

*Backstory-*  
**DRAMAtical Murder**

*Interview-*  
**Voltage Inc.**

*Gosplay-*  
**Nipah**

# YGG MAGAZINE

SUE 5 February 2015

*Fiction-*  
**EAB**  
**Simon Bransby**  
**James Lancy**  
**Akhie Takeda**

ISSN 2333-1364



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*COVER STORY-*  
**HAMLET MACHINE**



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# YGG MAGAZINE

Number 5 February 2015



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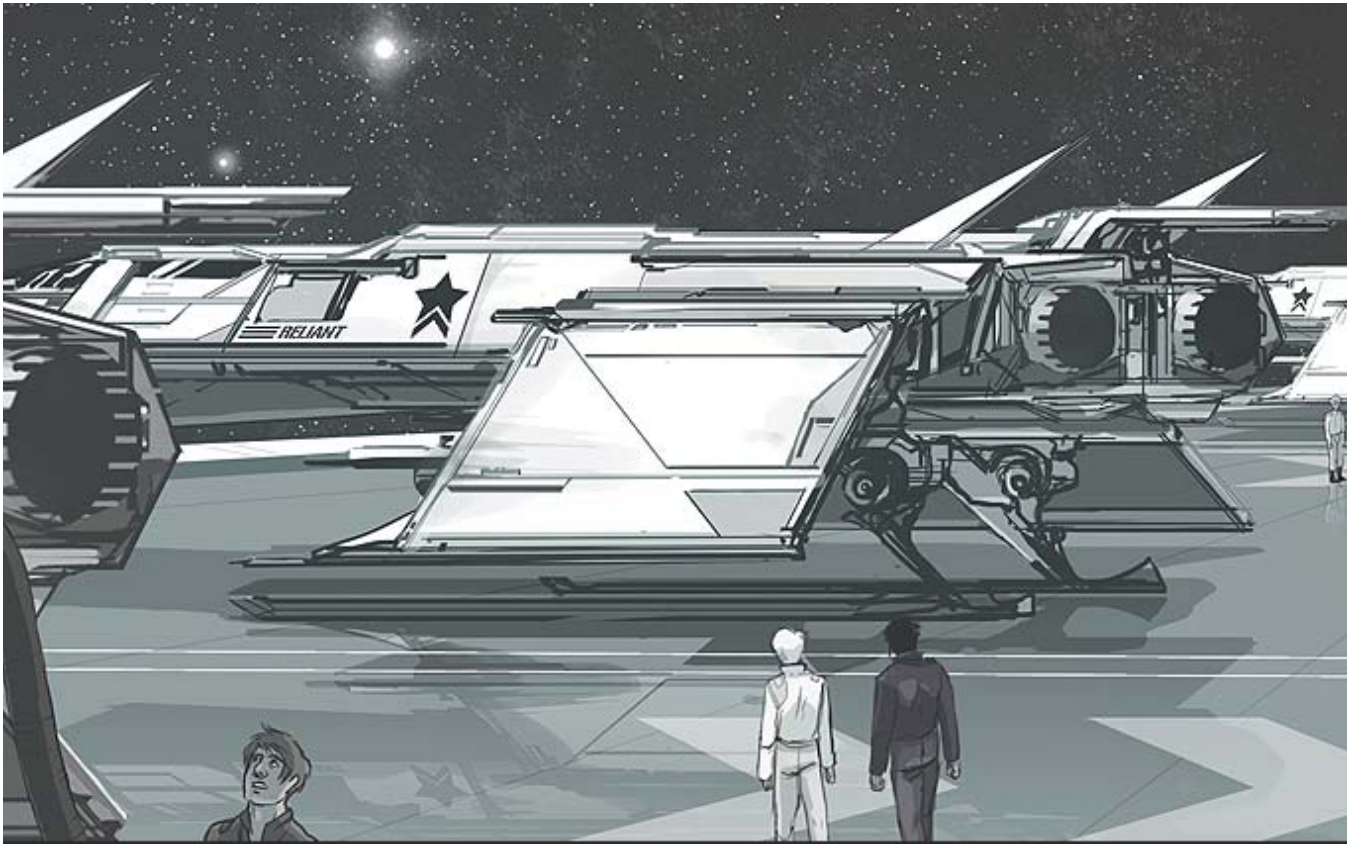
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*Cover Story*

# HAMLET MACHINE





Starfighter Webcomic is a riveting Yaoi Space Opera. The story of an interstellar war between a collective of space colonies and a vastly superior force of malevolent aliens seems simplistic, like the sparse design. Don't be fooled. Artist/writer Hamlet Machine has crafted a wonderfully nuanced saga of taut action and suspense that is also an intensely powerful love story. The story of Abel, a shy but extremely talented navigator and Cain, the hot headed and deadly fighter has legions of loyal fans all over the world who anxiously await updates each week. There are scores of artists and cosplayers that make elaborate creations from these charismatic characters. Each print run has sold out, and fans covet every bit of merchandise the webcomic has spanned. The real testament to the popularity of this webcomic was the enormous success of the

Kickstarter campaign to fund a visual novel based on the game. When it was all over, the campaign had raised \$145,000 – more than double the original goal of \$70,000. Fans flock to conventions all over the country to hear Hamlet Machine speak about her guys. For those who haven't had the pleasure of hearing her in person, YGG posed a few of the most frequently asked questions about Starfighter Webcomic.

YGG: How did you come up with the concept for Starfighter?

I had the idea for a while before I wrote the comic. A friend of mine asked me to draw her some hot guys at some point before the comic came about. So, I suppose the look of those characters came before the concept in

a way. When I decided to try out a comic of my own, I decided to make it sci-fi. We're big *Star Trek* fans – we grew up watching *Star Trek: Next Generation*. Something in outer space was a natural fit.

YGG: How did you come up with the stark color scheme?

The limited color palette helped get *Starfighter* off the ground. The whole plan was to create a look that could be drawn quickly with only a splash of color here and there. I wouldn't have to spend a great deal of time on color corrections and things like that. I had also planned on putting out pages really quickly. That plan fell apart early on.





**STARFIGHTER**  
CHAPTER 03





*YGG: Were you surprised at the fan reaction to Starfighter?*

I was so nervous about putting it out there. When it came time to print the first chapter, I had no confidence that anyone would buy it. I wanted a really small print run for the first chapter. I had to be pushed to print more. It was really shocking how fast that run sold out. Of course, that made me very relieved and happy.

*YGG: One of the big questions fans have is how much more will there be to the story?*

Chapter 4 will wrap it up the entire story. Currently, there is no ETA for how long the chapter will be. We think it will take about a year. Since the crux of the story revolves around what Cain is hiding from Abel, the story can wind up once that is discovered. I can guarantee that the ending will be very satisfying for the fans.

*YGG: What do you think about Starfighter Cosplay?*

I would have never presumed that would happen from something I made! I really love them. They are absolutely amazing!

*YGG: How did the idea for the Interactive Novel come about?*

I realized that *Starfighter* could lend itself to that kind of format. And as it happened, I knew someone who had started a company to build that kind of platform. *Starfighter* will be the first of hopefully many interactive novels. Datenight.com will be creating. They have a team of writers, programmers and CG artists that is working on the *Starfighter* Interactive novel.

*YGG: How will the game work?*

The player is a new fighter who moves through his own story while interacting with the characters from

the *Starfighter* universe. There won't be bad endings in the same sense as *DRAMAtical Murder*, but here will be endings that could be considered fails. Cain and Abel will be part of the story, so the player will be able to interact with them. However, the player will be following their own story each time they play.

*YGG: How did you react to the success of the Kickstarter campaign?*

I was so shocked. I was terrified to try it. I didn't think it would work. It was overwhelming that people responded so well.

*YGG: When will the beta version be in our hot little hands?*

The plan is to have the Beta version out in spring 2015.



## ***Backstory***



# *DRAMAtical Murder*

DRAMAtical Murder began as an interactive Yaoi novel that has seen two versions with a third set to be released in 2015. An anime was released in July 2014. While it is missing the graphic sexual violence that is prevalent in the interactive novels, the anime is considered BL as well due to the intense emotional





connections between the male characters.

DRAMATICAL Murder is set in the near future on the fictional island of Midorijima, Japan. At some point in the game's recent history, the island was privatized by the powerful Toue Konzern and turned into a resort

called Platinum Jail, with the island's original residents being forced to live in the Old Residential District. Protagonist Aoba Seragaki lives on the island and works at a store named Junk Shop Mediocrity, hoping to live a simple life. However, after being forcefully dragged into the

popular cyber game Rhyme with its virtual world and its use of Allmates, mobile devices that usually appear as if they are the owner's pets, and hearing rumors about disappearances involving Ribstiez, turf wars between groups, all semblance of a peaceful life for Aoba ends.



## Cast

**Aoba Seragaki** is the primary protagonist of the game. He works part-time at a junk shop called Mediocrity, and lives with his grandmother, Tae. Aoba has a special ability called SCRAP, which allows him to mix his consciousness with other people's through his voice and use it to control them, though he can also destroy them and leave the victims in a comatose-like state. Aoba has a caring, honest, and open-minded personality, but is noted by Ren to have a short temper. Inside of Aoba lies another persona that represents Scrap, who usually comes out whenever Aoba is emotionally distressed. The "other Aoba" desires chaos and destruction, and has shown to be sadistic and masochistic. He is voiced by Atsushi Kisaichi, and by Hiroko Miyamoto as a child.



