

# Death Note: An Alternative

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*This is basically the same story (with a focus on the anime rather than the manga) as the real thing but with the focus on a character I added in.*

*Remember this focuses on my OC, you need to know the original story to fully understand this.*

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# 1 - Introduction

The door to the convenience store flew open. A man stormed in, waving a gun wildly.

"Everyone get down!" he screamed. "Cept you," he continued, motioning to a nearby teenage boy, "you get over here."

The boy walked towards him, doing everything he could to keep from shaking. As soon as the boy had reached arm's length, the man held his gun to the boy's head. He then turned his attention to the cashier.

"I'm sure you see where this is going," he said, "empty the register into a bag or you can have this kid's death on your conscience."

"Alright man, calm down," the cashier said nervously, "Look, I'm putting the money into the bag."

"Atta boy," the crook snickered, "Just finish pu—". He stopped suddenly, clutching his chest. His eyes grew wide as he gasped for air, and finally, fell to the floor, apparently dead.

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Zach Teeger, high school senior, was walking home from school, reflecting on the events of the day before.

*"At any rate, it sure was lucky," he thought to himself, "Guess I shouldn't really obsess about it."*

Once he had reached his house, he went straight up to his room. He threw his bag on the floor and fell onto his bed, looking up at the ceiling. Sighing heavily, he sat back up and turned on his TV. He remembered that yesterday on the news they had said there was going to be a broadcast concerning the recent mass murder of criminals all over the world. Suddenly a picture with the single letter, L, appeared on the screen, and a mysterious voice spoke.

"Hello. My name is L. While it was announced that this broadcast was being aired to discuss the killings of criminals throughout the world, its true purpose was to find the location of the person responsible, who now goes by the name Kira. This is no longer necessary; however, as we have determined that he is living in the Kanto region of Japan. That is all."

"Huh," Zach said aloud, "So one person is responsible for all this. Well, whoever this Kira guy is, he's got guts, I'll give him that." He lay back down on his bed. "I mean, he's gotta be pretty careful if he doesn't want to get caught. Hm?" He noticed a black notebook lying on his desk across the room. "I don't remember leaving that there..."

Zach got up, walked across the room, and picked it up. "Death Note..." he read to himself, opening it,

“How to use it. The human whose name is written in this note shall...die...name and face...heart attack...40 seconds...Is that supposed to be funny or something?...Guess mom thought I'd like it. It does sound interesting though,” he mused, flipping through the notebook. “What the hell?...just a couple of pages of rules and the rest is blank...what a joke,” he scoffed, tossing it aside and turning back to his bed.

“It's no joke,” came a deep, raspy voice from near the window. Zach whipped around to see a skeletal creature staring back at him. “Who..no, what...what are you??” he screamed. “Relax,” the creature replied, “I'm a Shinigami; name's Rek.”

## 2 - History

“A...Shinigami? Like a Death God?...” Zach’s expression slowly shifted from fear to a grin. “So if you really exist...then that notebook is for real too. It’s yours, isn’t it?”

“Nah. It’s yours.”

“Mine? But...but why me?...why not someone else?”

“Trust me, it wasn’t my choice. Truth is, that notebook used to belong to another Shinigami, but she died, so now it belongs to you.”

“Wait, what? How’d she die? Why does that make it mine?...”

“Ugh.” The Shinigami clearly had hoped to avoid telling the story. “Alright listen up then, ‘cause I hate having to repeat myself. For years, centuries even, the Shinigami previously owning that Death Note, Sorin, wrote down 5 names a day in her notebook. She was finicky like that, never knew why. Anyway, when a Shinigami writes a human’s name in their Death Note, that person’s remaining lifespan is added to that Shinigami’s. That’s how we keep from dying. You can stab us and shoot us all you like, but we won’t die. Anyway, about 5 years ago, she made a mistake. Probably the biggest mistake a Shinigami can make. She fell in love...with a human.”

“So why’s that such a problem?” Zach asked.

“Shut up and I’ll tell you. Anyway, that human’s life fell into jeopardy when some crook robbed a store.”

“Robbed a...you don’t mean...”

“I said zip it. And, yea, that’s right. That guy was supposed to shoot you. Yesterday was meant to be your last day of life, but Sorin couldn’t bear to see that happen. Don’t ask me why, but for some reason she loved you enough to save your life, and she killed the robber. Problem is, Shinigami are only supposed to take life, not extend it. She instantly turned to dust, or something. Anyway, she died to save you, so that makes her notebook yours.”

“Hmm...Rek, right? What happens if I choose to use the Death Note? I mean, that kind of power has to have a pretty high price, right?”

“Well, there won’t be any immediate consequences, but any human who uses a Death Note can neither go to Heaven nor Hell. And,” he continued, holding up a long, bony finger as if to emphasize this next point, “You will experience the torment that only humans who have used the Death Note will know,” he finished with the slightest trace of a grin.

“Interesting...hey!” Zach suddenly snapped to attention; he had just realized something. “Rek, the

criminals that have all been dying of heart attacks...there's another notebook in the human world isn't there?! That's how Kira kills!"

"Zach, who are you talking to in here?" Zach's mother asked, cracking open the door and stepping in.

"No one mom," he replied, scratching the back of his head, "just thinking out loud."

"Alright," she said with a smile, "well I just wanted to let you know dinner's ready."

"Okay." He followed his mother downstairs, glancing behind him to see if Rek was still following him. He was. *"Why can't they see him? Is it because they haven't seen the Death Note? No, it was sitting right next to me; Mom would've seen it, even if she wasn't trying to. That means you have to touch it to see Rek, or else he can control who sees him."*

"It's 'cause you own the notebook," Rek said, as if reading Zach's mind. "But don't be fooled, anyone who so much as touches it will be able to see and hear me."

*"Damn it! I left the thing just sitting on my desk; I have to be sure I get to it first."*

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"Alright," Zach sighed, "That takes care of that...for now anyway."

"Huh?" Rek shifted his attention from the ceiling to Zach. "You found a place to hide it already?"

"Yeah. It'll stay beneath this floorboard. Of course, that'll only protect it so much. So I've set it up so that if anyone tries to forcefully remove it from that case, an electric current will run through the metal and shock whoever's touching it. Though I doubt anyone would even look under there. I've also put a hidden pocket on the inside of the back of my jacket, so I can travel with the notebook without looking suspicious."

"Not bad, most humans go mad trying to keep the notebook hidden."

"Well, like I said, it'll do for now. Now Rek...you never answered my question. Do you know if another notebook has been dropped into the human world?" There was a long pause during which neither of them spoke. Zach was beginning to think Rek was going to keep silent until he changed the subject. "Then how abo—"

"Yeah, there's another one," Rek responded without so much as changing his expression.

"So that's how that Kira guy has been killing, isn't it?"

"Not sure. But it definitely sounds like the work of a Death Note. Why so interested in this Kira anyway?"

"Hm...that announcement on the news yesterday said Kira was known to be in Kanto...Rek," he said with a look of satisfaction, "we're going to be taking a bit of a vacation."

### 3 - Arrival

A few days later, Zach boarded a flight for Kanto. “Ugh,” Rek scowled, “I hate airplanes. Wings are so much better. Hm? Hello? Zach? You just gonna ignore me?”

“Man, flying tanks. There’s always so many people,” Zach said, laying back in his chair.

“Oh yeah, guess you can’t talk here since none of these people can see or hear me. Well, we better be able to talk later, I hate being ignored.”

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“Thanks,” Zach said to the hotel’s clerk. “Room 127...” he read to himself. As he and Rek walked into his hotel room, Zach gave a slight nod to signal Rek.

“Fine,” the Shinigami grunted, and reluctantly began to search the room. Able to phase through solid objects, it didn’t take long for him to finish. “You’re clear. No wire taps or cameras.”

