"

> "Exactly what it sounds like," The stone came back. "There's a set of curses that are called
> Unforgivable. One of them is a killing curse."

Rebecca: The curse of fatal death

> He flicked the stone out again. "Three guesses what it does."

Rick: It... causes your hair to fall out?

Dan: No.

Rick: It... gives you terrible flatulence.

Dan: No.

Rick: It. Ah... no, I got this... ruins your credit rating.

Dan: Forget it.

> "Yeah, don't need that many," V said. "I'm guessing you were hit with said curse?"

Tsuneo: Well, he probably wouldn't be telling you about this otherwise.

> How'd you survive?"

> "Well," The stone got thrown again. "The first time-"

> "Wait the first time?"

Rebecca: Harry gets killed a lot

> "Yes now hush, you'll distract this old man's brain,"

Rick: He needs a Werther's to keep going.

> The stone thwacked into Harry's palm. "Now the

> first time, I actually don't know much about what happened. I was one at the time."

> V scowled, "Fuck, who wants to kill a kid."

Dan: It depends on if it's your turn to change and feed them.

> "His name was Voldemort, well," Harry paused and gave V a wry look. "Technically his name was

> Tom Riddle,

Rebecca: With a name like that, a career of supervillainy is basically a given

> but he called himself Voldemort. It was a whole thing."

Rick: So he had an alias with the initial V, huh?

> "Ok so why did this Voldemort want to kill a baby?" V asked.

Dan: [V] I mean, killing you know, yeah. I totally get that. Could even chip in on it.

Rick: [Harry] Hey!

> "Or was he just trying to kill your parents and you were caught in the crossfire?"

Rebecca: He got a bit carried away with his explodo spell.

> Things like that happened all the time. Especially during some kind of war.

> Harry shook his head, "Nope, though that would be a fair assumption. But he entered that house

> with the sole purpose of killing me.

Dan: He'd gotten sick of the baby photos splattered all over Facebook.

> My parents were the collateral damage. But that's not important to this story."

Tsuneo: He killed my parents, but that's not important

> "Fine, so Voldemort goes to kill you using this killin' curse and what?"

Rebecca: [V] Seems like overkill. I mean, I would have just gotten a pillow and... Sorry, not helping.

> Harry again flicked the stone across the bay, "It backfired killing him instead. And leaving me with
> this scar." He lifted the hair that fell across his forehead, revealing the lightning-shaped scar that sat
> there. The same scar that seemed to be the main way people recognized him.

Rick: But it still wasn't accepted as a valid proof of age

> "Why?" V snatched the stone before it returned to Harry's hand.

Dan: She'd chuck it away, but she's worried that would just make it worse.

> He pouted at V for a second, before sighing and continuing his story, "Well, no one really knows for
> sure.

Rebecca: Quite literally, a wizard did it.

> The most accepted answer was my mother doing something to protect me. There's an odd
> phenomenon when it comes to magic.

Rick: One known as 'he who smelt it, dealt it'

> If someone were to sacrifice themselves to protect another
> person, then that person is protected from the magic of the attacker.

Rebecca: The 'girl germs, no returns' principle

> Usually, it protects them from small things. Minor curses and jinxes that sort of thing."

Dan: And that's why Harry never got stuck with static cling

> "So your mother sacrificed herself for you then?" V flicked the rock out, causing it to skip four times.
> "Seems pretty straightforward."

> "Except, that kind of magic only protects from minor things. Not unblockable killing curses,"

Rebecca: Slight difference between those and tickling charms.

> The
> stone flew back to Harry's hand. He handed it to V this time. "My mother would have had to find a
> way to amplify that effect.

Tsuneo: So she plugged her wand into a loudspeaker

> Unfortunately whatever she did was destroyed in the blast of the spell backfiring."

Rick: In short, aaaah, boom.

> "Still," she threw the stone again. "Just because no one knows exactly what she did doesn't mean
> she didn't do anything."

> Harry shrugged, "It's still one of those questions about my life I'll never get a true answer for.

Rebecca: And do yourself a favour; never ask JK.

> But there is one thing I do know about that night."

Dan: It was snowing. Nothing to do with anything, but there you go

> Harry spun around to lean back on the concrete block that sat near the edge of the bay, "When that
> spell backfired on Tom,

Rick: I suppose one of the big reasons to come up with a spooky alias like Voldemort is so people don't go around calling you 'Tom.'

> it broke off a piece of his soul, which latched onto me, turning me into a Horcrux."

Rebecca [V]; So am I actually doing anything in this fic any more?

Tsuneo [Harry]: Not now, I'm expositing

> That explained why Harry was around now. He had prior experience.

