

We'll Meet Again

On that day, mankind came together to mourn. At that dreadful moment, in everyone's hearts, they knew they had nowhere to go.

A truly agonizing sight, treated so differently by others. Some fled in terror, knowing their fate was the same as everyone else's. Some closed their eyes and mumbled prayers to the one who had become their last hope. Some drank their agitation away, relishing the prospect of death. Some hugged each other, relieved that they'd be able to go together. To calm the crowd, several performed on instruments.

And just like that, a massive fireball and a mushroom-shaped cloud of dust and particles took everything that mattered to Akira.

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"It's Doomsday, the presidents of Crede and Marlayan have spoken their final decisions," the reporter announced from the television, as the sounds of alarm jolted Akira awake. "There will be battle... slaughter... and, most importantly, nuclear annihilation." As the news broke, there was not even a single movement. The terror in the room was tangible to Akira. Everyone in his family was deafeningly quiet, and he could see his mother fighting back tears. What else could they do but cry? Nuclear weapons had been invented many years ago, and there was nothing that could stop them now.

"There's violence everywhere, and now we're going to die for that too?" Volt cursed at the top of his lungs. Volt, Akira's younger brother, was about 13 years old. Akira found it difficult to endure his younger brother's pain, especially since he was only a child. There was no response

from the family. The room was very quiet. Windy breezes began to sound much louder than they should.

Akira peered out the window. He was attempting to remain completely unaware of the chaos that was engulfing his family. Phone calls were coming in from all over the place. He was emotionally numb at the time, and he needed a break from reality. Suri, his 5-year-old sister, was riding her small bicycle, nicknamed "paradise." She laughed as she rode her bike down the hill near their house. Even in the most dire of circumstances, Akira managed to smile, but the realization set in that his sister would lose everything in a matter of hours. Maybe even herself.

"Why that young?" Akira sat and pondered his thoughts. He was also a young man, around 19 years old. He stood at 6 feet 3 inches and had tan-brown skin. He had the most piercing hazel eyes. He had wanted to be a doctor since he was a child. He wanted to help sick people in need, so he spent the summer learning new techniques by himself. For the time being, he only knew how to clean a horrifying wound properly. His family never really supported him with his dreams.

Akira went almost unnoticed by his family. They never treated him with the same affection they did with Suri and Volt. He never held a grudge because he realized he hadn't done anything significant enough for him to be recognized. In difficult times, instead of turning to his family, he always turned to the person he trusted more than anyone else in the world: Zeke. Zeke was also 19 years old. He stood at 5 feet, 9 inches tall, with blonde hair and hazel eyes. He was Akira's only friend; the two had grown up together and always looked out for each other. Zeke lived alone in his house. His parents had died when he was only 13, so he was completely dependent on Akira. It wasn't a surprise how close they were to each other because of their many

striking similarities. Based on first impressions, they automatically clicked with each other. There was never a moment of discomfort between them.

Akira dashed out of his house and began riding his bike towards Zeke's. Seeing the upheaval in his neighborhood was heartbreaking. A family had already packed their belongings and were preparing to leave town, Rosê, to begin a new life somewhere else. *What was the advantage of fleeing?* He reasoned with himself. He couldn't blame them; the family had a small child, who looked about five years old. There were also two elderly people, both of whom appeared to be in their seventies. *Is this a strategy for instilling hope in them?* Akira pondered as he got closer to Zeke's house. Akira found it difficult to stop tinkering with his thoughts.

"ZEKE!" Akira yelled as he parked his bicycle in Zeke's backyard. The backyard that held many memories of Akira and Zeke spending most of their childhood was there. Zeke sped down to Akira's spot. When he heard Akira's voice, he felt a wave of relief wash over him. Akira was the first person that came to his mind when the news was being broadcast. They hugged each other tightly as soon as they came into contact. Both of their eyes were filled with tears. They were able to understand each other's pain despite the fact that no words were exchanged.

"Did you hear the news?" Akira asked, breaking the silence.

"Yeah," Zeke replied in a very soft voice.

For a while, silence fell as Zeke gestured towards Akira inside his house and into his room.