“I didn’t really expect there to be,” Zach explained, “After all, they have no reason to. Guess I’m just a little paranoid. Anyway...” his voice trailed off as he walked to the window, looking outside to the street below. For several moments, the room remained silent. Then:

“The human whose name is written in this note shall die. This note will not take effect unless the writer has the persons face in their mind when writing his/her name. Therefore, people sharing the same name will not be affected. If the cause of death is written within 40 seconds of writing the person’s name, it will happen. If the cause of death is not specified the person will simply die of a heart attack. After writing the cause of death, details of the death should be written in the next 6 minutes and 40 seconds. Those are the basic rules, right?”

“Yeah.”

“So it’s almost certain that Kira is using another Shinigami’s Death Note.”

“Probably.”

“If that true...” Zach paused in thought. “Then he most likely learns his victims’ names and faces from the news, or else the internet. Hm...Yes, that has to be it.”

“Sounds reasonable. Unless he’s made the eye deal.”

Zach whipped around, glaring at Rek. “What eye deal??”

“Uh..” Rek paused, taken aback by Zach’s sudden change in behavior. “Yeah...any human who owns a Death Note can make a deal with the Shinigami it belongs to. Since I picked Sorin’s up first, that makes

that one mine too, technically. Anyway, if the human forfeits one half of his remaining lifespan, he'll get the Shinigami eyes."

Zach expression remained stern. "And why would someone want these eyes so badly? What's so special about 'em?"

"The Shinigami eyes..." Rek let a grin spread across his skeletal face. "Allow humans to see other humans life spans and names just by looking at them. Even at a picture of the person."

*"Darn it, Rek. Why'd you wait so long to bring this up? Well, you can count me out. I'm not risking half my life."*

"Fine. If I really needed to I could just kill someone and take the rest of their lifespan."

"Anyway..." Zach mumbled as he resumed his train of thought, "At the very least Kira probably gets the faces of criminals from TV. But I'm almost positive Kira doesn't have the eyes."

"Oh? Why's that?"

"Well first off, most of his victims were well-known criminals, so it would be easy to find their names. Of course that doesn't really prove anything in-and-of itself. However...even to people who don't know of the notebooks' existence...it'll still become pretty obvious that Kira needs a name and a face sooner or later. You would think he'd kill at least a few people he couldn't know the names of to clear himself if he ever came under suspicion. As clever as this guy seems to be...no, no I can't believe Kira would make the eye deal and not use it," Zach concluded.

*"Wow,"* Rek thought, *"this guy's smarter than I gave him credit for."*

"So now," Zach continued, "I need to find a way to reveal Kira's identity." He stared blankly into space, apparently oblivious to everything around him. He was determined to find Kira.

## 4 - Questions

“Are you still on your computer?” Rek asked, finally bringing his attention back to Zach.

“Yeah...” Zach muttered in response, “based on the time original killings, assuming the information I found online is accurate, Kira would have to be a student, most likely around my own age. But...” Rek walked over, apparently interested in Zach’s theory. “After a few weeks, the killings started happening every hour, on the hour.”

“Doesn’t that mean it can’t be a student? Well, I guess he could have just dropped out of school.”

“No, then it would be even easier for the police to find him. Once they realized criminals were dying during the school day, they’d start checking for which kids missed those days. So how’d he do it?...Wait a minute! Maybe...maybe one of the people those FBI agents were trailing was really Kira...it would certainly explain why they were all killed by him. Hm...what if the original Kira was a student, but forfeited ownership once he came under suspicion? Then the notebook was passed to an older person, someone who would get rid of the FBI agents, and who could kill criminals during the day...yes, that would fit. But the personality of both Kiras is too similar. Perhaps the original Kira is still calling the shots, telling the replacement who to kill and when...” He trailed off again, deep in thought. “Details of the death...should be written in the next 6 minutes and 40 seconds...”

“Yeah, so what?” Rek inquired gruffly.

“Hm,” Zach sighed in slight aggravation, ignoring the Shinigami altogether, “guess the only way to figure out how Kira works...and to find out who he is...is to use the Death Note,” he concluded drastically. He walked over to the bed and removed the notebook from inside the pillow. “But who should I start with?...”

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“*Huh?*” Stepping inside his room, the boy noiselessly walked into his room and across the floor.

“How’s it going?” the creature standing next to him asked, “I don’t think anyone else is in the house right now, do you wanna play some video games?” The boy, seemingly oblivious to the fact this creature was speaking, lay down on his bed and looked up. “Aw, c’mon, it’s been a while!” The boy continued to ignore him.”You listening?” The boy got up and walked over to his closet and pulled out a jacket, still paying no attention to the creature. “Hey, Light!”

After leaving his room, he bent down and put a slip of paper in his door. He then turned around and went back outside. “Where exactly are we going?” the creature asked, starting to get annoyed, “Light, don’t ignore me when I’m talking to you or I’ll get mad.”

Light began subtly checking his clothes, looking for something. “*It doesn’t look like these clothes have been bugged, I think we’re safe.*”



“Helloooo? Yoo-hooo!” the Shinigami said as he began making waving motions with his arms and legs.

“Listen to me!” Light snapped, “There’s a very strong possibility that there are wire taps, or maybe even surveillance cameras, hidden throughout my house.”

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## 5 - Discovery

“So...” Zach noted, “even though a heart attack will serve as a default death...it can still be written as the cause of death. If this is done, details of the death can be added.”

“Details? What kind of details?” Rek asked, for once seeming genuinely interested.

“Only writing the cause...decides the who and the how...so that leaves the where, what, and when.”

“Huh? What the hell are you talking about?”

“If I write ‘heart attack’ as the cause of death, based off my experiments, I can control what that person does before they die, and even when they die. Of course, I assume the time I put has to be before their pre-determined death-day. At any rate, I suspect that Kira has figured this out as well.”

“*Well what d’you know? I didn’t know any of that,*” Rek thought, slightly impressed.

“This means...that the original Kira and the current Kira may very well be the same person after all. If he discovered this ability to control the time of death, he probably would have used it to his advantage. However...” Zach bit his lip, somewhat frustrated. “The change in times was too sudden, it would stick out to anyone following the case closely. And if the notebook never exchanged owners,” he said with a wide grin, “that must mean...” He stopped talking; he seemed to want to confirm his thoughts before sharing them.

“Well?! What’s it mean?” Rek spat, growing more impatient.

Zach continued, seeming to be on a different train of thought, “If he found out the police suspected him, normally he would have realized that they had done so for a while. He would have made the transition between killing patterns more subtle, over a longer period of time.”

“So then why would he do it so abruptly?”

“Wouldn’t it be interesting, Rek...if Kira changed his pattern *immediately* after he fell under suspicion? If he knew for a fact that they had just begun to suspect him, he very well may have tried to throw them off with a sudden change, just as he did...But if he knew what the police were thinking as soon as they started thinking it, that means...” he bit his lip again, collecting his thoughts. “It means Kira has access to police information. Therefore, I have to think Kira has some kind of tie to the police, most likely an officer or family member. Since it seems that Kira must be a student, I doubt he’s a police officer.” Zach opened his computer and began typing.

“What’re you looking up now?” Rek, who was beginning to lose interest now that Zach had revealed his revelation, asked.

“This,” Zach answered, turning the computer around so Rek could see it, “Of all the officers on the

Japanese police force, only these 9 have children around my age. Assuming that Kira is in fact in that age group, he must be one of these 11 children. I cross referenced each of their names, and one came up repeatedly. Number one on Japan's nation-wide exam 4 years in a row. 2002 and 2003 junior high tennis champion. And just yesterday, a perfect score on To-Oh University's entrance exam. He's the only one of them clever enough to be Kira." Zach stood up with a look of mixed determination and satisfaction. "Light Yagami...it's time we meet."

## 6 - Meeting

A week later, Zach found himself walking down the street, headed toward the Yagami household.

"I gotta say, Zach, when we met I figured you were just another human. But you aced that test without even trying. And all just so you have an excuse to talk to this Light guy?" Rek asked.