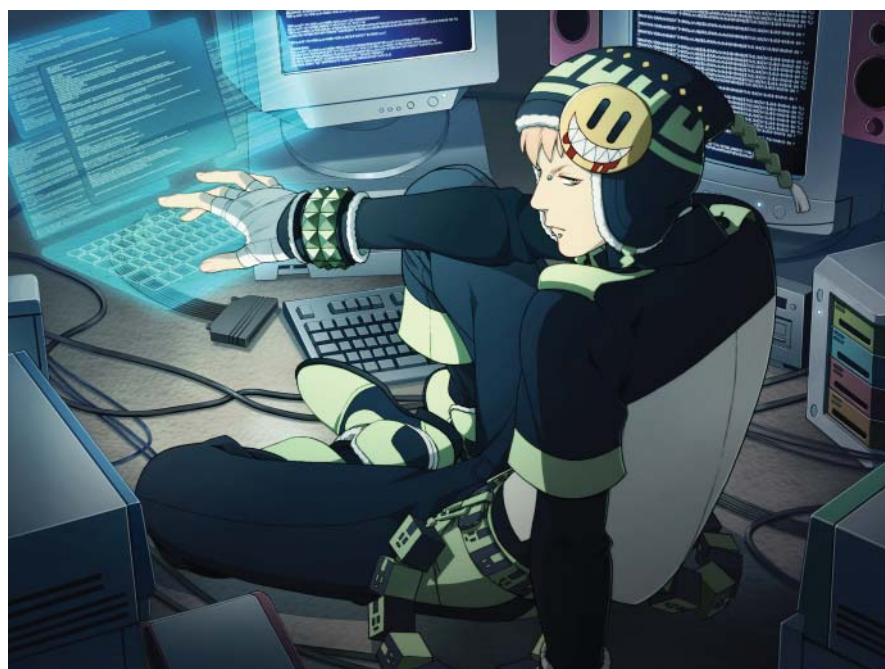
**Ren** is Aoba's Allmate, who resembles a dark blue Pomeranian. He takes a human form in Rhyme. Ren has a mature, patient, and pragmatic demeanor. Despite being an older Allmate model, Aoba considers Ren to be his important partner and cherishes him like family. Originally, Ren was a part of Aoba's consciousness that was created to keep the balance between Aoba and his other personality that wishes for destruction. He is voiced by Ryōta Takeuchi.



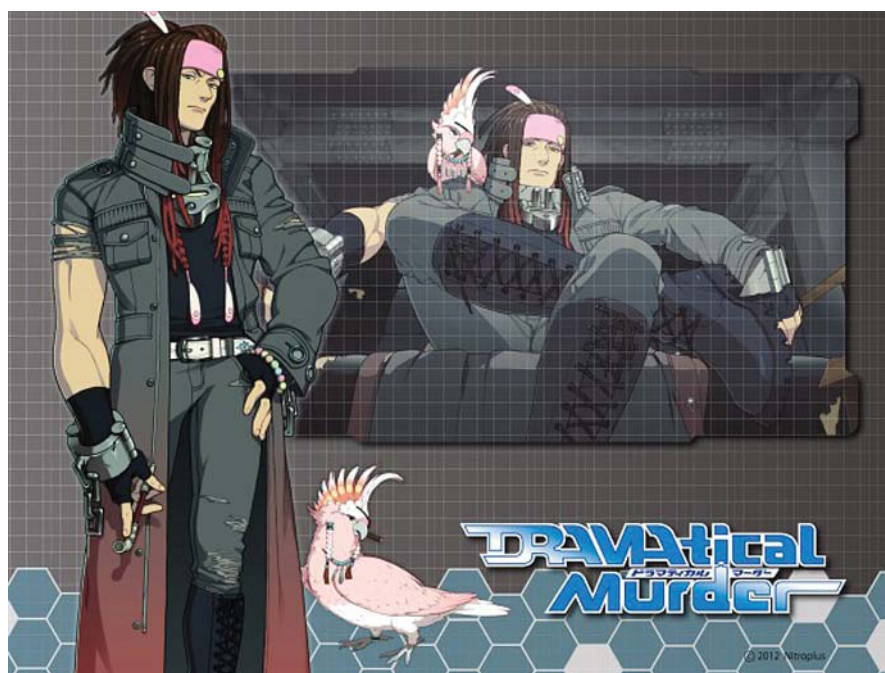
**Koujaku** is Aoba's childhood friend, and the leader of a Ribstiez group named Benishigure. He has many tattoos and scars on his body, and works as a hairdresser. Koujaku is compassionate and strong-willed, and he cares deeply for his loved ones. He was the illegitimate son of a yakuza leader and was the only heir, causing him and his mother to leave Midorijima when he was young. After undergoing a painful tattooing process, Koujaku was taken over by his tattoos' special effects and mindlessly killed his family. Despite his dark past, he retains a positive and gentle personality. Koujaku is a bit of a womanizer, and is incredibly popular with girls. He is voiced by Hiroki Takahashi, and by Eiji Miyashita as a child.



**Noiz**, real name Wilhelm, is an information broker for Rhyme, a skilled hacker, and the founder of his Rhyme group, Ruff Rabbit. Since he was a child, Noiz suffers from CIPA, causing him to accidentally hurt others. His wealthy parents regarded him as a disgrace and imprisoned him in his room for years until he ran away from his home in Germany. Due to this, Noiz is apathetic to the world around him and bases everything on cold logic, though he can be immature. His inability to feel pain also causes him to be reckless, and he eventually turns to playing Rhyme aggressively in order to feel the illusion of pain. His body is covered with many piercings. He is voiced by Satoshi Hino.



**Mink** is the leader of Scratch, a Ribstiez group of former prison inmates. Mink hails from a Native American tribe that grew special herbs that affects a human's body odor to give them a sense of peace. Toue, who mistook the purpose of the plant's effect as mind manipulation, slaughtered Mink's tribe in his attempts to obtain them, and Mink was captured and brought to Midorijima to be experimented on. Mink broke out and began plotting his revenge on Toue for his people's massacre. As a result, Mink hardened and distant himself from personal attachments. He has a stoic, ruthless, controlling personality, constantly using violence as a means to reach his goal. Despite his rough exterior, he does have integrity and a gentle side he rarely shows. He is voiced by Kenichiro Matsuda.



**Clear** is an android that previously served under Toue as a prototype for Scrap before being discarded. Clear was saved by a man who was in charge of the disposal, who treated Clear like a son until he died. Clear addresses this man as his grandfather and speaks about him fondly to Aoba. He refers to Aoba as his 'Master,' whom he is always eager to please. Although cheerful, polite, and kind, Clear is childish and his eccentric antics cause others not to take him seriously and be annoyed by him. He is almost always seen holding his vinyl umbrella and owns two masks to hide his face, one is a black gas mask and the other is a mask depicting a traditional Japanese woman, though he wears it as a joke. Clear enjoys singing, and can often be heard singing a song called "the Jellyfish Song." He is voiced by Masatomo Nakazawa.



**Virus** and **Trip** are acquaintances of Aoba who work for the yakuza and leaders of the group, Morphine. They are often mistaken for twins due to their similar appearances. They became Aoba's 'fans' after witnessing him play Rhyme in the past and will occasionally act as allies to him. In actuality, they are two-faced, and are simply looking out for their own self-interests. They are voiced by Junji Majima and Tomoyuki Higuchi, respectively.



# The Straight Line

## MASQUERADE

by EAB

*Please check out this excerpt from early in the novel EAB.*

Days turned into weeks without word from Sebastian. A lethargic monotony swallowed Courtney completely, so that when he was not working on the case, he stayed at home with Claire. The wedding was getting closer. Her sister finally decided on a New Years Eve wedding. It excited Claire at least, and Courtney enjoyed seeing her enthralled about something other than work.

Are you ever honestly yourself?

He was himself, honest. He was the same Courtney, in the same suits and Prada shoes. He was working tirelessly, trying to spit shine Lowman's image, and also keep track of the depositions and witnesses. The good thing was Pierre was still not well enough to testify.

Halloween was a the holiday he'd learned to completely ignore; brats asking for candy, delinquents ruining his lawn, and people dressing up as ghouls and ghosts.

Courtney looked down at his oversized pants and scowled. How Claire had managed to get him to dress as a peasant, he would never understand.

Claire took longer than usual in the bathroom, primping and making sure her mascara applied evenly. He was more peeved than usual because

she'd convinced him into the most heinous looking shoes, if they could be called that, Courtney had ever seen.

"It's a Halloween party, honey." She tried to fix his purposely tattered collar. "They're part of the costume."

"Any party I have to look like an idiot for, I'm not interested in," Courtney countered.

"Everyone is going to be wearing one."

That settled it.

Courtney hated dressing in costumes, but he hated standing out even more. He looked down at her pink ball gown. Other than too much tulle on the skirt, Claire actually did not look bad.

"Why are you the princess, and I'm a poop scooper boy?" Courtney scowled.

"Would you rather be the princess?"

Courtney tightened his lip.

"I'd rather not look like a Medieval times reject."

Claire laughed loudly and patted his shoulder twice.

"You look as handsome as ever." She quirked her brow. "Almost as stunning as me."

She chuckled and kissed his lips softly. Her tongue bristled against his own, and Courtney tensed. He kissed her gently, and held her hands against his cheek.

"This is what they were referring

to when the vows said for better or for worse." He stared at her seriously. She burst out laughing and gave him a mashed peck on the lips.

"Muah." She wiped the lipstick from his bottom lip. "You'll be the cutest stable boy there." He doubted it. No one could be cute looking this foolish.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Claire!" A chubby woman with dyed blonde hair and red lipstick came over and hugged Courtney's wife excitedly. She was dressed as a cave woman.

"Vicky!" Claire called back with equal enthusiasm. "It's been too long really."

Vicky kissed her cheek leaving a faint red lipstick mark on her cheek. Courtney clambered over and smiled perfunctorily.

"Vicky Allen," Courtney called, happily hugging her.

"Courtney Montgomery Lord, if you are not a sight for sore eyes!" She cackled happily, ushering them in.

Vicky's house was like her personality—loud. The walls were painted a questionable shade of green and covered with horrible porcelain cat clocks. The clocks had wide smiling eyes and tongues that hung from their mouths stupidly. The tails flicked back and forth as the minute hand clicked. There were also a few frames of her family obnoxiously

placed in the center of every wall. They smiled in all of them.

“Paulie!” She called her burly looking husband over to join them. He was dressed, of all things, as a horse.

“I am sorry I’ve been away my dear,” Courtney stepped his uncomfortable shoes on the soft pristine white carpet that clashed with olive green walls. “I’ve been terribly busy with work,” he replied.

“Of course, of course,” she replied shrilly. “Claire too— working like a mad woman. I asked her the other day what she is going to do when you have your first child. Mommy has to be home with the little one then.”

Vicky smiled at Claire who looked over to Courtney reflexively.