"Do you still remember how to play the guitar?" Akira chuckled as he laid down in Zeke's bed.

"Hell yeah, and you know I am good at it too," Zeke replied.

"Why don't you play me something then?" Akira grinned.

"Why don't we drink a shot before? Really want to waste humanity's last hours? "

"I never had one," Akira replied.

"Yeah, no s***, you're a fitness freak, "Zeke said as he poured one glass of Bailey's Irish Cream wine. "You're going to love this one."

Akira took a deep breath before he took a sip while Zeke stared at him for his reaction.

Akira's eyes widened.

"Woah... This tastes sort of like vanilla ice cream," Akira said, surprised. "Ain't no way. I thought you were so tough for drinking this baby s***. "

"No s***, you're a newbie, so I took it easy on you," Zeke joked, "that wine is seventeen percent alcohol; a five-year-old can drink that."

Zeke went over to his drawer and took out another bottle of wine.

"Now this," Zeke said in a German accent, "Cabernet Sauvignon' is only for adults like me."

"It's French, you dumba**," Akira laughed.

Zeke poured himself a shot and gulped it down in a split second, followed by a gag reflex. Zeke groaned because the taste was too strong for him, but he quickly covered it up to impress Akira.

"Pass me that guitar," Zeke said.

Akira groaned as he reached for Zeke's guitar that was on the end of his bed and threw it at him.

"What do you want me to play?" Zeke asked.

"I changed my mind, I'd rather you stay quiet," Akira replied as he closed both wine bottles.

"Oh, remember our middle school play where you sang 'We will meet again' by Vera Lynn," Zeke exclaimed, "Yeah, let me sing that for you right now."

"I've always despised that song," Akira chuckled, "and I still hold a grudge against Mr. Clark for making me sing it."

"Shut up now," Zeke said as he adjusted the tunes on his guitar and cleared his throat.

He began harmonizing with guitar and sang in the most angelic voice Akira had ever heard, leaving him speechless.

For a second, Akira forgot everything that was going on and was just lost in Zeke's eyes.

"Maybe the song isn't so bad after all," Akira muttered as he cheered on Zeke.

"We will meet again. I don't know where, don't know when..."

Akira then looked up at the ceiling, filled with nostalgia. It was a bitter-sweet experience. He looked around Zeke's room, and every object had a story to tell. His gaze was drawn to the necklace on Zeke's desk. On Zeke's 17th birthday, Akira gave him the necklace.

"Keep smiling through, just like you always do."

They were both attempting to ignore what was about to happen, and it was working. It was only a matter of time before it all ended. So for the time being, it was simply 'live for the moment' and not worry about anything else.

"They'll be happy to know that as you saw me go, I was singing this song. We'll meet again..."

"Those are all the lyrics I remember," Zeke said, "so... how was it?"

Akira looked back at Zeke and replied, "I expected worse from you."

They both shared a laugh until silence filled the room. Akira got up and went over to Zeke's desk. He carefully picked up the same necklace he gazed at when Zeke was singing.

Akira grinned as he wrapped the necklace around Zeke's neck. "Always have this on."

"I only took it off for a while, it was itching my neck," Zeke replied with a grin.

"Since this is our final night alive, I have been wanting to tell you something," Zeke adds.

"I..."

...

"Civilians of Marlayans, please evacuate immediately," Zeke's living room TV automatically played the broadcast news. "Several small grenade bombs have been dropped on the coast of town Rose... Have your prayers and stay sa—"There was a static TV noise for a few seconds before it closed on its own. Akira and Zeke stared at each other for a moment without any words.

The glass in the kitchen window smashed, making a loud bang. To protect Zeke, Akira leapt in front of him. They were fine, but the rest of the world was not.

"Zeke, toughen up," Akira shouted, grasping and tugging Zeke to his feet. "We've gotta get out of here or we're not going to make it."

"Nowhere is secure anymore," Zeke mournfully stated.

[A gunshot is heard]

"PLEASE, I HAVE A CHILD," a woman screamed in terror. She was right outside Zeke's house, so Akira and Zeke heard everything very clearly. A man replied, "I'm sorry, I didn't want to do this." A heavy thump of a body was heard after another gunshot.