Tsuneo: Also helps give context for what they said about the biochip, but I'm guessing that's not important.

> V hung her head, letting her hair hide her face from him, "And the second?"

Rick: The second time you got killed to death.

> "That was at the end of the war," Harry said,

Dan [Harry]: So there was this bunker in Berlin...

> "Tom had returned three years before, and I had just
> spent a year hunting down the rest of his Horcruxes."

Rick: Along with the heavy water, radioactive crystals and meteor dust

> "He had more than one?"

> "Seven, well, eight including myself," Harry said.

Dan: Plus the super secret ninth one that you can only unlock after getting a hundred percent on all the collectables

> "The fact that I was a Horcrux was important.

Rick: It gave him the legal authority to officiate wedding ceremonies

> Because the only way to destroy a Horcrux is to destroy the object containing it beyond magical
> repair."

Dan: [Harry] You know, drop it into a volcano, that sort of thing.

> V remained silent as she fought to keep Johnny from popping out.

Tsuneo [Johnny]: Blah blah blah. You can read this all on the Harry Potter wiki

> He seemed to react harshly to

> what Harry was saying if the rage bubbling inside her was any indication.

Rebecca: Johnny's just embarrassed because he legitimately thought the Death Eaters were a metal band

> Admittedly the direction

> she thought Harry was heading didn't fill her with confidence for her own situation.

Dan: [Harry] I mean, that's an obvious downside. Upside is, we wait a few weeks and the problem solves itself.

> "Anyway, we ended up at Hogwarts to find the last of his Horcruxes," Harry's voice had gone soft.

Tsuneo: V is mentally checking her chronometer and wondering where Takemura got to.

> "He found out I was there, so he launched an attack. And during that attack, I found out what I was."

Rick: An old rubber figurine he got from a vending machine. Weird choice, but there you go

> "What did you do?" It was a question V could already guess the answer to. But she had to ask it.

Rebecca: She knows he's going to tell her either way, so she might as well get it over with.

> Harry looked up into the washed-out sky that laid beyond the towering buildings.

Rebecca: The skybox is lovely tonight

> "I walked into the middle of his camp.

Rick: Bought some stuff from his vending machine and used his workbenches

> And let him kill me.

Tsuneo: This plan did seem better in his head

> Ironically thanks to the Horcrux he unknowingly left in my

> head as well as my mother's lingering protection I ended up coming back."

Rebecca: But please Harry, don't mention the gross Voldemort foetus

> V turned to Harry but before she could voice her thought, the low rumble of an engine broke through
> the night air.

Rebecca: [V] Oh thank god. I mean, continue.

> A white van approached the pair, its headlights dimmed so as to not attract attention.

Dan: You're meeting on the waterfront in the middle of the night. You're a bit past conspicuous already

> "Looks like he's here you'll want to," V's voice died in her throat once she noticed Harry was already
> gone. A quick scan with her kiroschi's showed no obvious heat signatures like what sometimes stuck
> around with stealth tech.

Rick: If your stealth tech can be beaten by the cybereyes that every man and his dog has, then maybe it's not that good

> There was a tap on her shoulder and Harry's voice whispered in her ear, "I'm still here. Just be
> natural."

Rick: [V] Yeah, you're really helping with that.

> V shrugged his hand off her shoulder just as Takemura stepped out of the van. He looked worse
> than V remembered. Eyes sunken in, slouched posture, dirty coat.

Rick: She was worried that he'd hit her up for change

> "It is good to see you V," Takemura said. He sounded tired to V. Which made sense considering the
> state he seemed to be in.

Dan: Well, he looks tired and he sounds tired... Could it be that...

> "What the hell happened to you. You look close to awful,"

Tsuneo: Only about eighty percent awful tops

> V said as Takemura leaned up against an old concrete barrier.

> "You see a man robbed of his implants, money, and dignity,"

Dan: Upside, he's still got this sweet coat

> Takemura tilted his head to look at V. "Look well." He sighed and shook his head, "It is not all bad.

Tsuneo: They stopped pushing ads into his optics.

> I am mostly unnoticed in the streets."

Rick: He blends in with the other insane hobos

> "So when's your friend getting here?"

> "Oda? He should be here any moment now."

Rebecca: I'd say he's being fashionably late, but fashion passed us by long ago.

> V leaned against the railing again, "Alright, so while we wait, you willing to finally give me the spec
> on him?"

Dan: You'll meet him in this scene and then fight him as a boss later. That's about it.

> Takemura looked over at V, regarding her with his usual cold stare, "He is Hanako-sama's
> bodyguard."

Tsuneo: That doesn't seem to be the most promising career at the moment.

