



Original story: Bandai/Digimon.Net

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PDF Assembler: Junnichie

Novel's website: <https://digimon.net/digimonseekers/>

Churape's news: <https://churapereviews.com/>

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CHAPTER 1 – Eiji: Wolf of Ninth Avenue



1.1 - The Beginning

Hungry snarls echo off the tunnel walls. Heavy hurried steps crash onto loose gravel. Thick black claws dig deep into the earth as they reach through the darkness. An old light flickers. Its dirty yellow light washes over a large dinosaur. For that moment, its red scales shine and the light catches the glint of hungry blue eyes. The creature snarls as another light reveals its figure. The creature looks like Tyrannosaurus Rex, but not like the ones you'd see in a museum. Thick black stripes decorate its body and a row of pale emerald scales run down its back. Behind it, two identical beasts follow.

A subway car zooms past the trio, illuminating them for moments before leaving them to continue their pursuit in spotted darkness. The Tyrannomon are on a mission.



A tiny shadow scurries ahead of them. With each passing moment, the Tyrannomon inch closer to their prey. The scent grows stronger with each talon full of gravel. Their fangs blare as foamed drool drips down prehistoric jaws. Their prey is trapped.

ROAAARRRRR

The first Tyrannomon lets out as he lunges, but a passing train brings it to a halt. Gravel and dirt shoot from under it. The panging of pebbles against the metal is heard briefly before the screeching of the wheels drowns it out. Dust and dirt kick around the lead Tyrannomon as the

remaining two come to a stop behind it. They pace impatiently for the few seconds it takes for the train to pass them. They waste no time continuing their chase. This was their turf, there was no getting away.

The Tyrannomon move deeper into the tunnels. Darkness settles around them heavily. There are no lights to shine a path, but they don't need them. Instinct guides them through the shadows.

SPLASH

Talons sink into a cold thick liquid. The sensation slows them, but the Tyrannomon do not stop. They waded furiously through the sewage. The putrid rotting scent of the canal begins to mask the scent of their prey. They stop, taking a long sniff at the air in search of the eluding scent. Suddenly, the sound of gusting air appears in the darkness. Before the Tyrannomon can react, a tornado forms around their leader. The water around it kicks up into an angry whirlpool before sending the Tyrannomon flying. It lands on its back, its stomach left vulnerable as the waves from its landing settle around it. It struggles to return to its feet.

FUSHA

A shockwave of energy pierces into Tyrannomon's stomach, leaving behind a deep hole. The Tyrannomon lays there motionless as its bright blue eyes grow pale and lifeless.



Eiji moves through the lobby of a fast-food burger joint to grab a seat by the window. He carries with him a small Coke he got free with a coupon. He looks out the window and watches the people walking below him. Behind him, a digital 3D pop-up advertises the restaurant's newest burger. "Don't forget to supersize it!" The mascot commands as it enjoys the last bite of its burger. The advertisement trails off and is replaced with a generic Pandora station, as it fills the lobby with soft music.

Eiji pulls out his phone from his jacket. "Let's see if there's any work," he says to himself. Aside from a few people sitting in the booths away from him, there was no one around to hear him.

Eiji logs into his GriMM account and begins scrolling through the threads.

GriMM is the world's most popular social network. Most people use GriMM for its normal social network features like chatting, streaming, and message boards. GriMM's most distinctive feature is its support for the proprietary cryptocurrency Digicoin (DC). But like anything that exists on the net, there are parts of GriMM that are quite illegal.

For freelancers like Eiji, having a GriMM account is mandatory. GriMM is where freelancers find job postings, sales, and other tools of the trade. Eiji scrolls through the job listings as he mutters to himself.

He scrolls over an image of a BlackAgumon "One -Hundred Million DC for the capture?" It was a lot more money than he made on his usual hunts. The bounty excites as he thinks about all the meat he'll get to eat. He swishes the coke in his other hand as his stomach grumbles.

But Eiji's heart begins to sink as he begins to read over the comment section. Instead of helpful tips, it was full of trolls and people asking for money. GriMM is a dumpster fire, but a necessary one.

Eiji stares out the window as he debates taking the assignment. "Maybe this is some sort of urban legend. An Agumon isn't worth a million. And if it were black, it wouldn't be an Agumo..." A faint beeping interrupts his trance.

"My Tyrannomon!" Eiji shouts involuntarily. A group of high school students sitting at the other end of the restaurant turn to stare at Eiji. Eiji doesn't notice as he fiddles with the palm-sized LCD screen in his hand.

