

# 東方偽現実 ～ Cruelty of Verisimilar Existence

OkuuFallout

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Chapter Completion Status

## **Prologue**

## 1: The Vision

Yukari Yakumo, the Gap Youkai. Her ability is to manipulate boundaries, no matter what that might entail. That person is you, and you will soon discover the truth behind not only Gensokyo and the outside world, but the entirety of everything you know.

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One day, while thinking about the extent of your ability, you thought about how powerful you truly are. You can instantly kill someone by manipulating the boundary of life and death, or the opposite by bringing a corpse back to life. You can even manipulate the boundary between human and youkai, human and demon, etc. However, this would be taboo due to its danger to the balance of Gensokyo.

As you are thinking about this, you remember that painting you got from the outside world. It's an illustration of a massive wave with a snow-capped mountain in the distance. You took after that black-white magician and "borrowed" it from a museum. It is a bit disappointing, however, since it's supposed to be the original yet is so small. *No matter*, you think, *I'll just hang it above the vanity*.

While you gather everything to hang it, you think about how Ran could be doing this for you, but then remember that you are trying to rely less on your shikigami for the time being.

You've gathered everything now, and head towards the vanity. You continue to think about your powers. While you continue pondering that, you slip. You try to catch yourself, but that pesky shelf you put up bonked you on the head.

As you fade out of consciousness, you think, *I should get rid of that shelf*.

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You have a vision, there is a man operating a long, narrow, flat device. You recognize it as a keyboard, not unlike Lyrica Prismriver's. However, it doesn't sound like a keyboard, but rather what you recognize as the sound of Merlin Prismriver's instrument. What was it called again? A

trumpet? Yeah, that sounds about right. It does seem a little different than what it's supposed to sound like, but maybe it's just your imagination.

During what seems like a few hours, you observe the man working on a computer, a type of shikigami from the outside world. It appears that he somehow was able to get the music onto the computer, at least that's what you assume. It looks like what you believe is a "software", a feature of computers, somehow made the music "visible".

After some time, it seems like he finishes. The music that plays is... strange, but pleasant. Serious, but tame. Exciting, but slow-paced. Composed of mostly piano, but with snippets of that unique trumpet. The man seems pleased with his creation, and gives it a title. You can't really make it out, however.

The vision starts to fade away, but before it completely fades, you notice he adds one more detail. This time, you can see it clear as day. Your mind blanks for a second, then you go still, chills running down your spine. The vision fades away, and you see black. All you can think about are those last three words he added:

**"Yukari Yakumo's Theme"**

## 2: Rebirth

"Mistress?" A quiet, soothing voice speaks. "Mistress Yukari, are you alright?!" Now an eager, energetic voice speaks. There can only be two beings in the world with those voices.

"Chen, calm down please. This is Mistress Yukari we're talking about, she's most likely fine." You are fully conscious by now, but you decide to tease them some more. "MISTREEESSSSS?!" Ran snaps a little, "Chen, be quiet! I told you, she's fine!" Chen doesn't listen.

After a few minutes, Chen finally calms down. However, Ran starts to grow concerned. "She should have come to by now." Ran pauses for a bit. "Oh well, she told me to do this in these kinds of situations. Chen, please exit the room." Chen, probably thinking about protesting, sighs and exits. Ran then adds, "And don't stand outside the door to listen!" Rapid footsteps fade away.

"*Sigh* well, here I go." Uh-oh. When you told her about this, you weren't sober. You shoot up. "Ran, please don't, I'm fi-" *bonk* That damn shelf...

You don't blackout this time, fortunately. "OW! Dammit, I really should get rid of that shelf." You turn to Ran.

"Oh! You're awake now!" Ran, clearly trying to hide her embarrassment, quickly gets up and backs away. "Ran, when I told you that, I was drunk. I didn't say anything afterwards since I thought you might have understood." Ran timidly replies, "O-oh. Sorry Mistress, I thought you were serious. You told me that when I find you unconscious, a sure way to wake you up would be to give you a r-romantic ki-" You interject. "Alright! You don't have to remind me." You feel yourself blushing. "I know we fool around sometimes, but in these types of situations, please don't do it."

"Un-understood, Mistress." You can tell that she feels not only embarrassed, but shameful as well. You start to feel bad. She is, after all, a shikigami, obeying your every order.