> That got V to bolt back to her feet, "Wait, Hanako Arasaka? From the carrier at anchor in the bay?
> Saburo's daughter?"

Rick: Actually it's Hanako Jones, the TV chef. Everyone makes that mistake.

> "Yes," Takemura remained calm in the face of V's frantic questioning,

Dan: And no, you can't have her autograph.

> "And if he believes you, we will next meet with her."

Rebecca: And then your resume will be sent to HR who will speak to your references.

> "Oh that's good, and what's to stop her little errand boy from selling us out?"

Dan: A higher bid.

> "He will not do that. He is a man of honor."

> V gritted her teeth, "Right, 'cause Arasaka's ranks are chock-full of those."

> Takemura shot a glare at V, "Do not confuse true honor with the petty morals by which you live."

Tsuneo: Need I remind you Takeura that you're trying to prove that Yorinobu killed his own father. You really don't have a good case.

> He

> looked over V's shoulder, ignoring her reaction. "By car, huh? A good sign. He is usually

> camouflaged."

Rick: Usually he choses a less conspicuous mode of transport, like a unicycle

> The car Takemura's contact was using growled past them. It flipped around, showing off more

> maneuverability than V was used to seeing in a car of its size.

Dan: Yes, okay, you have a sweet ride but is this really the time to show it off?

> She held her arm in front of he eyes

> as the headlight threatened to blind her. Apparently, Oda didn't care about being seen.

Rebecca: It's so the kill squad can follow him.

> A man stepped out of the car, dressed in a clean business suit. He was followed by a woman.

> Takemura stiffened as she seemed to flow out of the car.

Tsuneo: She spilled over the doorframe and pooled on the concrete.

> Dark hair, that V could tell had once been

> dyed silver by the faded tips, framed her aristocratic features. A dark blue dress outlined in silver

> hugged the woman's body

Rebecca: She immediately regretted wearing it to a clandestine waterfront meeting.

> with a matching blue cloak that was draped over one shoulder.

Rick: At this point, she's basically screaming 'I am an evil wizard' to everyone around her.

> Something about her put V's nerves on edge as well. Though she looked no different than any other

> corpo V had seen.

Rebecca: Although she was sure Takemura would wear that dress better.

> Something in the back of her mind was screaming at her to run.

> As V looked into the woman's brown eyes, she felt a kind of pressure build inside her head.

Tsuneo: She had massively overdone it on the perfume and the stink was getting to V.

> She felt

> Harry tap her shoulder and urgently whisper into her ear, "Look away now." V looked down at the

> pavement. The pressure that had built, disappeared as soon as she did.

Dan: Better throw some salt over your right shoulder to be sure.

> In a softer tone, Harry whispered, "Don't look her directly in the eyes."

Rick: It's a sign of aggression. Do you want to get shivved?

> Slowly, V brought her gaze back up, being sure to follow Harry's direction. She focused on the man
> who now stood in front of her and Takemura. He bowed to Takemura as he spoke, "Takemura-san."

> "Oda," Takemura said, though he didn't bow back. "Why have you brought her along."

Rebecca: She's his plus one. Would have been awkward to show up without a date

> "Insurance," Oda said.

Tsuneo: [Oda] She's a claims adjustor. Follows me everywhere.

> He gestured to V. "Is this her? Your thief?"

> "She is my witness, V," Takemura said,

Rick: That's why she's in an Amish dress

> nodding his head towards V.

> "Can speak for myself you know," V said.

Rebecca: The fic thus far says otherwise.

> She was sure the two of them would have kept talking as
> if she wasn't there. As it was, her outburst drew the attention of both Oda and his unknown
> companion.

Tsuneo: Facial recognition on V's optics lists her as Anne Onymous.

> V could feel the woman's eyes on her even though she refused to meet the woman's gaze.

Dan: I'm averting my eyes, O Lord

> Oda turned his impassive gaze to V, "So speak, I have been told you know things."

Rick: V is amazing at pub trivia

> V matched Oda's cold stare with one of her own, "Was there. Saw what happened. Yorinobu
> strangled the old guy-"

Dan: And yet, it wasn't the most awkward family dinner they'd ever had either

> "Silence. Not one word more," Oda interrupted V.

Tsuneo: Speak but, you know, don't speak.

> He took a step forward and pointed at her. "You will bring death to your door."

Rick: It's a mister Death. He's here about the reaping

> "But it is the truth!" Hanako-sama must hear it," Takemura said.

> Oda didn't seem to care,

Rick [Kid]: I don't care

Tsuneo: Why doesn't Oda care?

> "My one concern is to keep her safe in this city forgotten by the gods."