Eiji puts down his phone to focus on the small toy-like device in his hand. A deformed pixel version of Tyrannomon fills the screen. There is an “X” on its eyes, and its vitals are gone.

“Gah! I’m so stupid!” Eiji growls. He’d become too distracted, and it was going to cost him. “Stupid, stupid, stupid!” He grumbles.

The two remaining Tyrannomon look up from the LCD screen at Eiji, then at each other in confusion. Eiji starts pressing the keys on the screen, replacing the downed Tyrannomon and entering new commands.

“Capture the target or no food for you!” Eiji growls at the Tyrannomon. If the Tyrannomon doesn’t capture the target, he won’t get to eat either. Such is the life of a freelancer.

The high schoolers shift in their seats as they steal awkward glances at Eiji. They find it strange to see him so worked up over a game. But this isn’t a game for Eiji. Eiji is a Code Cracker, and this is his job.

Eiji continues furiously entering commands into the small device.

Tool Settings... Capture! Reassign target to Modoki Betamon

“You’ll pay for underestimating Cracker Fang,” Eiji says, referring to himself as his alias. Eiji clicks the Execute button. The Tyrannomon disappears from the screen. Eiji takes a sip from the half-empty paper cup. Moments later, a chime sounds. Eiji looks down at the LCD screen and smiles. The Tyrannomon have captured their prey. Eiji picks up his phone and continues to scroll through GriMM as he finishes his drink.

1-2: Abadin Electronics

Tokyo University of Electrical and Computer Engineering is a world leader in research and innovation. The school started as a government-funded program in an effort to promote the advancement of science and technology for the benefit of society. Despite being a newer institution, the university has earned prestige through its advanced research in the field.

The campus is also home to the world-renowned Abadin Electronics Corp (AE). AE leads the industry in electronic terminals, network equipment, and fabless semiconductors. The site is also where you find the Abadin Electronics Lab (DDL), a world-famous research and development lab.



Eiji walks into the DDL to find a bare room with only a reception desk and a small metal bench sitting across it. There are no visible logos or markings to suggest the building was connected to AE except for a large display mounted on the wall. The display loops peaceful videos of nature to serene music, occasionally ending in one of Abadin Electronic's promotional videos.

"Abadin Electronics Corp, discovering the impossible" the video trails off. The line makes Eiji smirk as he continues to make his way toward the front desk. The cute girl

behind the desk watches Eiji suspiciously. She is shorter than Eiji, with thick short hair tucked at the collar. She is dressed plainly in her receptionist's uniform.

Before Eiji could say a word, the girl says and says, "This is a research facility, if you are looking for the school, it's out those doors and to the left." It was a speech she's made too often.

Eiji is dressed in his usual casual attire and looks out of place amongst the well-dressed professionals that occasionally walk around him. He can't help but feel out of place. He smiles warmly. "Hi there. I have an appointment. Do you want me to sign in?"

The receptionist studies Eiji for a moment before handing him a tablet. A camera stares down at Eiji as he picks up the tablet and begins to fill out the form. The receptionist looks confused and slightly annoyed by the information as it appears on her screen. "Your name is Fang?" she asks incredulously.

"It's an alias. I use it for work"

"Are you in streamer?"

"No"

Fang is Eiji's code name. Most code crackers use them on the job. It was to keep anonymity in a field that wasn't always on the legal side.

"Please use your real name," the receptionist replies flatly.

Eiji updates his information on the tablet before setting it down. "Is that all you need from me..." Eiji reads over her nameplate "Hatsune?"

Hatsune turns to her computer and begins typing away. "Don't be so casual."

"Sure thing...Hatsune"

Hatsune's temples give an involuntary twitch "If you are here on company business I need your company's name"

"I don't have a company yet." Hatsune doesn't seem to appreciate the response. Instead she continues to look annoyed as she waits for an answer. "I'm sort of a freelancer. I'm here to see...oh what's his department" Eiji's voice trails off as he pulls

out his phone and begins scrolling through his messages “I’ll just wait for him over here...” his voice trails as he walks towards the bench.

Eiji clicks on the contact: Tomonori Ryusenji, professor. “I’m here” the message reads.

Eiji takes a seat. A few people wait with him. He begins to scroll through his phone as the serene lobby music plays around him.

“Fang!” a voice calls from behind the security gate.