"I'm sorry, Ran," you apologize. "I didn't mean to make you feel that way." Ran looks at you. "H-how could you tell? I thought I hide my emotions well." You answer, "Yes, you do. And I wish you would show them more. Otherwise, I won't know what you need. From now on, I would like you to show more of that part of you. Don't hold your feelings back. While that may cause more issues, it will cause many more good moments. And you don't have to start doing this at all times, it's okay to start just around me. So please, open yourself up more." Before you finish, with a smirk, you add, "And that's an order."

You hardly have time to prepare for what happens next. Before you know it, Ran is embracing you. You look at her, shocked. Tears of joy run down her cheeks while she smiles tenderly. After

all the centuries you've been with her, this is the first time you've seen her like this. You embrace her back. Nothing else matters right now. Nothing other than you two.

"Mistress?" she asks. "I don't want to be just your shikigami anymore. I- I- I want to be *yours*." You stand there, even more shocked than before, but don't let go. A few minutes ago, you would've, well, been also shocked, then have punished her. However, now you realize that she'll always be with you, shikigami or not. Still, there is something you must do first.

"Ran, I can't accept." She freezes, until you continue. "I can't accept, unless you are no longer my shikigami." Ran lets go, but you just hold her tighter.

Ran speaks, her voice full of shame. "I'm so sorry, Mistress, I got carried away. I won't question you aga-" You interrupt. "Ran, I never said I won't, I only said I cannot in our current roles. I want to be yours as well, but I can't if you are my shikigami. So what do you want more? To live on as we always have, or to terminate your servitude to me in exchange for a new beginning for both of us?"

Ran doesn't answer, she just stands there, taking everything in. When she finally responds, it's in the form of an embrace that knocks you over. She doesn't apologize like she normally would, instead shedding many tears and shouting, "I don't care if everything changes! I don't care what the consequences will be! All I care about right now is you! And if that means I'm no longer yours in servitude, that's fine with me."

You are taken aback by joy. Then you start crying yourself. For centuries, you've been searching for "the one". Little did you know, that person has been by your side all along.

### 3: The Shikigami

Shortly after your attempted conquest of the Moon, you are taking a walk when a storm starts up. You remember seeing a moderately sized shed not too long ago, so you decide to turn around. *It's better than nothing*, you suppose.

When you arrive at your destination, you hurry inside. But before you do, you stop to look at it. When you first noticed it, it didn't seem like much, but now that you take a good look at it, it seems fairly well made, and no holes are in the roof.

You enter the shed. You gap a comfortable chair and sit in it. That's when you realize how exhausted you are. Walking in a storm is no small matter. *Might as well rest up*, you think. You close your eyes, and fall asleep almost immediately.

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When you fell asleep, it was mid-afternoon. Now it's early morning. You wake up unexpectedly, but don't know why or care. The sun is just peeking out of the horizon, its light slowly creeping up in the sky. You think of the term made by a crown prince from a few centuries ago: "Land of the Rising Sun".

You hear the sound of an animal whimpering. It is then you realize that what woke you was that sound: the soft cries of a badly injured fox desperately calling for help. The fox is half-conscious, curled up in the back corner of the shed. Its injury is located on its right front leg and appears to be a bite wound, likely from a wolf.

*This poor thing*, you think, *It's barely holding on. If I wasn't here, it would likely be dead within an hour...*

You approach the helpless creature slowly, so as to not have it panic. However, it barely reacts when it notices you, and instead ceases to whimper. When you reach it, you tenderly lift it up and examine the wound.

It's a female, you notice, but then you sense the undeniable aura surrounding it. A youkai. You know what you have to do. Normally, you'd have a professional care for it, but this is a different circumstance. You carefully but quickly gap to your residence.

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A few weeks have passed, and the kitsune has completely recovered. She has grown to completely trust you, almost as if you were her mother. One thing does bother you, however. She always seems to be eerily calm, even under circumstances that would normally cause the average youkai stress. Nonetheless, it is nice to finally have some company around here.

Weeks turn to months, months turn to years, years turn to decades, and decades turn to centuries. As time passes, the kitsune, who you've named Ran, grows a new tail every century, as kitsune youkai do. It is now the eighteenth century during the Edo Period. Since you first met Ran she's gained the ability of human speech, and you've made her into your shikigami, who dutifully carries out your every order.

You wake up one day and go over to the kitchen. You make a cup of tea and walk towards Ran's room. She's not there. "Ran? Ran, where are you?" you shout. She has never been missing from there when you get up. *Guess I'll go to the restroom while waiting for her.*

You enter the restroom and immediately drop your teacup. Right before you is a woman, appearing to be in her lower-thirties, soaking in the bathtub. You notice fox ears that sprout from her head, and the many tails she has. You know who it is, although you can't conceive it at first. You know that kitsune can shapeshift, but this particular one has never done so.