"Yeah. I can't say I was expecting a perfect score, but that just makes it easier. I have something in common with him now, so I'll have that much better of a reason to talk with him."

"So just how sure are you that this guy's Kira anyway? 'Cause if he's not, you could get arrested for accusing him," Rek said as he followed Zach down the street.

"Aw, Rek, I didn't know you cared so much," Zach answered mockingly.

"Trust me, it's the exact opposite; if you go to jail, I'm gonna have to kill you. No way am I waiting around for you to die in some boring little room."

"Fair enough," Zach responded with a yawn. He had gotten used to Rek's indifferent attitude. "But do me a favor, wait at least 3 days after I get put in..." He stopped mid-sentence, looking back and forth between the piece of paper in his hand and the house in front of him. "This is it," he said, all humor now gone from his tone, "Well, Rek, ready to meet Kira?"

"Whatever."

They moved toward the front door. Zach could feel his heartbeat speeding up with each passing second. Every step toward the door seemed to take an eternity. Finally, he reached the door. For a moment, or perhaps several minutes, he couldn't tell, his entire body became immovable. Then, just when he thought he wouldn't be able to do it, he reached his arm up and knocked on the door. After a few seconds, the door cracked open. Zach thought for a moment that his heart might burst from excitement. When the door opened all the way, he saw, not Light Yagami, but a girl, probably only a few years younger than he was.

"Can I help you?" she asked with a smile.

"Uh, yeah," he responded; he had forgotten for a moment why he had come in the first place. "Yeah, I'm looking for the Yagami household, is this it?"

"Sure is," she replied.

"Right, well um, I'm supposed to talk to Light Yagami. My name is Zane Waller. You see, I'm a late entry at To-Oh, and they wanted me to meet with one of the top freshmen. That other guy, Ryuga, was busy today. Anyway, is Light here?" he finished, laughing nervously.

“Oh, um...no, he’s not here right now,” she replied, her smile fading, “He’s at the hospital right now. Our father had a heart attack earlier today. But Light should be home soon, you can go wait in his room if you want.”

Zach nodded his head slightly. “Thank you,” he said, stepping inside.

“Up the stairs and to the left,” she said, her happy tone returning.

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Light opened the door, walking inside. “Hey Sayu,” he said, “Dad’s doing much better, the doctors think it was just stress.”

“That’s good,” she answered with a sigh of relief, “Oh, by the way, there’s someone from your school waiting for you. He’s in your room.”

*“Sayu, you idiot! If he finds the Death Note, he’ll be able to see Ryuk! Damn it!”*

“Okay, thanks Sayu,” he answered, walking up the stairs. As soon as he was out of Sayu’s sight, he ran toward his room. When he reached it, he threw open the door. There, sitting in the chair, looking back at him, was Zach.

“Hello, Light.”

## 7 - Conflict

“I’m supposed to talk to you about some stuff at school, I’m a late entry,” he said, “Is there somewhere we could go to talk?” Zach asked.

“Uh, yeah,” Light responded hesitantly, still unsure why this boy was really here, “There’s a place right down the street I like to go, come on, I’ll show you.”

After walking silently down the street, they reached their destination. Still quiet, they sat down at the table in the corner. They stared at each other for a few minutes, neither speaking to the other.

“Can we speak freely?” Zach asked finally.

“Of course we can,” Light answered with a hesitant smile. “What the hell is this guy doing? I would’ve been told if someone from school was supposed to talk with me...so what’s his real reason?...”

“Then I’ll get straight to it,” Zach said with a look of complete gravity, “I want to help.”

“Help with what?” he asked sincerely.

“Cut the crap, Light. I know the truth...I know that you’re Kira.”

“Wh-what?...How did this guy figure it out so quickly?...L himself just recently began to suspect me...and that’s with the use of classified police information...Is he trying to trick me into confessing, like Ryuga did? No...he seems too sure of himself...Who is this guy?”

“What makes you say that?” Light asked, still feigning innocence.

“For one, all of the evidence points to you. Two: your reaction just now tells me your nervous. And three...” Zach paused as a grin spread across his face. “I know for a fact that there’s a Shinigami standing right behind you.”

“So, he knows I’m here, huh?” Ryuk laughed madly. “Let’s see if Light figures out that this guy has a notebook too,” he thought, looking over at Rek.

“So do you have a piece of your notebook with you?” Zach continued, not changing his expression in the slightest. Light seemed to be struggling over what he should do next. Finally, he made a decision.

“Yes.”

“Good. So do I. For me too help, we’re going to need to exchange them.”

“So this guy has a notebook too! That’s how he knew about Ryuk, his Shinigami must have told him! Of course, Ryuk wouldn’t bother to tell me about this guy’s Shinigami.”

“Right,” Light agreed, taking a piece of paper from a compartment in his wallet and handing it to Zach, who touched the corner and handed it back. Zach then removed his own fragment of the Death Note from a hidden pocket in his sleeve, allowing Light to touch it. Both of them became silent again, taking in the moment as they sat, face to face, with each other’s Shinigami.

## 8 - Partners

“So,” Light said at last, breaking the silence, “Zane, was it?”

“I suppose I should go ahead and tell you that that is just an alias. Even though it’s clear that you haven’t made the eye deal, I’m sure you’d find out my real name sooner or later. My name is Zach Teeger.

“So why did you seek me out?” Light continued, “What is it you want?”

“I’ve already told you. I want to help. I want to help rid the world of evil.”

Light stared at Zach for a while, trying to decide whether or not to trust him. “Well...I don’t know about *that*, but...there might be a way we can work together, though we’ll have to make sure that the members of the Kira Task Force don’t find out about your involvement, in fact...” Light thought about his plan for a moment. “I think we’re going to have to find a way for L, or someone else on the Task Force, to introduce us. That should eliminate any ideas that we’ve already met.”

“Oh, yeah,” Zach answered, amazed at how quickly Light had assessed the situation and come up with a solution, “so...any ideas on how to do that?” Up until this point, Zach had felt his tactical abilities were sufficient, but now he seemed afraid of missing some important detail.

“Hm...I’ll have to think about it for a while...is there any way that I can contact you secretly?”

“I’ve already enrolled myself at To-Oh. We should be able to meet there without it seeming suspicious,” Zach replied. He glanced down at his watch. “We’ve already been gone for nearly an hour. You should go home; the longer we’re together the more likely it’ll be noticed.”

“Right,” Light said, and, without another word, the two walked out the door and parted ways.

“Hehehe,” Rek cackled as he and Zach walked back to the hotel, “So what’re you gonna do now that you finally met this guy? You’re not really gonna let him call all the shots, are you?”

“That’s exactly what I’m going to do, Rek. Light’s done very well so far, and I’m not going to be the reason Kira gets caught. No...no, I’m going to follow orders for the time being. At least until I get to know his movements better.”

“Great,” Rek said with a look of irritation, “I actually thought you getting the Death Note would be interesting. But now you’re telling me we’re not gonna do anything?!”

“Calm down, Rek,” Zach replied with a grin, “I didn’t say we weren’t going to do anything. In fact, it’s quite the opposite. Light Yagami will not be the only God of this new world. I’ll be right there, ruling over the world, and passing divine judgment on those who have hurt others.”



“Heh, well I guess we’ll see about that. By the way, you never told me how you convinced your parents to even let you out here.”

“Huh?” Zach was taken aback by the sudden change of subject. “I told them exactly what happened, that I was going to be attending college here. Granted, I wasn’t sure if I’d get accepted, but my parents would believe me if I said I was.”

“Cause you’re so trustworthy, right?” Rek asked with a laugh.

“Exactly,” Zach responded, “It might sound weird to you, but I was a different person before I got the Death Note. Don’t get me wrong; I wasn’t some perfect little boy. Far from it. But I can’t say that I ever did anything to make my parents distrust me. And I’ll admit, my mind’s always been my best quality,” he finished with a bit of a snicker.

