

Beginnings and Endings.

Von abgemeldet

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Kapitel 1: Sakuraba Neku

Sakuraba Neku.

Beginning.

„Outta my face.“

„Hey!“

The schoolgirl almost tripped, when someone pushed her away from behind. She looked after her „attacker“:

A young teenager, ca. 14-15 years old, red hair, giant headphones.

„WOH! What are you thinking, you're doing?! You could have hurt me, you know?!“

The boy ignored her and went on.

Her friend came and helped her up.

„Hey, Momoko, are you alright?“

„Yeah... That guy just, like... what the hell is he thinking?!“

„What?... Oh. It's just Sakuraba Neku-senpai.“

„You know him?“

„Well, a lot of people know him. He's not bad-looking and neither unpopular with the girls... but he...“

Neku just grabbed his MP3-Player turned up the volume. The last thing he needed to hear was a pair of girls goshiping about him.

Even if it was true.

He had gotten love-letters from girls almost regulary.

He always ignored them.

And not only the letters...

„So... That's this one boy, the other's were talking 'bout, Ai-chan?“

The girl was holding her cellphone in her hand, it looked like she was going to shot a photo any minute.

„Yes, he's that one guy from the other High School...“

„He looks pretty cute, doesn't he?“

„Yeah, but don't get to close to this guy. He's got some serious ishues, I hear.“

„Ah, he can't be THAT bad!“

Mina took a cell down and walked up to the stranger.

„Hello!“

Neku took a quick look. Then, he broke up the eye contact and turned up the volume once again.

Mina smiled:

„Hey, I wondered if you could tell me the way to—,“

„Scram.“

„Huh?“

Neku went away, without paying Mina a single glimpse more.

„Ouch... That was quick...“

„Yeah, told you. My friend over at the other High School says, that he's been like this ever since this great car-accident a few years ago...It was in the newspapers,

remember? I heard a friend of him was involved.“

„Ohhh..... And now he's s cold?....

WHAAA! DON'T YOU EVER DIE ON ME, AI-CHAN!!!“

Mina jumped and hugged Ai in childish fear.

Neku sighed.

The volume was at the highest level, and he could STILL hear those chicks through his Phones.

//I ought to get headphones with a louder bass...//, he thought by himself.

Ai laughed: „OK, OK, I won't! Hehe!“

//As if YOU could promise that to her...“//, Neku thought. //It's not like you could decide when you go. It just happens. There is nothing, you can do about it...

Nobody can change it. People aren't coming back from the dead. Better not getting too attached to them...

It just hurts.//

Neku entered the AMX-store....

Yeah, noisy as ever.

If they just would all shut up...

Neku looked through the regals, until he found the Single, he's been locking for. He went to the counter and payed.

“Hey, you didn't let me stamp your costumer-card!“, shouted the shopkeeper, but Neku just went on. He had no time for putting up anymore with that guy and his stamp.

“Huh? A costumer, who doesn't let his card get stamped? Well, that's new!“

“It's not just that! He comes here every Monday and buys. I can tell you, his taste is great... But the tracks he buys are mostly sad and full of loneliness and despair and such stuff...“

“And that's a suprise to you? I mean, just look at him. That attire just shouts “lonely wolf”!“

“Yeah, you're probably right.“

//If they could just stop talking...//

Neku went on. He hated it when people where talking next to him and he even more hated it, when people were talking ABOUT him.

It was his world, his feelings.

They had no right to even try to enter it.

He wanted to lock the world out of it.

To tune it out with his headphones.

The world he grew up in was such a noisy place...

Well, except...

Neku walked down the Dogenzaka.

“Irrasshaimase! Don't you want some good Ramen, boy? It's good for growing children like you!”

Volume up.

Ignore the guy.

Walk on.
Neku to the next turn right...
He went up the stairs...
There was it.

"Ahh... Great as always!"
For the first time today, Neku switched his MP3-player off.
Silence.
Calm.
He looked up the big mural.
The graffiti on it showed a cat, among various other symbols.
Neku smiled.
"Enjoy the moment... right, CAT?"
He reached out his hand for the graffiti:
"How could I not enjoy this awesomeness?
Even though it happened here... Even though I was here, when I lost him...
Your art always gave me hope. Thinking that you were standing here once, some time ago.. Wow. That feels so great...
I just wish, you would show your face...
I would like to talk to you... About so many things... So badly..."