"R-Ran?!" She jumps. "Mistress Yukari!" She is obviously surprised. "Excuse me, but- ah, I woke up this morning to find myself in this form. I don't know what caused it, but I have nothing in the way of clothing. Could you help me, perhaps?" She doesn't look directly at you, a reasonable reaction given the current situation. "*Sigh* Yes, Ran, I'll get you some clothes."

Since you don't want to get any old clothes for her, you decide to make some yourself. After a couple days or so, you've sewn a few outfits for her, lending her some of yours in the meantime. When you give her the clothing she thanks you sincerely, still keeping that same calm attitude she's always had.

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It is now the twentieth century. About 100 years ago, you helped establish Gensokyo, a sanctuary for forgotten youkai to come to as the outside world's belief in them vanishes. Since Gensokyo and the Great Hakurei Barrier were established, much has changed in the outside world, with their most recent achievement being the moon landing.

Meanwhile, Gensokyo has remained more or less unchanged. The most substantial difference between now and the establishment would likely be the declining faith of the Hakurei Clan, resulting in only a few of them left.

You've just come back from the outside world and are giving the shopkeeper Rinnosuke the latest inventions, as you do every few years or so.

"Curious..." he says, "This device seems to be an interactive version of television in a game format. It is called a 'video game', and it seems that Japan is the leading market for these. It seems like the outside world has been advancing dramatically lately."

"Interesting," you say. In only a decade or two, the outside world has come from landing on the moon (somehow not meeting the Lunarians) to creating a scientific research base orbiting the Earth, and from computers that once took up entire rooms to a device that rests on a type of table with small storage cabinets called "desks".

You then ask, "Anything new while I was gone?" He answers, "Yes, actually. Ran stopped by to tell me that when you get back, she has something to show you." You pause for a moment. What could Ran have gotten or done that warrants her to tell Rinnosuke?

"Thanks, Rinnosuke. Now what's my payment?" He thinks for a moment, then replies. "How much was it all in the outside world combined?"

"About ¥20,000." He sighs. "Would ¥15,000 be alright? You have said before that most products are sold for more than they cost to make."

"That's fine," you say. You do have some respect for him, since he's always served well as a shopkeeper, despite his lack of customers. You sell the various objects, receive both money and gratitude from Rinnosuke, and gap home.

"Ran?" You call, "I'm ho-." You look around. The place isn't necessarily trashed, but it's close to that description. "RAN!?" You hear footsteps accompanied by lighter footsteps. You're confused. You don't remember giving your other shikigami human forms.

Ran appears. "Hello Mistress. Welcome back. Sorry for the mess. I keep cleaning up, but *this* little thing keeps undoing all that work."

"Little thing?" you ask. Ran responds. "Oh right, you haven't met her yet." She calls out. "Chen, you don't have to hide. This is my own mistress, Mistress Yukari." *Chen?* you think, *Who's Chen?*

A small girl appears, seemingly out of nowhere, making you jump a little. She seems to be a cat youkai, with twin cat tails and two cat ears on top of her head, one of them being pierced twice with earrings. She looks delighted and energetic.

"You are my master's master!? Master has told me all about you!" She giggles in delight.

You want to talk to Ran about this immediately, but you can't just ignore this cute girl. "Er, hello. Chen, was it? Nice to meet you, but why are you here?" Before Chen can respond, Ran speaks up. "Mistress, she's my new shikigami. Remember right before you left, you told me that you trusted me enough to get a shikigami, and to get one if the opportunity arises? Well, here she is. I named her Chen."

Oh yeah, you did say that she could get one. Nevertheless, you are still surprised she got one in the time you've been gone, which was only a few days. From now on, life will be different for you and Ran now that Chen has become the shikigami of the shikigami of the youkai.

## 4: A New Beginning

You wake up. You weren't dreaming, in a sense; instead, all you could see was the vision. As you watch it replay, you pay closer attention. The only extra information you could gather, however, was the song's title: “夜が降りてくる ～ Evening Star”.

*Perhaps it was merely a strange dream*, you think. Even with the kanji in your name being the same, it might just be one of those weird dream details. However, there is one thing that stands out to you considerably: the music itself. It almost perfectly matches up your personality, as if it was in a melodic form.

You notice that Ran has already gotten up, so you figure that you should get ready for the day as well.

