

Loid Forger walked around the foggy serpentine streets, gazing around his serene surroundings, noting every intricate detail on his notepad with his silver fountain pen he kept in his suit pocket. Before entering Collin's Cottage Cafe, the place he would meet his old workmate, his silhouette dissolved into the morning fog like a brushstroke vanishing into silk. Then, he reappeared at the door, his eyes darting to his former colleague like a shadow at dusk. Loid placed his leather suitcase on the wooden floor, tapping his foot three times before opening his mouth.

"A bit early today, Yor," he began.

"Or maybe you're a little late."

The words came out faster than he had anticipated, filling the room with an awkward silence.

Unsure of what to say, Loid plastered a fake smile on his face.

"Long time, no see I guess..."

Yor's thin crimson lips stayed still, staring at her polished black shoes as she gave a small nod.

"Loid," she began, her voice cracking ever so slightly.

He looked up, surprised that she had spoken to him for the first time that wasn't a reply.

"You remember when we were younger," she took a pause, "at Emmersons Corporations?"

Loid's friendliness now faded away like withered petals falling from a rose, knowing that the conversation was about to turn serious.

"Yes. Why?"

Yor cleared her throat, flicking her silky black hair behind her shoulders.

"Well, the head of Emmersons – Mr Cleaves... he's unfortunately," Yor bit her lip, finding the right words, "he's gone."

Loid's jaw dropped. Bullets of sweat trickled down his forehead while something hammered against his ribs, each one faster than the next.

"No..." Memories flashed back, reminding him of the best times they had together.

Yor tapped her fingers on her arm twice, worrying if she would make the wrong response.

"When did this happen?" he stammered, demanding to know the truth dipped in bitter medicine.

"A few years ago," she slowly replied.

Silence hung in the air once more, stretching above them longer than the one before.

"How could you...? Why didn't you tell me this earlier? Why? We had each other's numbers....

Just why couldn't you have told me?"

Loid's anger flooded the cafe as he clenched his fists in frustration.

Yor took a deep breath before answering.

"I was worried about you, Loid. I knew you were going to be shocked, so I was trying to care..."

"What did you say?" Loid's voice echoed in the room, this time quiet.

Yor didn't reply, and instead stared at her hands through her tinted black glasses.

"Yor... you never cared about me. When you purposefully messed up our work project, I muttered in disbelief, but I gave you another chance. But when you left our assignment program at the last minute, I was shocked. But even if we weren't friends, you could've told me. You didn't need to lie about you worrying about me."

This time, she rose to her defense. "I never messed the project on purpose – it was for my family. We were poor. We were struggling to pay our bills and my parents were in stress. I felt terrible for them, and I knew that if I changed plans, my family would have a bit more money. It wouldn't be much, but it would be something meaningful."

“Meaningful?” Loid almost scoffed. “Sure, I get that your family was financially struggling, but doing that is the worst thing you can do. My family was also struggling. My father was seriously ill while my mother struggled with almost everything due to depression. I knew I had to work hard for my family and earn our cash. And yet, you existed by our sides in blissful ignorance of others' situations and cared only for yourself.”

Yor now pursed her lips, and lifted her black tinted glasses. When she removed them, Loid saw someone different to the Yor he had knew. She had wrinkles and a large scar near her eyes. “Fine then. I'm sorry Loid Forger. I'm sorry that it was my fault that Mr Cleaves passed away. I'm sorry that I purposefully sabotaged our work project. And I'm sorry that you thought that I never cared about you.” She rose from her seat, and tossed out a golden locket out of her dress pocket, before leaving.

Loid picked up the locket, and opened it. Inside was an oddly familiar image. A moment later, his fingers trembled like fragile autumn leaves. Realisation had collided with reality - this was an image of him and Yor when they were young. Now his childhood memories bloomed like reviving flowers. She had been his only friend when he was a child, and now, the relationship had ended. Yor had knew all this time that Loid was the same person as her childhood friend.

Loid held onto the locket in his palms and rushed out of the cafe. “Wait!” he called, desperate to say one last message to her. But it was too late. Yor had already boarded her taxi. Hopelessly, he checked his phone. Yor's name was gone. She had deleted his number. “No...” he whispered. He held onto the locket tightly, regretting every word he had said to her today. He wanted to go back in time, but deep in his heart, he knew that they would be apart and would never see each other again.