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## Chapter 1: Those that Remain (Part 1)

*Ten years ago, the final battle with the ultimate evil separated Hiyori and Yato, whom she loves. Now, having regained her memory of him and sees him, Hiyori is unable to hold back her emotions and calls his name...*



“Yato!”, Hiyori yells excitedly at Yato who sits on a sakura tree branch. Her calling his name catches him by surprise.

“Yato?”, he points to himself as she keeps calling his name.

“Yato!”, now she sounds slightly annoyed. He sighs, drops from the tree branch and effortlessly lands among the petals. Hiyori reaches for his arm just as he turns his back.

“I only sit on the branch to watch the blossoms more clearly. You've got the wrong person”, he says nonchalantly, “Sorry”.

“No, you must be Yato”, Hiyori's hand holds his arm firmly, pulling him closer and looking at his eyes.

*Nothing good comes from this*, his eyes say to her, wordlessly, *You'd better leave me and go*. He turns his back again, but she grabs his arm with both her hands.

“Yato!”, she keeps yelling, irritated, “Why are you ignoring me?”

Yato keeps yanking away, but only hesitantly. *How can I hesitate in a situation like this*, he thinks to himself.

“If I can prove you are Yato, you must listen to me”, Hiyori demands. She clutches his arms before whispering shyly into his ear, “Yaboku”.

“Wah!”, Yato nearly jumps. Hiyori has just called out his true name, having him at her beck and call. Yato's pupils quickly narrow like those of a cat, startling her a little.

“I spoke your true name, right? Yaboku, not Yato. Your reaction said as much”.

*What a mischievous girl*, Yato sighs. He turns, facing her and leaning backward, seemingly against the air. “Yatogami, delivery god, at your service”, he says with a grin. She smiles back at him, tears in her eyes.

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Yato takes Hiyori to a family restaurant near the park where they have just met. She picks a table near the window, her eyes never leaving

him. Yato looks exactly the way she remembers him, wearing a black tracksuit and a faded blue ascot, his hair busy and unkempt. But missing are the cheer and smile on his face. Yato seems to be deep in thought, a smidge of conflict flowing from his sigh as he keeps looking at the sakura petals falling outside the window.

“Customers, what do you order?”, a waitress cheerfully asks them.

“Katsu curry for me”, Yato answers even without looking at the menu.

“I will have what he has”, Hiyori says. The waitress puts two glasses of water on the table. She quickly sips from one of them, her heart beating in excitement. After minutes of silence, she shyly opens up.

“... It seems that you know this restaurant well”, she says, giving him the brightest smile she has.

“I have visited this place many times before”, he answers, still looking outside.

“... What are you looking at?”

“The sakura petals. They always put me at ease”, he says, sadness in his voice.

*Do I put you on edge*, Hiyori wonders. Silence befalls them again.

“Did I... do something bad?”, she shyly asks, looking down at her feet. Yato turns to her immediately, concerned. His eyes soften to reassure her. “No, it’s my fault. You are blameless in all of this...”

“Why would you be at fault?”, Hiyori slightly tilts her head, wondering.

“Because I made you remember”, Yato sadly replies, taking a sip from the glass of water. He avoids her gaze again.

*Under the falling sakura petals, the night air brought to me a whiff of a fragrance I thought I’d forgotten. My eyes opened widely as I realized I’d just remembered something precious. Then, my mouth remembered your*

*name. The air stirred, and I looked up, and I saw you looking at me, intently. I blurted out your name as if seizing something I'd lost...*

... is what Hiyori has in mind. But it is so embarrassing that she would die before admitting that much to Yato.

“... Somehow, the sakura petals brought back my memories. I looked up to see them and saw you, dangling above on a tree. Then I recalled your name...”, Hiyori says, looking down on her twiddling fingers, before looking up, meeting Yato’s attentive eyes. He hesitantly lifts his hand to touch her, before hesitating and settling his arms on the table, leaning in slightly.

“How much do you remember?”, Yato asks.

“Other than your face, your name and your... Nothing else”.

*To regain lost memories on your own after your connection to the Far Shore is severed, not to mention after barely returning from death and after we hid your diary, is something only someone as unique as Hiyori can do. It still takes ten years, though...*

... is what Yato wants to say. But he realizes that he must not forcibly trigger her memories any further, and it is his turn to be confused. *Should I indulge her, or make her forget me*, he thinks. He then looks for a coin in his pocket, remembering that he [once hypnotized her](#) and put her to sleep. He resolves to keep her memories secret, lest it ruins the both of them.

“It is dangerous to remember anything further, Iki Hiyori”, he says her name, putting it as bluntly and as caringly as possible. “As a god for fortune, in my conscience, I can’t allow it”. *Don’t make me do this, Hiyori*, he looks at her, expecting her to let go.

Hiyori looks at him with a pained expression, her eyes tearing up, “I... I... thought I’d forgotten those eyes forever. The eyes of Yato, the god who

has protected me and brought me luck”, she says, restraining her snuffle. “I always felt something was missing, as if I had lost something yet I couldn’t remember it.”

Clutching her chest, she looks into Yato’s conflicted eyes, “Only now do I feel hope in regaining my memories. Please don’t take this chance away from me...” *Don’t leave me*, her eyes say it all.

Just as Hiyori is bursting into tears, Yato stands up to wipe them away. He can feel the gaze of others who probably wonder who or what could make a beautiful woman like her cry.

“Don’t cry”, he whispers, tenderly touching her hair, calming her down. She rubs her nose, sniffing a bit loudly. Yato sits down, his fingers clasped. “Now what can I, Yato, tell you?”

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“... So, I lost my life in the final battle between you and the Crafter?”, Hiyori asks, pondering what kind of entity could have waged war against Heaven and gods like Yato.

“... The Crafter – we don’t call his name cuz of taboo – conjured a dimension which sucked in gods, spirits and humans alike, threatening to consume the real world. I defeated him inside it, and his death caused the dimension to disappear. You too were sucked into it and died, but since your death happened inside that temporary dimension, it was negated and you were returned to life. In exchange, you lost your memories. I have been watching over you since”.

*So that’s why I can’t remember anything: I really did die*, Hiyori thinks, listening to Yato. *But why did I only lose my memories of that one year of my life?* “And in the one year before that, I was a... half-ayakashi?”, she asks, pondering the what it meant.

“Ayakashi is a lump of spiritual energy caused by negative emotions. Yours was a unique existence somewhere between a normal human and an ayakashi, a being of the Far Shore – the spirit world, so to speak”, Yato nods, taking another sip. “By ayakashi, I don’t group you with one of them. It’s just a word used to describe your condition”, he replies to Hiyori who seems concerned.

“A half-ayakashi has many powers that only manifest in spirit form. You had greater strength, agility and endurance than in human form, and could detect Far Shore beings like me. Your only weakness was that in spirit form you gained a lifeline. It was a cord in the form of a tail which would kill you if cut. If your human body was destroyed, you would die too. The Crafter knew this, cut your cord and killed you”, he looks at her. “You were brought back to life, but as your cord was severed, you lost not only your powers but also the memories when you had them. That was the price of your revival”.