Eiji turns to see Professor Ryusenji waving at him. The professor was a chiseled man with graying hair. He must be in his sixties, but he looks younger. Everyone in the lobby is surprised by the professor’s sudden appearance.

“Hello Professor” Eiji says as he walks over to greet him.

Professor Ryusenji is one of the founders of Abadin Electronics. He owns more than 20% of the company shares and is worth around \$100 billion, making the professor one of the world’s richest people. Professor Ryusenji’s work has been instrumental in making Abadin Electronics a world-class company since its inception some 20 years ago.

“It’s nice to finally meet you Fang, but it feels like we’ve known each other well enough already” The professor shakes Eiji’s hand. The two had been talking over the phone for a while now, but this is the first time meeting in person.

Eiji fires back an untrusting smile “Eiji Nagasumi. It’s a pleasure.”

“Well Fang. ER. Eiji let’s get going. Sorry for all the trouble” He stops “Were you able to get your guest pass?” the professor looks over to Eiji. Before Eiji has a chance to answer, the professor continues, “I’ll get you one” as he walks over to the desk.

Hatsune is confused by the request. She looks over Eiji, then back at the professor before working on the guest pass.

“Oh and I’m going to D4, Eiji here is my guest”

“Excuse me, sir?”

“The board gave their approval this morning”

“Oh right, understood,” Hatsune taps away at the terminal.

Pass in hand, the two make their way towards the gate. The guards look at Eiji and nod as they walk through the metal detector. Eiji feels like a real professional as the pass hangs comfortably over his neck. They pass by employees and researchers who warmly greet the pair. Eiji does his best to keep up as he returns smiles and greetings. Eiji couldn't help but enjoy the attention. It made him feel important.

“Why do they call you Professor instead of President or Chairman?”

“Because Professor describes me best.” Ryunsenji enjoyed research more than he enjoyed running a company. He had already left management to his formal subordinates so he could focus on his projects. “Before we go to the office, there is something I would like you to see. Follow me.”

Eiji agrees as he becomes filled with curiosity. They take an elevator to the next floor and cross another guarded gate. A large metal plate on top of the gate “D4”. It is a strange-looking building that seems to exist on its own.

“This is our secret department. It is where we keep our most important work” The Professor explains.

After a rigorous search, Eiji is forced to leave his phone and personal belongings at the gate. Eiji enters the room nervously and asks, “What is it?”

The Professor smiles “It's an experience”

1-3: Digimon are Alive

Eiji finds himself in a domed room, staring at a massive hologram of networks swimming around his head. He stood surrounded by game servers, social networks, and cat photos, all presented to him in almost tangible clumps of code and data. The professor smiles as Eiji is left speechless by the impressive display.

Before them, a hologram produces a map of a strange yet familiar looking world. While not the best rendering, it was beautiful nonetheless. It was a world separated by distinct biomes. A world with islands and continents. Mountains and oceans.

“Welcome to the Digital World,” a warm mechanical voice begins. “A world that exists outside the sea of networks. A world inhabited by digital monsters known as Digimon.” Suddenly a new hologram begins to materialize before Eiji. At first glance, the monster looks like a frog or rather a tadpole on the verge of becoming a frog. The creature is green with black stripes that make it resemble a watermelon. A dorsal fin runs down its back. A single sharp claw stems from its arms and legs, and its tail rests lazily behind it. Sharp exaggerated fangs spill out of its mouth and its red eyes stare down at Eiji.

Below the Digimon, words appear reading “Betamon, child, amphibian, virus type.

“Digimon are living AI” the recording continues.

Living AI? Eiji thinks, Is that really possible?

“Digimon can resemble living, mythical and theological beings. They can take the form of mammals, plants, insects, machines, and even gods” The hologram cycles through visual representations to aid its explanation. “Digimon can evolve. Throughout its life, a Digimon will exist in one of five stages. Baby, child, adult, perfect, and ultimate form.”

“Digimon are our way of interacting with the digital world,” Professor Ryusenji chimes in over the recording. “This new world suddenly appeared on our network, and it has since helped prop up humanity. Digimon have played an important part in revolutionizing society. The application of Digimon as AI tools has lead to remarkable discoveries in different fields like software development, cryptographic security, and even medicine.” the professor is unable to hide his passion.

“However” he says in a sudden change in tone. “There is a lot we don’t know about Digimon or the Digital World. Most people don’t even know it exists”

The dome begins to vibrate as an electric buzz begins to fill the room. The images in front of them disappear.

“Even if they did” the professor continues “they wouldn’t understand. Most people aren’t ready to understand.”

