

Luna Valentine PM

You check your quarters before heading out toward the nightly rooms. You find a **Box of Ammunition** on the desk beside your bed. A note is taped to it that reads "DELIVERY!... ALSO SECRET SANTA LOSER!"

I suppose I didn't win that lotto... you think to yourself.

Before entering the rooms, as the entire group was heading off to go explore, you used chow down on some **Gummy Vitamins**. You feel healthier already!

That night you decided to enter **The Ho-ho-ho Gift Shop**. You note that Rosemary, Bolshka Shandall, Alexander the Average, Karl, Aurelia, Nil'Aurelias "Nils" Verbenti, and Miho Airi explore The Ho-ho-ho Gift Shop tonight as well.

You're immediately met with an uncomfortably heavy, still air. Patches of darkness sprinkle throughout the room with several lights flickering off and on in various places across the massive shop. Hundreds of bins filled with broken goods encircle a series of a dozen or so checkout counters in the center of the huge room. A short minute long holiday jingle plays on loop over an intercom on low volume. You don't recognize the tune, but you can tell it's been slowed down a tad.

Christmas trees, broken lights, and dull ornaments decorate the shop giving life to its lifeless shelves and bins. There's nothing useful that isn't already broken, destroyed, or in too many pieces to count. Broken ornaments, glass, and more litter the floors, but strangely the checkout counters in the center of the room and the designated snaking queue lines are spotless.

Making extra sure to not step on anything too loudly you begin searching The Ho-ho-ho Gift Shop for loot.

...

During your search you found a **Sword** and **X-ray Goggles**. You also found **10 tokens**!

You also find a strange note. It reads...

Genzo's letter... hmm. Why did that man call our welcome letter that?

...

Finishing up your search you meet up with Bolshka, Karl, Aurelia, and Nils. You convince them to assist you in a backstabbing.

"I-I-I will be the b-bait. He trusts me... so I should get a free hit in!"

And so the five of you make a plan to surround Alexander without his knowing and then have you attack him when he least expects it.

The group finds Alexander and you rush to meet up with him. Your sword feels uncomfortable in your hands; its weight much too great for you to carry it with ease. In attempt to sell it well, you wave at hand at Alexander as you run at him.

You're unable to say anything once you're an arms reach from him, but Alexander picks up the slack. "Have no fear, for now I, Alexander, am here." He says with a thumb pointed toward his chest. Tension leaves your body as you accidentally let the tip of your sword clank against the floor. "Now where the hell can I get a new shirt..."

You begin to have second thoughts.

NO! I have to do this to save everyone... to save Rosemary!

"If I'd be damned, a new shirt! It looks like it says... 'Party Fiend' on it?" Alexander says, his back turned to you.

The weight of the sword doubles under the weight of the guilt that afflicts you. Pulling back, you reel a mighty slash toward Alexander's back.

"I-I'M SORRY!!!!" you cry out as the sword is pulled down with all your might.

Just as your blade is about to connect with Alexander, a loud pop and flash explodes in front of you and in Alexander's place you see Aurelia.

...!

"UUHHHHHGGGHHHHH!!!!" Aurelia cries out as the sword cuts a large gash across her back. Small droplets of blood splatter across your face as the priestess falls to one knee. Shaking uncontrollably you start losing your grip on your weapon.

Aurelia lets out a growl then turns to face you.

"AAHHHHH!!" you shout out in pain. As Aurelia turned she threw two shurikens, both lodging themselves deep into your thigh.

OW!! OWW OW OWW OW OWWWWWWWWW!

Aurelia stood up and began walking toward you. Unable to comprehend the confusion and pain your sword drops to the floor as you succumb to gravity; propped up by your knees alone.

"I know not of this sorcery, but know that my goddess will not hesitate to pass judgment on the wicked who fight under such vile veils." Aurelia spoke coldly as she pulled out another two shurikens.

You start to cry.

“(do not hurt :(the weak girl :(something happened :(it was not her :)” Karl jumps between you and Aurelia.

“Indeed. This wasn’t made known to us. Had she tried to backstab you this way I’d reckon she would have accounted for the three other allies she brought with her, no?” Nils stated matter-of-factly, now standing beside Karl.

“Uuuuou... looks painful.” Bolshka said, biting at her fingers as she looked at Aurelia’s back. “I’m gonna go with the group here. I think something else is at play here.”

Aurelia’s posture laxed. Her face changed from serious to wincing in pain. “I suppose you’re all right... are you okay, Luna?”

Still crying, you mutter through sobs and sniffles, “Y...yeah... just leave me be, I gotta...” your voice trails off. Looking at the shurikens embedded in your flesh... knowing that you need to remove them...

“Y-you guys go on ahead, take care of Aurelia.” The group then walked off as you lay alone on the cold floor.

H-h-h-here we go.....

AGHHGHRRRRHRHRGGGGH OOOWWWWW! You pull the first shuriken out, blood splatters and drips down onto the floor. Your vision is blurred from the tears streaming down your face.

One... one more. You wipe your eyes and steel yourself to pull the last one out.

AAAAGGGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHRRR!! IT HURTS!!!

You reel back in agony, but before you get a chance to collect yourself you hear Karl shout, “Oh no :(it is an ambush :(be careful :(“ You look up to see Miho staring at you with some sort of crossbow readied.

“She’s got you in her sights!” Nils warns from across the room. Unable to do anything you curl up into a ball.

Whssszzzz

Pttnkt

The arrow flies. It misses. You reluctantly open your eyes to see your allies chasing after Miho.

As you finally get the energy to stand you see Aurelia alone approaching you. She speaks bluntly, “Miho got away, but I think you and I should look for Alexander. He must pay for whatever trickery he has pulled on us.”