“Wow”, Hiyori exclaims as images of her past slowly come back. But the memory of her death still eludes her. “I cried when I woke up in a hospital after that, even though I didn’t know why. My parents told me I was found in a near death state, apparently having been saved by CPR so intense that it cracked my ribs”, she explains, putting her hand on her chest and scratching her head.

“Somebody must have desperately tried to save you...”, Yato looks away, smiling [sheepishly](#).

“I remember you. You promised to cure my half-ayakashi condition and protected me from the ayakashi...”, images of Yato gradually return to her. The mischievous, unpredictable and sometimes childish god with awesome combat prowess and compassion for mortals. “But the current

you is in some ways different from what I'm slowly remembering", she glances at Yato who is blushing.

"... In what ways?", he shyly asks.

"Calmer, gentler, less bumbling, less distant...", she smiles.

*I hope she doesn't recall the kiss*, Yato murmurs. He stays silent for a minute, until their food arrives.

"I'm sorry for keeping you waiting", the waitress delivers their dishes at long last. Yato immediately pours a mountain of shichimi spice onto the curry, putting them all together into a finely spread mix. He then hands the shichimi to Hiyori.

"I'm good...", she glances at the red curry before her, aghast.

"Don't mind me", Yato gulps in a large amount of curry. Hiyori smiles, "You haven't changed one bit, Yato", she recalls a cheerful Yato with a huge appetite. Because she jogged earlier, she too is starving. They quickly finish their curry. Hiyori realizes that she does not bring her wallet, but Yato already pays for both their meals. He then offers to walk her home, which she gladly accepts.

"I missed watching the sakura blossoms this year", she says when they walk across the park, thanking the petals for helping her remember.

"I watch them every year with Yukine and Mizuchi. The blossoms always puts me at ease", Yato replies, looking up to the petals. "Sakura...", Yato murmurs. He raises his hand, waiting for a petal to fall into his palm. His eyes are then focused on Hiyori who is walking in the middle of the falling sakura.

"Yato?", Hiyori asks, looking a bit concerned. "I'm fine. Let's go", he replies.

"... Yukine-kun is still with you? And Mizuchi-chan too?"

“Yukine is my shinki, remember?”, Yato smiles. Shinki are allied human spirits who can turn into weapons of the gods. “And Mizuchi is an old... she is family to me”.

“May I see them too? Bishamon-san and Kazuma-san, Kofuku-san and Daikoku-san, and Ebisu--”, Hiyori’s eyes are gleaming with excitement, but Yato puts his fingers on her lips, warning her.

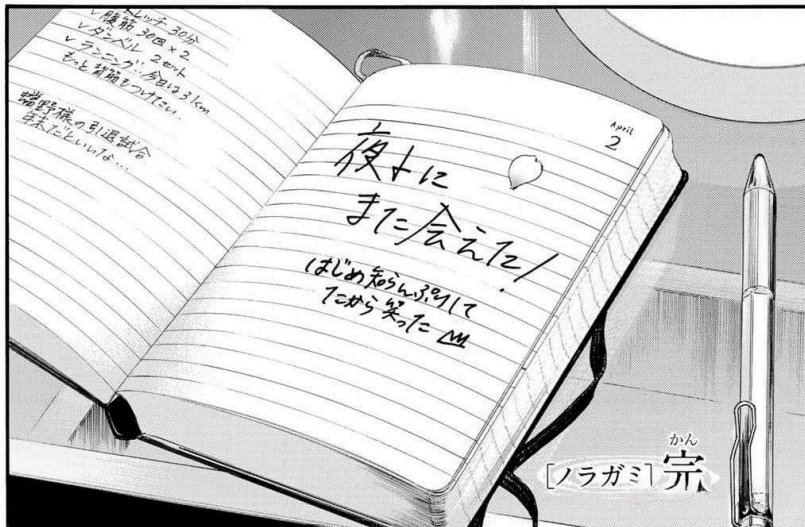
“Are you sure about this? You are now on the Near Shore, this side, the mortal world, while we are on the Far Shore, the other side, the spirit world. If you get close to us, there is no going back”, he stares into her eyes. In this instance, Yato lets out his calamity god side, seeking to drive the point into Hiyori’s mind. But she picks up his hand with both of hers, not disturbed by his frightening stare.

“Yes”, she says, sniffing his hand like someone long-lost and now reunited, making both of their faces red. “... I would like to meet everyone again...”

*Why do you let go of the safety of this shore*, Yato ponders as he leads Hiyori back to her place. After willingly sealing away her memories and hiding from her, protecting her in secret so she could finally live her peaceful life as a human, he could now only watch as Hiyori slowly walks back to his side. Later, he resumes his routine vigilance outside the window of her apartment, wondering if his decision to face her, after all this time, is the right one at all...

Hiyori wants to take a bath and changes out of her sports clothes, but she can’t resist the urge to write about Yato in her diary.

*I met Yato again! At first, he played dumb, and I laughed*, she writes it down as quickly as possible. A sakura petal falls from her hair and tenderly lands on the diary page, dated April 2<sup>nd</sup>.



“May our fates forever intertwine”, she whispers.

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“Are you insane, Yato?”, Kazuma exclaims. The bespectacled shinki of Bishamonten, the mighty war deity, wears a finely tailored, well-groomed suit, befitting his status as her most important and powerful shinki. Fixing his eyeglasses, he said to Yato, “You intend to bring Iki-san to our side yet again, after everything you did to keep her safe?”

Yato is tending to a food stall alongside Yukine, his shinki. He called Kazuma to discuss the situation with Hiyori, but Kazuma is overwhelmingly disapproving. "Think about this problem carefully. You too Yukine", Kazuma disappears, not without glancing back at Yato, worriedly.

"This is bad", Yato and Yukine says in unison, sitting on nearby stools. The food stall they are tending to, belongs to Daikoku, the shinki of Kofuku. They are paying for their rent in the house owned by Daikoku and Kofuku.

"I never could have thought she could get her memories back after all that time", Yato explains after a while, face-palming.

"After that intense CPR, she was brought back by Her Majesty", Yukine says, addressing the queen goddess Amaterasu-oumikami, "Her tail was cut, her memories were taken away... We were then told it was to be irreversible!"

Yato looks at Yukine, knowingly, "We intended to keep her safe in the mortal world, protecting her till she grows old and passes on", he laments. Their plan was for naught, "We have to do something about this before it is out of our hands..."

Yukine stands up, looking straight into Yato's eyes. "Tell me you didn't approach her cuz you lusted after her", he pours out his accusation. When Yato looks away, he exclaims, "I knew it! It was YOUR fault for sticking so close to her", now it is his turn to face-palm. "Now that she's drawn back to our side..."

"I have to be close to her in case of emergencies! Do you know how hard it is to stay close yet be out of sight?", Yato tries to explain, but Yukine turns away from him.