“We’ll just have to tie her down,” Courtney joked pulling her and wrapping his arm around her. Claire smiled, tightening her lip and cut her eye to him. Courtney pretended not to notice.

“I think you and I can take her.” He winked at the woman who blushed towards his handsome face.

“And this costume—oh my goodness!” She poked his stomach and he visibly cringed. “It’s adorable.

Courtney’s charm did not wear off easily.

“Oh you think so?” He looked over to Vickie’s husband and slapped his shoulder. “Claire and I are filing

for divorce under irreconcilable difference.” Paul laughed loudly and nodded through his scotch.

“Next years theme’s gonna be the credit card cutting party, am I right Court?” Courtney laughed, though thinking he would never cut an American Express. It was funny, men like Paul called him Court, and complained about their wives spending too much money.

“Come get a scotch.” He led Courtney over to the bar. Courtney loved shopping, it was like a fine wine, or clear cut win.

“I heard you’re working on the Lowman case.”

“I am. It’s killing me.”

Paul nodded.

“I know Lowman. Good man. He donated some money to my boys’ school for the football field. Good man.

“He’s got a damned good lawyer.”

Courtney smiled and pursed his lips.

“Thank you. I’ll do my best.”

He enchanted the party that evening. He smiled and recited immaterial anecdotes. They were in their element, Claire and he. Parties were like foreplay. He loved the people, the liquor, the interaction with friends, even if they were Claire’s. By the end of the night Claire was on the couch partially asleep. Paul and Vicky

took to dancing in the middle of the floor on a slow dance, and most of the other guests were heading out. Only when he saw them trampling out in a single file did he realize just how many people filled the home.

“Do you have bourbon Paulie?”

Courtney just wanted one more drink for the road. They did not have too long to drive and he was sure Claire would want to make love. Alcohol bought out the nymphomaniac in her.

Paulie was too busy whispering something in Vickie’s ear. Courtney smiled. It was cute, in a gross, cows mating kind of way. He knew Paul kept a well-stocked bar in the den and he desperately needed a cocktail. He inched near the basement door, cutting his eye to check his blind spot. Not that he was sneaking, he just did not want to be caught lurking around their home. It was rude. One drink, and he’d head back up unnoticed.

He turned the corner off the wall that separated the stairs from the basement. Each step caused a lengthy creak, and he paused only to listen for his name above. He swiped the corner with a skip, and closed the door behind him. The den was smaller than their kitchen, what some would call a man cave. Flat screen TV, football Jersey’s mounted everywhere, some in glass, the purpose of which he could not quite grasp. The only thing he cared about was the bar in

back of the television. He uncapped the bourbon and poured himself a shot, sipping relieved.

"I can count on you at the alcohol I souse'..." His heart stopped. That voice—slurred and with a strange accent, but unmistakable. He took another sip of his bourbon not turning around to see those eyes.

"What are you doing here, Sebastian?" Courtney asked quietly.

"I was invited of course." Sebastian answered simply. The calm tenor undulated over Courtney making his hand tremble a bit. He brought the glass against his lips and gulped the rest down. "How have you been, Montgomery?" Courtney's heart froze. He turned towards him and saw the dark hoary eyes.

"I am fine." He hardened his face exhaling. "And it's Courtney."

"How's Claire?" Sebastian asked sitting down at the table. Courtney did not know whether to sit, so instead he leaned against a stool looking awkward.

"She is fine... drunk at the moment."

Sebastian nodded, sipping his clear drink.

"Where...have you been?" Courtney bit his lip. God why was his heart racing so much?

"Busy," he answered smirking. He sat his cup on the end table.

"You could have told her you weren't coming back," Courtney replied.

Sebastian raised his eyebrow. "Why do you care?"

"I don't...my wife," he started. Then, he cleared his throat and answered resolutely. "She wanted you at the clinic."

"Is that so?" Sebastian raised his thick brow.

Courtney lowered his gaze mumbling an affirmative, and hiding his longing eyes. He could not even stand to look at him. It was like seeing an ex after being dumped. No worse,

it was like running into the one night stand who said they'd call. Courtney's ears reddened and he placed the glass down with a soft thud.

"You're going then?" Sebastian asked turning to him.

"The party is upstairs..." He uttered in a hushed tone. Please...

Sebastian smiled. "Do you really want me to work there?"

"Why would I care?" Courtney replied coldly. Please, heart. The tingling felt like electricity skating across his skin.

Sebastian did not reply. He glared at Courtney with blood red eyes, swirling his glass so that dribs of alcohol fell on the arm of the sofa.

"Well. Claire and I were just going. Please, do have fun." Courtney walked in a full circle avoiding his eyes and walking towards the steps that led back up to the party.

"No' so fas'." Sebastian put his leg up against the wall to block Courtney's passage. "Have a drink wif me..." He demanded weakly.

Courtney looked over to him and felt the intense tightness. Sebastian looked more handsome than he remembered. His face no longer donned the straggly beard, and his body seemed more rigid than before. His shoulders were relaxed against the couch and the familiar smug smile made him tense.

Please heart...

"I just had a drink." Courtney replied, stiffening his lip. "Besides, you don't look like you need anymore."

He tried move past again, but this time Sebastian stood. He stepped forward and Courtney stepped back. Then, Sebastian just gazed at him. Neither of them talked. Courtney tried hard not to fidget or falter his gaze. He could not take it if this man saw him weak again.

"You look well," Courtney replied with his mouth open slightly. Sebastian was dressed as a convict.

Courtney stared at Sebastian's

full lips, his Adams apple full and visible in the orange jump suit he wore. The buttons were open too low, Courtney could see fine hair at the top of his chest.

"Thank you." Sebastian touched his face where the beard used to be. "You look like shit," he replied truthfully, smirking and nodding to the shoes.

Courtney's jaw tightened as he turned away. This is why he hated Sebastian Aretino. He built him up, just to push him over.

"Thanks for noticing," Courtney replied anyway. "Now...if you'll excuse me..."

He moved to walk away again, and Sebastian stood in front of him.

"No...I will not." He replied simply. "You wanna know why I'm not working at the clinic right?" Courtney turned his face towards him. They were inches away. Sebastian was drunk. He could smell the scent of vodka on his breath. When he did not answer Sebastian continued. "Working with Claire would just be a reminder."

The ache in his throat made Courtney panic.

"A...reminder," he whispered almost inaudibly.

Of him? Of them? Of Claire? What?

"What does it remind you of?"

Sebastian touched Courtney's neck first rubbing his fingertips across and then squeezed firmly. Courtney's body reacted immediately and the blood rushing through him made his member twitch.

Sebastian bought Courtney's neck to his lips and whispered, "Of how much you liked being fucked by me, Montgomery."

Courtney whimpered weakly. "Look, I do not know what your problem is, but I want nothing to do with you..."

Sebastian stepped towards him, but this time Courtney's feet did not

move. "I— I am happy with my wife."

Sebastian nodded slowly and pressed his chest to Courtney's as he cornered him in the crease of the wall.

"I am seri..." Courtney trailed as Sebastian kissed him to cut off the rest of his word. His head spun, feeling combustive energy from his toes to his fingertips.

"...ous..." he hissed when Sebastian pulled away. He moaned when Sebastian kissed his neck even though he lifted it longingly.

"I am...married," he whispered pushing Sebastian's chest feebly.

"I know," Sebastian breathed sucking his neck gently.

"Claire...she's upstairs..."

"I was waiting for you."

The smell of the liquor and the heaviness of his body overwhelmed Courtney's senses. He felt Sebastian slide his hands up, removing the tattered shirt. Courtney shuddered, but followed Sebastian's tongue, winding in his mouth and breathing his air, loving his taste, dazing from the smell of his Armani cologne. This was him, assuredly. He waited so long he didn't realize he'd remembered the feel of his tongue against his own. Sebastian began slowly unbuttoning his shirt, exposing his bare chest. He wanted to touch Sebastian. He wanted to grab a fist full of his hair and drag him deeper into his mouth, but his bones tensed, unwilling to accept him. Courtney did not know what to do with his hands. In this position... Sebastian placed his wet tongue on his sensitive nipple and licked and sucked skillfully between his areola and the perk. Anyone could come...

Courtney pushed his head away suddenly, causing Sebastian to step back.

"I'm sorry..." Sebastian replied wrinkling his forehead. He was panting, and his forehead had dampened. "I thought—I'm sorry."

"No..." Courtney's chest and face were completely flushed red.

"Just...not here. Someone can see us."

Sebastian stared, but did not speak. He pulled Courtney's arm down past the steps that led to the basement and into the bathroom at the end of the hall.

The powder room was dainty, tight, and isolated; it reminded Courtney of the half bathroom he and Sebastian reunited in. Sebastian flicked on the light and gaped at Courtney silently. Courtney could not speak because his mind was struggling with accession. He walked towards Sebastian turning off the light again. Then they were standing there in the dark. They could not see each other, but Courtney could feel every breath.

"Mmph..." Courtney kissed him deeply sliding his tongue against his. All of the waiting, all of the anxiety, all of the trepidation sealed this kiss. His tongue skated against Sebastian's slowly and deliberately, tasting his warmth and liquor. He could feel Sebastian's hungry tongue and his strong hands pulling his back and squeezing forcefully. Courtney's hands shook like earth tremors, moving apprehensively towards Sebastian's jumpsuit. He undid the zipper, but then stopped. He was too sober. When he felt Sebastian's erection graze his fingertips, his body froze.

"How about I do it?" Sebastian whispered turning Courtney's body towards the wall.

Courtney steadied himself with his palms pressed against the white washed partition. Sebastian nibbled his ear, making his body shake. He felt Sebastian's hand undo his trousers, as his stable boy belt, of string and tweed, fell without protest. Sebastian wrapped his hand around Courtney's stiffened member and twisted his hands around the tip teasingly.

"I..." Courtney trailed lowering his head squirming and swallowed the apprehension boiling inside of him.

"You what?" whispered Sebastian holding his cock more firmly.

"Nnh..." He leaned his head against the wall twitching.

Sebastian rubbed his thumb over the slit of his cock and moved his other hand up Courtney's shirt rubbing his nipples between his fingers.