“Listen to Mr. Modesty. So if you’ve always been so smart, how come you were spending all your time in your room when you first got the Death Note? You telling me with all that personality you didn’t have any friends?” Rek questioned mockingly.

“Right again, Rek. Maybe you should start being sarcastic all the time, it seems to result in an intelligent thought every now and then. No, I can’t say that I had many friends; in fact, I didn’t really have any at all. And to be honest, I never once wanted one. People...are boring,” he concluded.

“Well, I’ll give you this, then. You’re certainly not boring,” Rek said, grinning. They both stopped short; they had almost passed the hotel.

## 9 - Broadcast

After reaching his room, Zach walked in and, as he had become accustomed to doing, checked to make sure the notebook had not been found or tampered with. He then put it back and turned on the TV. “*What the?!...*” An announcement was coming on Sakura TV, claiming to have a video tape submitted by Kira. “That’s...not possible...Light wouldn’t have done this...or if he had, he would have told me tonight...it can’t be...Rek, there’s not...*another* notebook, is there?”

Rek cackled in response, “As a matter of fact, there is. I’ll admit, it doesn’t happen often that so many notebooks arrive in the human world at the same time. In fact, this may very well be the first time. At any rate, those are the only three I know of: mine, Ryuk’s, and Rem’s. No idea who she gave hers to though.”

“Rem, huh?...so this could very well be a copycat Kira...in fact...it’s almost certain.” He paused as the announcement began. The screen went blank, and the single name “Kira” appeared. A voice, run through a scrambler, came on. He cleared his throat.

“I am Kira. If this video is being aired on April 18th, at exactly 5:59 pm, as I requested, then the time now is 5:59 47, 48, 49; please change the channel to Taiyo TV. The news anchor, Mr. Kazuhiko Hibima, will die of a heart attack at exactly six o’clock.”

“What the hell?!” Zach changed the channel, only to find that the second Kira’s prediction had come true. “This can’t be,” he said, “Light would have no reason to kill someone so insignificant. There’s another Kira.”

Zach’s attention returned to reality with a snap. “Ah! The broadcast!” He flipped the channel again, only to find that the transmission had ended. Instead, he saw that a large van had crashed through the front doors of Sakura TV. Three bodies lay on the ground, apparently dead. “That settles it!” Zach shouted, “There has to be a second Kira, and he has the Shinigami eyes!”

Rek snickered to himself. “Those notebooks just keep popping up, huh? Hehehe. So I guess now you gotta find this guy, huh?” he continued with a hint of a grimace. It was obvious Rek didn’t enjoy the first Kira search.

“No,” Zach responded, “This Kira is a joke. Pathetic.” He shut off the TV. “Although...” he added to himself, “he could seriously jeopardize the secret of the notebooks. We’ll have to watch out for that.”

A few days later, at To-Oh University, Zach found himself pacing around a public bench, waiting for Light to walk by. He had never been one to stand still for too long. Just as he was beginning to think Light would never come, he saw on the ground the shadow of a large winged creature. He looked up to see Ryuk, hovering only few feet behind Light. Unfortunately, Light was surrounded by other people, as was the usual case. Luckily, Zach didn’t need to worry about getting Light’s attention; Rek’s towering skeletal body stood out to anyone who could see him.

“Hey, I’ll catch you guys later, alright?” Light said, noticing Zach standing over to the side.

“Alright, later, Light,” came a collective response.

“You know we can’t be seen together too much,” Light said after everyone had left.

“Relax, Light,” Zach replied. He felt that Light’s paranoia about being caught was a bit too much at times. “We’re two of the three highest ranked freshmen; it’d look weird if we made a point of avoiding each other.” He finally sat down. “So...what’s the plan to deal with the Kira copycat?” Over the course of the past few days, a message supposedly from the real Kira had been aired, disclaiming the first video. Shortly after, the second Kira responded, claiming to be willing to follow the real Kira’s orders. This had resolved any doubts about the existence of a second Kira. “We’ve gotta stop him before he blows the entire secret of the Death Notes.”

“Her,” Light answered simply.

## 10 - Information

Zach's heart skipped a beat. "Her?!" he half shouted, then, realizing the volume of his voice, continued, "you mean, you've met the second Kira already? Wh-who is it?"

"Her name is Misa Amane."

"Misa...Amane? The model?! Great, just great; it's gonna be that much harder now that someone famous has a notebook."

"I agree, but I think I'll be able to handle it. But let me make this clear; you can never come into contact with her. It's bad enough she found me."

"Just how exactly did she manage that?" Zach asked, perplexed.

"She has the Shinigami eyes," Light explained, "When a person has the Shinigami eyes, they can't see the lifespan of someone who owns a Death Note. And that's exactly why you can't ever meet her. I don't want her to find out that there's another person who can play the role of Kira if necessary."

Zach nodded in agreement, and then continued, "So can you bring me up to date with what's going on at the Task Force headquarters? Have you heard anything from your father?"

"Actually, L asked me to join the Task Force myself just a few days ago. He was actually the one who asked me to send the video from the original Kira. Of course, he thinks that it's a Kira *he* created."

"So, you've met L? And if he asked you to do that, he must know that there's a second Kira!" Zach said, barely able to contain his excitement. "So what's the Task Force thinking, then?"

"To be honest," Light said, his face becoming serious, "they, or at least L, suspect me of being Kira. However, I'm pretty sure that I'm safe for the time being; no one else on the Task Force seems to be very convinced."

"Wow..." Zach replied, awestruck, "L figured out that you were Kira already? I mean, I know I did too but at least I knew about the Death Note. Without that knowledge, I never would've been able to do it."

"And there's something else," Light continued, "L knows that the two Kira's have met."

Zach stared at him, dumbfounded. "Wow, impressive."

"Yea..." Light looked down at his watch. "I need to go, we can't be together for too long," he concluded, and, as he was leaving, added, "by the way, if you see someone behaving weird, maybe sitting or acting funnily, there's a good chance it's L. Do not make contact with him."

Zach sat in silence for a few moments, watching Light walk away. "That guy's way to uptight," he said

to Rek.

“Heh, no kidding.”

## 11 - Memories

Light stood in a hotel room, surrounded by the other members of the Kira Task Force. A man was in the chair in front of him, sitting on top of his heels and watching a video from the second Kira.

“Well,” the man said, “take a look at *this*.” He played the tape from the beginning. The only image on the screen was the name Kira. A low, deep voice came on, run through a voice scrambler.

“I’ve decided to stop searching for Kira. And, I’d like to thank the police department for their advice. However, I still plan to help Kira in his mission, and I hope that, in time, he will come to see me as an ally. I will start by punishing criminals that Kira has yet to judge. Also, I will share my power with others who I feel are worthy, and I will encourage them to do the same. Together, we will make this world a better place.”

The man and Light discussed their thoughts on the tape for a few minutes. Then the man addressed the entire room. “The idea of their union is very threatening. However, this is one less reason to suspect that Light is Kira.”

“Ryuzaki, what do you mean by that?!” asked Light’s father, the chief of the Japanese police.

“If Light *is* Kira, I don’t think this is the message he would have had the second Kira send us, it doesn’t fit. *He* would have made the second Kira go through with his plan to have me appear on TV, then deny that they ever made contact, letting the second Kira shoulder the blame for my death. He’d make him say something like, hmm...” The man paused to lick some frosting off a donut. “Although I agreed not to go through with this, I have come to realize that it was not Kira’s true intention that I stop. I am positive that the real Kira would want L to die. There’s no way he’d make me...stop.”

“Ryuzaki,” Light started.

“Mm yes, Light?” L asked.

“I think you’re mistaken; I would never do that if I were Kira.”

“Why not?”

“Well,” Light continued, “if you’re L and I’m Kira, then I’d already know your personality pretty well. L would never agree to appear on TV, no matter what threat he was facing, and he wouldn’t allow someone else to die in his place. The L I know would find someone way to escape the situation.”

“So, you figured it out.”

“Look, Light,” Chief Yagami interjected, “you’ve got to stop that. I don’t like hearing you say ‘if I were Kira’, even hypothetically.”

