

“You know, sneaking around with you makes me look like a middle schooler...”

Mitsuru couldn't stop herself from commenting. Rias was so much taller, bustier and curvier than she was – and Mitsuru was confident that Rias was younger than her as well. What kind of bad deeds had she committed in a past life to deserve this kind of body? She was endeavouring to advance the human race and save billions of lives; the least reality could do was give her a few extra inches for the effort! The fact that Rias came from an ecchi anime franchise where *everyone* was stacked was lost in the noise.

“People come in all shapes and sizes. You have... a unique appeal. He's already surrounded by women with big boobs. Take advantage while you have the chance.”

“Ugh. I don't want to hear that from a boobzilla like you!”

Rias frowned and covered her chest self-consciously, “A... boobzilla?”

The reason why Rias and Mitsuru had found themselves talking about this again was evident. The man who they had decided to shadow around the city had as of yet, done nothing of note. Mitsuru was more convinced than ever that he was an alien in disguise – so why did he continue to wander around like a lost child?

“A-Are you *certain* that this is him?”

Mitsuru nodded, “Look, I even went back into the security footage archive and pulled an image of him. Is it not the same person?” She held up her phone to Rias' face, exposing the exact similarities between their features. “Them having the ability to put a human disguise on isn't surprising. Infiltration techniques like this could be used to establish conditions for a full-scale invasion.”

“So why didn't they do this before they arrived?”

That was something that Mitsuru didn't have an answer for. She recalled the first attack by the aliens, how they launched an attack drone right into her own backyard. They knew something – and Mitsuru was starting to suspect that they had a good idea of who the main threat to their plans really were. They didn't *need* to subvert governments, police or military; they needed to get rid of you. Did they know that this was going to happen?

Mitsuru couldn't remember his name, but the spy was one of the two commanders who had attacked previously. He stopped outside of an electronics store and observed the products through the front window for several minutes in an attempt to blend in. It was very clear to a casual observer that he was trying to do something suspicious. Most people just walked to their preferred destination without stopping.

“Watching this moron is starting to piss me off,” Mitsuru griped.

Once he was sure that nobody was watching (incorrectly,) he moved behind the building and through the alleyway. Judging by the way he was looking at one of the junction boxes for the building – Mitsuru knew that he was going to do something. He tore the metal padlock away from the grey container and ragged the door open. Then, he retrieved a small device from his pocket and slipped it inside.

“He's doing something,” Mitsuru whispered back to Rias.

But that was all he intended to do. Happy with the job, he dusted off his hands, slammed the door shut, and continued on his merry way. Mitsuru acted quickly. She drew a small 3D printed pistol

from her pocket and aimed it at his back. With a pull of the trigger a small tracking device flew from the barrel and latched onto his clothes for later. The computer system at the lab would compile his movements for her. He didn't even notice it landing on him.

"What was that?"

Mitsuru smirked, "Tracking device. I want to investigate what he did – so we can't follow him without splitting up. I can check the data later and see if he did the same to any other buildings." Mitsuru waited until he was out of sight before moving up to the box. She opened the door, revealing a strange, spider-like device with a fluctuating graph on a miniature screen. It had been hooked on to the wires that managed the internet and phone service.

Mitsuru flipped open a scanning tool and project a field over the top of it. It was a good thing that she never left the garage without her experimental field devices. They'd prove invaluable in gathering information on their plan. An internal schematic was soon generated that tracked the wires and resistors inside, as well as the frequencies being emitted.

"It's a monitoring hotspot. It's transmitting a frankly absurd amount of raw data up into the atmosphere. I can't begin to imagine the type of processor you'd need to make sense of this."

"Can't we just remove it?"

"It also contains a quantity of plastic explosive. Enough to kill anyone meddling with it. It triggers when the legs are released without the proper key. Luckily, it doesn't contain any other capture equipment. They don't know that we're here."

Rias crossed her arms, "I could use my magic to protect us. I don't think it could break through my barrier."

Mitsuru shook her head, "I'd rather take it intact. Whatever transmission system they're using is very powerful – if I could reverse engineer it for our own equipment..."

"And it'll help us find out if they've planted more of them," Rias added.

"Exactly. Though that's a secondary concern, my current sensors could easily find these with how much noise they're dumping into the spectrum." Mitsuru tapped some buttons on her tablet and brought up the controls for her sensor array. She tuned it to the right signal, and watched with a worried frown as several matching splotches of interference appeared around the city. "Ugh, he planted eight of them."

Rias didn't know what to do. Technology wasn't her strong suit. Mitsuru took a moment to clean her glasses and knelt down with her back to the wall. "I'll contact the police and make sure that they cordon these things off. If someone touches them without knowing about the explosive protection, they'll be as good as dead."

Just as soon as her VPN network booted up, anyway. Mitsuru was practically salivating at the prospect of ripping the latched device to pieces and studying what was inside. Hyper advanced, cross-dimensional computer components were almost enough to make her go white in the face. Never again would she have to make do with *just* the best processors, solid state drives and GPUS. Simulating and compiling code would go from arduous and in some cases impossible, to a breeze that she could do in an afternoon.

You certainly didn't know just how long it took to invent these things. Initial simulation runs of the Sledgehammer's warp relay system took weeks, crawling along and making her poor computer cry in

agony. Everything only escalated in complexity from there. If something went wrong, that meant that she had to go back and simulate the *entire* thing from the beginning. If not for the intervention of your 'son,' designing the mantle system would have been unfeasible.

