

“Does anybody know what the fuck theyre doing?!”

Late into the night another day of matches. Pitch dark bedroom lit up by the gentle blue lighting of light strips decorated throughout. The teal haired individual in the room on the other hand, was not so friendly. Programmed to sync with her match health bar, the lights shift into a warm orange hue then to a deep red. Another loud clicking of keys followed by a loud sudden slam of fists to the desk, shaking the halfway empty can of cranberry sprite sitting dangerously close. “Fuck!” Ren viciously stood up and tossed her headset to the side, the kitty ears making a loud impact on the mess of random items scattered on the ground. Whether it was broken or not she didn't care for right now. This was the third, no fourth loss streak. It really wasn't her day today. Her fist balled, if not for her monitor being partly expensive she would have struck it. The anger that overwhelms her in losing is something she has difficulty controlling. Wouldn't be a problem in the first place if her teammates just did their job as a team. Releasing another burning grunt from her throat, “*Tch*. Whatever, I dont fucking need this.” Slipping on her favorite boots and throwing on her favorite hoodie, the eyes of her favorite champion Rengar brightly shown. She needed a place to cool down again. Looking at the clock, there's one place that would be open this late.

Silent streets, the sway of the late breeze. The street lights lit the sidewalks, looking upwards Ren notices the Arcade she visits often is open this late still. Despite the hour, there are still customers. People just like her who don't follow a normal sleeping schedule. There was also a small corner shop for water,energy drinks and various snacks. Local tunes played over the speakers must be lofi tunes. Ren faded all the sounds around her, peering over the various games she could play. Some obviously were a test of luck, others always guarantee a little gain. Popping a couple coins into the machine, spitting out golden tokens into Ren's hands. She didn't bring a lot of change but Ren didn't expect herself to be here for several hours, only until her head was clear. She played short easy games, letting the minutes pass by. Next to her stood a big shiny glowing machine. It looked like a big slot, the jackpot excited her a little. The small wins on the machines for children left her feeling slightly confident in doing this. The sign reads to place four coins inside.“Really? That many tokens? Total scam.” Ren took a breath as she placed the coins in anyways, taking the giant lever she jumped a bit in the air using her weight to slam down the lever hard. Oddly satisfying. The digital screen icons shuffled multiple colors, slowly stopping on a fruit. A complete loss. Ren tried it again, meeting the same results.

Feeling her anger attempting to resurface Ren marched over to the vending machine, the only machine in this whole place to offer her beloved beverage: Cranberry Sprite. She crouched down to pick it out from the vending machine. A single flick to open the can, she takes a long sip. Feeling the carbonated drink bubbling down her throat through her chest felt horrible afterwards, the feeling soon faded away. Pounding her fist against her chest, slowly coughing she noticed somebody else there. How did she not notice them there the whole time? Was she also getting a drink? It was hard to tell what was on the silver haired girl's mind, her rosey eyes were clearly directed to her.

"Tough night?" she asked. Swiping a credit card on the machine, selecting a cherry flavored beverage. Ren doesn't know why she's talking to her; there's obviously other people. After a couple nudges, Ren gave in and made small talk with the lady. They gave each others' names, her's appeared to be Ruby. So weird, she's never met anyone with such a name. Then again, her best friend was named after a rainbow: Iris. Her fingers gripped her soda tighter, remembering Iris; her so perfect life with her perfect boyfriend and she had the nerve to actually move out of their apartment after their previous argument. Not that she's complaining much, she did miss the company a tiny bit. Some of Iris' stuff is still there. Ruby asked what was on her mind. Avoiding talking about her friend Ren explained she came by after her unfortunate losing streak that was totally not any fault of her own. Venting to Ruby about them, the other nodding as she continues to listen.

"It sounds to me that the answer to your little problem is getting advice on your matches. A more refined battle strategy.", she took another sip of her cherry drink. "You know, I could help you with that."

It sounded a bit interesting. Ren couldn't help but now notice her attire. It was definitely an outfit she'd be caught dead in. Baggy black cargos with multiple pockets, crop turtleneck jacket bearing a golden prism and a bright hot pink crop top exposing her chest and midriff too much for Ren to be able to handle in the current moment. She's beautiful, it's hard to believe she was a gamer like her. Ren's eyes shifted the other direction, praying she didn't notice Ren's probably obvious staring. "You dont look like you know jack shit," Ren took another sip and crossed her arms, "How am I so sure you even know what youre talking about?" Ruby's lips spread, the darker lipstick rosey from the drink adding to her charm. Ren counted two beauty marks: one under her left eye, the other under her lip on the same side. Hearing Ruby speak, Ren blinked her eyes multiple times, remembering they were having a conversation.

Shifting her weight to her other hip, "I happen to be quite skilled. I've recently conquered two missions this week alone, something no ordinary person would be able to do."

"Yeah?" Ren tried to shoo her away and ended up listening to Ruby talk about some fights she's had. Not so bad in her opinion, she mentioned strategies Ren never considered. Seems legit. Perhaps she will let Ruby be her coach.

"Hey, you want to be a better player right? I might know that." Ruby got up in a smooth motion, reaching her hand to Ren's. Ruby is annoyingly taller than her by several inches. "Let me show you how to get the power to ensure victory." Not seeing any other options for her, Ren took Ruby's gloved hand on her own. They were bitterly cold, way colder than she expected. There was a mesmerizing scent of roses to the woman, it seemed to soothe Ren's thoughts for a little. Anything would help her at this point. What's the harm in giving this a shot?

