

VIXEN ROUGE

Alive to Seven



A FINAL FANTASY VII FANFICTION

*Glorious is the third part of Alive-de Seven
it is centered on the games generation of Turks, thus mainly featuring:
Tseng, Reno, Rude and Veld.
Other Shin-Ra-related characters appear as well,
be they executives, soldiers or a wicked general.*

*all the characters have been given a complete background and eventual name extensions
this fanfiction is intended for fans of all kinds as well as those who don't know FF7
Compilation of FF7 was considered as mostly not existing when the plot was created
also it must be known that this story was written with a lot of derision*

May your reading be pleasant

Vixen Rouge

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ALIVE-DE SEVEN:

GLORIOUS

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*The night falls upon the world,
Few pages remains in the book,
Can a young fool bring light back again,
For the dawn of a new Era?*

Mr Night – Mister Blue Sky, *E.L.O*

[μ]-εγλ 1998 – July,26

The sunlight was fading into moonlight, and somewhere above the Midgarian smog stars were starting to shine. There, in the big city between sky and earth, was a young man, sat down his window, looking the buildings and avenues below his feet. Even at night there was still light. Everywhere. From the bright streetlights on the largest roads to the dirty night clubs' neon lights in the tiniest streets. And of course from the impressive Shin-Ra Tower not so far away.

The young man looked at the sky and its depressive emptiness. Only beyond the smog remained the jet black void of night. "At least the sky is still there," he thought. He closed his eyes to enjoy the taste of his cigarette and tried to recall nights.

His first night was the one when he was born. When his mother and father had some argument about his name. It was always the same, they loved each other but couldn't stop arguing. Finally, his mother named him Tseng, but his father never called him that name but Yoshiaki.

After, many nights went as he grew up. Wutainese ink skies stained with the mercury flow of the stars. Counting them was impossible, there were just too many silver pins on this black fabric... In the morning the village would get lost in a white mist, perhaps melt with magic. Fresh and silent until life woke up.

Yoshiaki loved this quiet place. But bad days arrived and the tranquility once burst with the burning village. On that day Yoshiaki lost almost everything that was dear to him. His mother, his uncles and aunts, his cousins and friends... The Kiriya clan could have known a bitter end if he hadn't escaped with his father.

After this day the quiet nights of his childhood turned into nothing but memories.

Messed up by the ire of fire born from the war. The boy knew how to fight, he just learned how to kill. He was eight and just trying to stay alive.

Many nights went on and on, and at the end of a great travel went the night when he crossed the doors of the big city of Midgar, sleeping in his father's arms. When he woke up he thought he had turned insane. There was no sky. And in the center of the town, it was even impossible to make a difference between day and night without the giant clocks here and there and the spotlights at day and neon lights at night.

Tseng threw his cig in the vacuum. What had happened after? They joined the Sector 4 of the Slums, the Wutain area. By some chance Kiriya Kuromaru – 'Aniki' – was there. Tseng didn't know him but so did Hizashi, his father. Quickly, the boy

discovered a new family he learned to love. Of course, they weren't all "good" people, but as long as you were on their side you were safer than if not. Yakuza. Hands stained with blood to deal illicit business affairs.

The Shin-Ra Company above tolerated them as long as they weren't messing up with them. And they had a deal with the most powerful man of the Slums, the Don... He had a crush on everything linked with Wutai. It was good for business.

Tseng rolled onto his bed and crossed his arms behind his head. "But Kenji had to mess up with Shin-Ra..." he sighed. Kenji was a young man, ambitious, over ambitious after drinking too much *Sake*...

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[μ]-εγλ 1991 – September,02

"Kiryama, you see what I see?"

Kenji was probably seeing the beautiful blond woman. Yoshiaki was seeing a black silhouette in the shadow, unfortunately over shined by the gold-haired beauty for Kenji to see it.

"What you wanna do?"

"Sure she have money, let's gat her and torture her till she sez where' her gils then we go on the Plate!"

The Plate, the real city, 50 meters above their heads... the place of the rich and the dream of most in the Slums.

"You're stupid. Better stop drinking." Yoshiaki stared at the woman, then at the man that just got out of the car. Dark-haired, brown-eyed, wearing a dark blue suit. The boy's eyes widened.

"I ain't stupid, Yo-chan! I'll show you!" Kenji spat.

"You're drunk!" Yoshiaki shouted in a still low voice. Too late. Kenji jumped out of their hideout, a gun in his hand. Yoshiaki's body reacted before thinking and he jumped too to throw his elder down the ground. Kenji was safe, Yoshiaki was wounded. The bullet that should have attended Kenji's heart had gone through his shoulder.

"You fool...!" Yoshiaki whimpered. The blond beauty and the dark-haired man were now handling guns. The woman fired and Yoshiaki jumped to avoid the bullet, drawing a tanto out of its sleeve quick enough to block the third bullet from the shadow man. Then he dived to the ground and took the gun from Kenji's hand to shoot the shadow. The man fired at the same time. The bullet went through Kenji's head as the final point to his life.

Yoshiaki felt a terribly cold void inside him that quickly got filled by a burning anger. Still he thought he shouldn't try to do any harm to the two remaining peoples, he had yet killed Kenji's murderer and should consider justice was done if he wished to stay alive. By the way he had no more friend to protect and he thought he'd better hide for a moment then take the body. So he faded in the shadows of a narrow street, avoiding some more bullets.

"Shit... Da Chao... Ya shouldn't have drink, Kenji..." Yoshiaki felt lost and too shocked to think properly about what to do. Still he decided to join a roof to keep an eye on the place, trying to listen what the two could say. He just heard something like "Do you think Hojo could be interested in this?" and "You still feel like you have a debt?". The woman hesitated. "I just feel like Hideaki is a fucking weirdo making specimens out of

anything he wants and you should be careful, I know he likes you..." she said. The man laughed replying something like "I think he'd be more interested in a cute kitty around here". The blonde gave him a sorry smile and reached Kenji's dead body and poked it with her foot. "Fool... you wasted my day." She kicked it with disgust.