Neku kept looking at the graffiti. He hesitated to touch it...
Then, a voice broke through the wonderful silence in Neku's world.

"COME BACK HERE, YOU YOCTOGRAM!"
"Hehe! If you're as great as you claim, how come you can't even catch a child?"

"Huh?"
Neku turned his head around---

A boy with silver hair came run.
Past the corner.
In his hand...
A GUN?!

Neku just starred... speechless.
He swore, he heard the boy say: "Ah, there you are!", as a loud PENG, almost shattered his ears.
He fell to the ground.

...

The silver-haired boy smiled.
He was holding the pistole very confidently.
Neku's heart was beating fast.
He was alive. Not even hurt.
But... the shot...
Where did it go—

"Ah- I blew it..."
"What?!"

Neku turned around.
A man was behind him.
Another gun.
The man raised the gun.
Neku closed his eyes.
Another PENG.

...

Again, the shot didn't hit him.
The boy...

The bullets were hovering in the air, right before him!
He... stopped them?!
Neku gasped...

Then, he heard steps...
The man was running away.
Neku turned around again:
"Hey, what is going on—"
He couldn't end the sentence.

The silver haired boy was standing right in front of him now.
And his gun was pointing...
At Neku.

"See you in the UG."
"W-"
PENG

Neku's eyes closed.
He fell down onto the hard floor...

Why.... here? Of all places... here?

With the last of his energy, Neku opened his eyes again. In a blurry view, he could see the boy, still smiling. He was holding something tiny in his hand.

"Just don't screw this up. You have all my faith, Neku."

The boy let the little thing fall, right onto Neku...
And right before it touched him, Neku could feel his consciousness being ripped away... out of his body...
And suddenly, everything he ever knew just faded into a unrecognizable blur.

...I would have never found this silent loneliness anyway, right?

Ending-Beginning

Since this, weeks had passed.
Four very important weeks...
Neku switched his MP3 player off.
He was almost there now...

"Hey!"
"Over here!!"

"He he..."
Neku smiled.

Beat and Rhyme were already waiting for him at Hachiko, waving.

"Hi, guys!"

He went up to them.

"What took you so long, Phones?!", asked Beat. "We've been waiting halfa eternity!"

Rhyme laughed:

"He means, we just got here ourselves!"

"Hey!"

Neku bowed down a bit, to be on eye-level with her.

"Good to see you back, Rhyme! And... You're alright now?"

"Yes, I'm fine. Well... I suddenly gained some strange obsession with hazlenut-flavoured deserts, but , aside from that, I'm back to normal, I guess!", she giggled embarrassed.

"That's good!"

"Ohhh.... Come here, Phones!"

Beat grabbed Neku jokingly:

"Don't ya get that close to my sis'! Haha!"

"OK, OK, hehe, just let me go!"

Neku looked up:

"Sooo... what are we gonna do? Just roaming the streets, or..."

"CURRY!", shouted Beat.

Rhyme smiled:

"Hmm, I feel more like Ice-cream!"

"So, we're going to eat CURRY-ICE-CREAM!", said Beat, perplexing Neku.

"Err... What?"

"OK, Curry-Ice-Cream, case closed! Can we go now!?"

A mousy voice started to giggle.

"Hehe... You're not forgetting about me, are you?"

"Huh?"

Neku feeled somone touching him from behind.

He turned around.

A girl with short, black hair, a blue skirt and a green west smiled at him. In her arms, she held a plushie, resemling a black pig---errrm, cat.

"Shiki! Hi!", ssaid Neku "How's it going?"

"Hehe, great, thanks! I made up with Eri yesterday, so, it's all Ok now!"

Beat looked pretty surprised:

"Woah, that's what I call some change!"

Shiki blushed:

"Yeah.... Is it OK?"

"Hey, ya pretty cute!", answered Beat. "Phones, tell ya girl, she looks cute!"

" "My girl"?"

"Ya know what I mean!"