They arranged a time and place to meetup. In 30 minutes, under the huge vegas like light signs outside of the Arcade they were just in. Noticing Ruby casually leaning against the building, her fingers pulling out a small object. She was using a pocket mirror probably checking on her complexion. Ren could have sworn she was talking to somebody. Maybe on the phone? She ignored it and went over. Noticing Ren's approach, Ruby guided Ren elsewhere asking her questions on the way about the type of game Ren plays. Ren went on a semi elaborate

explanation, wondering why she even has to explain it in the first place. Maybe Ruby was testing her first. Still, Ren left out a couple details.

"Hmm, I see. Commanders send five of their best champions against another five to ambush the other's base of operations."

Ren's eyes squinted a little, "Yeah? I guess you could put it like that."

It's a fight between champions. Ruby understood that part, the other deep details not so much. Absorbed enough information to make her next decision.

"Then let's try a game!"

Ruby walked further ahead slightly quicker forcing Ren to pick up the pace too. It was like a short chase trying not to lose the white haired woman through the sharp corners of the city. This area Ren realized she didn't recognize at all. Ren swallowed hard. Was she going to get mugged??? No way. She most likely just lives far away. Eventually Ruby came to a stop, Ren nearly bumping into her.

"Here we are!"

Ren looked around, she didn't see much of anything here in the back of the structure. Sticking her hands into her pockets she watched the taller one slowly strut up to a large blue tarp covering something huge under it. Yanking it off revealed a gigantic beautiful mirror, the borders golden and antique. The whole series of events was really strange. Is her place closeby? Slender fingers touched the spotless mirror, it was so clean like glass. It was strange though, when Ruby stood in front of it, her reflection wasn't shown as there were steps descending lower. Perhaps it wasn't mirror after all.

Ruby whispered something under her breath, the prism gently bouncing off her emitting a warm glow.

"Come."

She motioned her fingers to get Ren to go downstairs with her. It looked really suspicious, Ren didn't care at the current moment following behind. Her eyes take a closer inspection to the small details onto the golden frame. Tiny letterings far beyond her understanding, taking the first steps through it she half expected to run into a wall like a complete idiot. That didn't happen at least. Descending a couple steps down, a stone corridor leads further inside. There were oddly placed pillars, why are there weird choices of decorations down here? The air started to feel a little heavy, Ren pursued further. "Your place is around here?" Ren took a quick glance behind her, was there ever a door back there? They've probably walked too far from it by now. Ruby stopped them under an oddly shaped flooring.

Ren tapped her boot against the weird sigl, a very strange choice. It reminded her a little of her fantasy games. Her body gave a strange itching reaction to whatever it was on the ground, something that's never happened before, as if her body was completely trying to send a warning.

With a loud stomp of Ruby, the floor began to glow and before Ren could progress what was happening the ground under her opened up, sinking her below into darkness.

Gaining consciousness again after that, she's surprised she didn't get injured falling down who knows how low. Picking herself back up, her eyes scanned the place, this isn't where they previously were. Rose bushes finely decorated between tall statues, faces she doesn't know at all. Light beamed between the gigantic pillars holding up a gigantic colosseum around

her. It strangely reminded her of the ones she'd see in one of her games: Smite. The resemblance was certainly a coincidence. Right now she demands answers; this isn't normal at all. Just where is she? Noticing a marble building in front she entered it, the doors pushing with ease. Right away she sees Ruby who was very much awaiting her arrival.

"So you finally made it! You know, most people don't make it this far." the smile on her face made Ren's own brow lower. Ruby was clapping lightly, seeing Ren was about to march right up to her she held her palms to her, stopping Ren in her tracks. There's a cold silence between the two, a light then heavy rumble shakes the temple they're standing inside. If it were to crumble under them it would be a surprise to nobody.

"Hmm, they're quite early." Ignoring Ren, she walks back outside the click of her shoes on the marble flooring echoing.

"This shit isn't funny. Where fuck am I?" Ren demanded answers. A light sweet chuckle came out of Ruby. She snapped her fingers, emerging multiple large creatures from the earth. She points, counting the eight leaving ten of them total then dividing them between Ruby and Ren. Ren's eyes widened. A large digital board lit up, two large icons displayed the two as "Commanders", the others as teammates. Other structures began to rise from the ground: red and blue towers.

"Well we're playing the game right?" Ruby answered.

On her list of duties to do, this was not part of them. Nevertheless she was enjoying watching the human begin to lose her cool with everything going on around her. The huge powerful creatures growled around them, Ruby paying no mind to them; she could easily dispose of them.

"Yeah, on a computer! Not," Ren waves her arm to the grunts, "**this!**" Just what is this person thinking, she's only going based on the description she was given. It's Ren's fault for not being specific. Ren assumes this is going to be some kind of fight but the circumstances she isn't liking.

"I don't know who the fuck you are but they're all monsters. This shit is clearly rigged against me!" Ren complained.

"Fortuna iuvat."

Ren stared, confused about what she just said. That phrase she's heard somewhere what it means again.

"Fortune favors the bold." Ren whispered under her breath as she recalled the translation.

"I will ask you this once. Is winning important to you?" Ruby asked Ren, her stare intense. "So valued, you'd risk your life for it?"

"Yes, it is."

Amused by the response, Ruby approached Ren, the space between them nonexistent. The strong smell of roses penetrated her nose again. Twisting her fingertips, a prism manifested from Ruby's palm, similar to the one on her only smaller in size. It's a magical sealed item, capable of great powers to create, amplify or destroy. She'd become familiar with it through the sorceresses Hecate who assisted her own goddess, Morta: An arbiter of fate. They're mysterious, unpredictable, even though she doesn't know what they all do. All she knows is they're deadly to humans, curious and desiring to continue playing with this mortal's own life like

a puppet strung up for her. Dancing it between her fingers, Ren was mesmerised by the vile violet glow emitting from it. It looked so evil, dangerous yet so beautiful like the beholder of it. Ren shook her head, biting her own tongue from saying another word.