Yoshiaki aimed his gun at her without minding what he was doing and pulled the trigger. It just sounded like 'click'.

"Oh, fuck..." he thought. "OH, FUCK...!" He thought when the woman stared at him, aiming her own gun at his head.

Yoshiaki didn't want to wonder if she heard the click of if she knew he was there or anything, he just ran away again. This time, the two were after him. The man didn't seem to want to use his gun and yelled at the woman to stop and let the boy go but she didn't listen and happened to be really skilled with her weapon. Yoshiaki thought he'd be safe when she'd be out of bullets. But she reloaded. In the end all he could do was staying alive until he joined the Territory. There, were friends to protect him and the two stopped.

The next day, Aniki wanted to see Yoshiaki. The teenager thought it was about Kenji's death and he wasn't all wrong. Shin-Ra's black plague was there. Black suit, brown hair, hazel eyes, probably about forty years old... He inspired respect. Aniki exited the room with a worried expression. Once he was gone the man spoke.

"My name is Veld. I'm the head of the Department in Administrative Research of Shin-Ra."

"...Ain't you rather part of those 'Turks'?" the boy muttered his question.

"Let's say I am. You killed one of my men."

"It was self defense!"

"I don't forgive easily. Being killed by a kid... This is such a shame..." Yoshiaki didn't know how to react. Nor what the guy was meaning exactly, if it was good or it was bad; or very bad. "I'm lacking of men and you killed Sean yesterday..."

"What do you want?" Yoshiaki asked nervously.

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Tseng was breathing silently, quietly. The night was good. He missed the stars but it was good. Recalling memories...

"Hikaru... Akira... Mitsu... names that mean light... just what I miss in my life... If I ever have a child..." He laughed a bit. "Oh, I've got better..." He sighed peacefully. "Myou... that means light too... Myou...". He smiled at the sight of two gold pearls in the dark.

"Do I feel different?" He asked himself. Twenty years old. Veld trusted in him as he trusted in the man. If their first encounter was quite tensed they now got along very well. He was thirteen when he joined a side department of SOLDIER. He could have refused but he was feeling he didn't really have the choice. He was fourteen when he became a Turk rookie. He lacked of physical strength but was deadly when it came to hand to hand fight thanks to his self defense skills. No mercy. He was almost fifteen when he became a professional Turk. He was seventeen when he was put in charge of new members recruitment and formation.

One year later was when he met people that would change his life.

GLORIOUS

PART ONE

STARTING UP

Mr Blue Sky – E.L.O

[μ]-εγλ 1996 – June,28

"Can't you look where ya go!? You'd better get yo' fat ass outta my sight, yo!"
The man's face went red. Did this stupid brat call him "fat ass"? Did he threaten him?
Him!?

"*Sei morto, bambino.*" He drew a gun and fired, making the boy jump into avoiding the bullet.

"What's that gun, old man?" the boy laughed, pulling a small air brusher out of a pocket. He avoided one more bullet. "Listen to me: guns are old fashioned!". Coming as close as possible he covered the man's face and hands with glue from the air brusher.

It seemed painful. Really. What the fuck was this way of fighting?

"*Oh bella ciao!*" The boy laughed and ran away as fast as he could.

The windshield of a car just beside him exploded as he heard someone firing a gun. He risked a glance over his shoulder and saw four men wearing black suits and sunglasses. The boy wanted to laugh because one of them had an afro haircut but it wasn't the moment. He had to think quickly and mused he'd better get some help.

He jumped in a narrow street, avoiding a bullet by chance, and ran for a bar not too far away. He entered, very self confident, and strode to a table.

"Yo! `got in troubles I think!"

The young men around the table stared at him like he just announced he had pasta for dinner.

"You shouldn't be there, Sly, you're only twelve..." the elder said. He was about twenty and, more than the elder he was the leader of the gang. "What are you doing here?"

"I stole some things somewhere and ran to get back home, then there was that fat-assed guy that came outta this house and before I could slow down I was on him and then on the ground... I was quite pissed and didn't noticed he was a Mafioso or something and I got four men after me... Luckily I wasn't far from here, yo"

"Stop watching TV."

"Hey, I told ya guys wanna kill me!"

The youngest of the men stood up. He wasn't actually a man as he was only fourteen but he looked older from being rather tall and strong for his age, and having his head shaved. He stared at the redhead through his sunglasses and nodded. Nobody else moved.

"That's when you know who are your friends, yo," Sly spat. Him and the tall boy exited the bar. No black suits... it looked safe. "*It looks safe...*" Sly thought. It didn't mean it was. "You see something, Silence?"

Silence just shook his head in negation. "Want my gun?"

"You're nice, but guns are old fashioned and it'll be okay I think..." The boy just wanted to go to bed and have a good rest. He felt safe with his friend. They had known each other for a couple of years now and got along very well. For some of their acquaintances it was even suspect that two guys so different – the messy hairy talkative hyperactive obsessive compulsive "Sly" and the tidy bald mute calm phlegmatic neutral "Silence" – could get along that well. Once someone said they were gay and ended with a bullet in the hand from Sly who happened to handle a gun at that precise moment. Then the redhead claimed he didn't care about comments upon his sexuality but would never stand anyone trying to ruin his best friend's possibilities to get out with a pretty girl.

"I found something cool, yo," the redhead said. He looked after something in his bag while walking and stopped three seconds to adjust black goggles on his head. "You like?"

"It fits you."

"We'll be a pair of two cool guys with sunglasses!" the boy laughed.

Silence suddenly drew his gun and fired. A man dressed up in a black suit fell dead.

"Wow, that was a head shot, you've frag'd that poor guy," Sly reached the body and touched the suit's fabric. "Oh, shit..." He took a knife and sliced the fabric until the blade met something looking like fabric but impossible to cut. "Take a look."

Silence pulled down his glasses without a word.

"Looks like kevlar, isn't it?" Sly asked. Silence nodded. "You didn't kill a Mafioso, dude..."