Neku and Shiki both laughed.

"OK, Shiki, you look cute!"

"Hehe, thanks!"

"The only thing, I don't get is...uhhm..."

He looked Shiki's clothes. They were pretty much the Untrendiest thing, you could Mix and Match.

"Uhhmmm.. And you're sure that you're the same girl, who lamented over a loose button on my pants?"

"Oh—Those are..."

Shiki blushed once again.

"Well... I have different ones of course.. but... they are in the laundry... this were the only ones.. I mean..."

"You were not shure, if the clothes you like fit you, hm?"

Shiki turned all red:

"Yes... I mean... I don't have the figure... and those glasses don't fit with anything... and I got problems with my feet and..."

"Just wear, what you want, the next time you come, OK?"

"Huh?"

"You said you're not pretty, remember? Well, I think, you are. And you have no reason to force yourself into tha clothes, just because you're afraid that someone wouldn't like your body! You like it, and that's all that matters, right?"

Shiki smiled:

"Thanks, Neku....

OK..."

She had a weird look on her face, like something was wanting to come out, something she kept inside a long time:

"If it's like this..."

I'M GONNA GIVE MYSELF A MAKEOVER NOW! OF TO 104!!!! YEAY!"

//Does poor piggy get a makeover too?//, thought Neku smiling, while looking at Mr. Mew...

Then , he backed off. Was it just him, or did that Plushie just WINK at him?

"NO WAY!", lamented Beat. "We're going to eat curry!"

"I'm still thinking, Ice-cream would be great..."

"But I want to go shopping!"

"Curry!"

"Uhhm... Ice-Cream, anyone?"

"Neku, tell Beat, that we're going shopping!"

"Hey, I'm not going to carry your bags!"

"YOU brought me into the mood!"

"...Hazlenut Ice-cream? Hm?"

Neku backed of and started laughing loud:

"Wow, who would have thought, that we would end up fighting because of stuff like that? I mean, we survived THE game! HAHAHA!"

"And it did do a lot to you!", noticed Shiki. "I can't recall to have you ever heard laughing like this before! I didn't even now, you could laugh that loud!"

"Beat's a baaad influence!", giggled Rhyme.

"What? I ain't laughing like that!"

"Neku in Mus Rattus clothes."

"MUHAHAHAHAHAHA!"

"See?"

"Arghh... You got me..."

Beat smiled:

"Everybody! HIGH FIVE!"

"OK!"

The four jumped laughing, even Rhyme, who was way to small to even reach the other's palms.

And... for the first time in years, Neku started to realize again, what made life so great...

Friends.

And they'll always be there. Even if you lose them, their love for you and your love for them never fades. And new bonds can always be formed.

Just... one thing was missing...

Hey, Josh... Can you see us? Doesn't it look like fun? Well I, for my part, am having the time of my life. Jealous? Well, if you don't want to come, poor you!

And on top the highest building of Shibuya, two men sat and watched.

"Hey. It's their world... They get to decide, what to do with it! We just.."

But the other man just closed his eyes:

Neku...

You know what?

You got me jealous. Very jealous.

Wanna have my job? Don't want it anymore.

Really.

Kapitel 2: Misaki Shiki

Misaki Shiki

Beginning

The classroom was noisy and crowded.

Recess.

Boys and girls in their Gakurans and Sailor-Fukus were talking, gossiping, discussing the latest trends, the hottest girls and boys, the greatest J-Pop bands...

Just one wasn't part of a conversation.

Instead, her desk was filled with all kinds of sewing-material... Needles and black cloth, stuffing...

She was just a young girl, 13 years old, short black hair, brown eyes. Nothing remarkable, most Japanese girls had black hair and brown eyes. She was also slim; but not that slim, that she could have won a modelling-contest...

Concentrated, she sat in the middle of this noisy-classroom...

And sewed.

Stitch after stitch her work to shape....

//Wheew... never would have thought, that sewing is so tiring... But I want to do this!

I want to finish this! I...//

She stopped sewing for a moment and whispered:

„Even I must have some talent...Please, let it bet his... I sooo want to do it...“

„Hey!“

She turned around.

Someone was standing behind her, smiling.