"... If you ask for my input, I would say this is fated".

Yato and Yukine are both startled by the voice of Kofuku. They turn around to see her, the goddess of poverty and misfortune in her usual white collared shirt, pink checkered tie and a matching miniskirt. Her beautiful petite figure, puffy, curly baby pink-colored hair and childish, innocent smile, belie the fact that she can bring down ill fortune for anyone refusing her beck and call.

“It couldn’t be helped. Yato-chan loves Hiyorin with all his heart”, she looks at Yato, grinning like a schoolgirl. “He couldn’t be meters apart from her”, she says in a child-like, guileless voice.

“I thought you went outside to play”, Yato said, patting her head.

“Daikoku left for some errands and told me to stay here until he comes back”, she said, munching on some food from the fridge.

*Daikoku will be mad if she overeats, but I probably shouldn’t stop her,* Yato thinks to himself.

“Yato-chan, how long has it been since Hiyorin lost her memories?”, Kofuku says, calling Hiyori and him by their respective nickname.

“Ever since that day... ten years?”, Yato replies.

“Against all odds, her memories of you returned. If that isn’t fate, I don’t know what it is”, Kofuku continues with her usual dreamy eyes, her finger poking at Yato’s forehead.

“Fate, huh?”

“Back then, I tied your matchmaking plagues together, remember? It’s bound to happen eventually”, she giggles mischievously.

“Any match made by Kofuku is bound to turn into a tragedy”, a voice rings up behind them.

“DAIKOKU!”, Kofuku dashes to her shinki with all her might, ready to tackle him. Daikoku, who is larger and taller than her, simply catches her in

the air, hugs her and kisses her hair. “I was gone for less than an hour”, he whispers as she rests her head on his shoulder, sitting on his arm.

“Now what are you talking about?”

Yato talks to Daikoku about the situation with Hiyori. He calmly takes it all in, then shrugs. “You know my stance in this issue already”, he says it bluntly, “Hiyori-chan should be left alone”.

“I know, but against all odds, she has remembered me”, Yato muses, thinking of that day she called out his name, “Leaving her to herself will only drive her into depression. Worse, she may do rash things to figure out things for herself...”

“Put her to sleep. Erase her memories”, Daikoku said nonchalantly, waving his hand.

“I... I can't. Not after seeing her crying her heart out”, Yato resigns.

The two are at an impasse, before Kofuku pitches in, “I for one want to see Hiyorin. I miss her presence in this place”, she says, grinning like a kid.

“But...”

“Look, Daikoku. You're suggesting that two people stay apart despite their heart's desire. You big meanie...”

“But...”

“No buts! Or I won't take baths or sleep with you anymore”, Kofuku has put her foot down, to everyone's embarrassment.

“Missus', not here...”, Daikoku tries to hide it, but she smooches him. Yato and Yukine can only avert their eyes.

“Come to think of it, we should welcome Hiyorin with a party. Here, in this house”, unfazed by the fact that Daikoku's face is all red, she decides everything herself.

“Fine”, Yato says. He can’t deny the wish of his own heart, and refusing Kofuku is never a good idea.

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Hiyori casually walks in the hallway of Iki hospital, her family hospital.



Now as a doctor, she likes to spend it walking around and talking to other doctors, nurses and patients alike. As she is expected to work in this hospital, following her father’s footsteps, she wants to be close to those she is going to work with, and take care of, in the future.

Ten years ago, Iki hospital went through a “freak incident” in which both the hospital staff and patients turned extremely violent. Hiyori now knows it was due to the Crafter, but at the time, the scandal nearby broke the hospital and her family over lawsuits. They only got through this with the help of her brother and her parents’ friends. Over the years, the families of those afflicted along with scoundrels wishing to take advantage of their plight have plagued the hospital and her family, but all were prevented before they could escalate the matter.

“Yato...”, Hiyori clutches her chest, saying the name of the silent god of fortune who has been on their side all this time. He was there to save her

during that incident, when she was heartbroken and nearly transformed into an ayakashi, and he was there to save her when she “died”. For all that time, for the last ten years in which she had lost her memories of him, he has...

“Doctor Iki!”

Hiyori turns back to see Fujisaki Kouto, a returning patient. He suffered the same issue of memory loss she did and was hospitalized at the same time as her ten years prior. He has been frequenting the hospital for a while now. For this occasion, he wears a fine light gray suit which emphasizes his light brown hair and eyes.

“Fujisaki-san, can I help you?”

“I’ve just discussed with the director on the renovation process of this hospital’s wings”, he says, referring to her father, the director, “I saw you when I walked out of his office”.

“You work too hard. Thank you for your help with our building”, Hiyori replies, bowing to him.

“Oh no, don’t mention it... You seem really happy today”, he touches his cheek.

“Yes. I met an old friend a while ago. We talked about a lot of things from the old days”, she cheerfully answers.

“Oh”, he says, looking a little disappointed, “What did you talk about?”

“We talked about the stuff during middle school and high school I forgot about. Thanks to that I can now remember many things about that time”, she grins.

“Oh, that’s... good”, he said reservedly, “I... also happen to remember some things about our time in high school. What do you think if we talk about them during dinner some time?”

“I...”, before Hiyori could finish, a flock of birds fly through the windows and besiege Fujisaki, chipping at him and dropping feces. Scared, he runs away, dropping his briefcase in the process.

“Take care...”, Hiyori murmurs. *This has happened before. Those birds really hate him for some reasons.* She carries his briefcase to her father’s office and leaves it there before going back to her patients.

Hiyori recognizes many patients from the families of her middle school and high school friends. After that incident, her friends helped the hospital’s reputation by spreading good words and recommendations. As a result, lots of patients already knew her name even before they came here.

“Hiyori!”

Her older brother Iki Masaomi waves at her. He has been temporarily working at the hospital due to a shortage of doctors. Despite being only a personal doctor, his demeanor makes many patients, particularly children, happy.

“[Big brother](#), you seem to be enjoying yourself”, Hiyori smiles as her brother waves his hand at a boy patient.

“It’s almost lunchtime. Care to join me?”

Hiyori follows her brother to the cafeteria. They bring their bento and sit comfortably near one café.

“We spent a lot of time here when we were kids, but this area will be renovated soon, adding more space for furniture and a larger kitchen”, her brother muses, “It will be ready by the time you become director”.

“Big brother!”, Hiyori protests, “It hasn’t been decided. By all means, it should be you who succeed Father”.

“Dear sister, you know me. My passion is hardly for this line of work”, he leans closer, “I will have to leave the burden to you”.

*You are making it harder for me to enjoy lunch*, Hiyori murmurs.

“I heard some commotions in your wing a few minutes ago. A patient caused some ruckus?”

“Actually, a flock of birds attacked Fujisaki-san, our contractor”, she says, trying to make it sound normal, “He has issues with birds”.

“Nature hates him then”, they both giggle, “But to be honest, we are a bit short on money. If you get close to him, it can shave a lot for us”.

“Fujisaki-san... is hardly my type”, Hiyori meekly explains.