"He was sneaking around... I feared he would try to kill us... I assume he didn't think we'd be a danger so he didn't pay attention..." Silence said.

The redhead looked the man's head. He was young, about twenty, now bleeding a lot from the ear. The boy sniffed him. "He smells like fear... ..Well, I touched him with my gloves so no fingerprints... Let's call an ambulance! But first, give me your gun!"

Sly took the gun from Silence's hands. "Let's have fun, yo." He did his best to erase the fingerprints with his shirt then put the dead man's fingers on it, got up and fainted to be shot in the head, dropping the gun. "I know it's stupid, I know this man probably doesn't use 5mm gun, I know everything but... this is funny, yo!" He smirked.

"You fool... let's throw it on the railway to the Slums..." Silence put his gloves on and took the gun. "You call an ambulance, then you call me, and not a word about this."

"I ain't stupid! Go get rid of the weapon, I call you..." Silence left with the gun and Sly dialed the emergency's number on his cell phone. He fainted to be shocked. "I, I, I've just found a young man, he's wounded, b..bleeding from the head, I..I dunno what to do..."

"*This is damn fun, yo,*" he thought as he dialed Silence's number after having been told twice that everything was okay, that an ambulance was coming and so on. "You'll never guess what happened to me..." He smirked. He was a rather good actor.

As he was waiting in the silent street he heard someone sneaking in the shadows.

"*Wait. Be sure it's not the same kind of guy, no need to kill two of them...*" he told himself as he was trying to locate the person. First he thought the man was on his left, but he finally saw him on his right from the reflect on his sunglasses. Black suit...

And oh, SHIVA GODDESS, the HAIR! No more doubt!

"Mr Afro... he looks like a clown... ..perhaps is it a trick? He wants me to loose my concentration... that's interesting... perhaps this guy is really strong beyond his stupid look..." Sly dropped his bag in a bush and started to move too, quick and as silent as possible, an irrepressible smirk on his lips until he was behind Mr Afro. There he swung his left arm, drawing a retractable nightstick open in a sharp metallic noise followed by the crack of breaking cervical bones. Mr Afro fell dead. *"Well, finally he wasn't that strong..."*. The boy was almost deceived.

"Sly...?" Silence was back, taking his breathe.

"Good you're there! Wait here!" Sly said, running to the bush where he left his bag. He brought it back near Silence and lifeless Mr Afro. "I thought about you, y'know, and I think it's the good moment..." he gave Silence a bottle of wine. "Take my bag with you, it's full of stolen things, and help Mr Afro to walk, act like you're a bit drunk and it'll be okay. I'm gonna tie your right leg with his left one so he'll walk better, then you send him where you threw the gun, okay?"

"You weren't nicknamed Sly randomly..." Silence sighed. "I can't believe I'm gonna do this..."

As he was going to leave Sly stopped him to take a little square box from the bag. Silence mused it had to be a new CPU for the redhead's collection. Sly loved to open computer boxes and replace the components whenever he robbed a house or something.

Silence finally left, walking like a drunk and hugging lifeless Mr Afro.

"Hehe... I hope nobody saw us..."

The ambulance finally arrived and Sly was told to go back home.

Summer nights were good in Midgar, the boy took his time, though less than usual as he didn't really want to meet Mr Afro's colleagues.

Back home he told everything to Pr. Virginia Kavanagh, the woman he loved the most in the world and sometimes called "mom".

"This isn't good for you... I'm glad you're alive but things are going too far. You being a little thief was a bit worrying but now I'd really like you to stop with all of this for a good while at least."

Pr. Virginia's guideline regarding illegal activities was more about "try if you want but don't get caught" than forbidding crossing the limits. It had been okay until there but she was still a loving mother caring a lot for her child. She was considered as somewhat weird but was still very appreciated in the neighborhood and by the customers that went to her pharmacy. She used to work for Shin-Ra's Science Research Department but when she got pregnant and started to love the baby in her womb she decided it was time to do something to make the Department Director – known by the name of Hideaki Hojo – forget his future specimen. And she managed to piss Hojo off and to be fired. Her baby was born and she named him Reno. Soon though he was nicknamed Sly for explicit reasons. He was sly.

He wasn't really a bad boy, he was in fact rather cute, nice and intelligent.. And that was enough to make him confident. Especially after he met Silence. Silence didn't speak uselessly, he was efficient in his actions and always calm, he counter-balanced Sly in some way... They didn't know each other's real name and if Silence didn't bother Sly often tried to discover it. Still, never got an effective result...

The following days Shin-Ra began investigations to find the man Silence killed's murderer. At the same time the great Mafioso Alessandro Visconti had decided he

wanted Sly's head.

The second night after the murders Sly got two men after him and managed to stay alive by great chance – a couple was arguing in a building and the wife had the good idea to throw out the TV set through the window, which happened to fall just onto one of the mafioso's head. Then Sly just had to shoot the remaining one.

The third night Alessandro Visconti met a cousin of his known as Don Corneo and told him about that sort of red-haired cunning-as-a-fox demon that had yet killed three of his men. The Don got interested in the story and in the kid and as he knew his cousin wanted the kid dead, he decided he'd better send his own men to kidnap the boy. His men had their own methods after all...

The fourth night, Sly and Silence got out together and managed to enter in a night club. Sly fell asleep after drinking his cocktail and the sleeping powder that was in. Men went to take him away and as Silence was kicking their asses to defend his mate they knocked him off and took the red-haired sleeping demon down the Slums.

[μ]-εγλ 1996 – July,02

The boy got awoken by the feeling of something warm and wet between his legs and the soft pressure that went along. There were voices too. So he fainted to be still asleep despite the *extremely* disturbing situation in which he found himself, trying to listen and locate the different people that were present.

"You call that a demon? It's just a brat! Haha! We had more troubles with his boyfriend than him!" – the said brat tried not to frown.

"I found dis nightstick on him, I'm sure we can make good use of eet..."