"Sebastian..." Courtney moaned softly. His body melted at his touch. "It's too much."

Sebastian rubbed Courtney's cock up and down, slowly twisting his hand around the taut head, increasing speed gradually while he tweaked his nipples. Courtney squirmed against him, feeling the place where he pushed his fingers in when he masturbated burn and ache to be filled. His bare bum rubbed against Sebastian's stiff clothed erection.

"Nn...Sebastian..."

Courtney arched his back waiting to feel the perforation he yearned for.

Courtney could feel Sebastian guiding his body against the sink, but it was not fast enough. He poked out his ass pushing back from the basin, grinding against Sebastian's fitted jumper. "Hnn..." Courtney gasped as his hips ground into the porcelain when Sebastian thrust against him. Courtney gasped softly his fingers entered his the crease between his legs pulsing. "Ah..." He trembled, clenching his hands into fists as his warm flesh tightened on Sebastian's thin fingers.

More...

Sebastian's fingers dragged down his bottom lip, and slid into his mouth against his tongue. Courtney's mouth watered, dripping from the man handle of his jaw and still winded from the pressure of his waist pressing against the sink. Before he could swallow, Sebastian's finger was back inside, probing his opening with the poorly lubed digit.

Courtney moaned from both

pain and pleasure, his ass sucking the finger in willingly.

“More...” he whispered in a voice soaked in desperation.

“More?” Sebastian glared and yanked Courtney’s head back. The sharp pain on his scalp made his eyes water. Sebastian dug him out, pressing his thumb against a spot that made him shudder violently and spread open to feel more.

“Have you been doing this with someone else?” Courtney gasped, hearing the hushed tenor against his ear. It was cold, deep and rumbling like a dog’s growl.

“Ah—” He yelped as Sebastian gnawed at the thin skin on his lips. Courtney hastily covered his mouth not wanting to be heard.

“Mmph...” He whimpered softly with his eyes closed. “No...”

He gasped heavily uncovering his mouth to breathe.

“You...only you so” He arched his back pressing his own face against the cool glass of the vanity. “... More...”

His voice was a rasping beg. “Please.”

Courtney flattened his cheek against the mirror and Sebastian held his face there. His fair skin darkened from the trauma and arousal of Sebastian’s force. Courtney could feel the fingers sliding out slowly, and his front handled with more focus. It felt like Sebastian was milking him for pre-cum frothing at the tip of his quivering cock. He whimpered, his ass hole twitching when the second finger he’d adjusted to slipped out again.

“Sebastian...”

Courtney whispered it from the gut as the fervor ignited him: Sebastian pulled his shaft slowly and deliberately, dancing his fingertips in rhythmically against the veins of his member. He trembled in Sebastian’s palm, pinned down by his formidable weight. Courtney’s body jerked,

holding the sweaty palm to his mouth to keep silent, but lulling in Sebastian’s palm as he held Courtney’s head. Sebastian was toying with him. He knew what he wanted.

A sick dread rose in Courtney’s throat. If Sebastian wanted him to beg, he would beg.

“I want your...nnh...dick so badly...in me...”

He would do anything for it right now.

Sebastian paused and stopped moving his hand.

“Look at me, Montgomery...”

He twisted Courtney around and turned on one of the vanity lights. His vision was blurred without his lenses but he could still see those eyes.

It was enough to see Sebastian.

Sebastian was searching for something, opening the medicine cabinet as the tips of his black hair tickled Courtney’s cheek when he leaned in. Soon Sebastian pulled back with a small jar of Vaseline in his hands. Courtney stared as Sebastian uncapped the lube. His cheek burned red, watching Sebastian stroke himself and spread the jelly from the tip of his shaft down to his base slowly.

“Hah—” Courtney stopped breathing. He heard a rustling noise like paper cracking in the fire. It sounded like plastic...no...wood creaking...”

What is that?” His ears twitched in the dark. Fear engulfed him.

Sebastian lifted Courtney’s hand and wrapped it around the foiled plastic around the condom.

“It’s just a condom, Montgomery...” Sebastian kissed his lips, melting the tension through him and causing his body to liquefy once more.

Sebastian ripped the end of the package and Courtney watched as he rolled it down. It was a snug fit. Sebastian’s cock was long and thick like a baton of flesh. Courtney’s eyes remained fixed as Sebastian uncapped

the tube. His ears burned red watching Sebastian stroke himself as he spread the jelly slowly from the tip to the base. He wanted to reach out and grab the man, to feel the ingenious blood coursing through the impressive hunk of muscle.

Instead, Courtney felt his legs lifted on the sink. Then, it was hot and tight pressure as Sebastian softened his clinched hole. It was painful, Sebastian squeezing the Vaseline against his pulsing cleft. Courtney closed his eyes and waited as patiently as his body would allow, every so often feeling Sebastian’s fingertips tease him with what more he could give him. He wanted it all. Every wrinkle of his skin. When Sebastian finally leaned him back against the sink, he held the knob of the bathroom door and the towel rack for support against the quickening rut of his fingers.

Butterflies tickled Courtney’s gut from seeming weightlessness, but it was because Sebastian had lifted him up off the sink completely.

Sebastian carried him until Courtney’s back levied against the adjacent wall.

“Wrap your arms around me, and put your weight on me.” Courtney obliged, hesitantly at first. He was a fully grown man, with fine blonde hair on his chest, squirming as Sebastian held him with seemingly little effort.

“DidyouhearmeMontgomery...”

Sebastian’s fingertips pinched the ashen white skin of his thighs. “Trust me.”

Courtney whined, but leaned back holding up by the strength of Sebastian’s arms.

When Sebastian thrust up, Courtney bucked his hips. He could hear the sweat slapping between their bodies, the stallion’s tight embrace left Courtney clawing at his tensed bicep.

Sebastian was as intense as he was hard. Every inch felt fitted to his ass as if it’d been tailored just for him.

“Mmm...ahh...” Courtney moaned out loud. He was not riding Sebastian, only grinding, but when Courtney did stumble into Sebastian’s full penetration, he almost choked. “Fu—”

“Montgomery...” Sebastian slammed up against him. “Your wife is gonna come down here if you don’t shut the fuck up.”

Sebastian warned him but Courtney could feel the pace quicken. Sebastian was daring him to be quiet. The dripping blows to Courtney’s ass hole were like a walloping fist to a jaw. Courtney clenched his eyes with his brow furrowed, shivering as the cut abs rubbed against the tip of his shaft. It was like a feather, right on the tip of his dick head, teasing his cum, luring it out with Sebastian’s melodic thrust. Courtney clasped his hand over his mouth.

Please...

Bit by bit, an ember of pleasure rolled through him causing his legs to shake in Sebastian’s grasp.

Please body...

“Tell me...” Sebastian grabbed Courtney’s neck and pressed up. Courtney shook panting as the man went so deep words caught in his throat.

“Is that it?” Sebastian whispered, humping and winding his hips up slow. Their lips were almost touching, but there was stronger energy than physical, brushing their heat and breath against each other, the lines of their bodies only silhouette shadows on the wall.

“Mmph...” Courtney pulled his hand away a little from his mouth to breathe. “There...”

Courtney rolled his base, gutting deep, scraping the tip of Sebastian’s cock inside of him. Courtney’s cock quivered longingly aching to release under the strain of too much pressure.

Courtney clenched his hands tightly on Sebastian’s shoulders till his knuckles turned white.

“Hn—nn!” He was bucking back, smacking against the man’s hips for that oceanic plunge, and Sebastian obliged, a somatic sensation, pinching the head of Courtney’s cock.

“Imma cum...” Courtney moaned out in a cracking hot Southern accent.

“Fuck...” Sebastian put his hand on Courtney’s chest to hold him down against the wall. He felt his ass cheeks spread with both of the mans hands, and then the stallion broke free. Courtney flinched in agony; but was soon relieved to feel the full power of Sebastian’s cock. Now, that he’d adjusted there was only pleasure. Blinding him, choking him like a noose. He could hear Sebastian’s winded breaths getting close. Their foreheads were touching, and Courtney could feel Sebastian’s sweat mingled with his own, smell the alcohol wafting from his pores.

“I want to feel your ass squeeze my cock when you explode.” Sebastian whispered, running his fingers through Courtney’s blonde hair.

Courtney’s moans were strained and fast. The pounding made it difficult to breathe, and he felt the same nausea rising in his gut. The pressure in his groin boiled over, and Courtney closed his eyes feeling his body tense.

“Nnghhh...” He came hard, staining Sebastian’s torso and legs, convulsing in seizure like tremors. Courtney waited long enough. His ass clenched around Sebastian, shuttering above him. Courtney’s seemed to break the last restraint Sebastian had. Courtney shuddered feeling Sebastian’s dick expand and pulse inside of him. His ass hole was still twitching from climax. It was heavenly.

“Montgomery...”

Courtney’s eyes jolted open, awoken from his existential moment. Sebastian was staring deep into him with his jaw tensed. Sebastian pulled

out, and released him slowly one leg at a time. Courtney bent to slide his pants onto his waist. He felt weak, and tired, and drunk, and sick.

“Are you going to disappear again?” Courtney asked with his lids barely lifted. He felt bold, having just had sex with a man in the same house as his wife for the second time.

Sebastian dug in Courtney’s pocket and pulled out a white cell phone.

Sebastian Aretino

He entered the number into Courtney’s phone showing, and put it back into Courtney’s pocket. He wiped his stomach and leg with the towel and pulled up his pants.

“Call me, Montgomery.”

That was how he knew he was alive, Sebastian uttering warm words to him, touching his cheek with warm nimble fingers.

Courtney could not speak.

Courtney turned the bathroom knob. He was waiting for someone, anyone, to be on the outside waiting. They were too loud. They’d made too much noise. Someone heard them. He was sure. He swallowed hard, preparing for it, the backlash, the scorn.

There was no one. There was nothing.

***Fiction***



# Interlude in Ruby

## Simon Bransby

I saw emptiness under the blindfold. The black void was laced with random swirls of nameless colors, fading before I could discover any pattern to them. I couldn't tell how long I'd been there, but the ache in my back and legs suggested a long while. I felt cold drafts over my naked skin, sending ripples of goose bumps down my back. There were no outdoor smells here, just a vague impression of dust, iron, and old concrete. So far, the only sounds I could make out were the faint buzzing of power in the walls and a slow drip of water somewhere further away.