“Oh, I don’t mean to sell my dear sister for some cheap bucks”, he says cheekily, “You don’t like the white-collar type? Or is it because he’s wrong in the head?”

“Big brother...”

“You know, you have a secret admirer who has been rooting for you in many years”, he teases her, “Dressed in black, muscular, dashing. Totally *your* type”.

“Huh?”, Hiyori looks at him, surprised, “You know Yato?”

“So you do get his name. The way you fawn over him is quite cute”.

“Big brother!”, she makes a face.

“I saw him once or twice looking at you while sitting on the tree outside your apartment. He reminds me of stories Grandma once told me, about how Grandpa stood outside her window, proposing to her”.

*Right, Big brother can see those of the Far Shore too, just like me*, she thinks to herself.

“... I only recently remembered him. But we are just friends...”, Hiyori timidly confesses.

“I don’t want to interfere in my dear sister’s love life, but he seems like an okay dude...”, he says, “... minus the tracksuit, of course”.

“He was the one who rescued me back then, bringing me back to our hospital”, Hiyori speaks of Yato fondly, “He has been watching over me”.

“So you fall for him out of indebtedness?”

“No, it’s... complicated”.

“You will find your answer soon, I bet”, her brother gently pats her head, “Whatever your decision, I will support you”.

“Thanks, Big brother”, Hiyori smiles at him, delighted.

Just as she sees her brother off to his wing, Hiyori is approached by a middle-aged woman.

“Doctor Iki, my mother is a patient in this hospital. She humbly asks to see you”, she says, bowing her head.

“You don’t have to... Please show me the way”.

Hiyori follows her to a patient room. Inside, an elderly woman is waiting for her, sitting on a porter. Her gray hair is cut into a short bob, while her eyes are closed. When Hiyori enters, the woman stirs and opens her green eyes.

“Mother, Doctor Iki is here”.

The elderly woman leans forward. “Doctor Iki, it is you!” Hiyori slowly recalls her: she was the [elderly woman plagued by dreams of fire](#) – horrible memories of her mother’s death during the war.

“... Mrs. Onodera?”

“Yes! I’m glad that you still remember me...”, she picks up Hiyori’s hand and beckons her to sit on the hospital bed, “You were there, when I prayed at the shrine...”

“Yes, the shrine...”, the memories slowly return to Hiyori.

“You helped me with my nightmares. I’d thought that when she died, my mother threw me away, but thanks to you, I knew what my mother really

said at that moment. ‘Live on, for both of us!’, were my mother’s last words”, she looks into Hiyori’s eyes, hers full of gratitude.

“I have lived a long life, and finally said thanks to my loving mother. For that, I thank you with all my heart”, the woman bows her head deeply, almost falling over.

“Oh no! Please, it wasn’t me. It was Yato...”, Hiyori helps the woman up, her own face blushing. “It was Yato who cleared up your memories. Your late mother said, ‘Live...’ but you misheard it as ‘Go...’ He also helped you remember your late mother’s own loving words and prayers for your well-being...”

“Ya... to...?”, Mrs. Onodera seems confused, “But you were the only one there...”

*That’s right. She wouldn’t remember it, because Yato and Yukine are beings of the Far Shore, Hiyori figures out for herself. The only face she could remember is mine...*

“Anyway, I want to express my gratitude for you”, Mrs. Onodera says, holding Hiyori’s hands, “I wish for your happiness, and the best for you and the hospital your family has built”.

“Thank you”, she gently replies. *Her gratitude should be for Yato*, she thinks, leaving the elderly woman to rest.

*All these good deeds... were done by Yato. But no one remembers him. He only lives as long as mortals are thankful for him, before they too forget...*, Hiyori ponders. A pang of remorse hits her in her heart, knowing that she has forgotten him for the last ten years. *I wish Yato was here right now*, Hiyori grabs her phone and calls a familiar number, one that she has always kept but only recently remembers whose.

“Yato...”, she whispers.

“Hiyori?”, in the next instance, Yato appears behind her. She turns to him, meeting his worried eyes. “Is something wrong?”

“I... I just want to see you... is all...”, she looks into his eyes. She wants to say more, but the words wouldn’t come out.

Yato walks closer to her, kneeling before her, “You called just as I was about to come here. Let’s go see Yukine, Kofuku and Daikoku”, he picks her hand, “I will bring you there myself”.

“Yes, let me change my clothes first!”, she accepts his hand, smiling happily.

## Chapter 2: Those that Remain (Part 2)

*Barely able to hold back, Hiyori calls Yato, and he comes to her with an invitation from Kofuku herself. Hiyori is overjoyed to hear this and goes to prepare for their first party...*

Hiyori tries to calm her pounding heart as she changes out of her hospital clothes. Yato's invitation is too sudden, so she wears only normal clothes: brown knee-length plain skirt and jacket over a white Capyper T-shirt. She puts on some lipstick and takes a look at herself in the mirror.

*Hiyori, you asked for it. Now deal with it*, she speaks to herself. When she opens the changing room door, she finds Yato leaning against the wall, patiently waiting. "I'm ready", she says with a smile.

"Let's go to the rooftop", Yato replies, walking into a nearby elevator. she follows him, puzzled.

"Are we going to fly to Kofuku's place?", she speaks her thoughts out loud.

"Sort of...", he grins. When they step out of the elevator, she could feel light breezes. "I will bring you to Kofuku's now", he bends down in front of her, "A piggyback ride, if you don't mind".

"A... piggyback ride?", she asks, surprised.

"When we first met, your spirit got out of your body. I carried you on my back, remember?", he smiles warmly.

"... Just like old times, huh?", she smiles back. The memory rushes back to her, while he turns his head to look at her. As she wraps her arms around his neck, clinging to his back, she unconsciously breathes in a whiff of his scent.

"Still sniffing around gods, eh?", Yato giggles.

“... It... It can't be helped”, she says, blushing, “... I can't smell them anymore, but your scent just comes naturally to me. I just... I just did that without much thought...”

She was too mortified to say anything else. Yato then bends his legs, preparing to take off. “Brace yourself”, he whispers.

“Wah--”, she yelps as Yato leaps into the air. Her heart jumps a little, having forgotten the ability and sensation of leaping she had when using her former half-ayakashi powers. She clutches his neck tightly, unwittingly breathing in a full breadth of his scent.

“Feels like the first time you get on a rollercoaster ride?”, he says to her, tying his arms to hold her legs. She clings to him even tighter.

“Yes!”, she admits just as Yato deftly lands on a nearby roof. Being an athletic god, his movement, as with his ability to interact with the Near Shore, the physical world, is so adept that she hardly feels the impact of his landing. He then soars into the sky again.

As she clings to his back, Hiyori could feel the cool winds blowing in all directions, recalling her experience flying on a glider. The air mixes with his scent, overflowing her nose. The upward and downward movement was smooth and soothing, making her feel at ease and...

*This is embarrassing*, she thinks to herself, her face reddening. The next moment, her arms wrapped around his neck loosen, causing her to lean backwards unexpectedly.

