**Shinryaku Kōi.**

*Chapter 1 – The Personification of Death is a High Schooler?*

“Isn’t Shin acting a bit weird?”

I looked at the other guys, which were just talking about some random crap seconds before.

“Weird? How so?”

“You know weird. Not himself.”

“He’s been pretty normal, right?”

Jin nodded with a “HmmHmm” sound.

“Well I mean he hasn’t really been hanging out with us lately, he’s been distant, and he basically just been focusing on his studies. That’s nothing like he used to be!”

“Yo, you turning into a girl? Shin never used to hang out, he only does it every now and then. Distant? I can barely tell if he’s paying attention when he’s talking to me. And of course, he’s focusing on his studies, it is a school.”

“You know what I meant.”

“It’s all in your head Kazuya.”

These guys are useless. I know he’s acting weird I just need find out why…

“A girlfriend?”

“What?”

A girl from the neighboring chair suddenly said something which made all of us look at her.

“If you think he’s acting weird, he probably has a girlfriend.”

The guys started chuckling.

“A girlfriend? Him? Yeah right. The god of romance wouldn’t forsake me, then give that guy a chance. There’s no way he has a girlfriend.”

“Well…”

We all turned towards Jin like meercats.

“There was that girl that was asking for Shin’s help. I never even saw her step foot in this class before then.”

The neighbor girl became cheery.

“Ooooo~ A secret relationship.”

“Naaaa! This isn’t going to stand! That piece of crap can’t be the only one to get a damn girlfriend! I won’t let him!”

“Yeah, I always knew he was acting weird, just couldn’t put a pin on it.”

“Slithery little… he’ll get what’s coming to him.”

I did want to rally them together… but now they’re out for blood. I think I just signed Shin’s death sentence. Eh, whatever gets the job done.

That’s when Shin came through the door, wearing his headphones over his short cut green hair.

“SHIN YOU PIECE OF SHIT!”

Toya almost knocks over a desk moving towards Shin.

“What?”

Shin removes one side of his headphones.

“A girlfriend Shin? You have some damn guts! Dirty magazines hidden under a floorboard in your closet isn’t enough for you?”

Shin who was now blushing looked around the class, the girls giggled while covering their mouths.

“Ay! Don’t go mouthing secrets to the whole class!”

“Oh, I have a crap load of secrets to air out!”

At this point I see a vein popping in both of their heads.

“You think I don’t know some secrets Kim So Yung?”

Everyone in class displayed their confusion, even Toya’s friends.

“Don’t you dare…”

I should stop this before it goes any farther. Toya already started pushing back his brown hair and clutching his fist. He was even going into his stupid fighting stance that he copied from an anime.

“Hey now guys, no need to fight. We can talk in a civilized manner, and if Shin does happen to have a girlfriend we can then kill him.”

“A girlfriend!?”

Shin’s face turned almost sour, like he just stepped in crap.

“You have one, don’t you?”

Toya was now slowly going off the offensive.

“What makes you think that?

“The girl that came into class looking for you. The mysterious one.”

“You mean the class rep of 4-1 A? She needed me to submit some papers to the homeroom teacher. I am the class rep remember?”

“Yeah… right.”

“Why the hell do you guys care if I have a girlfriend anyway?”

“Don’t you remember the pact? Love is stupid and only leaves to heart ache, so we’ll never date anyone till we’re 20!”

“That’s dumb, and a bit pathetic.”

The students that watching the confrontation until now, bursted out in laughter.

Jin slouched back into his chair, then pushed up his glasses.

“You guys really shouldn’t blow misunderstandings out of proportion.”

“Shut the hell up Jin.”

Jin ducked back into his book.

“Ow!”

Shin suddenly crouched down holding his head and rubbing it.

“We’re starting class, get in your seats.”

The teacher must’ve hit him with the textbook… Mr. Kojima always so quick to violence.

When everyone went back to their seats, everything proceeded as normal. Toya was taking a nap behind his book, Jin was doodling on his paper, and Shin was jotting down notes. I still couldn’t help but feel like something was off.