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You walk into the kitchen and find Ran cooking breakfast. “Ah! Mistre-” She stops herself. “Ah, sorry. As they say, old habits die hard.” That's right, since she's no longer your shikigami, there is no reason for her to call you “Mistress”.

You reply, “It's alright Ran. It'll take time before you get used to calling me only by name. So what's for breakfast?”

Sheepishly, Ran says, “Well, I thought I would cook us a large, hearty breakfast to celebrate my ‘graduation’ from a shikigami, to put it simply.” She starts speaking in a slightly excited tone, “I decided to prepare a more modern-style breakfast, specifically dishes from the outside world, from that place called America. The meal consists of three core dishes, pancakes, scrambled eggs, and bacon, with the pancakes having a sauce called maple syrup. Do you know all of these, or do I need to explain them?”

You are a bit shocked that she knows how to cook these, she must have found a cookbook from your book collection. “Yes, I know these dishes. They are very delicious, in my opinion. Thank you, Ran!” You give her a peck on the cheek, and she appropriately reacts with intense embarrassment.

It is then that you notice Chen, who is already eating her meal, drop her utensil in utter shock. *Oh yeah*, you think, *She doesn't know what happened yet*.

“M-Mistress Yukari?!” she exclaims, “What was that?!”

You sigh. “Oh my, this will take some explaining...”

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After about an hour of frustrating explanation, Chen finally understands, barely. “So Mistress Ran isn’t your shikigami, and now you’re lovers?”

Ran jumps in, “Y-yes. But Chen, that might mean that I’ll be alone with her more, without you. So you need to behave a little better from now on, and you’re going to have to practice being by yourself more. Can you do that?”

“...Fine. But do I still call Mistress Yukari Mistress Yukari?”

“It’s up to her,” Ran says.

You reply, “It would probably be easier for you that way, since you’re used to it. Now come here, you two!” You grab the two of them and engage in a Yakumo family hug. Ran smiles warmly while Chen starts purring.

Life will be different from now on. You look forward to the times coming ahead. With Ran being reborn with a more expressive personality, and Chen being, well, Chen, you can only wait for what the future will bring.

And you couldn’t be happier.

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It has been three months since Yukari stopped appearing in the Dream World, and considering it’s her hibernation period, you are concerned about what is happening in Gensokyo. However, when she finally appears asking to discuss something, you start to get the feeling that perhaps something else may be happening.

## **Act 1**

## 5: The Ruler of Dreams

As you finish up your rounds of Dream World duties, a name invades your mind for the 14,587th time during the past three months:

*Yukari Yakumo*

It is the last few days of her usual hibernation period, and typically she is in the Dream World that entire time. Despite being a youkai with a concerning personality that would drive most people away, you two actually have a decent relationship, meeting up for three months every year.

But this year has been different. She never appeared in the Dream World for the usual three months. As the days of winter passed, you got more and more worried. The only thing holding you back from investigating was the long-lasting aftermath of the Perfect Possession Incident on the Dream World. Even four years later, the effects still haven't fully diminished, but it seems that as of now, it is more or less taken care of.

Now that you finally have the time, you decide that it's about time to investigate what happened to Yukari. *It would probably be easiest to talk with Ran's dream-self*, you think. But before you can contact her, a disembodied voice speaks. "Surely you aren't relying on others rather than yourself to find me, are you~?"

"Heh, you are the last person I want to hear that from." You turn around to find a beautiful woman with traditional Japanese-style clothing, a mob-cap on top of her head, covering her lengthy strands of blonde hair. She is looking at you with those violet eyes, a seemingly perpetual smirk on her face. "Nice to see you again, Yukari," you say with an earnest smile.

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After Yukari's explanation, you sit in total shock. "So are you sleeping right now, or are you actually here?" She replies with, "I think you know what the answer is. After all, I wasn't able to do anything about this until my hibernation was over."

"Was the vision just replaying over and over the entire time?"

She shakes her head. "No. I mean, it did happen, but only once. After that, I woke up pretty confused. After all, the amount of time that seemed to have passed was just a few hours. The strangest thing was that I felt somewhat refreshed when I got up.

"Confused, I walked out of my room to find Ran waiting right outside, since she can calculate when I will stop hibernating. She embraced me and said 'Good morning, Yukari. How was your sleep?' That's when I realized that I had hibernated the full length of winter already."

You sigh. “Well, at least you weren’t subjected to a torturous sleep.” She replies, “Seeing it just once is torturous enough. You have no idea how it affects my psyche.”