"I'll lend you a power from this realm, if you gain victory it is yours to use to escape but if I win, I can offer your soul to the gods!"

Listening to the silver haired lady talk, it sounded extremely sketchy. Any person can tell this was bullshit. To Ren though, the idea of having power, a force that can give her an upper edge and above all secure a victorious win after all her losses. Legit or not, what does she have to lose? Ren accepts the hand extended to her, holding tightly to the woman's hand. Their fingers interlocked, the moment rather warming. The beams of sunlight bounced off her teal hair, causing her eyes to squint a little. From the gloves of the taller woman odd vines continued to grow out of her hand, wrapping around both their hands, trailing all the way up to their elbows. The thorns pierced Ren's skin, causing her to ache in the sudden prickly pain. Through the opened wounds a purple prism absorbed into her own palm along with a strange force of power sinking into her veins, it felt like poison pulsing throughout her whole body causing Ren to fall to her knees, the vines still on her arm.

The other woman laughs, her chuckle echoing through the pillars, "I should've mentioned, it might have a side effect." Ren's eyes looked up to Ruby, her comment angering the other. No way was she going to let this get to her. If this is what it takes she'll endure it for as long as she needs. Her body was absorbing something and it felt horrendous. Her head pounded like it wanted to explode and her arm felt like it was being torn off. In the agony, her mind drifted to other places: the houses she's moved to over and over again, the absence of support from her family, god knows they even wanted her at all in the first place. The crumbling friendship of the only other person willing to ever put up with her even for years, falling out of her fingertips unaware of how long she can hold it all together. The mockery everyone gives her for failing at every single thing she does. So much bullshit in her life, this was *not* going to be what takes her life. As pathetic as she considers her own life to be, even she knows this isn't worth it.

"Gods, you're so *pathetic*. Are you really that weak to be near death from this? I thought you'd do better." Ruby shrugs, mumbling a little under her breath enough for Ren to catch, "*So much for getting power.*"

The woman's rosey eyes shift, an idea crosses her mind as her left hand is brought up to her chest, the golden prism resting on top of her chest illuminating an unnatural glow of gold. Her eyes shut, long eyelashes fluttering at the soft motion and her right foot stomps on the ground below them causing a vibration across the colosseum. It's faint but Ren's throat is caught in surprise over the sudden movements nearly knocking her over and reminding her to breathe during the pain that was paralyzing her body. She was an ant, being burned under the hands of Ruby, unable to think about anything. Her consciousness is coming and going.

"If you're worth anything," near Ruby's own boots a shadow crawled out of her, the smoke scattering. From the smoke, rose a sinister cursed blade, mid-length and stained in a purple

splash. Avoiding touching it with her own fingertips, Ruby kicks it over to the smaller one, sliding arms reach away from Ren. The immediate sight of it made Ren's own body sink in dread, her own lungs causing her to choke on the air itself for a few seconds.

"This will choose you."

Ren gritted her teeth, glaring back up at the silver haired woman grinning at her pain. She's going to wipe that smile off that bitch's face if it's the last thing she does.

Bloody fingertips scraped from clawing her nails against the ground to endure the pain, something inside her calls her to reach for the cursed blade while another part of her body screams at her to not; to give up her useless life and accept the cards laid out as they were. Whether it was her own voice or something else, she doesn't care. Spitting out fresh blood, Ren forced her body against the will of everything trying to tear her apart to grab the blade not caring of the consequences to come from it. Her grip tight against the hilt of the blade, dark sparks of energy burned her hand, fighting against her. With a pained scream, Ren tore the blade out of the shadows, ripping herself out of her broken state of mind with it. She hears the sound of something cracking in the vicious motion, her first thought was her own bones but rather unaware of the prism within her shattering into pieces, it's own energy drawing in the weapon's own. The pain from this was unlike anything she's had to face so far. The seal on the blade itself fell into pieces, purple veins growing into her own arm like a parasitic plant making home into her own flesh. Once fully removed, Ren was able to finally stand up lifting the blade skyward with her as the blade penetrated the air, a strong burst of air exploding through them both. Ruby held her own ground, pushed back by the force itself slightly.

"How interesting~" Ruby's eyes were blown wide by such incredible power released before her eyes. She'd known about cursed weapons for some time; it was something she was taught in her own training but was never able to see one for herself. This human wasn't as fragile as she thought, she'd make a perfect form of entertainment in her boredom.

"Why don't we get started then, hm?"

Ruby curled her own fingertips, the ground under them separating them from another a great distance. Their monstrous allies aiding at their side as the larger screen between them blared a loud siren signaling their battle between champions to finally commence.

While their minions ran off ahead of them to clash with another, Ren barely noticed the match had started. Her head was pounding like crazy, nonstop voices clawing into her brain so loud she couldn't hear herself. Blade still in hand, her grip tightens and the mixed clashing static in her head seem nearly clear. Her body still hurt, it was a miracle she could even move at all. Facing forward she witnessed the battle before her, the clash of various weapons, claws tearing through another, blood smearing the dirt in various splatters as her own teammates began to fall one by one. Two of her own marks have fallen upon the screen above them. It was three versus five.

She was losing.