“Oh, I’m sorry Dad,” Light replied innocently, “I just wanted to let Ryuzaki know exactly what I thought

of his plan. I posed that scenario because I want to help solve this case. It's the only chance have to clear my name. Besides, the only reason I feel comfortable saying things like that is because I'm not really Kira."

"That's a good point," L spoke up, "You're not Kira. That is, it would be a problem if you were Kira. Because," he continued with a sigh, "I feel that you are the first friend that I have ever had."

Meanwhile, back at his hotel room, Zach lay on his bed, staring at the ceiling.

"Lemme guess," Rek scoffed, "coming up with more strategies on how to use the Death Note?"

Zach turned his head lazily toward Rek, glaring at him in annoyance. "No, Rek. As surprising as it might sound, I don't spend every waking moment thinking about the Death Note."

"Oh?" Rek responded, clearly throw aback. "What were you thinking about, then?"

"Nothing, Rek," he said with a bit of a smile. "Nothing at all."

He turned his head back toward the ceiling and closed his eyes. His memories slowly became more vivid, and soon took over the real world.

*Zach was a much younger boy, sitting by a large tree. Another boy, even younger than Zach, sat beside him. Both were panting slightly, exhausted after a long day's play.*

*"Here, have some," Zach said as he offered the small boy part of his chocolate bar.*

*"What's it taste like? Roger never lets me have any," he replied curiously.*

*"Just try it," Zach answered, laughing.*

*The boy took the piece of chocolate from Zach and took a small bite. His face suddenly lit up.*

*"Yummy!" he exclaimed with a grin. As they began to eat, Zach continued talking.*

*"You know, Roger said that a new kid was coming today. He's only three years old, but they said he's really smart. Anyway, it looks like you're gonna be the oldest of our little group soon," he said, staring at his feet.*

*"C'mon Z, don't say that," the boy replied with a frown, "You don't have to leave..."*

*"Don't be that way," he answered, trying to cheer the boy up. "You know I do; they found my real parents, I have to go with them."*

*"But what if we never see each other again?"*

*"We will, I promise. And no matter what, we're friends to the end, now and forever."*

*A car horn honked in the distance. Zach looked up to see a man motioning for him to come.*

*“Well, looks like it’s time for me to leave. Bye...” he said and, seeing the sad look on the boy’s face, continued, “I promise, we’ll see each other again. Some day.”*

Zach wiped a single tear from his face. “And somehow,” he said to himself thoughtfully, closing his eyes, “I’ve got a feeling that day is coming, Mello.”



## 12 - Answers

"Where is he?" Zach asked himself the next day, slightly frustrated. He was wandering around the campus, looking for Light. He wanted to know more about the situation at Task Force Headquarters. He passed by the bench he had seen Light near the last time they had run into each other. There was only one person sitting on it, but it wasn't Light. Rather, it was a man dressed in a plain white shirt and jeans, sitting on his heels. "What a weird way to sit," he mumbled to Rek.

"Eh, all you humans are weird to me," Rek retorted.

"Should've known you'd say that," Zach said with a grin. A sudden shock ran through his mind. "*A weird way to...*" He did a double-take. "*This guy...could...that be L?*" He decided it was best not to take chances, and kept walking. A few moments later, he heard the man speak somewhere behind him.

"Hey, Light! How's it going?" the man said.

"*Damnit!*" Zach thought, his head racing, "*He knows Light! It is L! I've gotta get out of here.*" And, without a second thought, he walked as fast and as far away as he could. Again he heard voices behind him.

"I hope she's not upset," the man said, noting that the girl Light had been walking with was not leaving.

"Never mind that," Light answered, "Is it okay to be here? Didn't you say –"

Zach could hear no more of the conversation; he had moved too far away. His attention returned to his surroundings. He looked back in front of him just in time to avoid bumping into a young blonde girl running in the opposite direction.

"*Was that Mi –*" He stopped short. "I'm just imagining things now," he said to himself, laughing quietly.

Later that day he found himself once again lying on the hotel bed, waiting for Light to call. He turned to Rek, who was hovering upside down in the air, pretending to be asleep.

"If he doesn't call soon, I'm gonna have to make a move on my own," Zach said. Rek made no response.

"I know you're awake, Rek." Still no answer.

"Well, I'm gonna go kill Light now."

Rek snapped to attention. "Are you serious?"

"No. But now that you're up you can answer a few questions," Zach replied with a smirk.

"Aw man," Rek said defeatedly.

“Question one,” Zach continued, “There was one man who didn't die when I wrote his name in my notebook during my experiments. Well, that's not entirely true. He died forty-three minutes after I wrote his name down, at exactly nine o'clock. Why is that?”

“Well,” Rek answered, sighing heavily as he thought, “I suppose there's a chance that Light or the other Kira, Mimi or whatever her name was, may have written his name and details of death before you did. In that case, his name and any details of his death you wrote later would be voided.”

“So you're saying that once a name is written in a Death Note, that person's death cannot be changed by anyone else?”

“Didn't ya hear me?” Rek complained in a raspy growl. “I just got through saying that.”

Zach laughed and rolled his eyes. “Alright then, second question: What do you know about the terms by which Misa Amane acquired her Death Note?”

“Pretty much everything,” he responded sarcastically.

“Care to be more specific?” Zach asked, growing slightly agitated.

“Not really.”

“Fine then. One more question for now. You said before that when a Shinigami writes the name of a human in their Death Note, that human's remaining lifespan is added to the Shinigami's. But what happens to a Shinigami's remaining life? What happened to Sorin's life?”

Rek stared curiously at Zach for several moments. “Why do you want to know that? That information can't possibly help you.”

“Just curious, that's all,” Zach replied casually.

“Look at Mr. Softy,” Rek sneered. “You feel sorry that she lost her life for you, don't you?”

“Look, are you gonna tell me or not?” Zach snapped.

Rek chuckled to himself. “Well let's see. Life can't be eliminated, only transferred. That's not counting people who die when they're suppose to, of course. But life that was meant to be used by someone can only be transferred, usually to a Shinigami. Any humans you kill, for instance, will have they're remaining life transferred to me since I'm what I guess you could call the Shinigami by proxy. But when a Shinigami dies to save a human, well then...I guess I'd have to say that that Shinigami's remaining lifespan is transferred to that human.”

“So you're saying Sorin's remaining life was given to me.” Zach thought aloud. “That makes sense, I guess. Otherwise I couldn't have continued living past that day.”

“Yeah, yeah, whatever.” Rek said, clearly tired of the interrogation. “So are we done or what?”

“Yeah, we're done,” Zach said as he laid back down and closed his eyes. His mind slowly drifted off; it had just occurred to him how tired he was. His grip on reality loosened more and more as he slowly drifted to sleep.

He jolted awake. There was a sound coming from somewhere in the room. It took a while for Zach to realize that the sound was coming from his phone on the desk across the room. Zach scrambled over the desk and answered the phone. A familiar voice came from the receiver.

“L knows.”

## 13 - Preparation

Zach's heart skipped a beat. In an instant, every action he had taken since he first touched the Death Note flashed before his eyes. Had he made some kind of mistake? When? How? Had L somehow figured it out just from that brief moment? After a few seconds, Zach managed to regain his wits.

"How much does he know?" Zach demanded.

"He's already deduced that Misa has a notebook and has already had her detained," came the answer. A wave of relief washed over Zach as the meaning of Light's words became clear to him. He was safe, at least for now.

"In the next few days, I plan to have L detain me as well," Light continued, "That way, I can lay the groundwork to prove my innocence."

"And I suppose you have a part for me in this plan?" Zach asked, already aware of the answer.

"That's right," came the answer, "I've already prepared for an incarceration of up to five weeks. As it is, no more criminals should die until about two weeks from today. After that, I've arranged for them to resume dieing until the end of that five week period. However, if I do not contact you again by that time, I want you to use your Death Note to continue killing criminals. I've also planned to have Rem give Misa's notebook to someone who will do the same."