A fresh sensation came when the second guy raised his head to speak. "Let me finish him first, he's just so liking it... I'm sure he's having sweet dirty dreams right now..."

They laughed. It was now or never. The boy shot the sucker's chin with his foot – they should have taken off his clothes and shoes at least... He jumped onto his feet, catching the man's head firmly and turned it into breaking the cervical bones – a trick he learned from Silence, then dived to the man that had his nightstick and as they were falling together, kicked him hard in the balls, took the nightstick and stuck it in the man's head through the right eye. Strangely the boy was as shocked by what he was doing as beginning to like this situation... Feeling like drugged by adrenaline he still took the time to put his boxers back in place. He zipped his pants and started running after the third guy that was trying to escape. He followed him in the corridor, noticing by the way the over Wutainese deco, before entering a big room.

"For information, Silence isn't my boyfriend, you fucking bastard! Eez straight!" Armed with his still blood-covered nightstick, the redhead stroke with strength in the man's neck. Taking a look over the silent room, taking his breathe, he realized that three persons were present. A fat man dressed up with a red kimono with a terrible haircut, hair died in a yellow shade just disgusting according to the boy. He reminded him Alessandro Visconti someway... There was a blond-haired sir (he looked like someone you'd call "sir") wearing a dark red suit (probably very expensive so the man was probably very rich) and Sly was sure he had seen his face somewhere... An actor maybe? Or a politician? The third guy was much younger, he looked like a child beside the two others. He was probably Wutain, about seven or eighteen years old and looked rather handsome beside the two others. Well, even without the old men beside he'd still look handsome, the redhead mused. He also had the same black suit as the

man Silence had killed and this was probably bad.

"Ha... sorry for the blood on the floor, but be sure this guy deserved what I gave him... I'm a nice man. Well, so long, guys!" Sly ran for the exit door of the manor. He just heard something like "Tseng! Do something!" and he got out.

"Where the Hell is the sky...? ...Don't tell me I'm..."

"You're in the Slums. Now calm down kiddo, I won't hurt you."

"No way I'm listening to you..." And Sly ran away, the young man called Tseng running after him.

"Leave me alone, yo!"

"Stop now! If I wanted to kill you I'd have done it yet!"

"Some things are worse than being killed!" The boy suddenly stopped to beat Tseng in the legs but the Wutain was yet behind the redhead and blocked him quickly.

"You said you're a man, you're just a little boy... but you're interesting that's true..."

"True? What do you mean by that?"

"Corneo was claiming he had something interesting and the President wanted to know what it was. It was you... that's all."

"No way I'll be one of those men's sex toy!" Sly shouted.

"Well, calm down... That wasn't the point and I'm interested in you too."

"Oh, fuck off, queer!"

Tseng laughed. "Don't be silly! I know you killed three of Alessandro Visconti's men, I also know your friend killed one of my colleagues..."

"How..." the boy stopped. "How can you say that!? That's wrong!"

"You're really sly for your age, isn't it? You thought that perhaps I didn't really know if it was true or not as you didn't see any witness, right? Weren't you going to say 'how do you know that!?' or something alike? ...I saw everything on that night if you want to know, Because I was there, hidden... on your left..."

"What...? And you did nothing for this man Silence killed?"

"He was dead, do you know a cure for that? I just wanted to see what would happen, it's not everybody that manages to kill a Turk... even a rookie..."

Sly shut his eyes. He didn't know what was going to happen and didn't really want to. Fucking Wute...

"Fuck you..." he whispered.

You Big Disgrace! – *We Will Rock You, Queen*

[μ]-εγλ 1996 – July,03

"You brought me a kid, Tseng."

"I was a kid too when you found me, sir. This one is brilliant..."

"Well, the fourteen-year old one seems really okay, he's strong, calm, I think he can be obedient... He's a very smart boy... But the twelve-year old... perhaps you think he's good but it's just a kid!"

Tseng stifled a sigh. "Sir... please... To be honest, the one nicknamed 'Silence' you like is the one who killed Sean, but it was the kid nicknamed 'Sly' that messed up the clues, he erased the fingerprints and decided to act like he found the body... It's not every kid that would think like that... Then he killed a man by self-defense and I have to admit he was very imaginative at that moment..." Tseng winced. "In fact it's the first time I see such a smart clown, he could become dangerous, so... I suppose it's better to have him with us than against us..."

Veld remained silent for a while, studying Tseng's expression. He finally smiled.

"Loosing your words and temper again...? Looks like you're jealous, Tseng. You finally found a rival, someone perhaps as smart as you...?"

Tseng looked away. A part of him wanted to say that the boy was just a stupid little brat he yet hated while the other part of him wanted to agree. It was the fight between his pride and his reason.

"Well, let's try the two then... I hope they'll last longer than the others, I'm fed up of all those stupid deaths."

So Sly and Silence were proposed to join a certain side department of SOLDIER. Tseng told it was a special division for test training before training to join the Turks, that they would follow certain standard classes only and would have a special training in spite of the other standard classes. As he thought, it was the word "Turk" that convinced the redhead. It was just a kid that wanted to be called a man...

Also they had to give up their nicknames.

"Now I want you to tell each other your real names, no nicknames, no fake identities..." Tseng had ordered them.

The redhead's eyes widened. He was finally going to know...? "Name's Reno Kavanagh! What's your, dude?"

"...Rudyard Spellman..." the bald boy muttered.

Reno just roared in laughter. "'Spellman' you said!? 'Spellman'!? Like 'to spell'!? For a

guy that never talks! Hahaha!!! I can't believe it!"

"No comments..."

"TOO FUNNY!!! 'Rudy', hahaha!!! 'Rudy'!!! ooh, that's too much!"

Rudyard punched Reno to put an end to his annoying hysterical laughter.

"Damn that's rude!" Reno shouted. "If you don't like 'Rudy' then it'll be just 'Rude', that fits you better, yo!"

"Whatever..." Rude answered.