"I have to go see my family right now, " Akira remarked, fearfully, "find an evacuation center. Don't wander around looking for me... You listen to me? I'll locate you later. "

Zeke nodded.

They both had the impression that this was their last time seeing each other.

"Going to them won't change anything, "Zeke said as a tear streamed down his left eye. Let's have some more fun in these last few moments, Akira. "

"What are you talking about?" Akira said, in disbelief. He understood Zeke's point of view, and Zeke was correct in certain ways. Nothing was going to change except for the fact that he wanted closure from his family—which he never got.

"Do you know how old my sister is?"

"You know, I didn't mean that." Zeke replied.

"Yes, you did." Akira yelled vehemently.

The room fell silent for a few seconds.

"All I want for us is to spend our final hours together... Take advantage of this moment. Everyone is going to f**k*** end up the same... let me sing you another song, Akira," Zeke chuckled. The anguish behind his laugh was visible, as was his drunkenness from that single glass of strong wine.

"You've gone insane. How much more fun do you want to have? If I don't see Suri for the last time, I'll never forgive myself." Akira yelled as he walked out of Zeke's room, choking back his emotions.

"I should have just stayed home."

"You know, I don't intend on living anyway," Zeke yelled across the room. "You were the one who taught me how to find joy in the midst of adversity, so why are you running away from me? Do you want this to be our final conversation?"

Akira did not respond and continued to walk away.

Consecutive shots of sniper rifles spat around the neighborhood, even hitting the room's window. There were numerous screams and blood splattered all over the place.

Zeke squatted and ran towards Akira, trying to avoid the shots and the shattered pieces of glass. "YOU ARE GOING TO F**K**** DIE OUTSIDE, AKIRA, PLEASE COME BACK," he begged. You can tell he was crying from the way he was stuttering. "I love you," he then said in a low voice so that Akira couldn't hear.

Akira tried all in his power to suppress his feelings for Zeke after he made a hurtful remark about his family. **Though Akira knew in his heart that, while he was searching for his family, they were not searching for him.** He only wanted to see Suri one final time to tell her that everything would be all right. He always wanted to be a role model for Suri, and guide her the way his parents never had time to do so.

Akira dashed out of Zeke's house, only to witness all of Rosê's houses on fire or tear gassed. He covered his mouth with his elbow and squinted his eyes to visibly see and not be affected by the tear gas. The whole place was smoky. Sounds were the only thing that was now 'visible' to Akira. He was able to see some families running while holding their children and covering their ears to make them feel more safe. That wasn't even the worst part; there were several dead victims on the ground. People running over them, not trying to end up like them. Men with metal boots followed them. It looked as if they were mocking the victims by walking slowly and shouting "don't worry, I won't do anything" and laughing afterwards. Akira noticed the Crede flag symbol embroidered on the boots, and that's when he knew it was more than just the nuclear bomb.

Is that the woman from before? Akira pondered as he started choking from the burning sensation produced from the gas. *The woman who begged for mercy? Is she actually dead?* A boy, who seemed to be about six years old, waddled with a torn teddy bear on his hand, and shook that lifeless woman. His eyes were teary from the gas too and he was coughing violently. “Come on Mom, we have to leave now,” the boy yelled. He wasn’t crying, but that's only because he didn’t know his mother wouldn't be there to help him survive anymore.

In the midst of the turmoil and panic, an old man stumbled over the boy as he attempted to flee from a soldier armed with a sniper rifle. The little boy began to wail as his teddy bear fell to the ground and had the woman’s blood smeared all over it. From afar, the old guy was sniped on his leg. He fell to the ground screaming from the top of his lungs. “Give up, you old hag,” a soldier shouted and many of his own kind replied with an evil laugh. Another soldier stepped forward; he looked about 14 years old, and he tentatively lit a fire on an oval-shaped object. It took Akira a few seconds to understand that it was a grenade aimed for the young boy. Akira sprinted to the boy and carried him on his back and ran towards Zeke’s house.

A loud explosion behind Akira occurred. “NICE ONE, RICK,” a soldier shouted to the young one who threw the grenade.