"No. No fucking way." Ren's jaw shut tightly, her teeth grinding in her building fury. She didn't just go through the worst pain in the universe to simply lose. Not on her watch. Her eyes scanned the battlefield, Ruby nowhere to be seen. The lack of her presence made Ren even more upset; was she not going to bother with the fight? Did she think Ren stood no chance against her?

Bullshit.

Feeling her blood begin to boil once more a sharp pain pierced through her body originating from the blade attached in her own palm. A voice deep within her own subconscious clawing out.

"The rage is in your hands, let it loose!"

Gripping the weapon tighter, Ren felt the power building up from it, feeling a synchrony between the blade and her own emotions. Forced to suppress her own emotions of negativity and anger, the cursed item absorbed them all, calling to be given more and more. Ren complied, allowing all the misfortunes in her life to fuel this blade of pure wrath and destruction. Its power growing and growing, drawing in more out of her than she had wanted. A sinister force wrapping itself around her, her breath becoming more rigid, eyes burning with unfiltered anger out of her own control. And for once, she didn't fucking care.

"I will find her. I will destroy her!"

Dashing her way through the terrain, she searched for Ruby without any other thoughts in her mind. Nobody was to stand in her way. Nobody. Her fingers, sharpened with a point of something inhuman, gripped one of the creatures that had been summoned. "Out of my way!" Ren screamed, sending her blade right through it, tearing its own arm off, the screams from the monster mattered nothing to her. Slicing into two, the blade echoed a tune: *Two versus five*. She had slaughtered one of her own teammates.

"You're all useless!" Ren sent her foot down on another, the built up strength in her body exceeding that of any normal human. The anger inside of her powering her up in levels she'd never seen before. Nothing mattered to her anymore: ally or enemy. She was going to rip through everyone and everything to find Ruby herself and have her meet the end of her blade as well. Crushing one of Ruby's own allies into the ground until something in it snapped, shattering it into pieces and fading into the shadows it originated from.

One versus four.

Instead of working as individuals another two creatures decided to instead team up to put a stop to the human spiraling out of control. A wild animal on the loose with no signs of stopping. Ren's breath was heavy, her body showing wear and numb to the pressure her body is under wielding her ever-increasing strength. A sharp whipping motion sent her blade outwards, extending outwards impaling the pair of creatures, black specks of its own blood bathing the dirt. She pulled the blade sideways, shredding the creatures into two. As they descended downwards, she jumped on top of its form using it as leverage to skyrocket her into the air. Her bloodthirsty irises, noticing the last one trying to pathetically escape. Ren twisted the blade, bringing it down

onto the skull of the monster splitting it's whole body into two. She smiled as she saw the creature split into two directions behind her, feeling good about that one. It felt amazing. Her mouth tasted of heavy iron. Oblivious this body of her's was never meant to contain this powerful uncontrollable force for so long but even she didn't care about the details. **All she needs is to win.** Spitting out the blood in her mouth again and wiping it clean off her face, Ren walked forwards scanning and searching for that bitch to show herself. "Show yourself!" Ren screamed into the sky, noticing floating rocks and platforms above her. Sitting with her legs crossed on top of a tall rock was Ruby, waving her hand and winking towards the other.

One versus one.

Witnessing the minions being lamb to the slaughter before the hands of Ren was satisfying to watch unfold from the skies. Ruby rested her palm under her jaw, observing the swift combat the other performed. "She's a natural at this. How did she learn to use a blade?" The moves Ren used were of no amateur that much was clear from the beginning. More like a skill awakened inside of her, guiding her closer and closer to her. There was a great risk considered into the plans Ruby held, amused by their outcome being just as she had wanted it to. She only hopes the mortal would last out long enough for her to have a turn. When Ren finally looked upwards to realize she was literally above her the entire time Ruby tried her best not to laugh over the other's late realization. Stepping onto smaller floating rocks like a stairway, Ren made her way upwards closing the distance between them both. Ruby stood back up keeping her eye on the blueberry angrily marching to her; she cracked her own knuckles, waiting excitedly. Sliding down the rock, Ruby rested her hands on her hips, letting Ren make the first move.

"Show me your worth!"

With a great force Ren kicked herself into the air launching her over Ruby's own head wanting to sink her blade into the silver haired woman as quickly as possible. Their pink eyes meet another as Ren prepares to send her sword downwards to Ruby. Expecting a repeated move made her predictable as Ruby smiled and stepped to the side at the last second. The platform they were on breaking apart from Ren's attack both jumped to another set nearby. Mindlessly swinging slashes at Ruby, she flawlessly maneuvered her body around all her swipes. Dancing along to the frenzied dance. Her chuckles did nothing but anger Ren even further, attempting to throw a punch or kick Ruby hoping something would eventually hit her. One of the slashes did manage to tear a slash through the fabric of Ruby's own pants near her thigh. Ren almost had her. The joyful jumping to dodge Ren's strong yet unplanned stabs were a game to her. Even if she had a force beyond her own understanding, Ren clearly has no control over it and never will.

Ruby's back brushes against one of the taller rocks, bumping against it as Ren's arm pinned to her side against it attempting to cage her into staying in place for once, holding her cursed blade closer to the other. Crossing her arms together, Ruby leans her own body closer to the blade,

playfully challenging the shorter one with a smirk raising her head to the side as Ren points the blade mere inches under Ruby's own chin.



"I'll fucking kill you! Asshole!"

The frustration was clear on Ren's face as clear as day. Holding Ruby still even for a minute was progress for her even if it meant being way too close to her than she'd really ever anticipated. Noticing the other's smooth skin, well built form, and her lack of proper combat wear may prove to be an additional side problem for Ren she's not willing to think about right now. The slight distracted hesitance was obvious for the other when Ruby brushed one of her own hands to Ren, tilting her chin upwards as well.