[μ]-εγλ 1996 – July,08

Hair: blonde, straight, mid-size. Eyes: emerald green. Skin: white, size: 4'6'. Occupation: student. Age: 14. Name: ...forgot that...

"Do you love me?" Her voice was a melody, so were her whispers and moans of pleasure, her body was soft, so perfectly shaped, thin, with tender or firm muscles under her skin, her breasts were small, normal for her age, but to Tseng, they were perfect that way. Her lips were silky when they kissed...

"Please, Yosh, tell me you love me..."

"I can't, you're just a little girl..."

"I'll grow up, idiot..." she hugged him closer.

"So I will... I like you, I like your body, I love how you scream my name and your pleasure, but I can't love you."

"I don't care, Yoshiaki... I love you anyway..." Tseng answered nothing. He even didn't really feel sorry for the girl. She was a girl, among many others, but what made her different was that she was very pretty and good in bed, she was as naive as Tseng liked the girls to be and he didn't have to search after her, she came to him. So he had the perfect girl, a living doll, all for himself.

He thought next time he'd go for a boy, it had been a long time... Boys had to be older as they were often a bit retarded compared with girls. The body was different but interesting as well.

"Yoshiaki? What are you thinking about...?"

"Oh, you don't want to know..."

[μ]-εγλ 1996 – September,26

Tseng was often observing his two recruits. Their results were excellent, the only wrong point being about the redhead and the rules... He didn't like them, nor did he like orders...

"Such a fool... he's wasting everything!" Tseng fumed, slamming his flat's door.

"*Okaerinasai!*" came his father's voice. The biggest failure in Tseng's life: having his father to stop talking in southern Wutainese. As long as it was within the Family in the Slums it seemed normal though the man could be strange sometimes... It was only when they went on the Plate that Tseng realized his father had turned somewhat insane and was thinking he was still in Wutai. Tseng tried several times to persuade his old man to get back to the Slums within the Family or that he was in Midgar on the Plate and not in Wutai... but never succeeded, and the old man almost only spoke in *Myakugo*. Even the flat's decoration reminded Wutai, but Tseng had made sure it was sober. He wanted something Zen to rest better after work.

"I'm back..." Tseng sighed. "Talking about back, mine hurts a bit, give me a good massage please..."

"Warui ne... Itte."

"Sure that's bad, sure I come, sure you should stop speaking in *Myakugo*..."

Tseng got topless and forgot about everything when his father put his expert hands on his body, that was all he needed. Still, the fox kid remained in his mind. The boy was brilliant... sure... he just needed to be taught that orders shall be respected... sure... the lesson would hurt... sure... but he needed it... sure...
Tseng smiled. He knew what his fox needed to get tamed a bit.

[μ]-εγλ 1996 – September,27

"Where are we going, Bagheera?"

"How did you call me?"

"You look like a panther... where are we going?"

The Wutain sighed. Seemed that he didn't know the *Jungle Book*. "You need to learn obedience so you're gonna see a professor that will teach you..."

"A professor? Lawl." the redhead chuckled. "Hey, Tsengy, I wondered... what's that dot on your forehead?"

"You have to call me 'sir'."

The boy raised an eyebrow. "Why? Tsengy? You don't like?"

"Indeed. You're not my girlfriend or..."

The redhead cut him off by roaring in laughter. "Girlfriend!? You happen to have girlfriends!? I was sure you were gay!" He stopped laughing when Tseng caught him by the collar, somewhat pissed.

"It's not only obedience you need to learn, it's respect! I'm being nice with you taking you to see this professor, I do it for your good, and once more you're wasting everything!" He dropped him down the floor. "You little rat, even if you're brilliant, if you do not respect rules and people of an upper rank such as me... I'll have to kill you I think, you'd be a potential danger... so I'd kill you."

"You're cold outside but burning inside, man... you should control your temper..."

"SHUT UP!!!"

The elevator's doors the redhead was leaning against opened with a 'ding' causing the boy to fall onto his back. He flipped to get back on his feet and looked around. "Where are we?"

"What I just told you? Shut up, you'll see by yourself. ...I'm being so nice with you I hardly believe it...!"

The boy followed his elder through a corridor and they entered in a room that looked like a laboratory, that smelled like a laboratory, that sounded like a laboratory, that was part of a laboratory. A man was there, wearing glasses and a lab coat, jet black hair tied in a ponytail down his neck. One more Wutain?

"Professor," Tseng called him. "This is the boy I told you about."

"I'll call you when we'll be done, but if you want to make yourself useful before leaving..." the professor pointed a chair that looked like the ones in dentist cabinets.

Tseng nodded and caught the redhead by the shoulder. "Take off your shirt and sit down, please."

The boy hesitated but did what he'd been asked to. Then Tseng tied up little belts around his feet, wrists and arms to make sure he couldn't move.

"What the fuck is that crap...?"

"Just obey and perhaps it won't hurt too much." Tseng said. "A part of me truly hates you, I admit, but the other part likes you, and it's this part that pushed me to make you pass this ordeal. You need it. Even if you have to hate me after, at least, learn obedience and respect, please." Then Tseng left. The boy was a bit confused and far from being really at ease...

"What are you gonna do with me, Prof?"

"It's 'Professor Hojo'," the scientist snarled.

The redhead shivered a bit at the name. He knew the man was dangerous through his mother's words. At the same time he wanted to laugh.

"So... 'Reno' that's it? ...how's my dear Virginia?" Hojo asked with a grin.

"Fine, very fine... she just wishes the baby behemoth ate you...!" the boy snickered.

"So do many people..." Hojo smirked. "But unfortunately for you, I survived," he chuckled, raising his arms in a dramatic gesture. He reached the boy to clean his arm with antiseptics. "I hope you don't mind if I take some blood samples...?"

"How nice to ask... Why do you need that if I may ask?"

"Oh, I just so love to collect blood samples..."

The tone was honest but Reno guessed the man was making fun. What a weirdo...