A jangle of chain sounded when I shifted my weight; a hard resistance to any real attempt to move from my current position. I had never done this before, but I wasn't feeling frightened. Against all sense I felt alive, as if I'd been waiting for this my entire life. This knowledge shocked me with its force, and yet I couldn't push it aside. Breathless, I heard footsteps coming closer, the sound of them measured and deliberate. I smelled a rich mix of fine tobacco smoke and expensive cologne as their owner took my chin in his hand. My heart raced in anticipation as he whispered, "It's all right, Devon. You need this as much as I need to do this to you."

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I'd found the strange card one morning when I was out for one of my Thinking walks. Being an illustrator takes a lot of brain-work, even if it's mostly for children's stories. The name of Devon Marsh was known in a few circles, and my clients always had this or that project for me, though I was hardly a celebrity. I'd been working on a few early draft sketches for a new series of fairy tales, and I needed the break to clear my head. The moon was still up and the sky was fading to dawn as I wandered aimlessly through the local rose gardens, occasionally stopping to admire the twist of a branch or the sway of a blossom in the wind. It was during one such pause that I saw the card.

Perhaps 'card' isn't the right word; it was actually a stamped metal plate, similar to a dog-tag. Its thin chain was looped deep inside a natural hollow between two ancient rose bushes. Getting it out cost me some skin, one fishnet glove, and a minor amount of blood, but I managed not to cripple myself. I'd never minded pain in itself; what bothered me was the threat of infection. I decided to quit while I was ahead, and went home for a drink and some band-aids, the tag safely tucked away in my pocket.

Once I'd been acceptably sanitized and settled in with a cool bottle of my favorite hard cider, I

pulled out the mysterious trinket for a closer look. The design etched into it was vaguely familiar, but I couldn't recall where I may have seen it. It looked similar to a triple Yin-Yang, but the center wheel was cruelly edged, suggesting both pain and motion. On the back of the tag was a phone number and an elegantly scripted name: Laurent. I pictured the owner of that name and felt a soft warmth rising in my face. If the tag belonged to him, surely he might want it back? It did look expensive; not the sort of cheap pot-metal you could get at any mall stand. On the other hand, I'd never been great with people in general; I always seemed to say the wrong thing or somehow offend by mere existence. My clients only heard my voice by phone and saw my artwork; if they knew a Gay punker was working on their kiddie-fluff stories, I'm sure they'd all shit ten bricks each. If the people who paid me wouldn't accept me in person, what might this 'Laurent' do? I set the tag aside for now and tried to drown the fireflies in my stomach with more cider.

A week later, I couldn't stand it anymore; I had to make this end. That name haunted my mind and tormented my body. I woke up night after night in a hot sweat, desperately hard and my brain on fire with dreams of animal rutting. I'd been single

for several years, but I hadn't been looking, either. My needs were few and most of my energy went into my art; I told myself I didn't want anyone in my life right now. The truth was, I couldn't dare ask for what I really wanted; I couldn't even admit it to myself. I just stayed quiet and looked the other way, making bright pictures of happier places for people who would never see me.

I made the call with my heart trying to claw its way out of my throat. The voice on the other end was smooth and warm, a hint of an accent lending a polished grace.

"Club Ruby, this is Laurent. How may I help you?"

I never wanted to stop hearing that voice; it washed over my bones and wiped my mind clean of everything else. "I—um—I'm sorry sir, I—I found your tag, and..." I stopped, humiliated and shaking, almost in tears.

"It's quite all right, Mister Marsh. I will be free tomorrow at one P.M. if you would like to meet." He suggested a quiet café not far from my apartment, and I gratefully accepted. The call was over in a moment more, leaving me dizzy and drained. The rest of my day was spent frantically painting landscapes made of candy and toys; brilliant jewel colors masking the deep shadows I felt inside.

"It doesn't stop until I say

so." His voice, low and dangerous, crawled through my skull as the ropes tightened. I rode the fear as it chewed at my resolve to obey, to accept anything that came next. Helplessly, I felt a tear slide down my face. I trembled as Laurent roughly licked it away and bit my throat. I couldn't look away as His eyes burned into mine, raising the hair on my neck. My head was forced back painfully as He gripped my hair in His fist, growling with feral energy.

"When I'm finished with you, there will never be anyone else. Only my touch, only my voice will ever be able to fill the void I'll tear in your soul tonight. No one, nothing else will ever be enough, and you'll die of despair before you realize what I've done to you..."

\*\*\*\*\*

Three a.m. and I still wasn't done. I'd been stuck on the story of Princess Poppy for six days, and everything I did was tainted by Him. The shadow of that man sank into everything, no matter how I tried to escape. The candy-bushes bloomed with dildos and the clouds looked suspiciously like asses with hand prints. I ended up having to throw away most of my concept paintings because there was no way to explain the more obvious pornography to

my clients. My favorite number eight graphite pencil was almost worn through with chew-marks and my best eraser was nearly destroyed from trying to fix the damage He'd caused through my treacherous fingers.

Sometime around seven a.m. I just gave up. All the cartoon-bright colors in front of me and under my brush couldn't eclipse the ruby traces He'd left behind my eyes, and I knew I had to see Him again. With shaking hands, I dialed the club's private line and asked for Laurent.

I hit the shower and turned up the stereo, hoping no one would hear me cry. I'd never even imagined that Laurent could have been right when He'd said those words to me; yet here I was, burning alive with the memory of that warm cultured voice, those wicked grey eyes. I reluctantly towed off and lay down for a chance at sleep before my appointment. After an hour of twisting and squirming around in the blankets, I conceded defeat to the sandman.

I had no dreams, only flashes of red-lit rooms and gloved hands on my mouth, teasing me mercilessly. I woke up harder than I'd been in months; it was impossible to ignore and almost painful to touch, the tip aching and already wet. In less than five minutes I finished, breathless and sticky, almost hating myself and Laurent for what He'd done, and for what I was going

to let Him do tonight.

With every session at the club, I fell deeper under Laurent's spell. I finally had to stop taking commissions that weren't mature audience only, due to the continuing taint of subliminal obscenities. My name had gathered a cult following because of this, and I now had less work and more money. I spent my free time scrounging through various junk shops for unusual objects or watching old Grindhouse horror movies at the local dive theater.

I must have sat through Fulci's *Gates of Hell* five times that week; I loved the film, but all I could think about, all I could see when I closed my eyes was Him. Not even the repeated sight of greasy upchucked viscera could turn my thoughts from the glide of His hands over my naked cock, the wolfish sting of His teeth on my skin.

By the third month, I'd had enough. I made the call by memory in the darkened reaches of my loft, nested safely in a tangle of blankets and empty cider bottles. My voice sounded small and too high in my ears as I left a message, knowing Laurent would be listening without picking up. "Um...Hi, it's me again...I...have to talk to you. Not at the club...please...the café, the one from before...um... I'll wait for you. Ten a.m..."

I hung up just before I dropped

the phone, letting it sink into the fuzzy swirl of fabric twisted around me. I left it lost in the woven ocean, as lonely and adrift as I was. Morning couldn't come fast enough, and I didn't want it to come at all.

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"Dammit...I'm... addicted to you. Every time I'm near you, the world gets more real and this insistent heat pushes me closer to things I'll never say out loud. Your invisible chain just gets tighter when you're away, like unseen static on my wrists and in the center of my chest. I can't breathe with you here, and I don't exist when you're not..."

I forced back a sob, my breath hitching in my ribs as I finally spoke the words I'd been rehearsing for days, tripping over them in my need to be free of it all.

Laurent calmly listened as we sat outside the café, its green-striped awning half-shading us from the shifting sky. His smile was sly and almost regal as he sipped his coffee, regarding me with those maddening silver eyes. He still wore the black suede gloves he'd used during our scenes at the club, and I felt myself stirring at the memory, wanting him even now.

In the scatter of passing car windows, I saw the picture we made

and almost wanted to cry. Laurent in his tailored suit, impeccably groomed and composed, and me; the wild-looking street rat with chewed up nails and paint-spattered hand-me-downs. What was I thinking? I stared at the glassed-in tablecloth, hoping to hide my shame.

"Devon..." Laurent's tone was kind as he snapped me back to the moment. Setting his cup down, he reached over the table and took my hand, making me look him in the eye.

"I'm only going to say this once, so pay attention."

He took a breath, steadying himself before continuing.

"From the moment I saw you, all I wanted was to tear your clothes off and see who you were... Didn't you know...?"

Slowly and with perfect grace, Laurent hooked my shirt-collar in his fist and pulled me into a passionate kiss. The world stopped along with my thoughts as I melted into it, becoming empty of all other desire. People were staring, but for once I didn't care. "Let them look," Laurent's rich whisper in my ear sent sparks down my spine, making me shiver in his embrace.

"Let them see, and let them die in envy." He brushed the hair from my tearing eyes and whispered, "Mine."

# **Shards**

**Simon Bransby**

Everyone wants to know how James Mathens died. They want to know why he was found inside his locked apartment, wearing only a collar made of glass-laced rope twisted so hard around his neck it almost severed his head, but no other marks or sign of struggle. The only other clue was a five-dollar bill stuffed in his mouth. Listen, and you might learn something....

My name is Mark Cunningham, and I was James' shadow.

I'd known him for years, even loved him until that day. We'd gone to the same high school, lived on the same street, and gone stag to the dances together. I even had a key to his apartment in case of emergencies. I'd confessed my feelings only a week ago, and James had seemed like the open, caring man I'd always seen in him, even though he never could keep a steady partner.

We'd met for breakfast at one of our favorite caf  s, the one with the green-striped awnings. As we ate, we watched a new couple outside have their first public kiss. James didn't think it would last, and sneered into his plate. "Hmph...what does that

guy in the suit want with the freaky street-rat? It won't work."

Annoyed, I reached into my pocket and pulled a fiver, waving it under James' nose with an impudent smile. "I say they will. I'll bet you this right now that they'll last as long as we do." James snatched the money with a wicked grin, and signaled for the check.

