

## An Eternity.

*Haah haah haaah, just-just a little more.*

*\*BANG\* \*BANG\* \*BANG\**

Gunshots could be heard as the girl ran up the cliff, her hand holding her side as blood splattered on the ground. The girl was no more than 16, blond hair like her mother's tied up in a ponytail and golden brown eyes like her father's carrying the same darkness within.

*Almost there!*

The girl, Ayanokouji Keiko could see the two gravestones of her parents she made at the end of the cliff and felt relief wash over her.

*Mama, papa, I'm coming soon.*

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"Keiko, listen very carefully, you have to survive and live a happy life okay. For mama and papa's sake." Kiyotaka said as he gently hugged Keiko.

"Papa?" Keiko blankly stared at her father. She didn't know what was going on. How could she? She was just 6 years old. One moment she was blissfully sleeping in her mother and father's bed with them and the next thing she knew, she heard painful explosions and the sounds of helicopters as her father carried her in his arms through an underground tunnel, her mother running in front of them as she opened the weird steel doors with locks through her hands.

Keiko didn't know, she didn't understand, but she knew something was wrong, she unconsciously tightened her grasp on Kiyotaka's clothes.

"Is it granpapa again?" She asked the two, her voice barely a mumble yet easily echoing throughout the cave.

"Yes, Keiko-chan, it's your grandpa again." Kei said as she turned around and hugged Keiko and Kiyotaka, her shaking clearly felt by Keiko.

"Only... this time.." Her words were caught in her throat as her hold on them tightened before Kiyotaka revealed the cold hard truth to Keiko.

"This time, mama and papa can't come with you." He said as he lowered her into an escape pod, barely large enough for a child and a month's worth of rations.

“Eh?” Her mind understood, but her heart refused to accept what she just heard. She reached out to her parents but to her dismay, her arms were too short to grab hold.

“Mama? Papa?” Her heart slowly caught up on what was happening as whirring noises echoed around her, a glass dome barring her from reaching out.

“MAMA! PAPA!” She cried out.

\*BANG\* \*BANG\*

She repeatedly hit the glass in front of her, tears streaming down her eyes as the pod slowly moved forward, her parents slowly growing farther away.

“NO!!” The last thing she remembered was her parents faces as the pod accelerated. Her mother crying like her, yet giving the brightest possible smile she could and her father looking at her warmly. A small, kind smile on his face and his eyes full of warmth.

Yet she could see it. She was their daughter after all. She could see through their masks and feel their sorrow and pain. She... instinctively knew that this would be last time she would ever see them.

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*Sorry, mama.. papa. Keiko couldn't keep her promise. She couldn't live a happy life like you wanted hehe.*

She finally reached the edge of the cliff, in front of her the wild, chaotic waves of death and behind her an eternity of suffering as a lab-rat caused by her dear grandfather now deceased, courtesy of hers truly.

Looking at the graves beside her, her emotionless facade immediately crumbled, her feelings a chaotic vortex erupting within her.

*Hehe, even after death, Keiko can't hide anything from mama and papa can she?*

Indeed. This was one of the tricks she picked up from her parents. The ability to conceal her emotions, not letting anything show on her face.

One day she decided to do so after having a bad day at school only to be immediately hugged by her parents as they asked her what happened. Like the child she was, she immediately bawled her eyes out, like what she was doing now.

*Keiko killed him you know. Shot him right when he had the tightest security. Once through the head and another through his balls like mama taught me. Keiko did good right, nee~ mama, papa?*

Her vision started to grow blurry. Whether because of the blood loss, or because of her tears, she didn't know. All she did know was that she had nothing left in this cruel world that took her parents from her to live for.

She gave the brightest smile she could to the two gravestones as she jumped off the cliff.

*Keiko will soon join you two. Just wait a bit more mama, papa.*

The last thing she felt was the waves of the sea, unexpectedly soft and gentle, as if calmly welcoming her to her death hearing a whisper in a voice all too familiar to her as she drifted to eternal slumber.

*Keiko.*

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*Papa!*

She woke up with a start, raising her upper half to a seated position on the unfamiliar bed she found herself on. Before she could question the situation she found herself in any further, the door to her room creaked open and a figure rushed in, hugging her before she knew it.

“Keiko-chan!”

“Ma-ma?” Her voice was hoarse as she tried to take in what she was feeling. An all too familiar voice, an all too familiar hug and an all too familiar warmth.

“Mm. It’s mama Keiko-chan! Mou~ your papa and I told you to live a happily right. And you just-!?”

“MAMA!” She immediately hugged Kei, her grip vice-like as she continued to sob into her shoulder, crying tears of joy.

“Haah~ What will I do with you. It’s fine now, mama’s here alright.” A troubled smile on her face, all Kei could do was continue to hold her and pat her back.

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“Mama?”

“Mm? What is it Keiko-chan?”

“Where’s papa?”

“Papa’s currently at work you know?”

“Work?”

“Mmhmm. This might hurt, but do you remember jumping of the cliff Keiko-chan?” Kei asked worriedly as she stared at Keiko.

“!?” She then remembered what happened before she woke up. She didn’t want to accept that what she was feeling might be a dream, an illusion that might end with her in a hospital under tight security backed up by her grandfathers connections.

*N-no!?*

Before she could further delve down that thought, Kei hugged her again, patting her back like one would to calm a scared child.

“This isn’t a dream Keiko-chan.” Kei calmly said.

“It.. it isn’t?” Keiko asked, the fear of the possibility of this being a dream still in her mind yet abating slightly.

“Mmm. It’s real. It might come as a shock but you’re dead Keiko-chan.” Kei said, seriously gazing into Kei’s eyes.

“Eh?” Unable to comprehend, she blankly stared at her mother.

“It’s true, your dead Keiko-chan. Like mama and papa.”

“Th-then, this place-?”

“Purgatory Keiko-chan. Your papa became the right hand of Hades-sama allowing him to control a small part of Purgatory.”

She knew what Purgatory meant but she still couldn’t believe it. She was dead and in Purgatory with her mother while her father became something like a Grim Reaper. Despite all the confusion, she desperately wanted to know one thing and opened her mouth to ask.

“Does that mean...” *we can be together again?* She left her words unspoken, yet Kei smiled warmly at her, replying in the kindest most softest voice possible as she gently nodded.

“Yes. We all can be together. You, me, papa, we all can be here for an eternity Keiko-chan. In fact, your papa caused quite the commotion to make it possible. Why he even barged in when Hades-sama and Persephone-sama were-”

\*cough\*

The mother and daughter duo turned their heads towards the door to see who disturbed them.

“You’ve finally woken up K-!?” Before he and Kei could notice, Keiko already jumped off the bed and rushed to him, tackling him down onto the ground.

\*thump\*

“Ouch. That was reckless of you Keiko.”

“Papa!” She shouted out, hugging him as tightly as she could. With this, all her doubts were cleared. She now understood that this was no dream. She truly was reunited with her parents, albeit in a weird afterlife with her father working for Hades, but still, all that mattered to her was that she was now with them.

She could finally let go of her worries as she gave the brightest smile she could to Kiyotaka, his own gaze warming up as he patted her head.

“You really caused a ruckus you know? You really take more after your mother.”

“Hey!”

“Fufu, it’s because Keiko is mama and papa’s daughter after all!”

“True. Haah. For starters, why don’t we get some dinner as you tell us everything. We have an eternity to spend after all.”

“Yes!”

**The End**

**By Sora N.**