

As the sky donned its cloak of silent darkness, the people of Illyria naturally prepared for a deep slumber, leaving only a few shops open for business. Mist rose from the sea, mingling with the air to create a peaceful, cool atmosphere. Under normal circumstances, this would be a time for rest and recuperation. Yet, as a knight of the International Police Force, Ky Kiske was duty-bound to ensure his homeland remained absolutely safe, whether in the dead of night or the light of dawn.

Ky Kiske was currently patrolling the path leading out of Illyria Castle, a structure distinguished by its impressive domed architecture, facing both the sea and the sprawling city beyond. The setting tended to induce a sense of drowsiness at night. Nevertheless, starting a patrol from a vantage point that offered a panoramic view of the city was a sound way to begin.

A cold breeze blew gently, causing his white, blue-trimmed cape to sway. His turquoise eyes shifted across the deserted streets, and his hand instinctively rested on the hilt of his sword whenever the sound of waves crashing against the shore reached his ears. Even though no Gears had appeared tonight, he could not afford to let his guard down. He focused on maintaining a steady rhythm to his breathing amidst the biting night air.

"Just another boring evening. Can't you defective humans come up with something more exciting?" - a hoarse, mocking voice rang out beside him.

...That's right, Ky Kiske was not patrolling alone tonight. He was accompanied by Robo-Ky, a defective replica cobbled together from scrap metal. Normally, he would have no reason to let such an arrogant, conceited fellow tag along and disrupt his work. Yet lately, he and this defective metal construct from the Post-War Administration Bureau, walking right beside him, have been attempting to compose a love song of sorts together. Even though the robot constantly trails him, using the yellow optical sensors where its eyes should be to scrutinize and disparage everything about him, he chooses to turn a blind eye, however begrudgingly.

However, ignoring the robot's barbs is akin to trying to live in harmony with Sol Badguy. Ky Kiske still has a thorny path ahead of him. So, despite their relationship, he has no desire to let something as simple as holding hands tarnish his reputation as a member of the Sacred Order of Holy Knights.

"You were the one who insisted on following me." - Ky Kiske sighed softly; his voice, usually so decisive, sounded more weary and helpless than ever.

“Then you ought to find a way to cure my boredom!” - Robo Ky’s gravelly, mocking voice rang out beside him, and the white fabric covering its steel arm jabbed defiantly at Ky’s elbow.

The metallic creaking from the robot made Ky instinctively step a few paces to the right. In the quiet of the night, every sound the machine made seemed as loud as a church bell.

It might sound callous, but Ky Kiske felt his very senses offended by the presence of this scrap-metal replica of himself, a copy that acted with such absurd arrogance and swagger. His brows furrowed slightly as his gaze shifted toward the distant tower standing in the heart of the metropolis.

“So you’ve got some real nerve ignoring me like that!” - Robo Ky’s voice rose to a shrill pitch, clearly irritated at being deliberately disregarded by the person he cared about. He stomped toward him, the clanking sound of his movements against the stone pavement made everything else seem insignificant.

This time, Ky Kiske’s sigh was audible, he raised a finger to his temple.

If asked whether he regretted agreeing to let Robo Ky tag along on patrol, his answer would be no.

Once he had acknowledged his feelings for someone, he was always willing to indulge their wishes, provided the request wasn’t unreasonable. However, if this robot had a better grasp of the world around him, and complained less about his posture or the way he spoke, he would certainly be happy to have him as a trusted right-hand man during patrols.

Ky Kiske lowered his hand, instinctively resting it on the hilt of his sword while his eyes remained fixed on the rippling sea. Without realizing it, he had stood there gazing at the scenery for quite some time. The small moon, resting in the sky, was reflected on the water’s surface, distorted into a brilliant oval. The undulating waves caused the shape of that nocturnal light to fracture, scattering it into shards like broken mirror fragments. Yet, they persisted upon the water, refusing to vanish until the first light of dawn broke.

“Do you see the moon up there?” Ky Kiske asked, his voice carrying a gentle, warm tone quite unlike his usual manner. The android beside him was momentarily taken aback; he glanced at Ky for a moment before turning his gaze to follow what Ky was looking at. “Why you look at the sea and asking about the moon?” - Robo Ky was puzzled by it.