“Uwah!”, she yelps. He reacts, grabbing her buttocks. “Wah, pervert!” she shrieks, hitting his head, struggling with her legs.

“Oi, we are mid-flight here!”, both of their faces turn red, “How about you wrap your legs around me, and I wrap my arms around your waist? That way you won't fall...”

“That’s even more... Just don’t grab that place anymore”, Hiyori whispers awkwardly. They spend the next few minutes in uneasy silence, before she rests her chin on his shoulder. “I’m sorry for hitting you”, she says.

“It’s ok”, Yato calmly replies, “Sorry for grabbing your...”

Another minute passes before she says, “I... I’ve never thought you could carry me through the air so effortlessly”, she wraps her arms around him, resisting the urge to touch his bare neck.

“This is an improvement. The first time you woke up on my back, you thought I did indecent stuff to you. You struggled and scratched my face...”, Yato teases.

“Sorry...”, she is now more embarrassed than ever.

“It’s ok. Enjoy the view, yes? This is once in a lifetime only”, he shoots back.

The air trip to Kofuku’s place is fast. When Yato lands before Kofuku’s home, Hiyori sees the pink-haired goddess of poverty waving her hands at her. Beside her are Daikoku, her shinki and Yukine, Yato’s shinki. They are the same as she remembers even though ten years has passed. She bows twice and claps her hands twice, then bows once before entering Kofuku’s house.

“Welcome, Hiyorin!”, Kofuku happily yells as she jumps through the air, tackling Hiyori in flight and nearly knocking her over. She hugs Kofuku back as the goddess grins at her.

“Kofuku, Hiyori-chan is not as strong as she was. Don’t crack her ribs again...”, Hiyori could hear Daikoku’s exasperated voice.

“Hiyori, it’s been a long time since I last saw you”, Yukine says, giving her his biggest grin.

The welcome overwhelms Hiyori. Here are the people who remember her, yet she can't recall most of the time she spent with them. Kofuku pats her back and gives Hiyori her brightest grin, trying to ease Hiyori's concern. Finally, Hiyori returns Kofuku a gentle, eased smile, "Everyone, it has *really* been a long time".

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"This is our home", Kofuku re-introduces her home to Hiyori who feels amazed. Kofuku's home looks pretty much like any standard Japanese two-story *minka*. On the outside stands a food stall which is Kofuku and Daikoku's livelihood, and behind the house is a purification fountain one can find any traditional shrine. She washes herself using the water before walking into the living room.

"Daikoku, Yato-chan and Yukki are preparing a hot pot. You have me to show you around", Kofuku smiles innocently. Despite being fairly tall, she appears to Hiyori an energetic, cheerful schoolgirl.

"This is our bathroom. The kitchen is out back where Daikoku prepares food for the stall", Kofuku leads Hiyori by the hand, "Upstairs are ours and Yato-chan and Yukki's room".

"Yato and Yukine-kun live here?", Hiyori asks.

"Correct! They bring us fortune", Kofuku answers with a mischievous smile, "You should live here too, Hiyorin".

"It is a lovely home", she replies, gently looking at Kofuku. Awkward though it may be, she can hardly avoid glancing at Yato's room.

"Wanna peak into Yato-chan's room?", Kofuku tilts her head, her finger touching her chin.

"That would be too--", not waiting for Hiyori's answer, Kofuku drags her into the nearby room. Hiyori thought that the room would be messy, but

the futons were tucked into the closet and the tatami are squeaky-clean. It is full of Yato's scent. On a shelf, she sees a miniature shrine with the name "Yato" on its torii. It is the first thing anyone would see when they enter.

"You made the shrine for Yato-chan", Kofuku says, leaning against the wall. "He holds it every night before sleep".

Hiyori slowly recalls. When Yato was at his lowest point, she made a shrine for him, something he had always wanted but could not have. Merely holding it brought him to tears. The shrine was broken but she fixed it, and it remains Yato's keepsake.

"For a god, having a shrine means a human cherishes them. A shrine also gives a god a place in Takamagahara, the abode of gods", Kofuku says, patting Hiyori's head, "Yato-chan misses you a lot. He has never forgotten you".

"He still cherishes it...", Hiyori says, feeling a pang of remorse.

"I'm sure a part of you keeps remembering him. That has kept him going until now, and eventually brought back your memories", Kofuku says as she pulls Hiyori into a hug, "Welcome back, Hiyorin".

"I've only started remembering things...", she says, looking dejected.

"Let them slowly return. The mind forgets, but the body remembers", Kofuku replies, soothing Hiyori's concerns. Kofuku then brings Hiyori to the kitchen where the men are preparing food. Hiyori wants to help, only to be stopped by Daikoku.

"It would be best if Kofuku doesn't touch anything", he says wryly and insists that she keeps Kofuku's company.

"Daikoku, you are mean", Kofuku pouts and smiles at him lovingly. She then drags Hiyori back to the central living room. The usual rectangular table has been replaced with a round one.

“I think I would have died of loneliness had I not met Daikoku that day”, she whispers to Hiyori from across the table.

“You love him that dearly?”, Hiyori asks then immediately realizes she has blurted out something wrong. But Kofuku is unconcerned.

“Gods are born from humans’ wishes, but gods are also living beings. We have emotions, or at least can develop emotions”, Kofuku answers while pinching Hiyori’s cheek.

*Yato has always expressed a variety of emotions, something very unique for a god*, Hiyori ponders.

“Do you remember how I met Daikoku?”

“That...”

“Don’t worry, I will tell you all over again. I never tire of it”, Kofuku grins proudly, “I have always been scorned. I wanted to have a shinki, to help me deal with loneliness, but Heaven forbade me. Without a shrine, it was difficult for me to get a shinki anyway...”

“You don’t have shrine? Like Yato?”

“Who wants to worship the Goddess of Poverty? Deities, however, are born of human wishes. You would be surprised as to how many people wish for poverty and misfortune on others. It is a fact of life, so I remain, immortal and unable to fade away...”, Kofuku ruminates, her eyes full of sadness.

“When I met Daikoku, he had lost his life. I wouldn’t say more cuz he might overhear it...”, she whispers, “I felt in love with him at first sight, and he became a foreign and futuristic hand fan, a sign of great compatibility between Daikoku and me. I take it as proof of our great love”.

Kofuku then looks into Hiyori’s eyes, “We have been through thick and thin. During the war, this house was even burned down”, she points at

spots on the wall and ceiling, looking like soot and burned out wood, “We even had a child and raised him together...”

*Daigo*, Hiyori recalls the name of the child shinki Kofuku once told her about. They had to let him go, because a child shinki couldn't live long...

“That's how much a god can love”, Kofuku finishes.

“Why do you welcome Hiyori-chan with such a sad tale?”, Daikoku walks out of the kitchen, bringing an electric stove in his hand. He kisses Kofuku's cheek.

“I'm telling Hiyorin about our love story”.

“Maybe we can do so *after* the party? There's plenty of sake”.