After breakfast, we went back to his apartment. He'd insisted that I move in when I'd told him my feelings, and it was already starting to feel like home.

James had found the Collar in a box of stuff that had once belonged to one of his innumerable exes, and it felt almost wrong to be touching it; as if the trace of its former owner still clung to it.

It made me sad, and a little angry, to be honest. James had several boxes of these types of souvenirs, and he never seemed shy about passing them out, as if the people they had come from, the time and love invested with them meant nothing. I couldn't help but wonder if items of mine would join the pile someday.

"Just try it on. Please, for me?"

I huffed in annoyance, but took the thing anyway. I held it a moment, feeling its weight, picturing it around my neck. It looked simple enough. Just a wide band of leather in midnight blue, backed with another layer that reminded me of the dark purple Irises in my mother's garden. Silver rivets held it together, finished with a sturdy buckle. A large silver ring suspended itself over my throat as I fastened it, making a faint cheery jangle as it swayed freely.

James nudged me over to stand in front of the tall mirror on the hall closet door, turning me this way and that, commenting on how handsome it made me.

"See? I told you it was perfect. You belong in it, really."

Smiling, he reached out and tugged the ring, watching my face as he pulled harder. "You belong in this....you know it, don't you...show me that you do..."

I felt a strange haze rising in my mind, a warm and peaceful fog slowing down my thoughts, making me ignore the fear in my stomach as James pulled me to my knees on the carpet. I wanted to stay there, in that

blank calm space inside my head, but the feathered razors of dread in my belly drove it back enough to let me keep control of myself. I looked up at James and saw the cruelty in his eyes, the mocking smile as he moved to unzip his pants.

“That’s right, just be still for me...You want to make me happy, don’t you?”

He licked his lips as he pulled himself free, a living illustration of profane lust, empty of care. Gripping my hair in his fist, James’ cold whisper finally broke the spell, shattering the haze. “You slaves are all the same. One tug on the ring, and the whore comes out.” James grunted as he pushed himself into my mouth, thrusting deep enough to gag me, not caring that I struggled to breathe.

I barely noticed when he came, the spurt of salty fluid burning my throat as I reflexively swallowed. It tasted the same as the tears running down my nose as he shoved me away, letting me crumple to the floor. I lay there in shock, betrayal burning a hole in my chest, filling my lungs with molten glass, each breath burning with shame. I heard James whistling

cheerily from the bathroom as he cleaned himself up, as if he hadn’t just raped his best friend.

In the edge of my vision, I could see the tall mirror opposite me, reflecting the defiled creature on the floor. After a moment, James returned, and casually pressed something into my hand. “You lose, Mark.” He said, adding “I’m going out. Don’t wait up.” He began to whistle again as he stepped over me, a cheery tune that had been playing in the café. I lay motionless as I heard the door lock behind him, and I was alone. I looked at my hand and saw a corner of green paper. All I could do was cry.

I watched the sunlight change direction, slanting out to touch my hand, still clutching the now-soggy bill. I hadn’t bothered to move, and I no longer cared what became of me. All that mattered was making James happy. If he wanted to use me as his plaything, that was fine.

I loved James, and if he didn’t want me too, he wouldn’t have done what he did. I would prove that I loved him back. I would stay here, and I would let him do whatever he wanted. He would see, I wasn’t like

those other sluts. He would show he loved me, I just had to earn it. I smiled into the mirror, trying to look as if I meant it.

When James returned, he found me kneeling naked on his bed, knees open, hands behind my back. He passed by into the bathroom without a word, and started the shower. I remained as I was, waiting. I was soon rewarded with a rough shove onto the mattress and the pain of entry as James took my ass with brutish force. When he’d finished, he withdrew into the living room, eyeing me with vague disgust as I got up to clean myself.

James ignored me in a similar fashion over the next few months; only noticing me when I was to be used. The rest of the time, I was left to my own devices. I would cook and keep things clean, but it was mostly to keep busy. I’d almost convinced myself that I could live like this, that I could be happy as long as I had James, however he treated me. I was a fool. He’d been coming home drunk, and the booze made him even worse. James had started taking me in front of the mirror, teasing me with the boxes of items from his former lovers.

I knew he laughed at me, always had, and now he flaunted those other conquests in my face. He liked gagging me with lacy panties and tying me harshly with ropes, whipping my bruised skin with old belts as he ravished me. He made me watch it all, wearing that snide smile the whole time. "This is what you deserve!" he would hiss, making sure I nodded yes; my reflection blurring with tears.

I spent most of the days now in a grey numbness, only remembering to eat when instinct forced me. I couldn't pretend anymore. The pale battered ghost in the mirror was me after all, and I'd haunted myself with lies long enough.

That night, I didn't wait for James in the bedroom. I sat on the couch, fully clothed for the first time in nearly a year. I still wore the collar; somehow it had become such a part of me, I couldn't bear to see myself without it. I'd been rehearsing what I would say, testing my voice, trying to sound braver than I felt.

My stomach crawled as the door opened and James appeared. He was drunk as usual, but he wasn't alone. A man I'd never seen before was with him, exchanging sloppy booze-laced kisses as they staggered for the bedroom, completely ignoring me. After a short while, James emerged and headed straight for me, his weaving stride purposeful.

I froze, expecting him to order me into yet another of his perverted amusements, but instead, he simply reached over and removed my collar. "You can go now," he said, his tone casual as he turned away.

Those were the first real words he'd spoken to me in eight months.

"You can go now"...those fateful words echoed in my head, pinning me to the couch as I wrestled with tides of emotion. I was still there, thinking, when the unknown suitor wobbled out the door a few hours later.

James' thick snoring floated out from the darkened bedroom, underscoring my shifting thoughts. The collar had been dumped in the pile next to the mirror, and its broken circle seemed a physical echo of my heart. Silently, I got up from the couch, and went to pick it up. As I fastened it once more around my neck, I watched my phantom twin do the same; a jagged spider web of cracks crumpling us into Picasso's acid trip. The stranger had broken it when he'd stumbled away.

"You can go now"... Those words became written in fire, charring the inside of my skull, sparking behind my eyes. I could barely see past the tears of fury that boiled up from inside me, heavy drops of misery and wrath spattering my hands as I worked a few shards free from the wall. I didn't cut myself, but I wouldn't have cared if I'd lost all my fingers.

I wrapped the glass in a few pairs of the frilly panties, and carefully stepped on the bundle, breaking the shards into finer bits. I found the rope James had used to humiliate me, and the extra-sticky type of lube he so liked to employ. I coated the rope in powdered mirror glass, and crept into the bedroom. I had something to say, and I would not let him ignore me again.

I found him sprawled out on the mattress, the sheets and blankets making a fluffy pile on the opposite side. The room reeked of sex and old cologne as I approached, fanning the flames in my head as I wrapped the rope around his neck, twisting it hard to keep him still as I spoke.

James had woken too late to stop me, and his face wavered between rage and fear as he felt and heard my vengeance.

"How could you?!" Twist.

"I waited for you!" Twist. "I loved you!" Another twist.

"My soul was worth nothing?!" Each word pushed the ropes tighter,

the mirror-shards inching deeper into his straining neck.

James' eyes bulged in their sockets as the pressure increased, coloring them as the capillaries burst. He still tried to keep the selfish grin I knew so well, only partly succeeding. One twist left, only one chance to stop this and save himself...

I looked into his reddened eyes and asked him a single question. "Why?"

The answer came in a choking gurgle, almost as if he was trying to laugh at me, at himself. "...you..let..me.."

I felt nothing as I pulled the rope tight for the final time. I watched James bleed out and knew that I'd slain a monster. I stuffed the fiver in his gasping mouth, hoping he'd choke on it as I left the apartment. I stepped outside onto the landing and took a breath of the cleanest air I'd ever tasted. James had been right about one thing. I could go now. Whistling, I locked the door and threw the keys away, heading into the new morning light.

The BL series continues ...

# The Novels

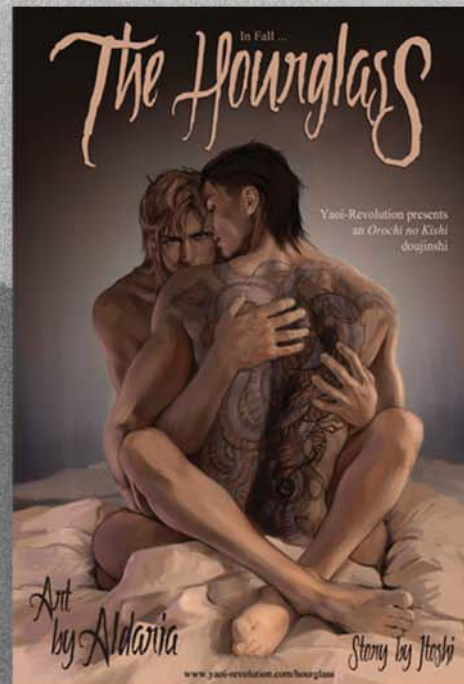
**Orochi no Kishi - On Sale Now**

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**Orochi no Saido - Winter 2016**

# The Comic



**In  
Fall  
2014**

**In 2071,  
the American West  
Has a New Breed of Outlaw**

# Orochi no Kishi



**by Itoshi with art by Aldaria**  
[www.yaoi-revolution.com](http://www.yaoi-revolution.com)

# High Voltage: Voltage Inc.

*YGG: Let's start with the basics for the readers who are not familiar with your product. What is an Otome game/interactive novel?*

Voltage Inc.: These are the kind of game where the user becomes the protagonist and enjoys a romantic story with the love of their choice. At Voltage Inc., we call these "Romance Apps." We have a large selection of apps to choose from where you can enjoy all kinds of situations ranging from falling in love with a prince, to romancing your childhood friend.

When we first started releasing Romance Apps in Japan around 2006, the gaming population was the first to catch on to our apps. However, with the spread of smart phones and with the effect of our TV commercials, our audience has greatly expanded. Now, non-gaming women in their 20s and 30s enjoy our apps daily. Storytelling is our strongest element and users agree that our apps are high quality entertainment that can be enjoyed by women who love Shoujo Manga and TV dramas.

Many of our users really enjoy

the fact that they can enjoy all kinds of exciting and romantic situations that they can't experience with their real-life lovers or husbands.