After class, every student packed their bags at an impressive speed and rushed out of class. Shin and I was the last to leave. We went into the cafeteria for lunch and ate together with Toya and Jin as always. And when class was starting I dropped by the bathroom for a quick number 1. That’s when I heard the door open, I looked over the urinal barrier; it was Shin that came in. He was just standing there looking at the mirror. Did he not know I was there? That’s when it happened, something that confirmed all my suspicions. It wasn’t anything big like him going ballistic, or him drinking a pouch of blood. It was… his eyes, his skin… it became weird. The sides of his face became scaly. And his eyes that were before a light shade of brown, turned a dark yellow. He almost looked like some kind of snake hybrid. When he glared in the mirror, I felt my nerves go on edge. Like I was looking at a dangerous animal, and any second it could attack me. I never saw anything like it. I couldn’t do anything but stare. That’s when my hand slightly slipped off the stall wall, and my elbow bumped it making a sound. Shin looked over with break neck speed.

“Who’s there!”

“J-just me.”

I zipped my pants then walked out from the stall wall. At that point his face was back to normal.

“Oh, it’s just you Kazu. Do you really have to pee like it’s some sort of routine?”

“Yeah… haha.”

I turned the faucet then started throwing water on my face.

“I just came in to wake myself up, staring at a book all day gives me a nasty glare.”

He checks his watch.

“Ah, time for class. Better hurry up. Ms. Fury doesn’t tolerate tardiness.”

“Yeah, I’m right behind you.”

He waves then dashes out the bathroom. I drop to the floor on my knees. I felt like I just escaped death. I slowly regain my composure and stand up. I wash my hands then walk out the bathroom. Maybe I was just imagining it… Yeah, I’m probably just stressed out. That was just a hallucination… right? Shin couldn’t possibly be some monster.

A month passed, and everything was pretty much normal. Shin started hanging out with us again. I guess he was just trying to focus on exams. I still couldn’t help but feel something was off, was that really a hallucination?

The class bell rang, and all the students stormed out as always.

“Alright, I’ll see you guys later. I have to get home early today.”

Shin started packing his books into his bag.

“Sure man, be safe. I heard there’s some sort of vigilante going around.”

Kakubatta Kitsune is what people are calling him, some guy in a fox mask going around taking down criminals. Jin who was pretty much his fan (mainly because he’s sort of an otaku for this kind of stuff) started defending him.

“Don’t you mean he’ll be safe? Kakubatta’s getting the trash off the seats. Something the police want to do, but can’t.”

“A criminal taking out other criminals, how safe.”

“Someone has to do it, right Shin?”

“Heh, something like that. I’ll see you guys later.”

Shin walked out of the classroom.

“Uh, I’ll see you guys later too.”

“Vigilanties are heroes Toya, but I suppose **you** would hate them.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Well Mr. Blondie why don’t you tell me.”

“You little…”

They ignored me, as I was walking out. It looked like it was turning ugly, so I rather not be there anyway.

After I walked out of the classroom I scanned the halls for Shin, there it was bright green hair that stuck out in the crowd. I followed after him, as he walked out the entrance to the school. Lately I’ve been following, watching, and researching Shin. I just couldn’t get what I saw out of my mind. Now I follow him almost out of habit.

I finally caught up to him as he turned a corner. It was his normal path to school that he always took. Sometimes he goes to the store for a snack, and other times he kills time at the arcade. But his schedule is usually the same. Suddenly, he stopped and started petting a small cat. While he was crouched down I felt a chill up my spine. I quickly hid behind a telephone pole. I didn’t know for sure, but I felt him look back. All my nerves went on edge, and sweat rolled down my face. When I peered from behind the pole, he started walking again. I just stayed there till he was out of sight.

It was the same feeling I had in the bathroom when I saw that…

My eyes closed without me wanting them too, and they wouldn’t open. It became harder to breath, and my heart felt like it was being squeezed. But I couldn’t let him get out of my sight. He’s going to try something, I know it.

I ran after him, not knowing where he went, or where he was going I ran down each street. Turning corner after corner.

I heard it, a gunshot. Every innate human instinct was telling me to run home, but I had to catch him… I had to somehow stop him. I know he’s evil, nothing with such a disturbing presence could have good intentions.

I started running to where I heard the gun shot, until I saw him. I turned the corner to a broken-down building. He was wearing a mask and had different clothing on, but I know it’s him. I could feel it. I quickly hid under a window of the building, and peered slightly over the edge. He was surrounded by a large group of men that towered over him. They were all carrying weapons, while he was unarmed.

“You must really want to die kid.”

He chuckled at the large man’s threat.

“I think you have that reversed, I’m sorry but there’s no way I could die to bottom feeder trash.”