Rebecca: Lousy pantheon won't even return their calls

> Takemura paced in front of V as Oda spoke. V could see his jaw clench in frustration that came out

> in his voice when he spoke again, "Is she in danger?"

> Oda shook his head, "Now? No.

Dan: [Oda] Not as long as her bodyguard is by her side... I should go.

> Yet during the parade to honor Arasaka-sama? Most certainly."

Rick [Oda]: I mean there might be clowns there or giant balloon animals

> "I bring you this witness to his murder," Takemura again turned to V, using his whole body to

> gesture at her

Rebecca: [V] Hey, I'm still here.

> before turning back to berate Oda more. "And you dare to worry about a silly parade?

Tsuneo: The Macy's Thanksgiving Parade is a tradition, thank you very much

> Fool!" His voice rose louder with his last word, nearly shouting at Oda.

> Oda still kept his straight posture, refusing to rise to Takemura's bait,

Dan: Takemura kept dangling a string in front of his face, just in case.

> "Correct. Unlike you, I have not yet failed to keep my oath to do my duty ."

Rebecca: In all fairness to Takamura, his boss did ask him to leave the room first.

Dan: I can only assume that he and Adam Smasher were chilling in the lobby or sipping cocktails in the hotel bar or something

> V had enough of the two men's contest of wills.

Rebecca: She figures they're seconds from whipping them out and measuring them.

> She interrupted Oda's jab at Takemura, "But you can't ignore the truth!"

Rick: Imagine if Poroit or Miss Marple had been staying at Kompeki Plaza at the time. Everything would have been nicely resolved by now.

> "The truth?" The woman spoke, her voice like silk and tinged with a similar accent to Harry's.

Dan: Which V could only define as 'foreign'

> "The truth is what we define it as, little thief."

Tsuneo: [Woman] Also, I don't have any evil plans.

> V stiffened, still refusing to look the woman in the eyes. Though she did see the sickly sweet smile
> that spread across the woman's thin lips.

Dan: She's got a massage booked for the morning and she's really looking forward to it.

> "Pretty sure this case, the truth is cut and dry," V said. "Not much you can change about a son
> killing his father."

Rebecca: Anything to add there, Freud?

> "Perhaps," The woman said. "But considering there were only two witnesses or well. Only one now."

Tsuneo: [Woman] Although I would like to point out that I don't have any evil plans.

> V gritted her teeth. I wouldn't do any good to go off right now. They were trying to end this without a
> fight after all.

Dan: Smash cut to the four of them deep in their cups and playing 'Truth or Dare.'

> No matter how much that dig at Jackie made V want to punch the woman in the mouth.

Tsuneo: Without looking at her, of course

Dan: Took some doing

> "That is enough," Takemura stepped in front of V again. "You have no business being here kijo."

> "I have every right to be here as Arasaka-sama's trusted advisor," The woman said.

Rebecca: Her and his similarity trusted advisor, Grima Wormtounge

> "You filled his head with lies and deceit."

Rick: And that's why the Arasaka corporation poured all its money into Bitcoins

> "I gave him everything I promised," The woman folded her arms.

Dan: Which is how Arasaka came to lead the market in automated hairstylers

> "It is not my fault he met an... Unfortunate end.

Tsuneo: [Woman] Also, and just to nip this in the bud in case there are any misunderstandings, I cannot possibly overstate that, despite initial appearances and perhaps poor choice of introductions, I don't have any evil plans.

> In fact, some would say, that as his bodyguard that responsibility would have fallen to you."

Rebecca: In short, Takemura, you had one job...

> Takemura took a step forward, causing the woman to draw a thin white wand. V grabbed
> Takemura's arm while putting a hand on the pistol tucked in the small of her back.

Rick: Takemura's wondering why everyone's jumpy about a stick.

> A movement that the woman noticed, considering the way her smile turned predatory.

Tsuneo: Don't show fear in front of wizards or else they will bite

> "Well, it seems the little thief is more well informed than I thought," The woman turned her wand to
> V. "Tell me, who have you been talking with."

Rebecca: [V] Mostly Regina. She is a sexy beast.

> When V didn't respond the woman sighed, "Very well. Look at me."

Dan: [V] Can't.

Rebecca: [Woman] Because you're afraid?

Dan: [V] No, 'cause your makeup is nasty.

> The words wormed their way into V's brain. A sense of bliss settled over her and a voice that
> sounded like hers whispered to her. It promised that there was nothing to fear.

Rick: It promised warm beds and marshmallows.

> That all of this would be over if she just looked. All she had to do was look into the woman's eyes.

Rick: And next thing she knew, she was a starbaby

> "WAKE THE FUCK UP," Johnny's voice roared in her head, stopping her before she followed the
> voice's instructions.

