Title: 00.01%

Author’s Notes:

I’ll write the notes in advance. I hope you can still understand the story despite of many POV shifts :D

-S0rahana

Number of Words: 1498

X POV:

“I will do my best. I’ll do anything!” I said, seated while wearing my formal attire. In front of me were three people who could be called as “higher ranks” in this society.

“Just by saying that you’ll do anything already means that you don’t have a proper direction in life.” One of them said. “Don’t you even have a dream?”

I dropped my gaze, and then gritted my teeth.

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Just call me as Character X, 28 years old. Unemployed. I don’t need to properly introduce myself since I’m just a “nobody” in the eye of the society.

Fate sure is cruel. Now I wondered, if ever I haven’t fought for my dream, would I turn like this?

I scanned my phone and browsed the internet. I accidentally looked around some familiar anime photos that had posted on my pages’ wall.

Anime huh, Japanese Anime industry made a big influence throughout this world and until now, it is still growing. Here, various cosplay events had also held each year wherein Anime enthusiasts gathered to have fun. It is a good thing, but yeah… there’s a saying which tells that ‘everything has flaws’. You know why? Because the industry itself produces victims…

-Such as me…

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“I’m home.” I said with slumped shoulders.

“How’s your interview.” My Dad queried.

“It didn’t go well.”

My Dad never said a word after that; he left the living room as I took a seat on the sofa.

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Y POV:

Again, another boring day.

It was getting dark when I always head home. Name? Just call me Variable Y. Since I’m a nobody, I don’t need to formally introduce myself.

My Job? As of now, I’m a sales lady on a particular department store.

I would’ve been lying to myself if I say that I’m settled with my life now. Really… how can I satisfy life if I’m always being reminded by the dream that I gave up?

Anime had always been my inspiration. Because of it, I had the passion to write stories, but lately I gave up because I couldn’t be productive, I don’t enjoy writing anymore. I have self-published a book, but I couldn’t sell well since an Original English Light Novel format story isn’t that good in the eye of most readers. Instead of saying that you worked hard, they’d rather say that you’re trying hard.

I stopped watching Anime because of frustration.

“So at the end, my hard work betrayed me.”

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I entered my apartment and placed my hand nearby the picture of my old friends.

I looked at it and thought. “I wonder what they’re doing by now.”

%&\*$%&\*^%$%

X and Y POV:

My phone rings.

I opened the message on my inbox:

✉ [ From: Z

To: ALL

Subject: (None)

Body:

We’re having a reunion by next week, May XX, XXXX. I hope you can come :D.

] ✉

Just how did she find my number?

%&\*$%&\*^%$%

X POV:

“Is there a problem?” Dad asked.

“It’s from an old friend; she said that we’ll have a high school reunion.”

“Are you going?”

“Of course I can’t. It’ll be a shame.”

“I think it’s better for you to go…”

“Hmm?”

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Y POV:

“Sorry, but I can’t go. I have plenty of things to do around the store.” I began typing my refusal, but I hesitated and erased the message before sending it.

After that, I stared again at the moonlight.

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X POV:

[Day of High School Reunion]

I really couldn’t believe why I went here.

However, it seemed like I was mistaken by the date. It’s Sunday, but no one else was here.

“Hey!”

Someone called me as I stared at the rooftop. There, the girl who informed me about the reunion stood.

I ascended upstairs and approached her.

“What happened to the reunion?”

She placed her hands to her back and smiled at me. “There’s no reunion. I just wanted to see you again.”

“…” I was bereft of speech.

“You know, I wanted to properly bid my farewell.”

“Why, are you leaving?”

“Yes.” She handed me her phone. “Look.”

I looked at the photo on her phone with widened eyes. What was the meaning of this?

She turned around and said. “I’m going to Japan for my Light Novel debut.”

“H-How did you do this?”

“I’ve sent a competition entry to D\*ng\*k\* B\*nk\*, and fortunately it was accepted for publishing.”

She faced me, “I just wanted to say that it isn’t too late, for you, for her, and for me.”

“Are you saying that I must pursue my dream once again? That’s stupid, I’m too old for that. First, I have accepted to myself that my dream will stay like that. You know… –a dream.”

“Did you give up because of that reason? Because you’re too old to write?”

“I’m just tired of overdoing those things; other people have it easy, because the opportunity comes to them easily. Like those professional authors that we look up.”

“A professor told me before, ‘Do you think the true reason why you fail is that you are not Japanese? Are you trying to say that those Japanese people who are successful in this industry haven’t worked that hard? If you’ll maintain that mindset then it’s better for you to give up’.”

She added. “That’s what inspired me to push myself to the limits. I mustn’t run away from the reality, and don’t think that I’m the only one who’s working hard. They too, are giving their best, right?”

“They are just lucky.”

“Luck can be a part of their success indeed. But you know… they wouldn’t have that lucky situation if they haven’t started their creations.”

I turned around. “Seemed like I wasted my time here.”

As I stepped forward, she began. “My friends on the internet who are too passionate, I observed them give up one by one, but you know, I told to myself that I must hold on. I already pressed the start button, so I don’t want this to end with a game over.”

With a downcast gaze, I added. “When will you give up?”

“When I die, I guess? Writing novels had been a part of my daily life, so giving up isn’t an option any longer.”

I was about to proceed on descending the building when she said in a loud voice. “You were the first person who appreciated my hard work.”

My eyes widened as I looked back. “So I don’t want you to quit.”

Then I remembered. I was a similar situation of what she said.

<< I think your story is great. >>

It was that girl; she often name herself as Variable Y, she was the person behind my eagerness to write novels; the very first person who appreciated my works.

I wonder what she’s doing right now.

I turned around, and said with a resolute voice. “Tell me, how did you submit your novel to Japan?”

“They held a novel competition each year.”

“Did you personally hire a translator?”

“Nope. I asked for help. I’m sure you’re familiar of those fansub groups.”

Yeah, those people who passionately provided us –the viewers– subtitles especially for those Anime that had illegally streamed online.

“00.01%, I’ll never give up that very small chance of success.”

Her words made me stop, because those originally came from me.

She smiled. “It’s over when we give up. Will you just wait to die like you haven’t existed?”

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I straightly headed home after that, and then I opened my laptop and randomly opened a .txt file.

The content of the file were the NOTES of my original story. The way I read it brought forth chills of nostalgia. I recalled all of my struggles of the past, my college days when I still passionately written stories despite of non-stop school projects.

I played a Japanese anime soundtrack.

Though we couldn’t understand most of the Japanese songs that we listened to, we still love it. Maybe because we were reminded by the Anime title that we watched?

Who knows…?

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I wore my casual clothes. Today is a different day.

I ridden a train, headed to that place. There’s only one location where I’d go, and that’s gonna be…

While walking around, I looked at the sky where a plane took flight; I assumed that that girl was there. Good luck for your adventure. The vapor trail from the plane was like a symbol of a newly opened path. One day I’ll follow you, I promise that.

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Finally, I was here.

I knocked on her apartment as she opened the door. Inside, I saw her holding her smartphone…

Then, from a surprised facial expression, she smiled.

I’m sorry, did you waited me for that long?

Y.

-END