His voice didn’t sound the same, it was changed with a voice modulator. It must be that mask he’s wearing.

“What did you! KILL THAT LITTLE SHIT!”

The large men ran at him with weapons, while he just stood there, motionless. One of them swung at him, the pipe moved fast enough to crack his skull, but it stopped right near his ear.

“What’s wrong? Not going to take the hit? You sure? It’s free you know.”

He laughed. A weird laugh resembling that of a Hyena.

“What are you doing! Hit him!”

“I can’t move!”

The man struggled to move any part of his body… he was frozen in place.

Another man came close enough and attacked him with a rebar he picked off the ground. This time Shin took a step backwards. When he did, the man holding the pipe became unfrozen. He continued swinging the pipe, almost like he was paused and Shin pressed play. The pipe smashed into the other man’s skull.

“Wuh oh, friendly fire!”

“You’re going to pay for that!”

The man holding the pipe tried hitting Shin again, swinging his pipe downward. He was frozen stiff once more.

“He’s using some kind of magic… Get him! Stop standing around!”

“I agree, this has grown quite boring.”

The large group of men rushed towards him, all holding blunt weapons.

He stood completely still as they moved closer and closer. One of them swung the weapon right at him, but he didn’t move, nor did he make the guy freeze like he did the other. Just as the weapon looked like it was about to hit him, it passes him, hitting the man directly across from him. It wasn’t just him, all of them were attacking each other. Blood spilled on the ground, as most of them collapsed from repeating attacks from their allies.

What the hell did he do…

There were but three left, and they seemed to have awoken from whatever hold he had on them. The ground was covered with bloody bodies of men who were still twitching from the pain inflicted on them.

“What the hell did you do… YOU DEMON!”

“Demon? That’s what you call evil mythical creatures right? I’d say I’m somewhat close to that.”

With his back turned to me, he puts his hand up to his face and removes his mask. The 3 men went from angry to terrified. They trip over themselves trying to back away.

“Wha- no… all of your kind are supposed to be dead!”

Shin starts walking towards them laughing.

“You humans are so incompetent; didn’t you ever learn to make sure a lifeform is truly extinct. It might come back to bite you.”

He points his finger to each one individually stopping on the one on the left.

“You.”

The man started shrieking while holding his head. He started banging his head on the ground. Suddenly he stopped moving, and his body dropped lifelessly.

“Who’s next?”

The other two men started walking back.

“RUN!”

They try to run through the doorway and outside. Just an inch away from the exit, they stopped moving.

“I mean I feel a little bad about doing this.”

He said lightheartedly we zero remorse.

They started screaming, staying completely still. Unable to even squirm from the pain. Then their bodies fall to the floor.

“Ahh~ Man when did chores become so easy, I don’t get why people complain about taking the trash out, it feels so refreshing.”

He said as he put his mask back on.

I can’t believe he did… I must run. I should tell someone!

My body, wouldn’t move.

“Ay Kazuya! If you were here, you should’ve said something! I would’ve been up to going to an arcade later!”

My eyes moved in the direction of his voice. I could see his black mask with two horns on it. Through the eye holes I could see his bright yellow eyes. It was almost as if I was staring at death.

He knew…

“Ay why don’t you come out and say hi, I want to see your face.”

He chuckles.

“Look at me, I sound like a mom.”

I could move again. I drastically started running. I left the abandoned building and starting running down the street. Passing people, turning every corner, not stopping for anything. I finally made it an area with a ton of people. He wouldn’t be able to see me in this crowd.

“Hey Kazuya, I finally caught up to you.”

I heard his voice as I was moving through the crowd. I frantically turned trying to see where he was.

“Check your head, I mean I’m in your head.”

“LEAVE ME ALONE!”

I couldn’t take it anymore… I just started mindlessly yelling.

Everyone is staring at me.

“GET AWAY FROM ME YOU MONSTER! MURDERER!”

“Now is that how you speak to your friend?”

“YOUR NOT MY FRIEND! GET OUT OF MY HEAD! GET OUT GET OUT GET OUT!”

I felt pain as he kept speaking, it felt like my brain was being squeezed.

“You seem a bit irate, how about you take a nap.”

The pain stopped completely, and then I felt like all the strength was leaving my body. I couldn’t stay standing. I dropped to my knees, then my entire body laid on the ground.

“Don’t worry about waking up.”

My eye lids felt heavy. I slowly closed them.

I felt, tired.