Dan [Johnny]: In the advent of cabin depressurisation, oxygen masks will drop from the ceiling. Place
the mask over your mouth and nose and secure it firmly.

> The bliss washed away to be replaced by a deep sense of violation.

> "Stay the fuck outta my head," V growled at the woman.

Tsuneo: Frankly, she's got enough people in there already.

> The woman was unperturbed by her failure. If anything she seemed gleeful, "Oh you are an
> interesting one aren't you?"

> "Enough of this," Takemura said. "Are you going to help or not?"

Rick: Wrenching the fic back onto the plot...

> "No, I will not," Oda replied. "What I will do is allow you both to leave this place, this city, unharmed.
> But if I see either of you again, I will kill you."

Dan: Well that went better than I expected

> With that Oda spun on his heel and walked away. The woman followed, tucking her wand back into
> her sleeve.

Tsuneo: And flashing a 'loser' sign at V.

> Before she got in the car she shot a glance towards V and smiled, "I suspect I'll be
> seeing you again, little thief."

Rick: Unless the fic is abandoned at the end of this chapter.

> She slipped into the car, closing the door behind her with a thunk. It
> drove off leaving Takemura and V alone.

Dan: [Takemura] So! Who's for noodles?

> Before Takemura could speak, V was talking, "Who the hell was that?"

> "She is of no importance," Takemura said, turning away from V.

Tsuneo: She is a completely unimportant evil wizard

> "Really now?" V stomped over to Takemura. Slamming a hand onto the door of his van as he tried
> to open it. "Cause if she's who I think she is."

Rick: She's one of the X-Men, right?

Tsuneo: Wrong crappy crossover.

> "And who is that?" Takemura's eyebrows knitted together.

Dan: Really, do tell. He'd like to know himself.

> He obviously didn't like this line of questioning. That only made V want to push further.

> "The Augury."

Rick: You know, Jake Rockwell's drill-themed vehicle that appeared in a couple of episodes but the toy was never released

> Takemura stiffened again. A scowl crossed over his face before he was able to school his feature,
> "Where did you hear that name?"

Rebecca: It was the title of the sixth chapter

> "Hellman," V said. "In fact. He was the one to tell me she worked on the chip in my head. You know,
> the chip that's killing me. Apparently, she worked some magic on it. Not only that but she shoved
> Johnny's soul onto it."

Tsuneo: But due to the current state of the global supply chain, they don't have nearly enough to meet demand

> "You seem very well informed on this topic," Takemura said.

Rick: Of course he knows about magic. Is there anyone in this city who doesn't know about magic?

Dan: Only Brendan the vending machine, and he was dangerously close to the truth.

> He stepped closer to V, encroaching
> into her personal space. "Where are you getting this information?"

Dan: She's been paying attention to the fic. Or at least, more than we have.

> "Me," Harry said as he pulled off what looked like a cloak. It disappeared into his coat before V
> could get a good look at it. Takemura whispered something under his breath as he looked at Harry.
> The man had taken a step back. "I'm guessing you know me?"

Rick: [Takemura] You're Weird AI Yankovic!

> "Shi no masuta."

Rick: Bless you

> "Really don't like that name," Harry said with a shake of his head. "Makes me out to be something

> I'm not."

Tsuneo: Japanese, he means

> Takemura ignored him, "This is the company you keep V?

Rebecca: I'm not sure if that's more insulting to Harry or Jackie.

> "Yeah, it is," V said. "Considering he doesn't keep shit from me that affects me."

Dan: [V] I mean, he has. Constantly. And probably is. But still.

> "You do not understand-"

> "No fuck that!" V yelled, finally allowing Johnny's rage to bleed into her own. "I understand enough.

> You were keeping key information about my condition to yourself.

Rick: The chip was the cause of her ingrown toenail

> And you had no intention of letting me know either!"

Tsuneo: Why wouldn't he trust the criminal that stole his company's most secret project?

> "It was not-"

> "What? Not my concern?" V grabbed Takemura and slammed him against the van.

Dan: He was going to say "not a good time." That diner really killed the mood.

> "Were you just

> going to wait till you had everything you wanted, then it would be, oops you can't be helped after all.

> You'll just have to die unless I sell my soul to you too?"

Tsuneo: In other words, the author got to the Devil ending and was not impressed.

> Harry's hand settled on her shoulder, "V."

> V growled before once again slammed Atkemura against the van.

Rick: Wasn't Atkemura one of those obscure, middle period Pharaohs?

> She pushed off him and back

> away, "We're fucking done. You can figure out your revenge on your own." She turned away. Not

> quite sure where she was exactly going. She just knew she had to get out of here.