“Huh? What do you mean by your psyche?”

She sighs, and for the first time, you see her usual demeanor turn into a sad, defeated one. “When I say that, I mean that I’m pretty much having an existential crisis. What if everything we know isn’t real? What if we’re all living in a cruel, false reality?”

The two of you sit in silence for a while, before Yukari breaks it with, “I’m going to try something. I’m going to try to manipulate the boundary between reality and falsity. Most likely, nothing will happen, but in the event that something does, I will need help.”

Normally, you would assume that this is an example of Yukari’s strange sense of humor. But based on the overall mood she’s giving off, you know she means it. “Is there anything I can do for you?”

“No,” she says, “I don’t think this would be your area of expertise. I realize that you oversee dreams, which are essentially a false reality, but that’s for individual people, and therefore predictable. In contrast, all we know is that a human from the outside world labeled a music piece ‘my’ theme.”

You find a hard time understanding her point of view, but you respect her wishes. You are about to send her off when she adds, “Actually, if you could find little Sumireko, tell her to come to me.” You reply with a nod.

“Thanks,” she says. “Whatever happens, I hope all will be well. But just in case, I’ll have a few people with me. Goodbye, Doremy Sweet.”

As she leaves, you realize that she used your full name. She couldn’t possibly mean...?

## Status Update: ⑨/⑨/2022

Hello! OkuuFallout here. I have recently decided to release chapters 5-8 all at once when they're finished. If you are wondering why, I can't say that just yet. However, I believe you'll understand why I did this once they are released. However, as of September ⑨, 2022, this work is on a "drafting hiatus" for the next couple months (at most).

Thanks for reading so far!

## Status Update: 10/04/2022

Hello there. Just in case you were wondering, I haven't gotten much progress done. Heck, before today I only had a single paragraph done for Chapter 5. So yes, I had writer's block, but I have an excuse this time. I'm introducing my least favorite Touhou character to the story, so it's been pretty hard to think of what I want to do for Chapter 5. But after thinking about it, I still have no idea what to do (^^; But I'm just going to go with the flow for now, as I usually do, and hopefully I'll finish Chapter 5 soon (and bring in that one girl as little as possible).

I also made some edits to the last paragraph of Chapter 4, since I have changed my mind about how the Chapter 5 interactions will go.

### **A day later...**

After a period of thinking about the incredibly short length of the chapters, I have decided to essentially group chapters up into "acts". Chapters 1-4 will

be Act 1, while 5-8 will be Act 2. It won't always be 4 chapters, but I still consider it an improvement.

Thanks, and stay tuned!

## Status Update: 11/03/2022

Hello everyone, OkuuFallout here. I have made a few minor changes to my Wattpad version of Touhou CoVE. But that's not the most important part. A few days ago, I started working on Chapter 6 after a brief hiatus where I needed to know where to go next with it. I've figured it out, I just need to overcome a little roadblock in the chapter content. I've been wondering if I should lengthen the newer chapters out a bit, but as of now, I believe I will just continue the usual way.

Thanks for reading so far!

## Status Update: 12/07/2022

Hey there. OkuuFallout here. For the past month, I've been feeling somewhat unmotivated when it comes to working on CoVE. I've only gotten about a single page's worth done in Chapter 6 so far— I've been working on it off and on. However, I'm here to announce a minor change. Formerly known as “Act 1”, Chapters 1-4 are now titled as the prologue, with the next batch of chapters starting as Act 1 instead.

I realize I've been inactive for quite some time now, so I will give an apology/holiday gift to those who have been keeping up.

**As of 12/07/2022, Chapter 5 is now released.**

Thank you again, if you've been keeping up. If you could wait another couple months, I will likely be finished with Act 1 by then.

OkuuFallout, out.

## Status Update: 02/27/2024

Hello. It's been a while, huh? Since my last status update, I've graduated from high school and got into a good university. Because of that, I haven't touched Touhou CoVE since... January 4, 2023!? I've been gone longer than I realized...

I don't know how soon I will be able to continue this, but I'm alive. This university is notorious for its challenging courses, so it may very well be over a year before Act 1 is finished. But I still exist, and I really want to work on this again soon, but only time will tell...

As always, thank you for keeping up, if anyone still is by this point. As I said, there is no telling when the next milestone is hit, but I'll try my best.

OkuuFallout, out.

## Chapter Completion Status

Chapter 5: COMPLETE - 10/07/22 | Released: 12/07/22

Chapter 6: In progress

Chapter 7: Not started

Chapter 8: Not started