"You sure that's all?", Ruby teased. Riling up the other once more.

She was really going to kill Ruby, she will make sure of it.

Pushing her blade forwards, Ruby ducked to the side, using the moment to snap Ren out of whatever trance she was in and kick her off the platform itself, sending the teal haired girl tumbling down to the ground. Quickly noticing her unappreciated boot off the platform Ren caught hold of one of the other platforms, forcing her own body upwards. Grumbling insults no living thing should ever hear.

The other hasn't laid a finger on Ren at all, it was a one-sided fight and Ren was sick and tired of it.

"Why the fuck isn't she attacking?" Ren complained, taking the moment to think about it for a second. None of it made any sense to her. Her head started to hurt again.

"A corpse makes a worthless offering."

Ren's eyes snapped open hearing that voice again, unsure where it originated from. Her body was hurting like hell now. She never noticed it earlier but now slowly coming down from her power trip, the damage to her body was resurfacing she had to do something and quick. Trying to focus on anything that may give her an advantage there was one thing that crossed her mind. It was a risky as hell move, she might die trying but she's got nothing to lose.

Taking her chances, Ren begins to avoid keeping a long distance from Ruby, testing the limits of the other's actions. Never once did Ruby pull a weapon, it was something Ren held an advantage of using the close distance to force Ruby to be more defensive. Her careless assumptions had her meeting a powerful punch right into her own gut, Ren choked as the air from her lungs exploded out of her. She was stupid to think Ruby wasn't skilled in close combat with her own fists. *Shit!. That really fucking hurts.* But she's so close to her now, biting her own lip hard to draw blood to suck up the pain and knowing something had probably broken. That doesn't matter anymore. This was it. It's all or nothing.

Ren pulled power from the blade once more, burning her own arm in pain again. No numbness to hide the pain this time, it was agonizing on top of her already internal and external injuries. She tosses the blade in her hand, letting it go for the first time since wielding it. Ruby notices, grinning. "Giving up already?" both observe the weapon leave their field of vision. Using the opportunity to distract her, Ren took Ruby's own arm with her fucked up one using all her remaining extra strength to yank that woman off her footing and slam her into the ground the best she can. Apparently not as easy as it looks. Ruby's body collides hard with the platform, her own body sinking into the platform from Ren's own hidden sudden strength of the cursed

arm she bears. Ren quickly moves to sit herself on top of Ruby, attempting to keep her onto the ground. She's a lightweight but who cares. The sudden power and changing position of Ren straddling on top of Ruby has the sly woman in awe before coming to her senses again noticing she lost sight of the cursed blade. A sharp feeling spreads through her own body, blowing her flushed eyes wide.

Ren had summoned the blade back into her hand, impaling into the prism on Ruby's own chest. The silver haired woman loudly laughed at Ren, "You must be the most dense human i've ever met!" Ruby rested herself upwards slightly with her arms, putting her face even close to Ren, their faces inches apart from another. "You think you can break this? It's impossible." Ruby knows this; even with her own great power she can't. It's her link with Morta, their bond unbreakable.

"Shut up!" Ren added further pressure to the blade, unbreaking my ass. She groaned as she tried to draw in more power to the blade, Ren feels like she's dying as she does this, at her final limits. Using the last of her strength, Ren screams as she notices it starting to crack. Ruby's unable to push Ren off her, the sudden attack now affecting Ruby in a way never seen before. Whether it be due to the prism slowly breaking or the elements of a cursed blade inflicted upon it, neither of them had time to think about it when the prism on Ruby's chest shatters. Deep red explodes out from within it, Ruby's own body falling back to the ground unmoving.

Sweat falls from Ren's face, heaving deep breaths exhausted beyond belief. A loud sound from the screen dimes a result: Ren's team had won as the last one standing leaving her as their victorious champion. For once in a very long time, Ren drew out a smile. She had done it finally; she'd won. Ren's own body no longer holds up, collapsing on top of the other passing out instantly.

"... g....t.....p!"

Muffled voices call for her, pitch darkness enveloping her body. Sinking deeper and deeper into the dark shallow waters, the cold water peacefully embracing her body. Pink eyes snapping open, she sat her body upwards, silver hair popping out from the dark waters of a river. Ruby coughed, expelling water from her lungs. She wasn't suffocating but it was still an uncomfortable experience. She can't quite recall what had happened when she blacked out, nevertheless, it seemed that the blue haired girl had been able to pull a quick one over her. Normally someone would be angered over being killed by someone so pathetic, Ruby on the other hand was not. Fingers trailed up her chest to hold the prism on her neck again, the glow warm against her fingertips. On land, stood a hooded figure slim and skeletal in form; they held a long oar. Boney fingers gripping a golden obol coin in their hand. The features reminded her of a familiar figure she'd read about in books during her own days of education.

It's Charon: Ferryman of the dead. Does this mean she died? For real this time? She laughed to herself a little.

Pulling herself back up, Ruby walked out of the river Styx, the black waters hiding anything it contained submerged, several skulls floating gently through the drift of the river pulling downwards further in. Charon remained in place, the sockets in their face staring at Ruby for a

minute and turning back to return to their daily duties of journeying the dead from the living into their passage to the Underworld. No carpool into the Underworld today.

The Underworld was rather calmer than she'd expected it to be. In her head she imagined more fire and people in agony, instead it was fairly silent with calm order. She'd heard there was a new person in charge; Persephone: Queen of the Underworld. Hades had been exiled into Tartarus for reasons the gods won't give explanation to somebody like her, so far they've managed to seal him well. Making her way further away from the river a familiar viridescent haired woman stood in front of her, arms crossed and glaring a look enough to kill.