Dan: Like any good chase, the question is not where to, but away from.

> "V, I had oath's to honor," Takemura said as he straightened himself out. "Please understand."

Rick: He signed an NDA and everything.

> V whirled, her fist smacking against Takemura's chin.

Dan: Robot punch!

> The man crumpled to the ground, the lack of

> usual implants leaving him more vulnerable to V's attack.

Rick: He was weak against being punched in the face

> She was sure she wouldn't have been able to do that in his previous condition.

Tsuneo: Normally he'd be fine with being punched in the face by her superstrong robot arms

> "Fuck your honor," V spat out. "I'll take my petty morals." She turned to Harry. "Can you take me
> home? I'm done here."

Dan: When you can teleport, you're everyone's ride home.

> Harry nodded and stepped up beside her as they walked off to where his motorcycle had been
> stashed.

Rebecca: And remember, no flying in the city or you're going to be shot down.

> As they left Takemura called out, "Oda was right. You will bring death to your door."

> Without looking back V answered, thankful to T-bug for having installed that Japanese language
> package,

Rebecca: It meant she could watch anime with the subtitles off.

> "Then it a good thing I have its master with me then."

Tsuneo: [Harry] Can we cut that out? I'm British and even I think it makes me sound like a wanker.

> A/N: Wow, this took a long time. But I'm pretty happy with this chapter at the moment.

Dan: Yeah, we got to repeat even more quest dialogue and Harry backstory!

> That'll probably change in a couple of days but that's future me's problem.

Tsuneo: Nothing like pushing a problem downhill.

> Also, there are a couple of instances of Japanese in this chapter.

Rebecca: Or something that could pass for it in bad light.

> If any of you speak the language and can come up with
> better phrases for Takemura to use feel free to throw them up in the comment.

Dan: I have a few, but they're all from seventies super robot shows

> Anyway, I'll see you all in the future.

Rick: Spoiler alert, we did not.

"And that was the final portion of Harry Potter and the Malfunctioning Biochip," Tsuneo commented as the big screen turned off, reverting the world back to prose format. "In which said wizard doesn't so much take over the plot as he moves in and spends all day on its couch."

"See here's the strange thing," Rebecca noted. "The fic ended just as the story was finally beginning to get moving. We meet what is presumably the main villain of the piece and establish the central conflict."

"And by that you mean the central conflict between the Augury and Harry Potter, because there was no way that V was contributing to said plot," Dan added.

"Of course not," Rebecca agreed. "I mean, putting aside the degree that V has been pushed out of the fic so far, it's clear that whatever came next would be all about the Augruy and that trying to find a cure for V would be all about wizard stuff."

"While at the same time completely pushing Takemura out of the fic," Tsuneo noted. "Given that the last chapter basically left him knocked out in a ditch, I can only assume that it wouldn't follow through on the rest of his quest chain"

"Or if it did, it'd do so without him and with Harry Potter being front and centre instead," Dan offered.

"This is true," Tsuneo nodded. "Either way, it's clear the author had no use for him, probably because he wasn't a wizard."

"I mean, he was written out of the Hellman quest chain," Rebecca noted. "But then, given that we basically skipped it anyway, it's not that much of a difference."

"Yeah, when I look at it, the whole Hellman thing ended up being completely pointless anyway," Rick said. "They skipped almost all of it, and it's not like the interrogation actually added anything to the fic once it was done."

"Which kind of takes away the need for Panam to be there in the first place," Tsuneo noted. "Since V initially only teams up with her to catch Hellman."

"Circular," Rick shrugged.

"You know what else I noticed?" Dan spoke up. "The lack of Johnny in the fic."

"You say that like it's a bad thing," Rebecca smirked.

"Well, see..." Dan offered. "Johnny spends most of the game sticking his head in to provide commentary and be generally annoying. However, he spends most of the fic silent. Which is odd, given that he's just learned of this secret hidden magical world that he was completely unaware of."

"No, I see what you're saying," Tsuneo nodded. "It's the sort of thing that you'd think he'd have something to say about. Like, anything really"

"But he doesn't," Rebeca agreed. "And while the fic acknowledges him, it doesn't actually do anything with him to add to the story or the like."

"In fact, I'd go one further," Tsuneo suggested. "The reason why he doesn't really say anything is that much of his role of smart-arse commentary was hijacked by Harry."

"Funny that," Dan noted. "It's almost like it's a recurring trend or something."

"Well you're all clearly excited about the fic," the Voice ploughed into the conversation. "And I can tell that you have a lot to say about it"

"Very little of which is complimentary," Dan shot back.

"Fantastic," the Voice replied without a hint of acknowledgement. "So then I'd love to hear your reviews of the fic."