She knew this someone- how could she not have?

This girl was the most popular in the class!

The boys fell for her!

The girls longed to be friends with her!

And now she, was talking to her?

Eri was talking to her?

How was this possible?

Eri smiled:

„You're sewing?“

She just nodded:

„Hm Hm...“

„What are you sewing?“

The girl blushed. Eri was actually having a conversation with her?

„A stuffed cat... At least, it's supposed to be –,“

„Oh, now, I see it! That are the ears, right? Oh, and here's the tail!“

„Yes! Correct.“

„Wow, you already got that much... How long have you been sitting on this?“

„Oh, since Saturday..“

„Two days ago?! Wow! Are doing this for a hobby?“

„Uhh... I don't really know yet... It's my first time and..!“

„Your first time!? GIRL, you must've got some talent! Did your mom help you?“

„Nope.“, she smiled. Suddenly, the girl gained so much confidence:

„Learned it from a book. I also did the sketch for the cat myself. Wanna see it?“

„Sure thing!“

The girl nodded. She longed into her school-bag and took out a sketch.

Eri laughed:

„Awww! How cute! Hmm.. There's something written?... „Mr. Mew“...“

„That's its name.“, answered the girl. Again, she blushed. „I know, it's a bit childish to name a stuffed animal, but...“

„I think, it's really sweet... Oh my god, and your sewing looks almost exactly like on the drawing! Uhhh.... You know, I got to ask you something!“

„Huh?“

The girl tilted her head a bit.

Eri wanted to ask her something?

Now, Eri seemed a bit ashamed:

„You know, I've been designing clothes for some time now... But I don't want to just show the sketches around and every time I tried to sew anything of it, it turned out HORRIBLE! And you, seem to have so much talent! So... I would like to ask you....

would you like to sew my designs?“

„Me?! Sewing.... Clothes for you?!“

The girls heart jumped...

Never before had a popular girl even NOTICED, that she existed... and now, Eri, the most popular of the popular, wanted her to be her... seamstress?

„I... I would really love to do that!“

She smiled truly happy.

Eri smiled back:

„Wow, that's great! So, we're designing partners now, aren't we?“

She reached her hand out:

„I'm Eri!“

„Yeah, I know!“, answered the girl.

„And you're name is...?“

She gave Eri her hand:

„I'm Misaiki Shiki! Hehe!“

Silence...

Finally, Shiki found some time to concentrate...

„Wheew...“

She sighed.

Then she took out pencil and paper... and started to draw.

And draw...

And draw...

And draw...

„ARGHH!!! NO, NO, NO!!!“

Shiki grabbed the eraser and rubbed it wildly all over the paper, until it ripped.

„OH NO!... I'm such a loser...“

„Uahh...Shiki, you're already awake?“

„Huh?“

Shiki turned around and looked in the door's direction.

Eri was standing there, still in her Pyjamas, looking tired.

„Oh! Sorry, Eri! Did I wake you up?“

„Naaah... it was about time that I get up anyway!“

Eri stretched and looked a lot more awake afterwards.

„I mean, having your best friend invited for a sleepover doesn't happen every day, does it? We got to use every single second of it!“, Eri winked at Shiki.

„Therefor, I'll get dressed now and then, we'll head over to Ten-Four! Does that sound good, or what?“

„Ahh...Actually, I'm a bit busy right now...“

Shiki took a glimpse at her sketches.... And blushed.

Eri got confused:

„Huh? You don't want to go shopping? Who are you, and where's Shiki?“

She went over to the desk.

„What are you doing, huh? What's that?“

„Ah , don't look!“

Shiki tried to hide the sketches, but Eri was faster and got one:

„Huh? Is that...“

„A Design, yes...“

Shiki blushed and grabbed Mr. Mew, who was sitting on the bench right beside her.

She always grabbed Mr. Mew, when she was nervous. It kind of calmed her down.

Eri studied the sketch carefully:

„Hmm... Kinda cute... But... Something's missing...“

„I know...“,

Shiki sighed.

„I've been trying over and over and over again, but I just can't come up with anything you could actually wear in public... I feel so useless...“

„Hey, Shiki... You're not...“

„Ah, you're designs are so cool, Eri! I mean, just look at those!“

She pointed at Eri's clothes on the couch in the other corner of the room.