"Rem?" Zach asked. He had heard the name before. "That's right, Rek mentioned her once. I assume she's the Shinigami attached to Misa's Death Note?"

"Yes," Light confirmed. "Misa has forfeited ownership of her Death Note, and so I've instructed Rem to find someone who will do as they are told for the time being."

"Then what good will it do for me to kill criminals too?" Zach asked, puzzled.

"I can't be sure what kind of person will end up with Rem's notebook. I need to be sure that someone who knows what Kira's ideals are is passing judgment on these criminals."

Zach grinned as he waited for Light to finish. He thought that Light would do something like this.

"Furthermore," Light continued, "during my confinement, I plan to relinquish ownership of my own Death Note. After that, I'll lose all my memories of the notebooks. That includes my memories of the existence of Shinigami, as well as any conversations I've had with you or anyone else regarding the Death Notes. Eventually, after L determines my innocence, I'll most likely try to help catch Kira myself. I've instructed Ryuk to inform you after I've given up ownership of the Death Note. After that, you should begin killing criminals sparingly, and using methods other than a heart attack."

"Of course," Zach thought, "*That way, the Task Force will be focused on the new Kira, rather than me. It also has the benefit of making L believe that there may be two Kiras operating in the open while Light and Misa are being confined. Of course, that would only serve as further proof of Light's innocence. Well done, Light. It seems like you've really thought this one through.*"

"I understand," Zach said. He heard a click as the phone on the other end hung up. "That seemed unnecessary."

## 14 - Unfolding

"It's been two weeks since Light asked L to confine him," Zach thought aloud. "Seeing as I haven't heard anything further from him, and since I haven't heard of any criminals being killed, I assume L complied."

"So this guy really *asked* to be thrown in jail?" Rek cackled. "If ya ask me, the pressure's startin' to get to him."

"It's entirely possible," Zach responded, "But I'm inclined to believe Light knows what he's doing. After all, he's gotten this far, hasn't he? And as long as I do my part, everything should work out fine."

Rek let out a harsh laugh. "So you're just gonna keep sitting back and doing whatever this guy says, huh?"

"Like I told Light when we first met, we're working toward the same goal. If he's willing to take the lead, and by that I mean the responsibility, I'm not going to complain."

With that, Zach walked over to the desk and took out his Death Note. He opened it to the first blank page and turned on the television. As he began writing, Rek slowly made his way over and looked over Zach's shoulder.

"Huh? What's the point in using it like that?" he asked confusedly.

"You'll see, Rek," Zach answered mysteriously, "I'm not quite done testing the limits of the Death Note, and as long as I'm using it to progress Light's plan, I might as well continue with mine as well."

"What d'you mean, 'limits'?" Rek spat, "It's pretty straight forward: write a name and kill 'em."

"Yes, but there's more to it than that. From what I've tested so far, I can control a victim's actions leading up to his or her death. However, if the actions I specify are physically impossible, or if I try to make them do something they would never do of their own free will, the default of a heart attack will take effect."

"But you had a few criminals commit suicide, you telling me they just happened to want to do that?" Rek retorted.

"You're not listening. It only needs to be *possible* for them to carry out my instructions. Since almost any human can potentially decide to kill themselves, writing 'suicide' as a cause of death will usually work. Furthermore, I can't write anyone's name in the Death Note without killing them."

"Please tell me there's more to that thought," Rek said sarcastically.

"That means," Zach continued, overlooked Rek's remark, "that it's much more difficult to control someone if I need to keep them alive."

"But I thought you said you could control them before they die. Can't you just specify that they die much later?"

"Are you just determined to prove you know less about the Death Notes than a human?" Zach asked smugly. "According to my experiments, I can only control people for up to twenty-three days before they die. If I write that they die more than twenty-three days after I begin controlling them, then not only will they automatically die of a heart attack on the specified day of death, but they won't perform any of the actions I write. Fortunately, I think I've found a way around that."

"Is that right?" Rek said curiously.

"Yeah, but I won't be sure until tomorrow," Zach concluded, shutting the Death Note.

"Really? How will you know?"

"Didn't you see what I wrote in the Death Note? If all goes as I planned, I should receive an 'accidental' visit from a Mr. -"

"Hey," came a raspy voice from behind them. Zach and Rek turned around to see Ryuk entering the room through a wall.

"Ryuk, what are you doing here?" Rek demanded.

"Don't you remember?" Ryuk spat back, "I'm supposed to tell you when Light gave up ownership of the notebook."

"And I take it he did?" Zach asked.

"Yeah, about a week ago. I sorta forgot to tell you then," Ryuk admitted.

"Well, thanks for telling me now, at any rate," Zach said. "I don't think anything I've done in the past week will stand out. Thanks, Ryuk."

"Eh, no problem. Hey, you got any apples?" he asked greedily.

"I live in a hotel, Ryuk."

"So I guess that's a no?"

"That reminds me," Rek interjected, "how can you afford to stay at this place?"

"When I applied to To-Oh University I also was granted a full scholarship, so my parents had no problem paying for the room," Zach explained.

"As interesting as all this is," Ryuk interrupted, "I'm gonna go look for some apples." As he turned to leave, Zach stood up.

“Ryuk,” he said, “tell me one thing before you leave. Do you know if Rem has found a new owner for Misa's Death Note?”

“No idea. But knowing Rem, I'd say she's found someone by now.”

“Thanks, Ryuk,” Zach said.

“Sure. See ya,” he said with one final wave as he left.

“Why does it matter if someone else has Rem's notebook yet?” Rek asked.

“Like I said before, Rek...you'll just have to wait and see.”

## 15 - Alone

“Zaaaach,” Rek whined in boredom, “What are we just sitting around here for?”

“I told you, Rek, I'm expecting a visit.”

“What's so important about this guy anyway?”

“What's [important] about this is that it determines every move I make from this point on.”

Rek rolled his eyes and floated away. He had clearly lost interest. Zach returned his attention to the television, which had a banner of recent event rolling across the bottom of the screen. For several minutes he sat in silence, waiting. His focus was completely on the screen; it was as if the surrounding world didn't exist. He began to worry that his experiment was a failure.

“There!” he shouted, pointing to the caption at the bottom. His outburst had rekindled Rek's curiosity.

“What is it?” Rek asked as he moved to view the screen himself. “Bank thief fatally shoots five police officers; thief killed by stray bullet,” he read. “That you're fault?”

“That's right. Well, three of them, anyway. Unfortunately, one of the setbacks of the Death Note is that you can't force someone to kill another person. Or rather, you can't make them kill a specific person. However, that doesn't mean it's impossible to make one person kill someone you also want to die.”

“What the hell are you talking about?” asked a clearly confused Rek. Zach opened the Death Note and turned to a recent page, showing it to Rek.

“The first two entries are each one of the police officers that were shot, the first of which was the commanding officer in that area.” He cleared his throat as he prepared to read the entries. “Shinji Inuzuka – accidental death: On June 14th, at 12:35 p.m., he corners a thief attempting to rob a local bank. He orders four police officers to follow him into the bank, where he is fatally shot.” Zach paused to give Rek a minute to take in the information before continuing, “Hachiro Kishimoto – accidental death: On June 13th, he reports a Kira sighting in Room 127 at the Yokoshira Hotel to the Kira Investigation team of the NPA. The next day, on June 14th, at 12:37 p.m., receives an order from a commanding officer to enter a local bank, where he is fatally shot.’ And finally, I made an entry for the thief, some American who tried to escape a conviction by coming to Japan. ‘Franklin Waller – accidental death: On June 14th, at 12:00 p.m., he enters a bank and pulls out a loaded gun. He demands that everyone in the bank leave immediately and proceeds to empty the registers. At 12:38 p.m., five police officers enter the bank. He begins to shoot wildly. Killed by a ricocheted bullet from his own gun.’” Zach looked up to see Rek's reaction.