Yato and Yukine soon bring the rest of the *nabemono* hot pot and lots of ingredients. Yato grins, holding a dish full of seafood with pride in his eyes.

“I caught and prepared all this by myself”, he proudly announces, “All that work with the fishermen paid off”.

“Yato, I...”, Hiyori is lost for words. Before she could find the words, Kofuku gently pats her head. Daikoku sits next to Kofuku and Yukine next to him. On the other side of Kofuku, Yato sits with Hiyori. The smell from the *nabemono* fills the room as they raises a toast to Hiyori.

“To Hiyori's recovery!”, Kofuku says and others nod, bringing Hiyori to tears.

“Kofuku-san, I...”, she rubs her nose, sniffing. Kofuku replies to Hiyori with a hug, “No 'san' needed”, she says, forsaking all formalities.

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The party is a sight to behold. Yato begins to tell how he caught the fish, crabs and shrimps while on a weeks-long sea trip on a fishing boat. The boat owner liked it that Yato could work long shifts and had the

strength of two men, so he rewarded him with the best catch. Meanwhile, Yukine talks about how much he has learned during the last ten years with Hiyori's books. He has been frequenting the local library for more books related to history and culture, particularly the mythology of Japan.

"... I really enjoy working on ships. Perhaps I will take another job like that again", Yato says after regaling everyone with his story. He looks a little tipsy, having taken a lot of sake.

"Can't hold your liquor, old man?", Yukine pitches in, teasing Yato.

"Don't talk to me like you're old enough to drink".

"I might look fourteen years old, but mentally I'm twenty-five now", he shoots back, "You don't say anything if Kazuma-san drinks, right?"

"My Yukine has grown old enough to talk back to his old man!", Yato exclaims, beginning to sob, "I'm so proud!"

"I'm not your son!", Yukine grabs Yato's shoulders and begins to shake him angrily.

On the other side, Kofuku and Daikoku are toasting each other. She starts listing the occasions she caused trouble, many of which make Hiyori pause.

"Do you remember the Youwa famine? That ended the Heian era".

"You were mad at 'em soldiers who attacked your hut and stole your grain", Daikoku says, patting her head, "So you punished them. The famine caused the war to stop for several years".

*And killed tens of thousands of poor people,* Hiyori thinks to herself.

"Or the Tenpou famine. Unseasonably cold weather, torrential rains and floods. Also exacerbated by volcanic eruptions a bit farther away..."

"That brought down the Shogunate".

"Not to mention the earthquakes..."

“Not to mention the bubble...”

*Our country is doomed*, Hiyori sighs, exasperated.

After a while, Yato decides to perform with Yukine. He calls Yukine’s shinki name, and Yukine transforms into both a blade in Yato’s hand and a spirit wolf. Hiyori is amazed, having never seen this before.

“Yukki is a split shinki, capable of having two different forms when in his shinki mode”, Daikoku whispers.

Yato begins a sword dance with his blade, moving gracefully under the moonlight. Meanwhile, Yukine’s wolf form circles him, poised to lunge. He deftly evades Yukine’s pounce, and the wolf playfully dodges his thrusts and slashes. Yukine’s wolf form jumps up to the roof of the house, before jumping down towards Yato who sheathes his sword and leaps up, riding the wolf’s back. The two playfully frolic in the courtyard, until they both leap into the air, with Yukine turning back to his human form. Both skillfully land in front of Hiyori, bowing to her.

“Superb! They practiced this for several days, for you Hiyorin!”, Kofuku claps her hand, “I proposed that Yukki should let you see his wolf form. You didn’t see it before, did you?”

“We still have one more thing up our sleeves, right Kofuku?”, Daikoku said, standing up.

“We do? Wah!”, he sweeps her off her feet and puts her down on the courtyard. They both have hand fans in their hands, “Ready?”

Yukine opens a traditional music track, and Kofuku and Daikoku start dancing to its tune. Despite being surprised, the two of them dance very elegantly, their movement concerted as if it is their second nature. Kofuku then calls Daikoku’s shinki name and continues. Hiyori can see Daikoku in his shinki form: an elaborate ornate black hand fan, its features perfectly

suiting Kofuku's ethereal and otherworldly beauty. As she finishes, Daikoku transforms back, holding her hands, to the cheer of everyone else.

"Everyone...", their efforts bring her to tears, this time of joy instead of sadness. She couldn't ask for a better welcoming party.

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Yato and Yukine pass out on the floor, while Kofuku falls to sleep on the table. Hiyori stands up to clean the table when Daikoku says:

"You can enjoy the evening. Missus will be sad if she sees you doing cleaning like that", he smiles contently.

"That would make me feel like a guest...", Hiyori counters. She would at least arrange the plates and wipe the table, then puts pillows under Yato and Yukine's head and rests Kofuku's head on her lap.

After the cleaning is done, Daikoku sits down next to Hiyori. "May I?", he says, gently picking Kofuku up.

"It's been a long time since I last saw Missus having so much fun like this", he whispers, kissing her forehead.

"Why do you call her 'Missus'?", Hiyori asks, wondering if by that he regards Kofuku as his godly master or his wife.

"It's wordplay with double meanings. By it, I mean Kofuku is both my mistress and my wife", Daikoku grins widely, "Kofuku wants it that way, so I won't be punished by the Heaven for addressing her disrespectfully".

"Punished by Heaven, huh...", Hiyori wonders. *Daikoku-san might act reserved, but the way he talks to and about Kofuku, with only her name and nothing other than 'Missus', suggests that he view her as family, or in this case, his wife, in all but name,* she figures out herself.

Hiyori then turns to Yato. Having danced his heart out, Yato now sleeps on the floor. His face red from the sake, he has a smile on his lips,

his scent making him so tempting. Unable to resist, Hiyori leans closer to him, about to kiss his forehead...

“You should really think about your future before getting mingled with us again”, he warns Hiyori, looking at her with concerned eyes.

“Yato... Yato warned me about this before. Is a relationship between a god and human forbidden?”, she asks, puzzled. *Isn't Kofuku and Daikoku married in all but name?*

“‘Forbidden’ is too strong a word. ‘Frowned upon’ is more precise”, Daikoku says, cradling Kofuku lovingly in his arms.

“There are two reasons: We are from the Far Shore, and you the Near Shore. We probably can never bring you the happiness you desire as a living human, being the way we are”, he says in a resigned tone.

“And Heaven may not allow it. Take me as an example: the spirit of a deceased human in love with his goddess. I'm also her one and only shinki, making me her moral guide. If Heaven judge me unworthy, they will destroy me and take Kofuku away, leaving her all alone”, he holds Kofuku tightly.

“You should probably think more about this, whether you can find true happiness. You may be happier not being so close to us”, he says, looking at her seriously.

“... Daikoku, you big meanie”, Kofuku stirs, lifting her hand to tenderly touch Daikoku's cheek, “How could you say such mean things to Hiyorin?”, she says, caressing his cheek.