*It probably got that old f**** Akira thought to himself.

“ZEKE,” Akira screamed in agony as he ingested the tear gas once again. When he entered Zeke's room, it was entirely strewn with shattered glass. “ZEKE,” Akira shouted again, this time more fearfully. He entered the living room to see blood trails on the floor. He continued on the route, praying to God that Zeke was safe. The path came to an end in the bathroom. Akira gently placed the boy on the floor and gestured to him to stay where he was. Akira then flung open the door.

"F**k," Zeke groaned in agony as he struggled to get the shard of glass out of his right foot.

"What the hell happened?" Akira trembled.

"Oh. It's nothing more than a dumb f**k*** glass that caught my heel as I ran after you."

Zeke responded. "But don't worry about it."

Akira was filled with remorse. *I always f*** up things*, Akira thought as he tried to approach Zeke but backed down because he blamed it on himself.

"I'm glad to see you, though...thought that was our last conversation," Zeke replied, attempting to grin.

"I am as well," Akira said as he approached Zeke and assisted him with his foot.

"It's a mess out there," Akira said while he bandaged Zeke. Zeke did not reply.

"I found this little fellow right outside your house," Akira pointed to the boy and introduced him to Zeke. The room fell quiet for a few seconds.

"He has been through a lot out there, witnessed his mom dying," Akira whispered to Zeke.

Zeke's face turned sadder. He remembered his own mother and how he watched her die too in the hospital at such a young age.

"What's your name, boy?" Zeke asked in a soothing voice as Akira was finished patching him up.

"Oliver," the boy mumbled.

Akira cracked a grin. Oliver reminded Akira a lot of Suri. (DESCRIPTION?) Akira went over to Oliver and kissed him on the cheek. He then proceeded to grab a bandage for Oliver's leg. Zeke assisted in the treatment of Oliver's wounds. There had been stillness up to that point.

"We need a plan or none of us will make it out there," Akira said quietly, "and it won't be long before one of those merciless f***s comes and breaks down his entire house like everyone else's."

"We should escape from the backyard.. there aren't any soldiers there, yet.. i checked," Zeke replied.

"We should start leaving now, Zeke," Akira whispered as he carried a little bag containing a few medications and bandages. "Can you hear me? We're all in this together."

Oliver and Zeke both nodded.

"Come on, there isn't much time left," Akira urged, "Beware of your surroundings." Zeke limped to the kitchen and brought back two headphones and two phones.

"Keep this with you, if we ever get drifted apart, talk to me in this," Zeke said as his voice started breaking down.

"You are still drunk," Akira said, cracking a chuckle, "wash your face and get cleaned, we don't want you to blow our cover." Zeke smiled and went to the bathroom.

"I am sorry about your mom," Akira said to Oliver, "I can't imagine going through this at such a young age." Oliver did not reply and had the same neutral expression he had since he got here. You can't blame him though, he is a kid, probably still doesn't understand what's happening to the world.

"Listen, you have to stay out of those men who are wearing big boots and are carrying guns," Akira remarked, "these people won't go easy on you, even though you are only like.. Uh, i don't know.. six year-"

"Seven," Oliver corrected.

"Oh. At least I was close," Akira chuckled then rapidly faded away the smile.

“Stay close to me at all times, I will do anything to protect you.”

Oliver nodded and hugged Akira.

“You’re a strong kid, just know that.”

Zeke came back drenched in water. “Okay, I think I am ready now,” Zeke chuckled. There was joy filled in the room for a second, it felt weird though.

Akira took out his headphones and placed them in Oliver’s ears. He played his favorite song of all time which was ‘Fourth of July’ by Sufjan Stevens. “You don’t deserve to hear all this violence,” Akira remarked. “Classic song choice,” Zeke added.

Akira carried Oliver in his back and gave Zeke the little bag to carry. Oliver closed his eyes and rested his head upon Akira’s shoulders, taking joy in the music. It was time to leave. They slowly escaped from Zeke’s backyard avoiding the soldiers at all cost. Sounds of bombs went off almost everywhere. There was no talking at all, just gestures between Zeke and Akira to know that they were on the same boat.