“Seems like you had a lot of luck,” Rek commented.

“Not really,” Zach corrected, “I specified that Inuzuka and Kishimoto would be killed by a gunshot, and



that Waller would shoot his gun. Since I made Waller evacuate the building, I made sure he only had the police as targets. There was no other way it could have ended.”

“But why'd you have that one guy report that there was a Kira sighting here? Won't the police have to inspect this place now?” Rek asked.

“I'm counting on it. I've already hidden the Death Note for now, and since this entire block is predominantly college students, they'll probably send someone younger and less experienced.”

Zach stopped suddenly. There was a knock at the door.

“Sounds like he's here,” Rek laughed.

Zach walked over and opened the door to see a dark haired man dressed in a suit.

“Hello,” the man said, somewhat nervously. “My name is Taro Matsui, I'm a member of the NPA. We received an anonymous tip that there may have been some Kira-related activity occurring here. I'm sure it's nothing, but we've made it a policy to check into any report regarding the identity of Kira.”

“Of course,” Zach replied understandingly. “You're welcome to look around, but I'm afraid you won't find anything to do with Kira here.”

“Right,” Matsuda nodded, stepping into the room. He seemed hesitant, as if he didn't know what to do next.

“*This guy is clueless,*” Zach thought.

“Excuse me, officer, but what can I do to help?” he began.

“Uh, please, call me Matsui,” he corrected nervously, “The tip we received said that Kira was spotted here on the 12th around 10:00 in the morning. Were you here at that time?”

“I was. I didn't leave for class until 10:30.”

“And was there anyone with you at the time?” Matsuda continued, examining the desk in the corner.

“In a manner of speaking,” Rek laughed. Zach shot him a displeased look. He knew this man could not see nor hear Rek, but he still felt uneasy about it.

“No, I was alone” Zach answered.

“In that case,” Matsuda said, “I'm going to need you to come to the station so we can put you on record.”

“*Perfect.*” Zach thought with a grin. “Wait, you mean just like that you're accusing me of being Kira?”

“No, no, no, it's not like that at all. It's just that with the magnitude of this case, we have to make sure to

keep a record of anyone claiming to be Kira or be connected to him in some way.” Matsuda explained, still inspecting the room.

“Oh, I see,” Zach replied in false ignorance. “Of course I'll come with you.”

As they left the hotel, Zach found himself struggling to keep himself from laughing.

*“Looks like I over-prepared,”* he thought. *“I could have just as easily kept the notebook on my person, he never even bothered to check my clothing.”*

“Mr. Matsui,” he asked, “have the police actually arrested anyone on the grounds of being Kira?”

Matsuda looked at him strangely for a moment. “Um, I'm afraid I can't share that kind of information.”

*“That's a yes. So, Light has definitely been detained by L.”*

The car ride to the police station was completely silent. On occasion, Zach wondered if he should say what he was thinking, but decided to wait. This was something that needed to be said after they had gotten to the station. Finally, Matsuda came to a stop. Zach looked out the window to see that they had arrived. They walked in together and Matsuda took him to a room past the front desk, where Zach provided the information for his file.

“Well,” Matsuda said after they had finished, “that should be it for now. Would you like a ride back to your hotel?”

“No, that's okay. I can walk back.” Zach began to leave, but something was stopping him. He couldn't let this opportunity pass by.

## 16 - Deceit

"Mr. Matsui," he began, "I'm not sure how important this is, but I was wondering if you would be at all interested in a theory I have been developing regarding the Kira case."

"Well of course, any new ideas are always welcome."

"Well, I'm sure that the police have already figured this out, but the fact that there have been two weeks without any reports of criminals dieing makes me think that he was trying to accomplish something. If the team investigating Kira took anybody into custody right before the killings stopped, then its possible that he or she arranged to have Kira's power transferred to someone else." He stopped for a minute. He could see that Matsuda, hanging on every word now. "But, I guess that sounds a little ridiculous, huh?" Zach finished, scratching the back of his head.

"N-no! Not at all! It's a very interesting theory. I'll make sure that L hears about it." Matsuda said eagerly.

A surge of excitement shot through Zach's body. "Does that mean you're actually working *with* L?" he asked.

"Oh, um..." Matsuda paused. He had clearly not meant to let Zach learn of his connection with L. "Yes, I'm a member of the Kira Task Force. Please, you must keep that a secret. You can understand why the people trying to catch Kira can't go around telling people."

*"I can't believe my luck,"* Zach thought, *"I thought that I'd just get some rookie looking into the tip I had that officer report, but they actually sent a member of the Task Force! But I can't let my excitement take control right now. I have to stay focused"* He took a moment to regain his composure. "You have my word. But, could I ask a favor of you, then?"

"A...favor?" Matsuda asked, surprised. "Um, sure, why not?"

"I believe that my theory will carry more weight if L believes it came from a reliable source. I would hate for Kira to get away because I was determined to take credit for an idea."

"Hehehe," Rek cackled. He was obviously amused by Zach's feigned innocence. "Listen to you. Playing at both sides to make sure you're covered either way, huh?"

"So you want me to tell L that it was my idea?" Matsuda inquired.

"Yes. Of course, if you're uncomfortable with it, I under-"

"No, you're right," Matsuda interrupted. "L will be much more likely to look into your theory if he believes it came from within the Task Force."

He stopped as his cell phone rang. Zach watched Matsuda's face as he listened to whoever it was that had called. He seemed very surprised and excited. What was going on?

"I'm sorry, but I have to go," he said suddenly as he hung up the phone.

"Oh, okay," Zach said, taken aback. Without another word Matsuda ran to his car and left. "I wonder what that was about."

Matsuda burst into a hotel room. In addition to the other Task Force members already there, L sat in front of a monitor.

"What's going on?" he asked. "I just heard, two weeks worth of criminals were just murdered all at once, it happened yesterday!"

"Yeah, Kira is back" commented another member of the investigation.

"So did you guys already tell the chief?" Matsuda asked.

"No, not yet."

Matsuda ran to the screen L had been watching and picked up one of the microphones in front of it. "Guess what chief!" he shouted, "Kira's started killing again!"

"What?" Chief Yagami asked, stunned.

"It looks like Kira was only resting," Matsuda explained, "But now he's started punishing criminals again!"

"Is that true, Matsuda?" the chief asked. "Then, that means...my son...I shouldn't be happy that people have been killed, but...at least Light's name will finally be cleared. Wait, knowing Ryuzaki, this won't be enough to clear him."

Every present member of the Task Force immediately turned their gazes to L, waiting for his judgement. L looked around, taken aback by the sudden onset of everyone's attention.

"Well," L mumbled, "he's in the grey."

## 17 - Outcome

"It's been over a month since that police guy was here," Rek groaned, "and all you've done since then is go to class, come home, do schoolwork, and spend an hour or two writing in the Death Note. I thought you had some kind of big plan to be working on."

"Be patient, Rek," Zach said calmly, his attention never shifting from the schoolwork he had been doing. "I *do* have a plan, but I also have to keep my grades up. Remember, if my parents find out that I'm not doing well in school, there's a strong chance that they'll make me go back to America. Besides, I can't use the notebook too much right now, I have to let the Task Force find the new Kira."

"Why do you want them to find this other guy so badly?" Rek growled, "If they catch him, won't they get a hold of the notebook?"

"I'm counting on it," Zach replied, moving on to another class' work. "By now, it's highly likely that L has released Light from custody, since the new Kira and I have been punishing criminals while he's had no contact with the outside world."

"I get it," Rek laughed, "Light Yagami helps find whoever Rem ended up giving the notebook to, and when the police arrest him, they'll take the notebook. Then, Light can touch it and regain all his memories of being Kira."

"Right," Zach said, "There might be hope for you Shinigami yet."

Rek responded with a baffled look. "But if the police find out about the notebooks, won't that be a problem?"