Without a word you wipe the tears from your eyes and nod in agreeance.

The two of you find Alexander, shirtless, scavenging for loot. As he starts to put on a newly found shirt Aurelia hurls two shurikens. One pierces Alexander’s shoulder.

“ARGGHHHAAGAAHHH!”

Aurelia shouts from where she stands, “Your cheap tricks wont best me, coward!” while pulling out more shurikens.

I can’t let her fight alone! You charge Alexander.

Whssszzzz

“Ahhhgghg!” Aurelia lets out a pained grunt. An arrow flew by and struck her in the calf.

Alexander did not waste the opportunity and charged at you. He dodges your attack and sends you flying with a well timed shove.

“TIME TO FEAR, FOR NOW I, ALEXANDER, AM HERE!” Alexander shouts as he hurls a brass knuckled punch with his entire weight behind it straight into Aurelia’s gut, launching her five feet into the air and some fifteen feet back. He immediately falls to his knees afterward.

A chance?!

You rush to attack him from behind. *I’m sorry!*

“Fr-freeze!” Miho shouts, holding an aimed crossbow directly at you. “Back off Alexander.” Keeping your sights on the crossbow, you take slow steps back until far enough away to break into a sprint.

Defeated, still bloodied, and tired, you decide to rest. After some time passes you're approached by Bolshka, Aurelia, Nils, and Karl.

"They survived many more attempts on their lives. We need to strike together if we are to stand a chance." Aurelia speaks with a serious tone.

":) yes :) the girl :) she is very :) clever :) we will need :) everyone to :) stop her :)" Karl agrees with Aurelia.

You look down at your feet. Then to the hand carrying the bloodied sword. Without looking your allies in the eye you nervously declare, "M-Miho... must.."

Before you're able to finish your sentence Bolshka yells energetically with two arms in the air, "DIE! Ha-ha-ha." Each member of the group nods.

":) I think both :) will be over :) near the center :) it is where :) I spotted last :)" Karl blurts out. Not a single person responds, but the entire group marches toward the center of the Gift Shop.

You spot Miho alone.

"Ghhhh :(ah carp :(only girl :(intel actually bad :(this time :(" Karl pouts disappointingly.

"Hahaha. Is this gonna be a running gag, fish boy?" Bolshka spits out, bent over laughing.

":("

You step forward and speak with uncomfortable conviction, "M-Miho, you're the lynch pin for this duo! Getting rid of you will ensure the safety of e-everyone else."

Miho's stands her ground. You ready your sword for a potential charge, but before you take the first step Miho pulls out her crossbow.

"Behind cover!" Nils shouts, the entire squad ducking behind cover. You alone are stranded in the open with nowhere to hide.

Oh no...

Miho's crossbow turns away from you and aims elsewhere. The bolt flies.

Whssszzzz

PTNNNGGGGGG

The sound of metal being blasted by the enchanted projectile echoed throughout the room. You stand there, terrified, as a series of steel walls shoot down from the ceiling dividing the gift shop in two.

THUNGKT

“W-w-w-w-what!?” you struggle to speak. You had been completely separated from your allies. A slight smirk creeps up Miho’s face.

“H-h-h-how! H-how did you?!” you shout while flailing your arms dangerously, sword still in hand. “I need to get to my friends! I need to... I need to protect them!”

Miho begins loading her crossbow.

NO! You charge Miho.

Before she can ready the next bolt you send an overhead strike her way. She abandons the task of readying her crossbow and barely deflects the attack with some dinky, runed shield.

“You need to die! I-I mean... s-sorry!” you shout with tears in your eyes. You swing your sword wildly at Miho who does her best to evade each blow.

“**AAAAHHHH!**” she lets out a pained scream as you feel the resistance of flesh against your sword.

I’M SORRY!

Every few attacks dodged is followed by one more connecting.

“**UUGHRHHHH!**” another pained scream escapes Miho as the sword scrapes her shoulder.

I’M SORRY!

“**AAAAHNGGGHHH!**” a wincing howl as your sword makes a nasty connection with her torso. Had it not been for her leather armour she’d have certainly been dealt a lethal blow.

I’M SORRY!!!

Miho, in a desperate attempt, swings a fist from behind her shielded body. It crashes into your bicep doing no serious damage, but the surprise sends you into a panic.

Frantic, you slash madly in defense. A stray swipe cuts heavily into Miho's leg. Afterward, your opponents energy seemed to drop.

Blow after blow, cut after cut. Tears did not cease to flow as your onslaught of attacks continued. Some twenty or thirty wounds on Miho's arms, legs, and torso dragged her closer and closer to death.

I'M SORRY!!!!

"AAHHGHHHH! HELP!!!" Miho cried out in anguish. The girl, an inch from death, begging for her life; clutching her shield and unable to do much against the volley of attacks.

I'M SORRRRRYYYYY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

With all your might you swung down, praying to end it once and for all.

CLNKKK

You miss. Your entire body freezes as you're shaken by the recoil of your blade crashing into the floor.

"AAAGGHGHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" Miho shouted with sudden vigor, charging forward with shield held high.

BRGHHBP

"AHHH--!" you scream as your body is carried by the momentum of the nearly dead girl.

THUD

The two of you crash into a rack filled with broken goods. The collision sends the majority of the broken objects spiral downward onto your head.

As quickly as you can, you regroup and bring your sword to Miho's head, but find she simultaneously had you in her crossbows sights. The two of you stood there, unmoving, for more than a minute. Not a word was spoken.

I need to escape!

Taking the draw as a defeat, you slowly creep backward. Once far enough away you turned tail and ran toward the exit... toward the safety of your quarters.