Suddenly, footsteps of metal cranking boots became louder and louder as it approached Akira and Zeke. “It’s them,” Zeke trembled as he and Akira squatted behind a car that was destroyed. A thudding sound of an object slid through the car between Zeke’s legs.

“SMOKE GRENADE,” Akira shouted, pushing Zeke out the way. It was impossible to see now. Shots of Sniper rifle spat at where Akira and Zeke were standing.

“ZEKE RUN TOWARDS GREEN,” Akira yelled while coughing violently. The word “green” was a code word for “back to main base.” He and Zeke always used it when they played cops and robbers. Zeke immediately understood and tried to plot back to his house. Akira ran holding Oliver’s head to make sure he didn’t get shot. Thankfully, none of them were shot, the smoke gave them a benefit. They both made it to the backyard.

“Evacuation center, here Marlayans!” Some random middle aged man whispered and shouted at Akira and Zeke. He gestured towards a secret pathway that started near Zeke’s garden. It was a bomb shelter secret to the Crede people.

“Zeke take Oliver,” Akira whispered as he took Oliver off his back and placed him down.

“What the f*** are you doing?” Zeke snapped.

“I have to go protect my family.. Please understand, this isn’t the time to fight,” Akira reasoned.

“I am coming with you then,” Zeke wept.

“Guys hurry up, we have to close the door soon,” the guy from the evacuation center barked.

“THIS ISN’T THE TIME, JUST GO,” Akira argued loudly.

Footsteps came closer. Akira pushed Zeke inside the door and gestured to Oliver to run inside.

“Please take care of them,” Akira sobbed.

“Here take this silencer pistol and a walkie,” the guy said, “it has exactly 16 bullets in it, use it only when you really have to.”

“I am sorry,” the guy whispered as he closed the door behind.

Five blocks away from home, Akira said to himself. There was no safe way anymore, every street was covered with flames, dead bodies and screams begging for mercy.

“We have cornered you everywhere, there is no place to escape,” a soldier announced over a megaphone.

The only option for Akira was to make a run for it and shoot anyone that came in his way. He didn't have the guts to take anyone’s life, though. So without thinking about it, he ran straight to his home street and did not look back once. Explosions go off in the background, Akira closes his eyes trying to ignore it. Two middle aged couples get killed in front of Akira's eyes so he changes the street lane and takes a different route.

Please be on my side God, just this once Akira begs in silence.

He finally gets to his backyard safely. He immediately stops after he sees Suri's bicycle on the ground. It was covered in blood and a single tulip right next to it. The door of his house was wide open. The top floor was on fire; Suri's room. Akira's heart dropped. He sprinted his way inside his house. It looked as if the house got robbed. Glass was shattered everywhere and random utensils were all over the place.

"SURI?" Akira shouted in internal agony. There was no answer. "VOLT?" No answer again. Akira screamed on the top of his lungs and fell to the ground. "MOM...DAD? SOMEBODY ANSWER." Still no response. Akira banged his head and hands on the ground and had a full mental breakdown. He felt great remorse thinking the most horrible thoughts about what had happened to them. "WHERE DID YOU GUYS GO?... PLEASE ANSWER." Akira sprinted upstairs where the fire was occurring. There was no one there. "WHERE DID YOU GUYS GO?" Akira shouted as smoke filled his lungs. It wasn't until he went to Suri's room to investigate, he found a letter with his name bolded on the front. The letter also clarified that it was written by Volt.

Akira's vision was blurry from the tears but he still decided to open it. He laid on the ground, ignoring the flames around him.

"We had to leave town. I begged mom and dad to wait for you, but they refused. I can't tell you where we're heading since anyone can reach this letter before you. But I'm sure it'll be you who reads this. Don't blame yourself for anything; me and Suri are okay. We didn't have time to wait for you since they started targeting our area first. Don't dwell on looking for us; I know you went to Zeke's house for a reason, and I understand. He has treated you well, more than any of us. I don't blame you. I hope we will be able to live together and meet again.

Love you big bro

Suri dropped off a tulip for you.”