"Not necessarily," Zach answered, finally abandoning his attempt to finish his schoolwork. "They wouldn't know that there are other Death Notes in the human world. With any luck, Light can keep them from touching the notebook and they won't even be able to see Rem." He stopped and thought for a moment. "However, with Light being a suspect I doubt they would entrust the notebook to him. The question is," he continued, "what will Light do once he regains his memories?"

"Eh, all I know is that right now, you're about as interesting as a stick. Why can't you actually do *something* with the Death Note?"

"I *am* using the Death Note, Rek. But I have to keep my activity to a minimum, and I still have a few more experiments to finish."

"What?" Rek asked incredulously, "you mean to tell me you're still playing around with that Death Note? I gave it to you so that you could do something interesting with it."

"Trust me, Rek. You might be bored now, but the end result should be very interesting."

"If you say so. I just don't get what the point of these experiments is," Rek complained.

Zach merely grinned and leaned back in his chair, staring at the ceiling.

"Rek," he asked, "Have you ever given a human a Death Note before?"

"No," he said simply.

"But you've seen other humans who have gotten a Death Note in the past, right?"

"That's right," Rek replied, "It's not often that a Shinigami drops a notebook into the human world, so when it happens a lot of Shinigami tend to watch that human until they're done using the notebook. I still can't believe three different notebooks ended up here at the same time."

"Well, it's a good thing that they did," Zach said thoughtfully, "because Kira couldn't survive a single person. But together, there's a very real chance that this world will have a new God watching over it very soon."

"Hehehehe. Confident, are we?"

There was a sudden ringing noise. Zach reached into his pocket and took out his phone. His face took on an expression of mixed anxiety and excitement.

"It's...my mother," he told Rek, answering the phone. "Hello?"

"Hello, Zach," came his mother's voice. "I've got some bad news."

"What's wrong, Mom?"

"You remember the Bensons, right?"

"Of course. They live in the house at the end of the street. Didn't their son get hospitalized a few months ago?"

"Yes. I'm afraid he finally took a turn for the worst. He died last night."

"That's terrible," Zach said, his voice remaining steady.

"There's more," his mother continued, holding back a sob. "His parents were found dead this morning. They think it was caused by grief over the loss of their son."

"I'm sorry to hear that," Zach said. He seemed to genuinely mean it. "Mom, I...I'll call you back later."

"I understand," she said. Zach hung up the phone without another word. He dropped it to the floor as he slumped back into his chair. For several moments he stared at the floor, completely silent.

"What's your problem?" Rek finally asked.

As Zach sat motionless, something began to overcome his disbelief. His heart started racing faster and faster. He could feel the pressure building inside his chest. A small grin broke the stillness of his ghostly expression.

“It worked,” he whispered. All at once his emotions burst to the surface as he broke out laughing. “Hahahaha! I did it! It all went according to plan! As long as Light is successful in his plan, everything will turn out perfectly!”

## 18 - Compromise

The only sound that could be heard was Zach's breathing as he took in the magnitude of the moment.

"What's the big deal?" Rek asked. "So you used the Death Note to kill some family from your old neighborhood, so what?"

"They're son has been in and out of juvenile detention centers for years. He needed to be punished. The parents' deaths were an unfortunate necessity. Besides, it's not the deaths themselves, Rek," Zach said with a self-satisfied smile. "It's what they prove."

"Eh? What's that?"

"Two things. First, that I don't need to specify an actual date. Secondly, it proves that as long as a disease has the potential to be fatal, it can be used to kill a person at a time outside my control."

Rek scratched his head. "And what's the point in that?"

"You know, Rek," Zach thought aloud, "for someone who doesn't like questions, you sure ask a lot of them. The *point* is that the Task Force is examining every death caused by Kira. They are also operating under the assumption that there is some significance in every case. Killing someone through natural disease results in a completely insignificant date. But I doubt that they'll even find out about these deaths. After all, it was just some small American family; the Kira they're familiar with would have no reason to kill people like that."

There was a sudden, loud thud coming from outside the room. Zach's heart skipped a beat. Without a word he rushed to the door and threw it open. The hall was empty, except for a single maid's cart sitting outside the door of the next room over.

Zach turned around and shut the door behind him.

*"Damn it!"* he thought. *"Was there someone out there listening? Even if there was, I have no way of knowing who they are. I don't even have a name to work with! This isn't good, I'm going to have to act fast."*

"What's with you?" Rek growled, watching Zach panic. "It was just something falling over in the hall." Zach looked up for a moment, remaining completely silent.

*"He...could be right,"* Zach thought as he mind raced. *"But...if someone did hear us..."*

"Hellooo? Zach?" Rek asked as he waved his hand in front of Zach's face. Zach threw up an arm and knocked Rek's hand aside.

"This is serious," Zach said sternly, "We have to determine if anyone heard something significant."



“And how are you going to do that?” Rek asked, clearly amused.

“Rek, I need you to look in all the rooms along this hall. I looked outside as soon as we heard that noise, so if there was someone out there, they must have gone into one of these rooms. There's a good chance that it was the maid outside who heard something, which means she's most likely in the next room over.”

Rek stared back at him in silence. “Look, this is your problem, not mine,” he said at last.

“*Damn Shinigami, he's useless.*” In a panicked rush, Zach ran over to the wall and put his ear to it. Although it was muffled, he could still hear a voice. Zach listened intently, barely able to hear over the pounding of his own heart. Suddenly his face went white.

“She called the police,” Zach told Rek.

“So what?” Rek asked, reclining in midair. “They wear name tags, don't they? Just write his name in the Death Note.”

“You're right,” Zach said, relieved. His breathing slowed down and returned to normal. “Who'd have thought you'd have a good idea?”

“Huh?” Rek responded in surprise.

“Which means I just have to find out that maid's name. But just in case...” he trailed off as he picked up the Death Note. “I have to find somewhere to hide this for the time being.”

After several minutes of searching for a spot to stow his notebook, he finally decided on a small gap between the bed and the wall.

“It's not the safest place in the world, but if the police officer they send decides to look around I'll have time to write his name on the piece of the Death Note I have with me.” There was a knock on the door. “Looks like it's time.”

Zach opened the door, his mind completely focused on his plan. Just as he had expected, there was an officer standing in front of him.

“Can I help you?” Zach asked.

“I need you to come with me, sir,” the man said simply.

“Oh? Uh, okay,” Zach replied with a feigned innocence. “Damn it, I thought I would have a chance to write his name down. I already had to create a file for myself at the police station so I could make contact with the Task Force. If they think that a second person called in claiming that I'm Kira, they'll have more than enough reason to suspect me. I have to be quick about this.” He looked closely at the man's name tag. “*Haru Kobayashi, is it? Now I just have to remember his name and kill him as soon as I get an opportunity.*”

After arriving at the police station, Zach was directed to a small holding cell. As he looked around, he noticed that there was only one other cell was occupied. The officer who had brought him in was facing away from him; it looked like he was entering something into the computer. "*Now's my chance,*" Zach thought. He removed the piece of the Death Note from the hidden pocket in his jacket, as well as a small clothespin. He opened the clothespin and pressed the needle end into the tip of his finger, coating the needle tip with his blood. Zach proceeded to carefully write the entry for the police officer.

*"Haru Kobayashi – suicide: at 1:35 p.m., on July 25, after releasing two people from their cells in the immediate vicinity, he deletes all records of their existence in the police database. Afterwards, he returns home and hangs himself."* Zach looked up at a clock on the wall. There was only one more minute to go. Zach counted every second until the anticipation was almost too much to bare. "10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2..."

Zach felt his stomach turn over. "*What the hell?! Nothing happened!*" Rek began cackling uncontrollably. "*It's a fake name...*" Zach realized. "*It makes sense, they know that Kira needs at least a name to kill. Damn! I have to kill him soon, and I've only got enough room on the piece of the Death Note I brought to try one more time. But...there's no way for me to find out his real name without revealing I know he used an alias!*" His stomach lurched again as he realized his only way out.

"Rek," he whispered solemnly, "let's make a deal."