Hojo put a needle through the boy's skin. Reno could see his blood quickly filling a first test tube, then a second and finally a third one, there, the scientist pulled the needle out and scotched a small piece of hydrophilic cotton on the skin.

"We're gonna play, it's easier to learn that way, isn't it?" As the redhead wasn't answering he pinched him on the forehead. "*Isn't it?*"

"Sure, it is..." went the answer. "What sort of game is it?"

"I'm gonna ask you questions. If the answer is good you get a point, if the answer is wrong you lose five points. You must score twenty points to end the game and I'm the only one able to decide whether the answer is right or wrong. To make it funnier and give you some challenge spirit I'm gonna inject you a substance. It will hurt more and more with the time and I'll inject you the antidote only if you win the game, otherwise... Tseng will never come to get you and I'll use you for some of my experiments. It would be interesting to see how long you would survive with that poison inside your body. Usually people turn insane after two hours. So, are you ready?"

Hey, Teacher! – *The Wall*, Pink Floyd

[μ]-εγλ 1996 – September,27

Hojo was said to be twisted, merciless and a bit insane, and the game he was proposing was just as creepy as you could expect from a man of such a reputation. Being injected poison? The boy bite his lips and swallowed his saliva. He didn't know if the scientist had lied about the effects or not but wouldn't dare doubting of his words. "Be a man, kiddo...!" Hojo chuckled in a mocking tone. He injected the poison and the redhead quickly started to feel the effect. "How do you call the man that brought you here?" the scientist asked.

"Well, Tseng..." Reno began.

"Wrong, less five points. You must call him 'sir', repeat it, 'I must call him sir'."

"I must call him sir."

"Say it three more times..."

"Why...?"

"If you open your mouth for anything but answering you'll loose points."

"Oh.I must call him sir, I must call him sir, I must call him sir," the boy repeated in a neutral tone.

"Good. How do you call me?"

"Professor Hojo."

"Right, makes less four points. If your boss ordered you to lick his ass, you'd do it?"

"No way! I ain't a slut, yo!"

"Wrong, less nine points. You're not a slut, indeed, you're nothing. Nothing if you don't obey. Even if you're asked to do something you don't want you'll do it."

"But I ain't paid for that, yo!" the boy whimpered. The pain from the poison was increasing incredibly fast... Twenty nine points to make it over..

"I don't care about that, nobody cares about that, do you think I'm paid to teach you obedience and respect? You've just lost two more points, it makes thirty one points to get... From now on I'll tell you how many points you've got to score, I'm bored of the countdown."

Reno was beginning to feel Hojo was more than right when he said the poison drove its victims insane. The boy just found it harder to concentrate and knew it wouldn't get better in anyway. So he decided to drop his pride and think his words were nothing but meaningless wind blown from his mouth. He just needed the pain to stop...

"Have you ever had sex?"

Reno blinked. "Wha...!? ...Err... yes."

Disturbing a teen was so easy...

"Thirty," Hojo counted. "...How many times?"

"Wow, about quite a many...? more than twenty times at least I'd say..."

"What a big boy you are." Hojo rolled his eyes. "Twenty nine. How many different people?"

"Three."

"Twenty eight. With girls or boys?"

"B..both..." the redhead blushed terribly. How embarrassing questions...

"Twenty seven. What ages?"

"Thirteen, fourteen... sixteen..." he blushed a little more.

"Twenty six. Which gender you preferred?"

"Fu..." he bite his lips to prevent himself from shouting something like "Fuck you! That's my private life, yo!". "I'm not sure..." he just said.

There he met Hojo's eyes. He didn't seem satisfied by the answer, waiting for true humiliation.

Okay. Stop, he wants me to tell everything? Right, I'll do.

A fugitive grin lifted Hojo's lips as he noticed the sparkle of furious determination that had just appeared in the boy's eyes.

"Male."

There it was Reno's turn to grin, but in a mocking and victorious way as he saw Hojo wincing and noticed the sparkle of disgust and something like sadness or disillusion in his eyes.

"Twenty five. Detail me the best time then." The voice was neutral, the eyes were bored, the man wasn't a pervert, just a scientist being a bit sadist with a teen.

"You really, really want me to crack from humiliation, huh... It was..." The redhead shut his eyes for a short while. "He was sixteen, sexy, hot... we were alone in his house and drank a little bit, very few but enough to make us do things we wouldn't have done in normal time, we got slightly undressed, kissed, stroked each other... it was good, we knew what was good to a man... We got fully undressed and he sucked me then made me love. Is it enough?"

"Twenty four." Hojo nodded. "Wouldn't you prefer a kitty for your next relation?"

The boy blinked and opened his mouth a second, wondering a lot about many things Hojo could or couldn't know then whispered something like "No, of course no..."

The man smirked. "Seems you were embarrassed... Tell me why."

"What you know?"

"I'm the one asking the questions."

Reno grumbled a bit. "I was wondering if you were thinking of a real or metaphoric cat."

"How I believe you." Hojo responded with apparent huge sarcasm. "I'll wait for your blood sample to give me the answer I want." He then asked him to tell his greatest humiliations, what he feared the most, the dirtiest things he did or thought, made him say things about his mother, things that weren't true, things the boy would have never say nor let say...

Tired and sweating from the poison and the rage inside of him Reno finally reached the twenty points and Hojo injected him the antidote and called Tseng. Then he cleaned the redhead's left shoulder. The boy only reacted when he heard a little motor noise. "What are you doing...?"

He felt the needle in his flesh, moving fast, something like a cat scratch on his shoulder's skin.

"Aaow! Wha... Stop it! What are you doing!? Why...? ...Don't... Don't tell me..."

"I'm giving you a number. I'll complete it when you'll be a Turk. If you ever survive until you become..."

"No... no... no...! I'm not a specimen... I'm not..."

"You are. I created you, you should belong to me. But Veld wants you among his own specimens..."

Hojo tattooed the other arm too. Numbers that had a sense, only to him and few of his assistants...

"I didn't want that... I'm gonna have it all my life..."