„Just the skirt alone is so great, I wouldn't even have known, that making something like that was possible! I actually doubted, that it would work, when I sewed it, but it did! And you know why? Because your designs always work!... I'll never be as good as you...“

Shiki sighed.. She looked, under the table, for no apparent reason and hugged Mr. Mew.

„Shiki...“

Eri stood up.

Then, she shrugged and smiled:

„You're right! You'll never be as good as me! Hehe!“

„Huh?“

Shiki looked up.

Eri was smiling...

And for some reason, this smile seemed rather... creepy to Shiki.

„And you know, why that is?“, asked Eri. „Because you're not meant to be a designer!“

„W-What?“

Shiki shocked...

Eri... Did she really just...

No...

Tears. She could feel them, gathering in her eyes.

„Eri... You really mean, that I'm..."

„Well of course!"

„WELL, FINE!!!"

Eri jumped.

That scream got her off guard.... It took her a few seconds to realize, that she probably said something wrong, and even more time to realize, WHAT it was.

By that time, Shiki had already grabbed her bag and was rushing out the door.

„I'M GOING HOME!!", she shouted.

„SHIKI, WAIT! I DIDN'T---,"

But was already outside and slammed the door.

Eri just stood there in disbelief.

This must have been like the worst idea she ever had.

She never felt that bad in her entire life.

Shiki was running.

And running...

Over Dogenzaka ...

The buildings of Shibuya just rushed past her, she didn't even pay attention to the people around her, and several times hit somebody while running.

//Why?!//, she thought

//Eri... I thought, you liked what I do... But I'm just a nobody. I thought, being your friend would change that and at least you would notice, that I exist! But it didn't! I can't do anything! I can't even wear your designs, ,cause they wouldn't look good on me!

I'm to fat, to common, to casual, to boring...

I'm a failure in everyone's eyes! But I can't be Eri! I can't be cool and cute and charismatic and strong and beautiful! I can't design! I can't be Eri! I'll never be!

Mr. Mew, you're the only one who really knows who I am, aren't you?!//

Shiki looked crying at the ground and kept running.

Past Ten Four, over the scramble...

...

That's, when she suddenly heard the people shouting loud and shocked.

She quickly looked up from the ground and realized:

The traffic-lights where red.

Red.

And she ran right to the middle of the scramble-crossing...

Everything happened to fast now...

Shiki turned around... She heard a hoot.

A truck.

It was coming right into her direction.

It was much to fast.

It wouldn't be able to stop, even if it tried.
It was a heavy truck. It would just... crush her.
Shiki was frozen. She couldn't move.
It was too late.
It was already that close...
So close...
Shiki quickly shut her eyes and pressed her stuffed Cat against her chest in fear.

Mr. Mew... Tell me... Do you think, I'm... special? Like Eri?...

An impact... That was the last thing, Shiki felt... And afterwards...
Just darkness.

Eri was ready now.
She packed all her things. Also some bars of Shiki's favorite chocolate..
She would make up her now... Apologize for what happened the day before...
She was about to go...
Suddenly, the phone rang.
„Huh?“
Eri took the receiver and answered the call.
„Uhm... This is—„
„Eri-chan?! Is that you?“
Eri recognized the voice... It was Shiki's mother. But, something wasn't alright... She sounded like, she had been crying...
„Misaki-san? What happened, huh?“
„I-it's about Sh-Sh-Shiki.... You're her best friend... so I thought, you should ... know.... she's... yesterday... the police found her... the scramble crossing.... She's...she's...d—„
As Eri heard the rest of the word, the receiver slipped out of her hand.
So did the bad with the things, she packed.
Eri sunk into her knees, her eyes wide open.

„Did... Did I do this?....“

Ending-Beginning.

Eri was standing right before the door now... A bag full of chocolate in one hand, some flowers in the other. She gulped.
Shiki had an accident right after the fight. A truck hit her, but, like a miracle, she survived with just a few mild wounds that healed within five days.

Of course, in reality Shiki really died and was restored to life by the composer, but Eri couldn't know that.
And it was better that she didn't.

