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*“Approximately six-hundred meters away from W-Low’s, prepare for boarding, I repeat, six-hundred meters, be on them in about two minutes.”*

A short static denoted the end of the relay as the pilot’s comm cut off. Dark grey fingers pressed thumbed the wrist link held up to an angular, brown-furred face, “Copy that.”

Vai unbuckled from her seat and pulled herself upright onto her feet using the straps running overhead. The wisened Ryn nodded to a crimson haired Selenian beside her, who was also gathering himself and things, and paused after swinging her medical backpack on. Usually the kid had some quip to give when they worked together, depending the solemnity of the mood of course. It was one of the reasons she liked partnering up with him, that and he let her blatant sabacc cheating slide under the table. But the kid knew his shit too and was usual confident, focused.

He’s attempted to secure his pack four times, fumbling.

“Ronpa.”

Vibrant green eyes with pale swirling stripes curling around them glanced over. His chewing upon his inner cheek ceased with a heavy sigh. “Yes?”

“You good?” her own piercing yellow eyes softened to show her genuine concern, and she paused in double checking her harness.

“Yeah, yeah. Just...” He shook his head and exhale a poof of breath that even in the confines of the LAATi still left a visible cloud before him. With a quick glance at the couple soldiers prepping the lines at the door, he quickly busied his hands again with his fastenings and gear. “Just thinking how if I’d had this training before, if...I was out here, I could’ve helped Illuyak, y’know? Maybe given her a chance to survive.”

Vai was quiet. She understood well with her years the loss of a close comrade. The number of friends she’s buried...It never gets easier.

Heard a lot about Illuyak, over drinks on the edge of the shipyard, a couple days after he heard the news. Ronpa had grown up with her. Thick as thieves they were and vowed to go through the military together, to watch each other’s back. So when the power went out and the two medics were sent to aid in support of the medical wards, Illuyak went north. Killed trying to defend one of the power plants from bloody alongside her the unit’s officer, bloody cultists.

The white tuft of her long tail brushed his boot lightly as the old Ryn reached out and squeezed the young man’s shoulder, garnering another emerald glance.

*“--thirty seconds till we’re above target. Ya’ll ready back there?”*

A shake of her head and quick raise of her free hand, “Copy, will be in twenty.”

“Listen, I understand,” Vai returned her attention to her partner, shifting over to hook up to the repelling lines, the Selenian following with a stretcher in hand, “It seemed Illuyak would’ve wanted you to focus on ahead, to keep at the mission two of you set.”

He took pause at that, seemingly mulling it over as he clipped his line and fixed a helmet on his head. Nodding, he gave a solemn smile, "Thanks. Ready?"

"Aye."

A hiss of hydraulics and air rushing into the ship as the side hatch slid away and exposed the expansive sea of snow and ice below them. Beneath the LAATi, a platoon of WLO-5 Speeder Tanks zoomed across the land, sending a cloud of powder behind them. Their target, a transport vehicle, hovered in the midst of the pack and coming in alignment directly under them.

Ronpa whistled and she back through her chitinous nose, the equivalent of a hyping shoulder pat for them. They leaned out of the opening on the lines before he gave her a salute, "As Illuyak would say; from coast to coast, eat my dust!"

And leapt.

The old Ryn cracked a smile and propelled after...

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