"Shut up and stop crying, that ink is only visible under a blacklight! As long as you don't get topless in a nightclub no one will see it."

"I don't care! ...You bastard...!" the boy whimpered.

"Say it again?"

"I...I... said nothing..."

"You insulted me. You didn't understand the lesson..." Hojo stared at him. "The next time you'll come here it'll be so much more painful you'll wish you were never born. Now I'm gonna give you something to recall me and this lesson." He took a scalpel, grabbed the boy's chin and blocked his head. The redhead clinched as he felt the sharp edge on his skin. If you had to pick something special about Reno's face you'd probably pick the twin red marks on his cheeks.

"No... not there..." Reno whispered. But Hojo's answer was the blade cutting the flesh, scraping against his cheek bone. Reno couldn't help but scream with pain as the blood ran over his face. Hojo did the same on the other cheek, following the curve of the other mark, causing some more screams.

"Let's clean this up..." He wiped the blood and looked after a small flask among many others in a cupboard.

The redhead thought it was some antiseptic thing and well, he expected it to be itchy, but not that much... He merely howled in pain.

"What? You thought it was over? ...This is just citric acid... like in lemons. You like lemons? When you'll look your pretty face in the mirror, you'll think about me, and you'll think I can do things much worse to you..."

If only he could wipe his tears to keep his pride safe...

"So... Are you gonna behave?" Hojo asked. "Even if it's just for a while... I'll be glad to see you again, you know?" He carefully wiped the boy's tears making him feel even more ashamed.

"...Yes..." the boy muttered.

"Yes what?"

"Yes I'll behave..."

"Good boy." Hojo petted him in a mocking way.

He put plasters on the tattoos and undid the belts that tied the boy and Tseng arrived soon after. "Take this with you," Hojo pointed the redhead like it was just a thing. "And you," he said to the boy that was now adjusting his shirt, "don't forget to put this on your tattoos, your skin's gonna need it." He handed him a tube, pushed him in Tseng's arms then pushed them both out of his lab.

"Goodbye! I'll be very pleased to see you again!" Hojo smirked.

He closed the door and Tseng found himself alone with the redhead still in his arms.

"Hey, go away, you're gonna stain my shirt with that blood..." Tseng began.

"Serves you right if it happens, yo, I hate you..."

"Calm down, I feel you're gonna cry. He just broke you, little kid, like he broke many others before... Can you recall what's your name?"

"What?"

"Tell me. What's your real name?"

"Reno Kavanagh. What's yours?"

"My name? Tseng Kiriyama. You should cure those wounds..."

"I'm just fuckin' exhausted..."

Tseng took Reno onto his back to bring him to the elevator then to the boy's little room in the Shin-Ra Military Academy. He laid him onto his bed and washed the blood on his cheeks and what remained of the sort of make-up from the red curves on his face.

"It's still bleeding, that's deep..." Tseng wiped the blood with his fingers as he could. When he passed them again on the wound Reno felt something. Magic. It was soft and efficient. The Wutain healed the second wound and looked at the result. "You'll keep scars I think... Don't speak now, I'd fear it would reopen and bleed again. I'll see you tomorrow, now have a rest."

Taiyaki saa – *Oyoge! Taiyaki-kun!*, MUCC

[μ]-εγλ 1996 – October,02

“Are you all right?”

“No... no I’m not... I think I’m gonna turn insane... What he did to me...?”

“What happened?”

“I don’t know... I don’t know myself anymore, I get mad, I’m turning insane...!”

It’d been five days. The redhead had suddenly become very quiet, like he was soulless, he hadn’t said a single “yo” and his joyful aqua eyes were now a deep sea of sadness. He was in pain and so was the young man who called him his best friend. Having someone dear to you in pain and not being able to help makes suffer too.

“Is it linked with what’s under those plasters?”

“I just want to forget all, hide it for ever...”

“Hide it for ever...” came a voice behind them. Tseng was there like coming from nowhere. “If you want to do it, I have a solution that will enable you to hide what you want for ever.”

“How kind of you, sir...”

“You just disgust me when you’re like that,” Tseng waved the comment. “Did you use medicine or been under drugs recently?”

“No...”

“Perfect. Tonight, 8 o’clock, I’ll come to take you and we’ll solve your case.” Tseng turned on his heels and vanished in a corridor.

The trainings on that day seemed longer than ever to Reno. He was somewhat excited even if he still hated Tseng. After all, it was him who decided to introduce him to Hojo, right? ‘A professor’. Fuck it...

The hours passed, one after the other according to their endless circle.

8 o’clock, knock, knock, knock.

Reno opened the door. Ready to go? Let’s go. Off duty Tseng, black shirt, black pants, black shoes, black car. Ready to go? Let’s go. Drive down the Slums. Underworld Sector 4 is where we stop.

“Remove the plasters.” Reno did it, a bit reluctantly. The twin scars looked like thin white lines. Obviously the boy hadn’t been willing to paint the red curves as he used to. Tseng touched the skin. “It’s okay, I think we can make this disappear but now the

rest is up to you. Here lives a man, he's a great tattooist, the best I've ever known. That's all I can say, now it's up to you to decide what you do."

Reno remained silent for a short while then stared at Tseng. "I wanna do it. ...But I don't have money now, can you lend me some...?"

Tseng smiled. "Don't worry about this." They got out of the car and Tseng knocked at the door. "Open, it's Yoshiaki!"

"Yoshiaki!?" went a voice from inside. Hurry foot steps echoed and a dark-haired man opened the door. He was Wutain from head to feet, from the colour of his skin and the shape of his eyes to the clothes he wore. "*Hisashi buri da naaaa! Genki des'ka?*" He looked happy. Reno thought he'd better keep silent for the moment. "Long time no see, sure! I'm fine and glad to see you, Aniki." Tseng answered. "This boy needs your skills I think."

They entered. Reno failed to fall. "Mind the step, kiddo," Aniki laughed. "and take off your shoes, it's yet a pain to keep things clean here..."