Playing our apps is very easy. All you have to do is follow the steps below.

1. Choose which character you'd like to fall in love with
2. Read through the story
3. Make decisions throughout the story
4. The ending changes according to your choices, so try to get your Happy Ending!

At Voltage Inc., we currently have over 60 titles available for the Japanese market. Over 20 of these have been translated into English and are available worldwide. One of our apps titled "My Forged Wedding" reached 1st place in the iTunes Store Entertainment category in 48 different countries. Our apps aren't just games or manga; they are a new type of entertainment that is being enjoyed around the world.

*What audience are you aiming at in the US?*

Our target audience in the US ranges from teenage girls in middle and high school, all the way up to women in their 30s. Although a lot of our fans are familiar with Japanese anime and manga, we also feel that women who are not familiar with these subjects will be able to enjoy our apps.

*Are these games original to the US or are you localizing Japanese games in English?*

All of our apps are translated versions of apps that we release for the Japanese market.

*Tell us about the first titles or group of titles you are distributing.*

Our first title to be released in English was "Pirates in Love" which was released in June, 2011. "Pirates in Love" is a translated version of the very popular Japanese mobile app known as "Koi Ni Ochita Kaizokuou." As the title may suggest, the story revolves around the heroine getting



caught up in romantic adventures with a group of handsome pirates. We have been releasing titles consistently since the release of “Pirates in Love.”

*Are they available now? How often will new titles be available?*

We currently have 21 different apps available in English. We try to release about 10 titles per year.

*What platforms do they work on?*

Our apps are available for download on the iTunes store and also the Google Play store. Not only can users play our apps on mobile devices, they can also play them on their tablets.

**Black-Hearted & Cruel**

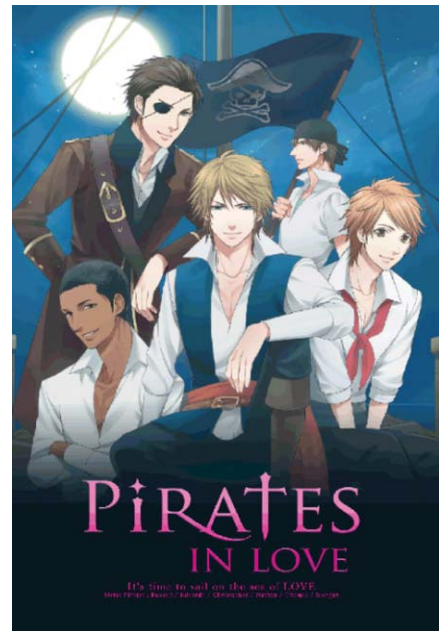
**The Deal** Back

I agree to give everything to Satoru Kamagari. See below for detailed information on this devil.

**Basic Facts**  
Height: 5' 9"  
Weight: 150 lbs  
Often says: You don't have a choice  
Interests: Choosing outfits for girls

**Warnings**  
1. Do not clean without permission.  
2. Do not say sweet things if you mean them.  
3. You must satisfy all his desires.

**Main Story Buy**  
Chapters: 16 Endings: 2



*How are the titles chosen?*

We pick the most popular apps that we release in Japan and translate them to provide to our English speaking fans.

*What are the basic steps involved in production?*

The most important part of our production process is the translation. Because we start with an app entirely in Japanese, every part of it needs to be translated. However, just translating the text is not enough. There are many subtle nuances and cultural references that our audience would not be familiar with. We do our best to make sure to provide context for these or modify them so that our English speaking audience will be able to enjoy our romantic stories to the fullest.



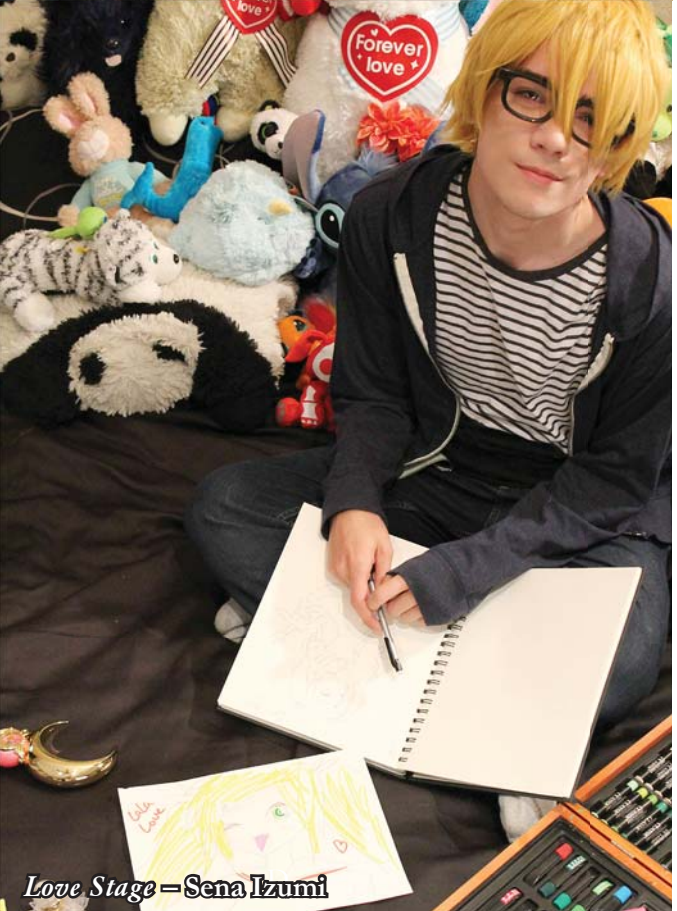
# Cosplay



*Hyrule Warriors – Link*



*Kingdom Hearts – Sora*



*Love Stage – Sena Izumi*



***DRAMAtical Murder – Aoba Seragaki***



***Kingdom Hearts II – Axel***

It is a surprise to most to find out that NipahDubs has only been Cosplaying since 2010. His characters are so well executed down to the smallest detail that it would be easy to believe he was veteran with a decade or more experience under his belt. NipahDubs works out of a small town in Texas but his skills would fit well on any Hollywood set. He has a singular talent for styling wigs. No matter how wild the hair style, somehow NipahDubs can make it look perfect for real life. Beyond his skills with wigs and well crafted props, NipahDubs possesses a gift for finding the essence of the character he is cosplaying and bringing it to life in front of a camera.

“My favorite part of cosplaying is the construction of the outfits and wig styling. I grew up in Orlando Florida. One of my favorite characters to cosplay is Aoba.”

When he isn't working on Cosplay, NipahDubs is an artist and an animator. He also finds time to answer scores of questions from budding cosplayers and provide them with encouragement. He's a great talent, and we expect to see a lot more from him!

**Links**

- <https://www.facebook.com/NipahDUBS>
- [nipahdubs.tumblr.com](http://nipahdubs.tumblr.com)
- [twitter.com/NipahDUBS](https://twitter.com/NipahDUBS)
- [nipahcos.deviantart.com](http://nipahcos.deviantart.com)
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***Howl's Moving Castle – Howl's Demon/Bird Form***

# *A Fragile Heart*

James Lancy

I've never been at ease when it came to being comfortable with anyone, at least not until He came along. I was always too shy, too afraid to speak my mind, too scared that I would mess it all up. I wanted to get out as much as possible, but I was so afraid of the stares I got when I tried hitting on a guy I thought was attractive. When He met me, I was at the lowest point I've ever been in my life. A friend of mine had to drag me out of the house, with what clean and presentable clothing I had in my closet at the time, to a gay bar as a way to try to cheer me up. The bar was pretty dark save for the beer advertisement neon light signs that were hung all willy nilly over the large mirror that lined the back wall of the bar area. The walls were painted the ugliest in between of scarlet and orange with Boys Love posters hung just as frivolously as the lighted signs. My friend, Rick (a proud member of the Gay/Straight Alliance), and I made our way to the bar to order a few drinks. A Cosmopolitan for him and a Lager for me. I was surely looked up and down by the bartender as he went to get our drinks; probably evaluating whether I was "gay enough" to be there. He came in a short while after our drinks arrived, taking a seat just a

few barstools down, just staring in the mirror waiting for his turn to order.

He was a vision of dark beauty. His onyx hair came to about his shoulders, maybe a little longer, I couldn't tell because of the leather trench coat he was wearing. The collar he was wearing didn't look like it belonged around the ivory skin of his neck, its rightful place was around mine...if it weren't for these damn anxiety problems, I would do something about it. When he slipped off the trench and placed it to the stool beside his, I noticed he wore a black vintage waistcoat over a white baggy shirt that could have been worn by pirates back in the day. The ruffles of the cuffs seemed to cascade over his hands as he gently grasped the glass he was handed, lifting it to his thin lips before he turned to face his elegant features towards me with a look of slight distaste.

"Take a picture, pervert." His voice seemed to flow through his lips like water streaming over a rock in a koi pond, even when he placed emphasis on that last word, the wave continued uninterrupted. I remained silent as I pulled out my phone and snapped an image of him, probably not my best idea. Oddly enough, he didn't lash out at me, instead, he wore

the most devilish grin. "You've got some nerve, taking my picture like that...I like nerve."

"Oh...uh...I'm sorry...I sometimes...ummm...I..." I couldn't take it, I had to hide my face before the deep gradients of crimson rush to my cheeks. All I could see in that next moment was a field of flaming locks before I crushed my eyelids together. I had to escape to my garden of solace I keep tucked away in the deepest reaches of my mind. There, I like to tend to the rose bushes that are forever in bloom, looking upon their blossoms put me at ease. It seemed like I was there for an hour before I was shaken awake. I was apparently on the floor with a literal pain in my ass. He was standing over me with Rick and the bartender fussing over me, making sure I was all right. Rick was letting everyone know that this happens sometimes, but it was never this bad. I could feel something wet and sticky drip down my forehead and curl over my eyebrow piercing. I touched it and looked at my finger... blood. What did I do when I was away?