“I thought you're sleeping...”, he leans closer, touching her forehead with his own.

“Hearing you say you love me, I can't help but wake up”, she lifts her head to his lips, yearning. He kisses her gently. In Hiyori's eyes, she looks like Daikoku's beloved wife, fully content in his embrace.

“You should worry less about Heaven, and follow your heart more”, she turns to Hiyori. Her eyes says more than words. “Regardless of your choice, I will support you all the way”.

“Thank you”, Hiyori says.

“Say, you should sleep here tonight, Hiyorin”.

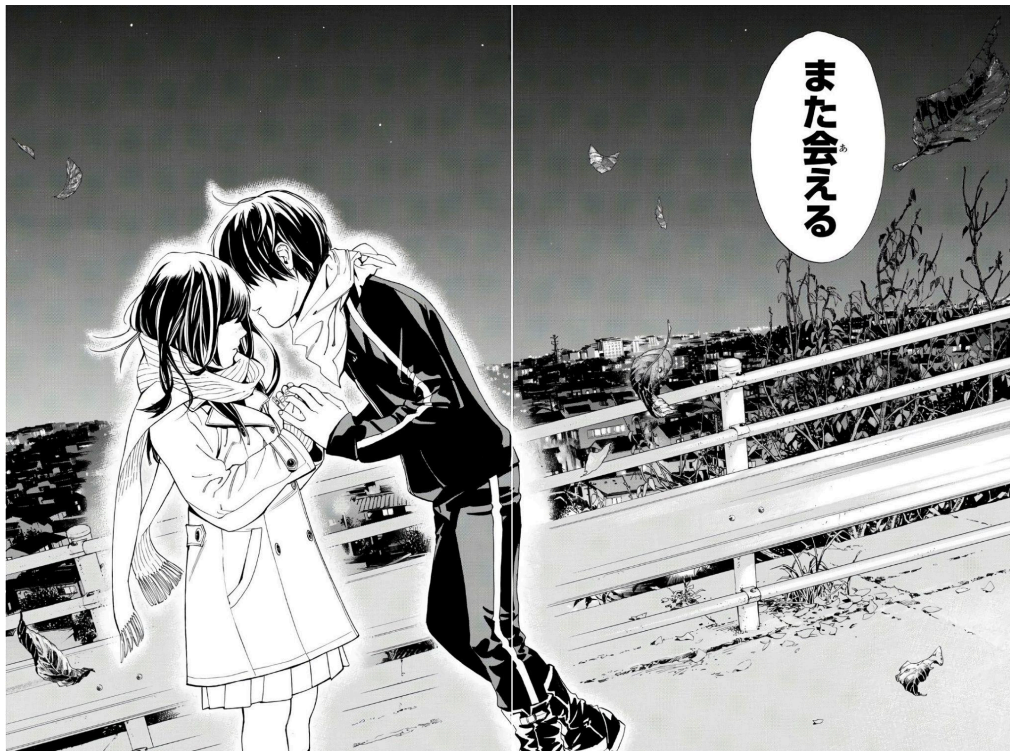
“I can’t take advantage of your hospitality like that”, Hiyori declines.

“A deity’s word is sacred. Besides, I haven’t had a sleepover in ages”, she grins. Even Daikoku shakes his head and brings them a futon, before waking Yato and Yukine up and leading them to their room. “I really want you to stay here tonight”, Kofuku rests her head on Hiyori’ shoulder.

“I’d love to...”

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*Yato picks up Hiyori’s hands which hold her diary he has just returned to her, entrusting her with the miniature shrine she made for him. Closing her hands, he whispers tenderly, “We will meet again”.*



“Yato, wait--”, Hiyori reaches for Yato as he disappears into thin air. She accidentally drops both the shrine and the diary, breaking the former. The diary opens and Hiyori sees her handwriting, “Even if I become an old lady, I will never forget Yato!!” She sobs...



...  
...

“Huh?”, Hiyori opens her eyes, waking up from a dream. *It is so vivid. It's... a memory.* “Yato told me he decided to face his ‘Father’, risking his life. He believed in me, the only one who remembered him, to bring him back if he died. And I was unable to stop him”, she murmurs.

The night is fresh. She feels Kofuku lying next to her, hands wrapped around her neck. “Kofuku-san seems free of worries”, she mutters, “Maybe I should call Daikoku-san to bring her to their room to sleep. That might wake her up, though...” Gently putting Kofuku’s hands away, she rises up.

“I should take a short walk”, she says, grabbing her jacket.

Hiyori walks out of Kofuku’s house, enjoying the night breezes. The air is fresh and a bit cold. It has been a while since Hiyori had a night walk

like this. Ever since she first met Yato again, her memories have come back in increments, mostly through dreams. She can now remember most stuff from early in the missing year, but the rest still eludes her.

“Yato isn’t following me, is he?”, her eyes dart left and right, looking at rooftops and tree branches. Her ability to smell his scent becomes handy at moments like this: his is still back in the direction of Kofuku’s house.

“This is awkward”, being able to smell Yato – and only Yato – makes her face red. *I enjoy his scent a lot...*, she thinks. She knows Kofuku ships them together, but...

Hiyori walks into a park, sitting down on the first bench she sees. The moonlight is dim here, and the lamps are scattered, so she can hardly see anything. But she finds it a good place to ruminate on the things she has felt and seen recently.

“When I saw Yato at that park, I felt an urge to call his name, as if I’ve done it a long time ago...”, she leans back and looks at the moonlit sky, “I now know that I forgot him and others before, but somehow I could always regain such memories...”

*Who am I to you, Yato?*, Hiyori closes her eyes, pondering, *Why are most of my memories of you blurry, Yato?*

The winds die down. *I guess it’s time for me to go back*, she thinks to herself, standing up. Suddenly, she can hear some of the lamps close to her being broken. She could only see around her thanks to the light of the moon.

“What the...”, she can feel something near, hungry for her, making her shiver. Her eyes widen when she looks up into the sky.

“What is that?”, she blinks and rubs her eyes, and the faint shape of a gargantuan, pitch black octopus hovering over the park slowly comes into

her vision. Even though it is still faint, the monstrous form is so huge that it blots out the moon, and its tentacles create small whirlwinds, threatening to topple nearby trees and electric utility poles. It opens its eye, looking at and terrifying her.

“Is this...”, the word comes to her mind, but she dares not utter it. Her instinct tells her to run, and she does just that. Kofuku’s house is too far away so she dashes for the nearest building. The monstrosity is so huge; it hurls its tentacles in her way, cutting down trees and toppling electric poles. Hiyori can only frantically run, but the ayakashi’s attacks send shockwaves, blowing up dust and smoke, hindering her vision and movement.

*It hungers for me*, Hiyori thinks, not stopping to catch a breath. Just as she is about to enter a building, the ayakashi flings a fallen power pole in her direction, it missing her head by just a smidge and crashing into the building. She feels her legs frozen in place, and turns her head just to see the hungry eye of the ayakashi. Its humongous lump of vengeful spiritual matter begins to descend on where she is standing.