"Just what did you do to get yourself here?!" Morta yelled, demanding an explanation from Ruby who had gone rogue off her sights for some time, to discover her in the Styx itself; the river of promise between gods, the blessing of Achilles. This isn't the first time Ruby's run off to start trouble with humans. Having Ruby bound to not kill anybody unless their time has come has its perks with avoiding any issues of Ruby potentially messing up the future because she decides to off people at random out of boredom but it's the first time something has actually happened to have Morta's attention.

"What? You know most people say hello before screaming in their face you know? Besides, the human's fine... I think. Is that important anyways?" Ruby responded, putting her hands into the pockets of her pants and kicking a few small rocks under her.

"Do **not** play games with me Ruby." Vibrant hair bounced with every step the towering woman made, nearing closer to the silver haired woman. Any other person would know it's wise to start running the other direction when a goddess who decides when people die is pissed off and coming your way. To Ruby, it was another day of the week. It was unusual seeing Morta in the Underworld at all, the same can be said about herself as well; while they both have their role of bringing an end to the lives of humans and gods alike when their time neither was exactly belonging to the place. Instead they share their own realm that balances right between both whilst detached from it. Morta stops her steps, pondering if to tell Ruby what had actually happened; Ruby doesn't seem to know the details. Rather than explain, Morta decides to instead figure out why it had even happened in the first place.

"What did you steal from Hecate?"

"I'm so hurt, Morta! You think I'd steal from one of your friends?" Ruby cooed.

"..."

"So I may have borrowed a little something. Is there a problem?"

Morta sighed, crossing her arms against her chest attempting to keep her cool and not rip the head off her stupid servant. "The problem is, Hecate holds cursed weapons. She'd just explained to me one from the locked vault was missing. I don't know how or why you'd do something so stupid."

"Isn't that what some of you do though? Get bored sometimes, mess with a human or two? I don't see the big deal."

"You could've actually perished!"

Ruby blinks, drawn back by the sudden comment and outburst of Morta. As far as she was concerned, Morta holds her soul meaning Ruby can't even die for real and constantly

reawakens by the side of her bound goddess. Waking in the Underworld was definitely strange; it's never happened before. Something about the way Morta stared at her was also off-putting, like she was holding back on a certain detail which she wasn't going to press on it. Ruby would even dare to think Morta was actually worried about her. Must be the dizziness in her head she's still coming back from.

Not wanting to raise more questions than answers, Ruby claps her hands together. "But I'm here now aren't I? You know I'd never go down that easily. It was a fluke!" Ruby knows she's strong; her body blessed by the river Styx itself leaving her body all-powerful. She'll never age, the encasement of her soul and other factors makes sure of that. An endless life next to Morta, at first agonizing, now bearable even if Morta had a stubborn demanding attitude unfitting her beautiful complexion. Morta would normally agree with Ruby's comment but this time she wouldn't. Hecate had mentioned to Morta about great powers being sealed inside some of the prisms and cursed weapons to create or destroy beyond the understanding of even Morta's, no, even the gods' own knowledge. More questions were being raised than answered and she hated not knowing the answers above anything; even Hecate wasn't telling her. Unknowing what was locked into that weapon taken from the vault, the newfound vessel alongside the risk it holds against humanity and the gods now she's got more issues to attend to than before or rather one for Ruby to do instead.

"You're going to find that human and keep observations."

"Are you serious? She could be anywhere!"

Morta lowered her brow, "Ruby, we both know that's not the case."

"Ugh. *Fine*. This better be worth my time."

The sunlight burns her eyes, the morning is the fucking worst. Ren wanted nothing more than to stay in her tall pile of blankets for another complete day. Her head fucking hurts. Maybe she shouldn't have chugged so many cans of Cranberry Sprite at that arcade like a raging alcoholic now she can remember jack shit. Staring at the digital clock to her side informing her it is way past noon Ren groaned and decided she may as well get the day over with. Kicking the sheets off her and skipping over the mess of god knows what clothes or random items littered on the floor she survived the way to the restroom, the door resting slightly open.

"I look like fucking shit." Hair stuck in various directions, slight bags forming under her eyes despite being out who knows how long. Ren shut the door of the bathroom, reaching for a hairbrush in one of the drawers to make herself look somewhat decent. Leaning over and splashing water in her face, she could notice a vague ache in her stomach as it pressed against the sink. Did she sleep wrong again? Her arm feels a little numb too. How fantastic.

"Well, I doubt I can do anything else." Nobody was paying her a visit anytime soon; Iris is probably still upset and staying with her asshole of a boyfriend. Recalling their fight, she can't help but feel a small tinge of ache in her. "No, there's no point thinking about that now." Ren shook her head, clearing those thoughts out of her head and reached her hand over to the door knob pulling the knob clean off the door.

Holding the knob in her palm Ren stared at it for a second, dawning on it too late she had broken the door. She knew it was only a matter of time but why the fuck now. Attempting to shove the knob back in wasn't working either.

Pathetic. Put more into it.

Ren's breath skipped, unsure where that had come from, that was definitely not her phone. She's going to be so angry if she ends up trapped in the bathroom of a shitty apartment over the weird sounds going through her head.

"Fuck!" Ren tried shaking the door a little, not doing anything to help her in the current situation. She stepped backwards, her heel meeting the bathtub behind her and began to dash forwards leaping her body and kicking the door.

Better.