Eri ringed the doorbell.

After some moments, someone opened.

A girl at her height, short, black hair and green clothes. And a stuffed cat.

„Uhhmm... hello Shiki... I'm so---„

„ERI!!!“

Before Eri knew, what happened, Shiki had already charged for her with open arms and hugged her.

„OH, you don't have a clue, how glad I'm to see you!!!“

„I'm glad to see you too, Shiki! Hehe!“

Eri „freed“ from the hug and looked into Shiki's eyes:

„Shiki, listen, I'm sorry about what I said the other day... I just wanted to...“

„Cheer me up, I know!“, Shiki laughed. „Yeah, I got it all wrong and overreacted... I'm the one, who should feel sorry, really...“

Eri persisted:

„No, I am! That was the most stupid and unsensible thing, I could have said, and I'm terribly sorry! Here!“

She gave Shiki the bag:

„That's for you. I know, it's not gonna make up for you beeing hit by that truck... but, please. We're still friends, right?“

Shiki laughed:

„Eri, you'll ALWAYS be my friend! Even if I were dead!“

„Ah! Don't say something like that!“

„Sorry, it slipped!“

„Slipped?!“

„Ah, anyway....“

Shiki took Eri's arm and led her inside:

„Oh, there's something I gotta tell you, Eri!“

„OK, go on!“

„I met someone in...uhh... the hospital!“

„A boy?!“, asked Eri.

„Yes!..Uh, no! Uh... I mean, yes, he's a boy, but were not like that---„

Shiki thought about the Entry-fee thing...

„At least, I think so...“

„And? How is he?!“

„NICE!“

„Really?!“

„Well, he started out as jerk, but after a while he really changed!“

„Oh? So you were roommates?“

„Uhhm, yes, kind of!“

„Didn't know that was possible... boys and girls in one room, you know...“

„Ah, it there was to less beds and stuff, you know..“

„Whoa! You didn't have to share a bed, did you?!?!“

„NO! Of course not!“

„Wheew... So, what's his name?“

„Sakuraba Neku!“, said Shiki.

„Hmm... Sakuraba? Like in „Cherry Garden?““

Eri grinned.

„Well, pluck the cherries, while they're ripe!“

„Lame pun!“, said Shiki.

„I know!“, she laughed. „It’s just already fun to hit on you and that guy, and I haven’t even met him yet!“

„HEY! Excuse me for telling you! Hehe!“

Shiki grinned. She knew that Eri was just joking.... Hopefully.

„Ah, anyway, we had a few fights, but then, we got into talking and made friends with each other and some other people! And we’re all going to meet up at the Hachiko statue tomorrow!“

„Aww, THE Hachiko? Sounds great! That must be some awesome people!“

„They sure are!“, smiled Shiki.

„You got to introduce them to me as soon as possible!“

„I will!“

„And then, we’re going to give them all.... A MAKEOVER!! I’m doing the desings!“

Shiki laughed:

„Neku and Beat are not gonna like this!“

„Shibuya is a battlefield. Live and Die for fashion.“, claimed Eri.

„You should wear some of the outfits we made more often as well...“

„Ahh... They don’t fit me...“

„They sure do!“

„Tomorrow...“

„Yeah, yeah, what a convinient excuse!“

Eri laughed.

She looked at the clock:

„Oh shock! Already twelve?! I gotta go home, sorry!“

Eri jumped up and wanted to leave, as Shiki stopped her:

„Eri...“

„Huh?“

Shiki smiled:

„The birthmark on your right wrist is cute. You don’t need to cover it up with wristbands!“

„Hey!... How did you...?“

Shiki just kept smiling, until Eri realized:

„Oh! You saw it while the sleepover, right?“

„Probably?“, giggled Shiki.

„Huh?“.

.....

„Ah, gotta go! See ya!“

Eri rushed out, winking at Shiki one last time.

Shiki cuddled Mr. Mew happily.

I’ll always be Shiki and Eri’ll always be Eri! No matter what eighter of us may look like. And it’s good that way, am I not right, Mr. Mew?