Drops of Akira’s tears soaked parts of the paper. He felt betrayed by his own parents, but he knew that it was the best choice to protect Volt and Suri. The feeling of the worst guilt filled him; he felt awful about the fact that he couldn’t share his last words with Suri. The ceiling was completely on fire now, but Akira didn’t move. At that moment, he felt like he had nothing else to lose. Right corner of the ceiling collapsed, making the room filled with dust.

No sound buzzed in Akira’s ears. He gave up trying to save everyone and himself. The one person that was close to him now was Zeke, but the fight before put salt into his fresh wounds. Tears were still streaming down, but it was a silent cry . Smoke filled Akira’s lungs, he covered his mouth violently, almost as if he was choking himself. Gunshots in the background still.

Go see Zeke! Akira’s inner voice was continuously screaming.

THUD

Someone had busted the house’s front door. Akira lay on the floor still, with no movement and his hands covering his mouth. Two men were giggling as their footsteps became louder every second.

“This s*** looks gross, I don’t think anyone is hiding here,” the first man said.

“Let’s check either way,” the second man replied.

Those metal boots, Akira gasped as he heard those footsteps. *It’s them*. Akira quickly landed on his feet trying to cover his coughs as the smoke got worse and worse. There was a window that was connected to the balcony on his left, that was halfway burned.

“Check that room, it’s open,” the first man said.

The fire had gotten really worse from before. Akira could barely spot the window. He took the letter and zipped it in his pocket.

Make a run for it. He challenged his thoughts as he quickly sprinted through the yellow flames and out the window.

Akira yelled in agony as he landed on the ground instead of the balcony. The scream was loud enough to alert the two men.

“THAT BOY,” the second man yelled as he made direct eye contact with Akira’s eye and his smoke covered face. Without looking back Akira ran. He had to distract the soldiers elsewhere because he couldn’t give away the camp’s location where Zeke and Oliver were hiding.

Akira kept running until he found a hiding place where he could rest for a while. He was able to outrun the soldiers but since his identity was given away, he wasn’t safe. He was able to hide behind a tree that was pretty tall. Akira sat down, breathing heavily and out of breath.

There were static noises coming from Akira’s walkie that the guy from the camp gave him.

"10 minutes left till the final explosion, Crede soldiers surround Marleyans from every corner," a guy said in a very Crede accent. Akira’s eyes widened, and he quickly took out the walkie from his pocket and held it close to his ears.

Many of them are hiding in Rose's streets. Be nice to some of them to lure them into your trap. "

Silence.

Why is this walkie exposing Crede’s plan? Akira was confused.

Another guy laughed through the walkie-talkie. "Kill'em all. We are doing them a favor from the big doom coming."

What does this mean? Akira's heart pumped rapidly, leaving him feeling heavily discomforted.

Akira examined the walkie and found the same small Crede flag symbol embroidered at the very bottom of the walkie.

This walkie is only channeled to the Crede soldiers. Does this mean... that the camp guy was a part of the Crede military? Thousands of negative thoughts flooded Akira's brain.

Are Zeke and Oliver in trouble? No. What am I thinking? Those people were nice, and either way, why would a Crede give away his walkie to me? A Maryleyan. Akira tried to be positive despite the striking coincidences.

"Damn you, Crede," Akira muttered in pain as he tried to get up from his soreness that was pulling him back down. So many emotions came over Akira at once, as he limped his way back to the camp.

The once-colossal, vibrant trees and the cleanest, smoothest roads had been transformed into the bloodiest, smallest swimming pools. Random pieces of people's clothes were on the floor, scattered in different places. The thing that was the most disturbing to Akira was how many stuffed animals were also on the ground. Everything changed in a matter of hours. Nothing is normal anymore. Some of these streets where Akira had many great childhood memories were gone, and sooner or later he would be too. Akira sobbed as he compared the streets to now and before. The same street where he taught Suri how to ride a bicycle was now almost colorless with no meaning behind it, just destruction. A feeling of heartburn came, where it felt like his chest was filled with tears; an aching lump in his throat, and the worst headache all at once. Akira continued limping. He never wanted to be wrong about something so bad. He was close to the camp underground.