It worked perfectly, the hinges on the door snapping upon contact slamming down onto the floor. Ren really hopes her neighbors are out and knows her landlord is going to kill her later. Her bedroom is a mess and it's going to take her a solid week to get it looking like her shut in ass and didn't forget to clean her room for an unreasonable amount of time. Even with her long sleeved shirt, she felt cold from the air blowing in from her open window.

"Wait, I never..." Ren slowly and carefully tip-toed closer to the window; she swears she never opens this window; she doesn't leave the apartment if she had a choice not to either. Something doesn't feel right at all.

Listening carefully, Ren heard voices coming from outside her room. Taking a guess she assumes somewhere near the living room. Turning the corner Ren sees a tall lady in silver hair standing in her balcony, the swift air blowing through her short silver hair. Her back is turned, looking occupied with whoever was on the other end of her cellphone looking downwards to the cars passing underneath.

Ren took a deep breath, very slowly making her way closer to the unknown intruder.

Considering her options on what to do. Should she say something? Push her? Maybe the balcony is shitty enough to also break off. This morning was already terrible enough, now she's got to deal with this too.

"I've got this under control you have nothing to worry about~ And Decima, I'll make it up to you if you're able to get me any information about the stuff your sister is apparently freaking out about! She's as annoyingly stubborn as usual."

"Hey, so one last thing. Do you think you can ask Clotho to make me another set of gear? These are fine but I'd love some other options you know? Really? Sweet!"

Hanging up the phone the intruder slid her phone back into one of her various pockets. Ren was hiding on the opposite side of the couch away from the other's field of vision. Praying the timing is just right, Ren rushed upwards to push her to the wall. Catching the other by surprise her

body knocks against a small table near the wall, regathering her footsteps the stranger looked up to who had done that.

"Come on, don't you remember this pretty face?" she asked, irritating Ren in ways no other person has been able to before. It's like her voice and presence alone makes Ren want to get rid of her even more. Ren yelled as she drew a punch to the other's face, her other arm unknowingly pulling a burning sensation through it. Taking a step backwards the silver haired woman slipped onto the couch behind them, pulling the other with her. A purple blade oozing with evil in Ren's left hand. The two marks on the pretty lady's face felt familiar. Suddenly a flood of memories rushed into her head, she'd met this woman before, the agonizing pain she'd suffered from her itching back into her body.

"How about now?"

Ren shoved her off the couch. Not wanting to risk staying too close to her Ren held the blade before her.

"How the fuck did you find my place Ruby."

"How do you think you got home?" She laughed, "You've been out for a couple days actually. At least we know you're not dead."

Ren grit her teeth, pointing her blade to Ruby once more. "Get the fuck out."

Ignoring the clear threats of Ren the other waltzed to the kitchen. "About that," she poured herself a drink, "I'm going to stay here awhile. It's not a bad spot and a fine place to lay low for! Although you need to do something about your room, that is an obvious safety violation." She hated her so fucking bad. Why won't she ever listen to anything she says?

"I know what you're thinking but let me make a proposition for you~" Ruby sat down onto one of the chairs, her leg crossing over the other elegantly holding her glass.

"What can you even offer to me, I don't even know you! And you almost killed m-!"

"I can cover all your expenses for letting me stay here", Ruby threw a pouch to Ren filled with strange coins and bills. "Think of this as an advance."

"Holy shit." they were definitely legit. Whoever this bitch is, she's not kidding around.

"Do you think you can still say no to me?"

As terrible as an idea it is, without Iris living with her indefinitely she would have a tough time figuring out how to pay the rent by herself. Her streaming career isn't the most stable source of income either at the moment. How Ruby got her hands on this was a question for Ren to ask later on. Ren knew she was making the worst choice in her life.

"Fine."

She won't lie, Ruby is quite attractive which is something Ren will never admit out loud and have to get used to. Iris will totally freak out when she hears about the sudden new roommate, best to spare her the complicated details though.

"But I'm not sharing my bed with your crazy ass." Ren declared.

"That won't be a problem."

Having the rays of the sun attempt to bleed through your eyelids to remind you of another morning was something Ren was long used to even after recently moving into the city. It's the only way she'd be able to tell another day had passed; otherwise she'd never notice as she spends her life holed up in her bedroom. Groaning, Ren wasn't looking forward to getting herself ready for another day again.

"Should I even bother changing?", she tugs on her large black shirt, the whole top swallowing her smaller petite form. It's not like she has to bother with guests so would it matter? Ren shrugs, rubbing her eyes aching from the sun's direct attack on her. God she hated that fucking thing. "What the fuck's the point of blinds if they don't do their fucking job!"

Still resting her back against the mattress she wondered about what to make for breakfast. Probably more chips. She really needs to shop for food later; she's surviving off cranberry sprite and leftover takeout in the fridge. The fact she doesn't know how old it is should be a concern to anybody but currently she doesn't care.

Shifting her weight, Ren felt her body ache. Hissing through the pain she tugged on her blanket to throw it off her body which was being held down by something else.

Unsure of the source Ren turned her head to the left, noticing there's something there as well. The silent rise and fall of a woman's body with gentle snowy hair, one hand brushed atop her stomach with the other pocketed to her side. Ren knew immediately who it was.

Her apparent new roommate: Ruby.

Waking up with another woman in her bed, definitely new. And not something her simple-minded brain will be able to handle for very long.