Kapitel 3: Bito "Beat & Rhyme"

Bito "Beat & Rhyme"

Beginning

„Daisu—,
„DON'T CHA GO „DAISUKENOJO“ ON ME!!!“
„SO, THAT'S IT!!“

It has been a long time, since silence used to reign in the Bito-residence. 2 years? 5 years? 7 years?

At least a very long time.

But that had passed long ago.

All that reigned here was argument and shouting.

And Rhyme sat in a corner and sighed, watching her brother and her parents fighting once again.

„Daisuke!!“

There was a strange tone of anger in the voice of their mother.

„What EXACTLY were you doing in the Underpass at 12 o' clock midnight?!“

„... 'Skating...“, answered Beat, turning his head away.

He tried to hide his own angry eyes... maybe there was also a trace of shame in it. Shame, that he didn't want to show.

„Jus' Skating...“

„Aha. JUST Skating. At MIDNIGHT?!“, shouted his father.

„You shouldn't be skating in the Underpass at midnight. You shouldn't be ANYWHERE at midnight, but you're bed, understood?!“

„I'm not a kid!“

„And that on a school-eve!“, continued his mother „As if you're grades weren't bad enough already—,“

„Who cares `bout any stupid grades?!“

„WE care!!“, she shouted. „Just listen to yourself, Daisuke! You're talking, like you were going to rob a bank any minute!“

„I ain't speaking that bad!!“

„YES, you are! You're japanese is worse than that of some americans I met. And you ARE japanese! It's your native-language!“

Oh... His father...

Beat's father was a dolmetcher. English-Japanese. He was translating japanese for american buisnessmen and visa versa.

And he was also the one who put all the pressure onto Beat.

He wanted Beat to become a well-educated , good-earning young man. He wanted him to go to university.

But the problem was, that this wasn't what Beat wanted. He never wanted to.

„I talk the way I wanna!“

„Daisukenojo---„

„STOP CALLING ME THAT!“

Beat snapped.

„I hate that name! I always did! It sounds like I was some girl!“

„WELL, maybe it would be better if you were one!“

His mother again.

„Maybe you would be a bit more like Raimu than!! Did you ever take a look at HER grades?!“

„Oh, yeah, so that’s what ya ever wanted, huh? A second Rhyme? Well, gotta inform you:

I AIN’T HER!!!!“

„Beat...“, whispered Rhyme in the corner...

Maybe she should say something...

„Mom... Dad... I think you should go a bit ea—„

„Not now, Rai-chan! We’re talking to your brother now!“, answered her mother.

Their Dad shouted:

„YOU COULD AT LEAST FOLLOW HER EXAMPLE!!! You could at least TRY to give your best!!“

„I tried! I did! I screwed! End of story!“

„Are you realizing, what you’re doing to your life!? Your going to end up working at Sunshine’s!“

„Don’t care. I like burgers anyway.“

„Or worse!“

„Still don’t care!“

„YOU’RE NOT CARING ABOUT ANYTHING BUT YOUR LAZYNESS, ARE YOU?!“

„OK, YOU WANTED IT! I’M OFF!!

Beat grabbed his Skateboard and ran off.

„DAISUKE!“, shouted his mother.

Rhyme jumped up:

„Beat! Wait!“

„Rai-chan, you don’t have to---„

„Yes, I have to! He’s my brother!“

Rhyme ran out of the door, after Beat.

„Raimu.... She’s such a nice girl...“, said their mother.

„Couldn’t Daisuke turn out at least a BIT like her? Whom did he get all this attitude from?“

„Uncle Koshiro!“, was their fathers opinion. „He’s the only other one in the family, who is as stubborn as him.“

„No, we can’t just blame others fort hat, honey...“

A few seconds pause.

„... Darling?“

„Yes?“

„What if Rai-chan is right? Maybe we're really a bit too harsh with Daisuke-kun. Maybe we're focusing too much on finding any intellectual talents in him?“

„What? Do you want him to become a dishwasher?“

„No... But maybe we should try to encourage him to find his own talents. Rai-chan always does that and it seems to work a bit.“

„His own talents?“

„I... Somehow I don't think anymore, that he's fit for a job in the office. Maybe, he's right and he'll probably never be. But he's a strong boy! Maybe he could go into sports...!“

„...Hmm... Sports?“

„You can earn a lot in sports as well!“

„Hmm....“

....