While the call was going out to the police, the rest of her attention was focused on studying the bomb in more detail. It had several other rudimentary protections. It couldn't be shorted from the outside with an electric pulse, pulling it away from the wires would break the circuit and trigger the explosive. It was designed to prevent meddlers like her from getting inside. There were no visible screws or access points on the outside casing. The legs were held in place by a strong hydraulic system.

"What the hell are they using all of this data for?"

Rias shrugged, "Spying on humanity?"

"They'd hardly have need of a crude thing like this for that. If they have human disguises all they'd need to do it walk around. Breaking into an encrypted system with their technology is probably a cinch too." After all – they did crack her security and copy the Sledgehammer. Mitsuru intended to improve her systems so that it couldn't happen again.

Mitsuru knew one thing for sure, she couldn't crack the defences on the bomb with what she had on hand. She'd need to head back to the garage and put together a proper response. She stood back up and turned to Rias, who was still carrying their collective shopping on her forearms.

"Can you teleport us back? Make sure to remember this spot."

"Of course. Stick close to me."

Mitsuru stepped into the magic circle. Rias took in her surroundings and left a 'bookmark' for later. They'd need to get back and defuse it once she was done. The pair sunk down into the ground and re-emerged within the confines of the industrial compound. Mitsuru immediately set about collecting all of the tools and pieces she needed to build her counter. Rias wandered over into the empty office room and left their clothes on the table for later.

It only took her a few seconds to do, but by the time Rias had gotten back onto the main floor, Mitsuru was already leg deep in designing and building something. Rias had no earthly idea what it was or how it was going to work – but Mitsuru was a bonified genius. Whatever she created would do the job.

"I do wish he'd summon some more engineering help. I'll have to force him to press some new cards..."

Rias frowned, "Even if it means more competition?"

Mitsuru rolled her eyes; "I don't imagine there's a limit to the number of women he's willing to rendezvous with. He's a shameless man, through and through. We used to watch harem anime together when our parents weren't home. Who does that?"

Rias blushed, "I may have indulged in one or two myself." It only happened because *your* anime went on a break so the manga could produce more chapters. Rias' withdrawal symptoms were so strong that she desperately scoured the web for something to fill the void. None of them captured her heart like your series did. The romance elements were rather shallow and the crossover appeal was lacking.

Mitsuru continued to work at pace while speaking, "Yes, but a boy doing it with a girl – it's weird. Your series was one of the first we consumed. A pioneer in perverted, wish-fulfilment storytelling."

"And what did you think of it?" Rias asked. She found herself hoping that *her* show was as good as yours was.

"It was a... mixed bag. But I always respected you the most out of all of the cast members."

"Respected?"

"You're competent, powerful and confident. A leader. Unless we're talking about your arc in the third season, which I thought was pushing things a little. Though this is a version of you that doesn't come from a world where polyamorous relationships are normal."

"They're only normal for *devils*," Rias reminded her, "Greed is a cardinal sin, and it acts as an affront to the authority of the church."

"The point is! I saw the best version of you."

Rias moved over and sat on one of the stools around the workbench, "To be truthful, I had my share of doubts before I was summoned here. Mother was insistent that I marry myself into another family – of course, a lot of things have changed since then. Now that she approves of my new fiancé, those dreadful marriage meetings are done with."

Mitsuru was quick to joke, "Yes, all you have to worry about now is walking down the aisle with her."

Rias blushed, "W-Well, it's a great honour to share something like this with my mother. You'll be surprised to find that many devil clans have arranged betrothals like this. With sisters and aunts, usually – women who have already given birth tend to be passed over."

Rias knew just how unprecedented it was. Her initial reaction was one of shock, but the more she spent time with you and Venelana, the more she realised that it was actually very nice. Rias hadn't seen her mother in such a good mood for a long time. A new love had reignited some of the passion that she once had. Devils didn't have as many qualms about things like this as humans did. There were always devils pushing the boundaries of mortal taste. Rias recalled that one of her peers from the younger generation had married the same man as her sister.

Mitsuru was already half-done with her new invention. A prying tool that could supply a flow of electricity to the circuit, and prevent the explosives from detonating. "Speaking of Venelana, she's a terrible flirt, isn't she? Every time we have a business meeting she keeps hinting that I should become one of his wives too."

Rias giggled, "That's how you know she's in a good mood. Her generous side comes out."

"I don't think she knows the meaning of the word. She's ruthless. I've never seen someone play hardball like she does. Thanks to her, we bought this industrial estate at a steep discount."

"Business is one thing, but she never fails her family or friends. In fact, she took in Grayfia as a member of her peerage. Not many clan mothers would be willing to spend such an important evil piece on their daughter in law, even if she is a skilled fighter herself."

"Oh, I suppose she'll be joining in next. He did just buy a big mansion that could do with a skilled maid."

"That he did," Rias pondered.

She didn't know how attached you were to Grayfia, and given the sheer number of girls already spinning at all time, surely, he'd refrain from adding *even more*. Which was exactly why her line of thinking was incorrect. You didn't care. It was difficult, but the snowball effect of dating so many different women from anime and games wasn't done just yet. Things were going to get even crazier in due course.

Rias had no idea what she was in for.