For a few minutes Ren pondered how to go about this. "Why did she hog up the whole blanket???" She shouldn't even be trying to do anything to wake her but Ren needed to escape this blanket trap. Ren moved one of her arms over to the other side of Ruby, now hovering over her body still trying to figure out what to do. Really she has no idea what she's doing at all. She doesn't actually know this woman aside from their first encounter but she knows she's well trained to take her out in an instant if she fucked up and she'd rather make it through her morning alive. Ruby looked in peace as she slept, she wasn't a snoring type which Ren was grateful for or she wouldn't have been able to sleep at all. The golden pendant on her chest rises and falls with every breath she takes. Now, she knows it's rude to stare but her eyes couldn't help but dip down. The growing flush in her cheeks realizing other details she hadn't been able to see properly last time due to their intense fight. The strong arms, forming muscle on her abs and the impressive chest she has that makes Ren incredibly jealous of but they also looked quite nice to rest one's head on. How would they feel in her hands? God she really shouldn't be thinking that about someone who literally tried to kill her.

"You're falling to temptation from this voluptuous woman? Pathetic."

Snapping out of the staring trance, Ren's eyes widened at that voice. It was deep, sinister and definitely not her's nor Ruby's.

"What ...the ...fuck." Ren muttered under her breath. Feeling an ache in her head coming on again, Ren looked all around the room. "There's nobody else here who the fuck's talking." she thought to herself, not wanting to speak loudly. Last thing she needs is Ruby waking up with her slightly on top of her like a fucking careless idiot.

Eventually Ren realized it was coming from her own mind.

"Of all being's to be selected to be chosen as my vessel, it had to be YOU."

Oh god whatever it is, it's apparently complaining.

"This is so fucked up."

Ren was not ready to have a conversation with whatever it is while dealing with her blanket issue. Managing to slip out of the sheets, Ren maneuvered carefully over the messy bedroom floor to the living room for some fresh air. Stepping over into the balcony of her flat, silently shutting the glass panel behind her to avoid risking waking the other. Ren took a deep sigh, tapping her fingers over the metallic fence while looking down to the busy streets in the distance.

"I'm going to skip the boring shit and get to the point. Who the fuck is this?"

Ren took a deep breath, the silence weighing heavily on her body. Crushing. The voice that erupted from her mind felt like it was attempting to swallow her whole.

"I'd have you punished greatly for your lack of respect."

"Yeah? Well last I checked I never asked for another stupid voice in my head that isn't mine."

Ren nervously looked behind her making sure nobody else was watching her poor attempt of communication. "I don't have time for this."

"You should be honored to be the vessel of Saangsa. The most powerful of Darkin. The sealed blade of thousands of years has accepted you."

"More like cursed me." Ren groaned. Great, more problems on top of her already existing. Her arm burned as Saangsa spoke. Sure there was going to be great consequences for picking up that blade Ruby kicked to her but this was beyond her expectations.

"So what is it you want?"

"Surrender your body to me! I have many plans for humanity for my grand return!"

"No fucking thank you." Ren knew talking back at Saangsa isn't a good idea but she can't let it get the upper hand on her right away.

"You're weak on your own. You couldn't keep your closest friend to stay by your side!"

Ren's eyes snapped wide at that comment, Saangsa invaded her own memories drawing reminders of her mistakes and troubles.

"Shut up! And stop that!" Ren wished she could hit Saangsa without hitting herself. A vile laugh tore through her mind, the vibrations giving her an onslaught of headaches.

“I’ll eventually break you down. You’ll ask me to take it. We’d be so much stronger together.”

Ren mentally pushed Saangsa away, not hearing that voice once more she turned her back, angrily stepping back inside. She was hungry and didn't want to deal with that the whole day. Those words would linger in her mind for the rest of her day.

“Stronger together? As if.”

Pulling herself free from the blankets, Ruby sat upwards on the side of the bed observing her surroundings. The blinds had been shut leaving the room low-lit, the lights from the bright colorful computer and accessories on the desk provided a fair amount of light. This definitely wouldn't be her choice of stay; it's Morta's demand she'd stay here. Gripping the pendant resting on her chest her own master called for her.

“For someone who no longer has to sleep, you sure took your sweet time.”

“Running your errands is exhausting too you know? Or do you want me to go back with you?” Ruby teased, angering Morta every chance she got. As Morta continued to bicker, Ruby walked to the bathroom next door to fix up. Her hair wasn't too messy but needed to be worked on. As she looked into the mirror, another figure manifested itself on the other side. A tall horned woman with vibrant green hair glared into Ruby with her own golden irises.

“Hey Morta, mind moving to the side? Kinda working on my hair right now.”

Groaning, she stepped to the side a little, her arms crossed at her chest.

“Did you come up with a plan for your extended stay here?” Morta asked, no longer speaking to Ruby through her mind from the pendant.

“Eh? No. I was thinking I'd wing it and see where it goes you know? We don't know if she's even a threat!”

“No plan? You have *no idea* what we're dealing with here!”

“Well neither do you which is,” Ruby danced her fingers outwards mimicking an explosion effect. “absolutely mind blowing you're literally a goddess of fate. Isn't an ancient sealed blade kinda your thing??”

“That blade you stole wasn't from our realm of existence. What you unleashed is beyond our problems now. This now threatens the fate of humanity and the gods. If we're lucky that human will only have the side effects of bearing a cursed weapon.”

Ruby's brow shifted upwards, now paying attention to the conversation. “And if it's more than that?”

“Depending on where her destiny lies, as the Executioner of Destiny, you will put her down.”

Ruby smiled, finishing up the last of her final touches to her face. Under her breath she whispers “*nemo ante mortem beatus*”. Maybe now her time in the mortal realm will be more interesting.

Nemo ante mortem beatus
[Nobody is blessed before his death]

Malediction
[a magical word or phrase uttered with the intention of bringing about evil or destruction; a curse.]