„... Probably... we should apologize to him, when he comes back...“

Their mother smiled:

„And I'll make some Curry. I know how much Daisuke-kun loves it.“

Meanwhile, Beat was skating through the streets of Shibuya.... He wanted to get away.

Away from all the shouting.

Away from all expectations.

Away from his parents.

“Beat!!!“

Beat looked up. It was his sister's voice.

“Please! Come back home! I'm sure, Mom and Dad didn't mean it! They were just overreacting a bit!“

In the first moment, Beat was happy, to hear her voice--- but it lasted only this moment.

No.

Not again.

He always had to rely on Rhyme.

He always had to get comforted by her!

She was 12!

He was 15!

He was no baby!

He was too old for this...

“Go home, Rhyme!!!“, shouted Beat.

“Please, listen!!“

“No! I've listened long enough!“

Beat made a risky maneuver to make Rhyme lose him. He was way too fast for her to follow.

“Beat!!!--“

Rhyme slowed down. She was out of breath.

He had the skate-board... If she just had taken her bike with her...

"Huh.... What now?"

She looked around...

Until, she got an idea:

"Ah! I think, I know where he's going! Just need to take the short-cut! Hehe!"

Rhyme turned left, into a narrow street. She ran up and up and up.... Until she was at Mashita-park.

She carefully climbed down the bridge and ran into the underpass.

Beat was already coming from the other side.

She waved at him:

"BEEEEAT! Please, stop!!!"

"OH, man... Forgot `bout the shortcut..."

Beat sighed.

Rhyme got him... Again...

He was about to turn around and escape...

When he saw some lights behind the waving Rhyme.

....

Lights...

A car?...

...

A CAR!!!

And she didn't seem to notice it at all. She just kept waving!

"RHYME!!!", shouted Beat. He rode his skateboard up to her.

"Beat!"

Rhyme smiled. He was coming in her direction.

"CAR!!!"

"Huh?... Car...?..."

Just now, Rhyme turned around and noticed the vehicle coming in her direction.

"...KYAAAAA!!!"

She froze on the spot.

Beat shocked.

She wasn't moving.

Why wasn't she moving?!

The car would hit her!

It was too fast!

Even IF the driver noticed her now, it would be too late!

DAMN, it would kill her!

I would kill her!

Beat couldn't think anymore. He jumped off his board and ran up to his sister:

"RHYYYYYYME!!!"

He jumped. And pushed her.

Out of the way.

Please out of the way.

Please, let that be enough!! Please, she mustn't die! I don't care if I die! I've ain't got nothing to live for anyway!! But she is!! She mustn't die! Not `cause of me! Not `cause she wanted to help me! That's not fair at all!

Beat pushed...

No...

It wasn't going to be enough..

He could still feel her shirt between his fingers!

She was still next to him!

She was still on the road!

...

He heard her loud scream, combined with another voice, probably that of the driver...

Then, he felt the metal of the car touching his body...

It felt so slow, so incredibly slow, but he knew, it was happening in split-seconds in reality.

She felt being pushed down and heard a very unpleasant noise... that must be his bones crushing...

Her shirt was still between his fingers, he knew it.

She was in this as well.

She was dying here with him...

Hell, NO!! That's not true! It mustn't....be...

Beat's thoughts clouded... He tried to open his eyes...

He couldn't feel or move anything.... He couldn't even tell, if he was in agony, or if he was already dead...

But he saw the silhouette of his sister before him... Lying next to him...

He could hear her voice, like through a thick wall of cartoon.

"Beat.... Sorry..."

...No... I should feel sorry...

You're the best little sis`ever, Rhyme.

I wish I could have been just a lil' bit like you...

I'm such a loser...

With his last energy, Beat took Rhyme's hand...

Before both of their minds left the crushed bodies.

And just some time later, in the Bito-residence, there was still no silence.

But mourning.

"They're... dead....."

On the stove, something was burning up.

But nobody cared.

...Today, I lost two things. My dreams. And my brother.

--To be continued--