If its face were made of human flesh, it would raise its eyebrows while curling the corner of its mouth into a mocking smirk. Unfortunately, it was merely a rigid assembly of iron and steel, utterly incapable of expressing emotion.

“Beautiful, isn’t it?” - he said, ignoring Robo-Ky’s question.

For a brief moment, the robot glanced at him. His gaze had softened, and his shoulders had relaxed, shedding the stiff, solemn air it was accustomed to seeing. His lips quirked up ever so slightly, a look almost identical to the bored, unamused expression he usually wore. Others might overlook this, but Robo-Ky was keenly aware of how strictly he controlled his facial expressions. Only when alone and in a secure location would he allow himself to relax and let fatigue wash over him.

Yet tonight, it was witnessing, with its own eyes, Ky Kiske, the esteemed knight of the Sacred Order, smile. That exclusive sensation made the gears inside it spin a little faster.

It didn’t keep its gaze fixed on him for long, quickly turning its attention to the water’s surface instead.

“Ugly as hell” Robo-Ky remarked, clasping its hands behind its head.

“Fair enough” Ky Kiske chuckled softly before resuming his patrol; his breath was as faint as a passing breeze.

Even so, the sound didn’t escape Robo-Ky’s audio sensors; it let out a scoffing noise, clumsily attempting to mimic his mannerism. Metal and gears clattered together as it followed Ky Kiske, creating a medley of metallic sounds. Then again, for him, this commotion turned out not to be so bad after all.

The path leading out of Illyria Castle looked just as it had the day before; even shrouded in night, the surrounding scenery teemed with the vitality of a prosperous nation. A breeze stirred his hair, and a speck of dust blew into Ky’s eye, forcing him to rub it.

“Come to think of it, how are things going with that ‘Sol’ fellow? I hear he’s still as stubborn as ever.” Robo-Ky remarked out of the blue. Ky glanced at the eerie, green-steel face, bearing no resemblance to his own, while continuing to rub his eye.

“I am his superior, and also his rival.” Ky Kiske lowered his hand; at the mention of Sol Badguy’s name, his eyes narrowed, revealing a burning, murderous intent.

“Heh I bet he looks down on you because you’re just too weak right” Seizing the opportunity, Robo-Ky immediately adopted a mocking tone, accompanied by a mechanical titter.

“A mere human like him... I fear he wouldn't make it back in one piece if I were to use my full strength.” Ky Kiske maintained a calm, humble demeanor, his voice firm and decisive. Yet, his hand unconsciously tightened around the hilt of his sword.

He raised his left hand to his chest and gazed at his palm; the calluses formed from countless battles were concealed by a fingerless glove. Ky Kiske felt a sharp pang in his chest. Deep down, he still could not accept his defeat at the hands of Sol Badguy, the moment Sol had successfully stolen the Fireseal. It was surely because the man had wielded the power of a Sacred Treasure that he had been defeated. Ky Kiske gritted his teeth and clenched his fist. Right beside him, Robo Ky watched his every move. Curiously, whenever that name, Sol Badguy, came up, he displayed far more emotion than usual. In contrast, he maintained a completely expressionless face around the robot, neither smiling nor crying, yet his tone turned noticeably sharper at the mere mention of that old geezer. It was clear he cared more about that guy than he did about the robot.

“...Then stop mentioning his name.” Robo-Ky’s voice dropped, and the gears whirring inside him suddenly spun at an odd speed.

“You were the one who brought up Sol Badguy first” Ky Kiske raised an eyebrow at him.

“Then stop thinking about him!” Robo-Ky’s voice rose; he crossed his arms and deliberately strode a few paces ahead.

Ky Kiske didn't understand why this defective copy was suddenly acting so erratically, yet a thought flashed through his mind: the guy was actually kind of cute.

Even though, in reality, this walking hunk of metal was just acting childish to get more of his attention.

“Alright, have it your way.” Ky Kiske quickened his pace to catch up with the robot, gently placing a hand on his shoulder.

“How about we grab a bite? It’s late, after all. Don't worry,my treat.” He smiled softly, his turquoise eyes gleaming in the darkness.

Robo-Ky gazed at those sparkling gems for a moment. Somehow, looking into Ky Kiske’s eyes made his internal engine skip a beat.

“You idiot,how the hell am I supposed to eat human food?”