Hiyori is about to close her eyes, accepting fate when a familiar scent strikes her nose. From the corner of her eyes, she sees a humanoid shape soaring through the air. In the next instance, what looks like a blade which gleams under the moonlight cut through the tentacles aiming for her. The severed limbs of the ayakashi fall to the ground, turning to dust.

“Hiyori!”, she meets Yato’s eyes just as he swings his shinki past her, cutting another tentacle. The blade passes through her effortlessly; all she feels is a breeze on her throat. Hiyori turns to see Yato preparing to launch himself into the air again, his eyes fiery.

“Sekki, now!”, he shouts Yukine’s shinki name. A spirit wolf lunges at the monster, having till then hidden behind a tree. It gnarls at the remaining

tentacles, severing them and making the ayakashi groan in pain. Hiyori could see some tentacles regenerating, however.



“Daikoku, cut off the ayakashi’s limbs from your side! Don’t let them regenerate!”, Yato shouts at Daikoku who has arrived. The three of them hack at the ayakashi, while Hiyori is left on ground, stunned.

Yato surveys the monster of the Far Shore, looking for a weakness. Its numerous tentacles keep growing back in spite of Daikoku and Yukine’s

wolf form's best effort. Looking at Hiyori frozen with fear nearby, he understands he must find a way to destroy all of them in one go, before hitting the heart of the ayakashi, killing it.

*Sorry, Hiyori, he thinks before telepathically calling Yukine. "Hiyori can be a bait. We can kill this ayakashi if it focuses on her..."*

*"That's..."*

*"I know, but I don't want to risk her or Daikoku becoming a casualty in this battle. If we do this, we can end this bastard in the next instance."*

*"If Hiyori is hurt, I won't forgive you",* Yukine's wolf form transmits the warning as it leaps to Hiyori, grabbing her jacket in his mouth and drags her away, while Yato retreats and takes cover behind a tree. The ayakashi turns to the fleeing Hiyori and Yukine immediately, hurling all of its tentacles in that direction. Taking advantage of that, Yato leaps from a nearby rooftop into the air, preparing to deliver a critical blow.

"Rend!", he shouts, unleashing a sweeping wave of spiritual energy with his blade, cleaving all of the monster's tentacles in one go. The ayakashi writhes in pain and begins to fall back. "Daikoku, use your barrier to stop it!", Yato screams out of the back of his lung. On the far side, Daikoku raises a spiritual barrier with his fingers, stopping the monster from retreating. Yato lands on an electric pole, bracing for the final blow against the vulnerable monster.

"Rend!", he shouts again, lunging at the monster's eye, driving Sekki forward. The blade penetrates its pupil, cutting through corrupted spiritual matter and emerges on the other side of the ayakashi, leaving a big gaping hole. His second dive brings the ayakashi to the brink of death. It releases its death throes causing shockwaves blasting everything away, but Yato, Daikoku and Yukine gather just in time to shield Hiyori. The monster finally

explodes and disintegrates into nothing, returning the area to its peaceful state.

“Hiyori!”, Yato recalls his shinki Yukine into human form and dashes to Hiyori. Having survived an ayakashi attack, she is left frozen in horror. “You are safe now”, he whispers.

“Yato?”

“I would never let anything bad to happen to you...”, he says as Hiyori begins crying.

“Yukine, let’s give them some time to themselves”, Daikoku leaves with Yukine behind him. When the two are out of sight, Yato leans closer to Hiyori.

“Hiyori, Kofuku attracts ayakashi by nature. That is why she asked you to stay at her house, at night, for your safety”, he pulls Hiyori close and pats her head, “But you couldn’t have known that, could you?”

“... How did you... find me?”, she says, sniffing loudly.

“Kofuku woke up, not seeing you around and sensing strong ayakashi nearby. She and Daikoku helped me and Yukine sober up and sent us after you...”, he pats her back, “I know you sometimes go out for night walks, so I had a hunch you would be somewhere near this park. We came just in time”.

“Yato, thanks for saving my life again...”, she sniffles.

“You are welcome. Just--”

Hiyori’s lips touch Yato’s as her hand reaches out to hold his hand. He is stunned as she wraps her arms around him. Outpouring all that emotions and the sensation of brushing with death, Hiyori’s lips eagerly meet those of her savior. When she lets go of him, Hiyori looks into his eyes, tearing up.

“I love you”, she whispers, her lips turning into a heartfelt smile. In this moment, she realizes where all her memories are leading her to. She hugs him again, resting her head on his chest. Yato is speechless for a moment, before he too responds.

“... I love you too”, Yato says the only thing that comes to his mind. He looks into her eyes and answers her with a deep kiss of his own, unleashing the emotions he has been holding back all this time. The two lock lips for a while before she opens up.

“I can’t hold back my feelings anymore”, she says, pouring out with her emotions, “My memories are not all back, but... I remember that I’m in love with you, ever since that day”, putting one of her hands on her heart, Hiyori looks at him expectantly, “All my memories lead to you”.

Yato looks at her, “My feelings are the same as well”. He leans closer to kiss her cheek, his lips passionate and wanting. “But I’m a calamity god. I bring only misery and misfortune to those around me. You experienced it first hand, losing your life...”, Yato sighs, pulling Hiyori closer, clutching her, as if saying, *Our love is not to be*.

“No, you are a god of fortune. You have brought my family and others so much happiness”, she says, holding him firmly. “You protect Iki hospital. You saved that old woman, Mrs. Onodera, from dreams of fire, and have done similarly for many others. You gave my grandmother peace before her passing...”

She looks into his eyes, strong in her belief, “... And you saved me, not only once but thrice. Without you, I would be ayakashi’s food now. I want to remain here with you, Yato”.

Their eyes are locked, speaking wordlessly. They kiss one more time, this time full of mutual love and passion.

“How... How did I do for our first kiss?”, after they let go, Hiyori asks, her face all red.

“I couldn’t have asked for anything more”, Yato whispers, holding her tenderly, “And it wasn’t our first kiss. I sorta kissed you when doing CPR to bring you back to life”.

“So you were the one cracking my ribs back then!”, Hiyori exclaims.

“I was desperate. It’s not every day that I bring you back to life”, Yato gives her his biggest grin yet. “Let’s go back to your home. It’s not good to stay out in the open at this hour”.

“The trains have all left though--”, before Hiyori could finish, Yato has already lifted her up, carrying her back with one arm and legs with another. He leaps into the air.

“You are really getting good at this!”, Hiyori exhales. Though they are only centimeters different in height, she looks small in his embrace. Hiyori falls to sleep in his arms. When Yato brings her back to her apartment and puts her on the bed, she holds his hand, saying, “Stay with me”, though she knows he could not stay for the night.

“I will hold your hand until you sleep. You should rest now”, Yato tucks her into bed. She sits by her side and leans to touch her cheek, reassuring her.

“Promise me I will see you tomorrow and the days after?”, she asks, already half-asleep.

“Promise”, he whispers lovingly.