"Let's start by addressing the wizarding elephant in the room," Rebecca spoke up. "Harry Potter is a classic Possession Sue. The character in the fanfic bears only the most vague resemblance to the canon character. His name is Harry and he has a distinctive scar, and that's it. And it's not so much that he's out of character as the way he's being handled."

"The fic's version of Harry Potter is a smug, self-important, all-knowing tosser who is special and knows it," she continued. "More specifically, he lords the fact that he's a wizard over V at every step. He constantly talks down to her and treats her like she's an idiot for not knowing about the secret world of magic. Likewise, he lords that knowledge over the other non-magic characters he interacts with, like Judy. And despite the fact that the separation of the Mundane and Magical worlds is a key part of the Harry Potter universe, he basically runs around screaming 'I am a wizard' while blatantly flaunting his powers and claiming that magical laws don't apply to him."

"So in short, you're saying he's a Libertarian Wizard," Rick offered.

"Now that I think about it?" Rebecca considered. "Yes. Yes he is. But continuing that, what really sells him as a Possession Sue is the way he interacts with the story. In shot order, Harry is walking over everything around him. He saves Evelyn's life while curing her of her traumas. He wails on Takamura and essentially pushes him out of the story. He captures Hellman while V is taking a nap. Plus on top of this, he never suffers any sort of setback or loss or the like. Nobody even calls him on how much of a tool he is. Combined with his persona he's hitting so many classic Mary Sue notes that it's crazy."

"I suppose it's appropriate that Harry's taking over the fic, since Wizarding World stuff also takes over the fic," Dan picked up. "From pretty much chapter..." He furrowed his brow in thought for a second. "I want to say five? The one in the cave?"

"Sure, let's go with that," Rick said.

"Yeah, from about then it's all been wizards and magic and doing things their way rather than anything relevant to the Cyberpunk half of the setting."

"That chunk starts off on a sour note, revealing Panam's a witch and mostly being about her argument with Harry. But then when we get to the Aldecados, instead of them being about cars and family, they've got a secret wizard bunker tent and a magical doctor and everything. We're not looking at V's cybernetics for her problem, we're looking at how a curse has got her locked up. Then we've got the revelation that the biochip is a Horcrux. While at first it seems like a good way to integrate the fic's two halves, instead it's a door to let the wizard stuff take over more. That comes by way of the Augury, a master villain for the fic who is, of course, a witch."

"Somehow, this latest chunk manages to make things worse. The fic spent the last three chapters just going on about Harry Potter stuff. We have the whole flying bike ride which is just there to show off, then a long dip into the pensieve to replay chunks of *Goblet of Fire*. Finally we have the meeting with Takemura. While this is meant to advance V's story towards the attack on the parade, what it really does is nip that in the bud and let their villain take over. But worse than that, they spend ages talking about where Harry comes from. Thing is, if you're reading this fic, you probably know all of this already. It's pointless and indulgent, and serves only to marginalise V in her own fic, by having her just hang around to say 'gosh, that's cool' to whatever Harry does today."

"Following on from the previous two points, I want to address V's character, or more to the point, the lack thereof," Rick continued. "Simply put, V is a flat character, a fact that's not helped at all by the fic basically squeezing her out of everything she was meant to be doing in the story."

"So as a video game protagonist, V's personality is relatively underdeveloped in the source material. It's informed by dialogue choices, but it's largely up to the player to fill in the gaps," Rick explained. "The problem is that the fic hasn't done that at all. Instead, V's personality largely comes down to a few simple beats that are constantly reiterated. She's a Nomad, she's dying, she doesn't like Johnny and that's about it. Her personality never develops beyond that."

"Unfortunately, the fic also takes away many of her opportunities for growth. She doesn't get to interact with other people; instead, that's handled entirely through Harry talking at them. She doesn't get to make major choices, with Harry instead effectively doing that for her. And when she does make them, she's largely just parroting what Harry does in order to push his personal narrative forwards. As a case in point, her chat with Neville was more about him and Harry than they were about her."

“Actually what really got me more than that is the real mess-up of tone in this fic. Let’s be fair, Cyberpunk 2077 is intentionally dark material. It’s a messed up setting where life is cheap and bad things happen endlessly to undeserving people. Whereas by contrast, Harry Potter... isn’t. Sure, it gets heavy in the later books dealing with death and consequences, but even then it still maintains an adventurous tone. The setting is otherwise light and filled with whimsy and wonder, and even its heavier sections are offset with camaraderie of its leads.