"Let me take him to the hospital, he needs that looked at." He told Rick while handing him a card of some kind. "My contact information is on

there. I'll make sure he gets home. Give me your number and I'll call you to let you know he's alright." I was about to protest, but by then, I was already in His arms being carried to His car and I was too light-headed to say anything intelligible. On the way to the nearest hospital, I had gathered enough of myself to tell Him not to take me to get treated for my head wound, but to take me home. I had a first aid kit I put together myself for that kind of thing. He implied calmly that I had no say in the matter before I collapsed in the passenger seat of His car.

I woke up in a strange place. It wasn't anywhere close to resembling a hospital room, it was darker, the walls were painted black and there were leather masks and leashes strung with chains hanging off of nails that were driven in. My shirt had been stripped open; most of the buttons were just barely hanging on by their threads. He sat on the other side of the bed I was laying on, smoking a cigarette and taking sips out of a glass filled halfway with an amber liquid. I'm guessing He could feel me move around because He put the smoke and glass down to check on me.

"James, how are you?" He asked me with the deepest look of concern,

but He kept Himself so gracefully composed.

"I'm fine, I guess...Where am I?" I asked Him, looking around the room a little more.

"You're at my place. The doctors said you almost died twice. I couldn't keep you in that stiff bed any longer, so I checked you out despite the advice the staff at that wretched place gave." I could see His face stiffen as He told me the story of the events that took place while I was blacked out. His bed was incredibly comfortable; I could probably sleep for days given the opportunity. Another glance showed that His shirt had blood on it...my blood, I reached a hand to where the crimson stain was left.

"I'm...sorry I worried You." I told him, my vision started to blur and ripple from the tears that started to swell in the corners of my eyes. "I'm such an idiot." My body started to instinctually curl in on itself as the sobs forced their way out of me. Next thing I knew, a pair of strong arms were wrapping themselves around me.

"Hush, my dear. I will make sure nothing bad happens to you." He took one hand away to reach for the back of His neck. The collar that surrounded that neck was loosened

and fell away onto His lap. He took it up and presented it to me. "Take this. As long as you have it, you will be Mine." I took it from His hands and held it close to my chest.

I didn't know this man at all. I had only spoken to Him all of two times that night, the first time, I broke down completely. A gift like this eased all of my tensions, brought my mind peace. His smile lit a fire in my heart that would never be die, only grow stronger with each time the corners of His lips curled upward. The love we shared when we bonded sexually, the chains He confined me in, the pain He caused me was beyond ecstasy. The collar He gave me became a permanent addition to my garden of solace; it would be forever hanging off of a post surrounded by the roses.

Fin.

# THE GUY IN THE FRONT GATE

AKHIE TAKEDA

The gentle breeze from the outside sways his hair and put them in a messed,  
The man's face come troubled fixing for less,  
After giving a few strokes his beautiful appearance once again outshine,  
Capturing the attention of people with his eyes intertwine

I began to remember when I first saw him that day,  
He's like a lost child that's what I'm about to say  
Unlike the impression from the others half a year ago,  
They are staring, laughing and wants him to go

The dark clouds surround the sky covering the sun,  
The drops of pouring rain hit the ground  
The dismissal of the class comes to end,  
And then I notice a guy standing outside in the edge.  
I watch him from the window from a building of our school,  
After a minute I stop before I drool

The cold wind blew, my body shiver as I sign  
I began to collect my things not to leave anything behind  
I look at his face as I pass through,  
He's like a drench chick with full of sorrow  
The aura of his loneliness comes to surface  
Even a slight of smile is never to trace

Ever since that day I become aware,  
Asking myself of what kind of problem does he bare??  
I want to ask his name but I'm a bit scared,  
Let's just call him "the guy in the front gate"

On that day forward he was always there  
student began to gossip that he was a stray.  
Due to their curiosity they asked him directly,  
"I was waiting for my LOVER" he answered them gently

One of the students grabs his collar and said,  
"Fuck! Are you stupid or that you can't read??"  
The guy in the front gate asked them with a pled  
"I don't intend to fight so please leave me instead"

The group of student tossed him in the side  
walking away from the guy, their paths divide  
Then suddenly I realize why their anger subside  
It was a kind of love that the other forbide

There you are again waiting for your lover  
Standing tall and firm, even stared by the other  
Hatred and disgust thrown into you  
Some despise you because you're a...homo

Many question starts to cross my mind  
Which the answer I will never find  
Thoughts that forever I can't hide  
Accumulating one by one until I over ride

Day by day, I just watch you from the window  
Whispering to myself that I mustn't go in your show  
I'm just an ordinary student who knows your existent  
You're the guy that waiting for his lover in the front gate

But what is this feeling I feel in my heart???  
Did someone strike me with a dart??  
There's a part in me I can't longer resist,  
As if it's telling me, to put you on ease

I clench my chest and think again  
When did this feeling actually begin?  
From only this window I only know you,  
The fact you had a lover and your love for him is true

Maybe if we become friend I can lighten your pain  
Help and drag you out from the pit of vain

I decide to approach you till this day  
And wouldn't mind what the others will say  
I gathered my courage and talked to you,  
you smiled at me with a golden hue

I was petrified with your glance and your sparkling smile  
I thought I was brought into the sky  
I had already guess you have a gentle voice  
It's really waking me up from my doze

Your face looks familiar I think I know them  
I seen them countless times, but I don't know when  
As if things already happen since long time ago  
Don't you think it was some sort of De'javu?

You said your life is like a rolling dice  
Then you joke on how your cat chased the mice  
We keep exchanging story of how life was  
Forgetting the time that running so fast

You receive a message so you checked your phone  
You said your lover is already gone home  
You said your goodbye and walk on your way  
I, same too, before I call out your name  
"Take care William" you looked again as I called  
you smiled and reply "I'll do what you told"

The new morning arrived giving a warm light  
From this window I caught you in my sight

I gazed onto you, and watch you closely  
You're waiting for your lover again so dearly

The wind blew hard, your hair is in messed  
Your face comes troubled fixing them for less  
I grew a smile as I remember,  
The same scene happens last September.

Two months already passed since I first approach you  
We become so closed out of the blue  
And every time we met you tell new story  
I focused and listened to you so happily

The moment and days we spent together  
The joy and the laughter that we share  
Even it was just a limited time I can say I was lucky  
For us to bond as normal ally

Before we separate to walk on my way home  
You path my head and said "you'll never be alone"  
Giving your sweet and your gentle smile  
Caring for me so much as if I am so fragile

When I look at you again my heart beats so fast  
As if it was running in a big rush  
Our eyes met, I feel my face turn blush  
It's embarrassing I want to escape in a dash

Thadump! Thadump! Thadump! Is what my heart say  
I whisper "LOL! Stop it! Listen to me hey!"  
My body feels excited even if we're both male  
This strange feeling I grew for almost everyday

Here we go again talking about your lover  
Declaring how much you love him, I can't count in number  
What kind of person he is I wonder  
Does he really possess something that I can't overpower?

I began to gain this feeling of what you called "JEALOUS"  
I want to say my apologies for being ambitious  
Before you became aware and be suspicious  
I have to hide this from you up to my utmost

I feel guilty about my feeling towards you  
'Coz I no longer desire you, like a normal friends do  
But, can you judge me, if I fall in love with you??  
I'm just man...a human that needs someone to love too

I want you to embrace me more than you do to your lover  
I want you to share me only your laughter  
To love me so much until forever  
Even in the old age, and die together

Maybe, I should stop all this wishful thinking  
Someone wake me up from this hopeful dreaming  
Before I put myself into a total sinking  
And can't stop myself from deep falling

I know what I feel for you is wrong  
I'm well aware, to someone you already belong  
Before I totally plunged myself into this sinful desire,  
I shall stop and kill the starting fire

The next day, I just passed in front of you  
As if I don't know and just ignored you  
I know I really hurt your feeling that time  
But it's just that, I don't want to grow this selfish desire of mine

After the day I stop talking to you,  
I receive a package said "For: Hubert Andrew"  
I torn the package wrap and see what's inside  
It's a notebook design with a blue strap

I never intend to read on what's written  
Into this diary William given  
Two weeks since then he never appear,  
I'm afraid he'll never show up that's what I fear

All my dreamless nights come to end  
You show yourself and apprehend  
In my dream you give me the same diary  
It said lover own it, as I remember in the scenery

I look for the diary the morning I wake up  
Reading all the entries gives me Goosebumps  
My whole mind is in total confuse  
Memory of the past accumulates and booze  
One by one my memory comes vivid  
For a long time its sleep and hid

There's an incoming call from an unknown number  
I have a hint it won't wait even later  
I take a breath before I answer  
"Come in the hospital or you'll never see him ever"  
My world torn in pieces and scatter  
After hearing the news about William Carter

My vision comes cloudy as I see you  
Laying peacefully in the silk blue  
As our distance draw near  
I can't stop to burst into tears  
It seems the world shut so that I can't hear  
On how that doctor said you're no longer here

The feeble drop of tears keep rolling in my eyes  
As I place my hand into your body cold as ice  
How long have you been waiting for me???  
Do you really wait that long just for me to see?

I embrace your cold body I don't want to let go  
Maybe you'll comeback if I say so,  
But you never response even how many times i tried  
Calling your name while I cried  
"Listen to my calls please don't go  
Come here in my side where you really belongs to"

The hospital staff is taking you away  
Taking you to the morgue is what they say  
They're pulling me away from behind  
Taking out your body from my side

Your family holding me so tight  
Slowly you disappear from my sight  
My tears again began to fall  
Until the sound of my stifle surround the hall

"It's raining that day, when he receive the news with a smile  
You're brain surgery become successful so he wants to see  
you by  
But on his way in your house he got involve in the accident  
Ever since that day he was in coma and never awakened"

Six months ago when I first you in the front gate,  
It must be day you got involve in the traffic accident  
You're leaving your body so we can met  
But it was me, who totally forget

My remaining strength leaves me behind  
Slumping my whole body on the side  
I regret everything that I've done  
I want to say my sorry, but you are gone

If only I recognize you long time ago  
You will never suffer the way you do  
I'm so stupid that I never knew  
All the hardship you that went through

If only I talk to you right from the start  
I guess I never had this broken heart  
It's such a long time that already passed  
All my memory with you became so vast

That all along I am the person you been waiting for  
Outside the front gate of our school  
If only I regain my memory after the surgery  
Maybe...just maybe...you're still with me



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