They left their shoes in the Wutain-styled entrance and followed the man in the Wutain-decorated living room. A young Wutain-shaped woman was there, pretty, Wutain-haired, Wutain-skinned, Wutain-dressed.

"Yuka, be a nice girl and make sure Yoshiaki is at ease," Aniki ordered. "What's your name, kiddo?"

"Reno," the said kiddo answered.

"You come with me." Reno followed Aniki into an other room.

"You want to drink something?" Yuka asked Tseng as he was sitting next to her.

"You were drinking *Sake*, weren't you?" the young man smiled. Such a charmer.

They drank a bit and talked. Yuka was Aniki's daughter and it was well known that she had some crush on the person that was actually beside her. Tseng was a charmer. He was also cruel with girls if they wanted to stay with him when he'd decided a relation was over. He looked his watch then Yuka.

"You're pretty." He smiled with his most charming look. That meant "You can kiss me, I know you want it."

Yuka was two years younger and almost breastless, that was the reason Tseng liked her. They went in her bedroom. It had to be quick, tattooing the boy wouldn't last so long.

"*Didn't I say next time I'd go for a boy?*" the Wutain told himself. He closed his eyes to forget what was in his hands was a girl and focused his mind on a pretty young man he saw a couple of days ago. He even didn't think about the redhead despite the fact that focusing on him would have been way more easy. Like Veld said it was just a kid and Tseng wasn't interested in kids, he was a bastard but not of that kind.

We're there in the darkness of her room, my eyes are shut, I hear our breathes melting in the air just like our two bodies are melting together for our lovemaking. She loves me and I don't. Do I even have a heart able to love?

The young man chuckled a bit, something creepy. He gently smiled and kissed the girl to wave her doubts upon his sanity and made sure to be done quickly.

"Hey, this is a nice boy! He even didn't complain about the pain!" Aniki announced when he finally came back with Reno. "It's lucky I had the color he wanted..."

Tseng looked at Reno's face and the red ink that now perfectly covered the scars. It was the same red as the marks he used to paint on his face ...and as his hair, Tseng mused. The Wutain was a bit surprised it finally took so long to tattoo such simple

shapes, but the boy had recovered his smile and joyful eyes and that was probably all that mattered. Tseng smiled back, somewhat embarrassed to feel himself smiling then blushing a bit. "You're cute," he just said.

"By the way, how's your father?" Aniki asked.

"Still the same... I think he will never leave me alone..."

Aniki laughed and handed Tseng a box. "Give this to Hizashi, gift from me." He went in the kitchen and came back with a plate full of fish-shaped biscuits. "You can take some too," he proposed to Tseng and Reno.

"What is it?" Reno asked.

"*Taiyaki*." Tseng took one, snapped it in two and gave him the head. "You can eat it, it's not gonna kill you," he ensured and began to eat his part as a proof. Reno did the same. The red paste inside was very sweet...

"What's your currency for the tattoos, Ani?"

"The Don would appreciate Shin-Ra's help to extend a bit his territory, Sakura-chan, Yûki-kun and Haruko-san ain't feeling safe anymore if you see what I mean..."

"Okay, I'll do all I can..." Tseng answered. "Reno..." He looked at the boy that had now a *taiyaki* in each hand and a third in the mouth and stifled his laughter, "we're leaving..."

The redhead nodded and quickly gulped the biscuit in his mouth to thank and say goodbye. They put on their shoes and got out of the little house. Tseng fired his gun several times just to scare the kids around his car. One was shot in the foot by mistake and the Wutain (laughed) gave him a *taiyaki* as consolation, then kicked his ass to make sure he wouldn't come back. Reno thought his elder could look really cool when he wanted so. He sat in the car, Tseng started the engine and they were gone.

"The girl was damn pretty, yo..." Reno sighed. "You had sex? She was good?"

"To answer your first question: it's none of your business. To answer your second question: it's none of your business." Tseng answered.

"You're being cool but not nice, yo..."

"Who said I was nice?"

Reno kept silent for a moment. "So... you're straight? I was so sure you were gay..."

"...To be honest I don't know. Perhaps I'm still too young to decide." Tseng hardly believed he said that. Perhaps there were things he needed to tell sometimes...

"How old are you?"

"Eighteen."

"You're adult, so..." Reno shut up for a while again. "Tseng... this 'Aniki'... it's a member of your family or something?"

"I think... Yeah, we're from the same family..." the Wutain laughed.

The redhead shut his eyes, feeling good, rocked by the engine of the car, tired from his day, the stomach full of *taiyaki*... He even didn't realize he was falling asleep. Tseng smiled like he was sorry for the boy's tire. He was cute, he was sly, he was good at sneaking and fighting, especially with his nightstick... but his body still had limits. It was a kid after all.

I'll train you, I'll train too... You'll be brilliant. I'll still be the best of course, but you'll be brilliant, I promise.

He stopped the car, got out, took the boy in his arms, hugging him, and shut the door by kicking it. Then he took him on his back and the boy instinctively passed his arms around his shoulders, that helped a lot. Tseng got Reno back to his apartment, undressed him – the boy just snorted a bit; and put him under the blankets. Taking a look at his watch he took a piece of paper and a pen, quickly wrote some sentences

and put it on the nightstand, then got undressed too, just keeping his shirt and boxers, and slipped between the sheets.

When morning came, as soon as the alarm clock rang Reno woke up and shut it within a second. He then realized he'd been sleeping with a man and that that man was no one but Tseng of the Turks. As too many questions were sprouting in his mind he noticed the piece of paper on the nightstand, took it and read:

"If you read this it means you woke up just before me and you probably wonder why we've been sleeping together. We didn't have sex, you just fell asleep while I was driving you back here and as it was late and as I was tired I decided to sleep here, that's all, I'm not interested in little kids of your age."

Reno chuckled and looked at Tseng that was now awake, staring at him, obviously amused.

"Don't worry, I'm leaving you right now, kiddo."

TO BE CONTINUED
IN PART TWO

ORDEALS