“The problem is that the fic does nothing to reconcile these two tones, instead mashing them together without a thought on how they conflict. In the first chapter Harry Potter is mentioning potions with silly names to a hired killer who’s slowly dying in front of him. They then go on to raid human traffickers by setting off colourful fireworks. Said bright and whimsical fireworks make a return in a later gunfight where V is ruthlessly cutting people down all around her.

“I think where it stand out the worst is again in these latest chapters. Judy and Evelyn are dealing with great personal loss and tragedy, so Harry goes and shows them a memory of him whizzing around on a broomstick and fighting a dragon. It’s so far removed from the situation they were in that it’s not so much jarring as a complete disconnect. Although there is in that moment one part where V comments on the tonal shift – what was in the Harry Potter books a moment of daring and bravery, she sees as child endangerment. V acknowledges that the tones of the two works do not mesh; it’s just a pity that the fic as a whole doesn’t.

“For all that, I will give the fic this much,” Rebecca admitted. “It is one of, if the most technically competently written fics we’ve ever covered here. Spelling and grammar are great, the text flows well and the dialogue, while still grating as all hell, actually feels natural and like human beings talking rather than the aliens or robots we usually get. Even the blocks of exposition are well handled and feel like they’re a part of the world.”

“But otherwise, it’s got a lot of problems,” she finished.

“Thank you all for that,” the Voice spoke up. “As always, your reviews are greatly appreciated and help select future fics.”

“Sure, we’ll go with that,” Rick nodded.

“But we are done with the fic,” Dan added.

“We are,” the Voice confirmed. “I’ll see you all next time.”

“Great,” Rebecca sighed as she slumped in her seat. “It’s going to be another crossover. I can tell.”

“Transformers crossover?” Rick suggested.

“Historical data would support that,” she nodded. “Of course, there’s also the question of what it’s crossing over with.”

“At least this one was two properties we’ve never touched before,” Tsuneo noted. “So it gets points for that at least.”

“Of course, now I have to wonder where the fic was going to go from here,” Dan said. “Given how far off the rails it had gone already.”

“Well let’s see,” Rick considered. “Takamura’s clearly out given that last chapter, so there goes most of his quest chain.”

“Right,” Rebecca nodded. “And with Evelyn being alive, Judy loses most of her motivation for her quest chain as well. Maybe the fic just pairs them off and leaves it at that or something.”

"Related that that, Panam and the Aldecaldos are in a completely different situation that would invalidate a lot of that storyline as well," Tsuneo stated. "Plus since Saul barely appeared, his feud with Panam doesn't seem to be an issue any more either."

"I guess that just leaves wizard battle with the Augury," Rebecca finished. "Before V rides off into the Nomad ending, bringing us back to where we started from."

"Which makes me think back to what we covered earlier," Dan spoke up, "I'm going to offer a theory based on the last chapter."

"What's that?" Tsuneo asked.

"The Arasakas aren't wizards," Dan stated. "I say this because they needed to bring in an outside wizard to help make the Biochip-Horcrux-Relic-Thing rather than doing it themselves. And on top of that, they needed to make it a magic-technology mashup to make it work."

"No, as strange as it sounds, that makes sense," Rebecca nodded. "By the logic of the fic, they wouldn't need to go to such lengths if they were wizards themselves."

"But at the same time, they're clearly aware of the existence of the magic world and know at least a fair bit about it," Tsuneo noted. "Given that they knew of the existence of magic for immortality, which was otherwise forbidden"

"And on top of that, both Takemura and Oda were aware of its existence as well," Rick added. "But I'd say it's clear that Takemura isn't a wizard, and I doubt that Oda is either."

"Of course, in all this we've got to ask about the most important character, and how magic relates to them," Rebecca said with a smirk.

"And that is?" Tsuneo asked warily.

"What about Nibbles?"

Author's notes:

I assume that the Augury was meant to be an existing Harry Potter character, or at the very least, connected to one. I don't really know which one it was intended to be, but at the same time, I'm also not sure that I care either.

Once again, we have a fic that dies as soon as it really gets started. The introduction of the Augury was clearly intended to be a major plot point and set up the rest of the fic and its major conflict. However, instead it was abandoned. This happens to us a lot. True, it got further than many other fics do (which usually are just setup and leaving everything else hanging forever) but it still couldn't clear that hurdle.

Next time: it would be the stupidest crossover we've ever done, but then it forgets that it's a crossover anyway

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Death's Fixer written by Browncoat-Valentine-335

Rebecca Bartley and Rick R. Mortis created by Rick R. (natch)
Tsuneo Tateo and Dan created by Zogster

Questions? Comments? Complaints? Magical wasteland lunatics? Email us at [elmerstudios00 \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:elmerstudios00@gmail.com) and register your Jeff.

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> Harry seemed quite fine with letting her brain restart