The walkie talkie kept making a weird noise. It's almost like the sound of a clock ticking. Akira took a glance at it and there was a number that went down every second. It wasn't long until Akira realized it told the time when the bomb was setting off. "9:59...9:58...9:57," it showed. Akira's heartbeat gets faster every time he hears a tick. He didn't have much time left, he needed to reunite with Zeke and Oliver quickly and get to safety.

Akira ran faster than he ever had. His vision had gotten blurrier and he couldn't hear much from his surroundings as they were slowly fading away. He heard a high pitched frequency sound as he kept running. He felt like passing out. He shook his head lightly, trying to keep himself together. He started hyperventilating, but he didn't stop.

He finally reached the location, only to find the door's of the camp smashed into pieces.

"ZEKE," Akira yelled as he went inside the camp. It was filled with smoke, but strangely, laughter was coming from the inside. It didn't sound like Zeke at all. Akira calmly took out the silencer pistol and went in without any hesitation. The same metal boots surround a lifeless person. It seemed as if they were making fun of the poor victim. Akira felt too enraged and pointed the silencer at Crede's head.

"Go to Hell, Devil."

The laughter stops. The body falls with a thud. Silence surrounds the room and it's 'louder' than ever. Akira doesn't have time to reflect on his actions.

"Keep moving," he mutters to himself, as he reaches closer to the soldier.

A long pause.

The soldier was the same person who led him and Zeke around the camp. Akira's theory was right after all. Akira doesn't react to it though. He keeps moving forward. He drags the soldier's body towards a different area and tries to do the same with the victim.

Akira's heart drops.

Zeke's lifeless body was surrounded by a large pool of blood.

"N..o..," Akira whispers as he shakes Zeke's body.

"Zeke?... Zeke?" *Silence*. Akira notices the walkie he gave to Zeke before escaping from his home. It was completely shattered. Zeke probably tried to speak with Akira before he got murdered.

"I am sorry, Zeke... I should have listened to you... You were right, I don't think. Please open your eyes." Akira whispers again as he lifts Zeke's body into his lap. Akira's eyes were filled with tears again, and not only that, he was heavily shaken. He has felt this much pain before.

"You said you wanted to have fun in our last minutes, right? Let's go, Zeke. I am here now. "

Static noise starts coming from the walkie-talkie again. This time it wasn't the Crede soldier. It was a woman harmonizing to a song. The same song Zeke sang before, only the real version of it.

"We will meet again, don't know where, don't know when..."

"Hey, it's your song. Wake up please," Akira sobbed, "Open your eyes, you can't leave me yet. What was the thing you wanted to tell me earlier when you were singing? "

“Are you listening to me, Zeke?”

“Keep smiling through, just like you always do..”

Akira lifts Zeke over to his chest and rests his head on Zeke’s hand. Akira notices Zeke’s necklace. It was very shiny and clean, not covered with blood. Akira clutches it tightly in his hands, sobbing quietly in Zeke's chest.

“They'll be happy to know that as you saw me go, I was singing this song. We'll meet again...”

He peers over the walkie. It showed "2:39." Two minutes left. The world outside is in pure chaos. They are aware of the timer now, yet not everyone has the same reaction to it. The majority of them are still fleeing and running away in terror. Many are chanting prayers out loud, even though they know the outcome is going to be the same. Akira didn’t pay attention to any of it. He wants to spend his last seconds with Zeke, even though he isn't alive. Akira is still happy because Zeke doesn’t have to witness any of this anymore.

The sound you make is muzak to my ears as he clutches Zeke's necklace very tight, scrunching his eyes, trying to weep but he can't, everything else just a fever dream.

We'll meet again...

“0:16...0:15..0:14.”

“You are one lucky f**k you know,” Akira mumbles trying to grin.

Don't know where, don't know when

“0:07...0:05”

“I guess it's about time,” Akira tightly hugs Zeke, covering his eyes in Zeke’s arms.

“But I know we'll meet again...”

“I love you,” Akira whispers and suddenly closes his eyes.

“*Some sunny da—*”