The dome continues to shift around them. Suddenly, the pair find themselves inside the cabin of a passenger plane. The flight is full. The engine roars as it carries the plane over clumps of clouds.

“There are two sides to this new world. While Digimon have been instrumental in important scientific advancements, there are people who will misuse them as weapons...” the professor’s voice trails off.

The scene starts to play around them. One passenger films the cabin with his smartphone. In the seats next to him, his wife and daughter sleep soundly.

BOOOOH!!!!

The serenity of the cabin is suddenly interrupted by a deafening roar. Eiji is startled by the sudden outburst. The cabin erupts into chaos with a sudden flood of noise followed by an ominous silence.

ROOAAARRRRRR

The scene starts to go dark as the camera begins to shake violently. An alarm starts to sound as the oxygen masks come down. Panicked screams mix with the confusion and....

Eiji averts his eyes. He can’t watch anymore. Tears start to fall from his shut eyes as the scene continues to play around him. The airplane begins to lose altitude. It crashes through clouds and falls out of the sky.



Eiji follows the professor to his lab. He tries to shake off the sadness of what he saw and get serious.

Inside, it looks like an ordinary university laboratory with tables filled with parts and unfinished gadgets. On the wall are shelves crammed with tools, materials, and cardboard boxes. One of the walls is made of glass, revealing an empty hallway. The two are alone except for the occasional whirling of machines.

Ryunsenji inspects the palm-sized gadget Eiji brought with him. A Digital Dock. "Wonderful," the professor says as he inspects the device. He is visibly impressed by Eiji's work.

Ryuesenji connects Eiji's dock to the lab's equipment. The Digimon Eiji captured appears in a hologram. It is a familiar tailed frog-like creature.

"A Modoki Betamon, just as I requested. Look at how beautiful and gentle it looks" Ryunsenji smiles widely as he continues to study the creature.

Eiji scoffs at the remark "It took four Tyrannomon to capture it!" Eiji sets his belongings on one of the tables.

Ryuenssenji continues to study the Betamon “wow, sounds rough,” he says flatly.

Eiji remembers the fight. The cornered Betamon fighting back furiously, the shockwave emitted from the creature’s dorsal fin, and the Tyrannamon lost in the process.

“This Betamon is different from the others,” Eiji begins his appeal.

“How do you mean?” Ryusneji seems miffed. He looks at the Betamon “Oh. You don’t know the difference between Betamon and Modoki Betamon?”

Eiji shakes his head in embarrassment. He didn’t like disappointing his clients. “Umm, is it the color?”

“That’s it!” the professor exclaims “so you do know the difference. I’ll make sure you get a bit of a bonus with your reward”

“Thank you so much!” Eiji’s mouth begins to water at the thought of meat for dinner. It’s been a while since he could afford meat, or any food really.

The professor seemed satisfied. He begins to transfer the Modoki Betamon data into the strange device.

Ryusenji turns to Eiji and asks “I’ve been meaning to ask. What did you think of our little experience from earlier?”

“Earlier...” Eiji shakes himself from his meat bowl dream “Oh you mean the video in D4? It was amazing!”

“That was a promotional video for our planned Digimon Land. The idea was to sell Digimon as characters to the general public to help educate them on the Digital World.”

Eiji’s imagination begins to race with ideas for the Digimon AI “I especially liked the bit about Digimon being AI creatures. If I were a kid, I’d be hooked!”

Ryunsenji shakes his head as he turns his attention to Eiji. “You don’t understand,” his hand lands on Eiji’s shoulder “Digimon are alive.”

1-4: The Job Offer

“Digimon are alive!” The words linger in dead air.

Eiji breaks the silence with an involuntary chuckle “It be cool if Digimon were alive. Lots of people have Digimon. Some folks keep them as pets and others collect them. Digimon are useful tools.” Eiji thinks of his Tyrannomon. Tyrannomon are popular with code crackers because they were common and easily caught. Most Digimon exists as code traded, bought, and sold between people on GriMM.

“Hmm,” Ryusenji responds, somewhat lost in thought.

“So, when will Digimon Land be ready? Where are you going to build it?”

Ryusenji snaps out of his thought as a look of disappointment fills his face. He begins to shake his head “We had to stop development on Digimon Land... Permanently”

“Seriously?”

“The park presented many challenges, some of which were... impossible to overcome. There’s a reason why the digital world must be kept a secret. People aren’t ready.”

Eiji thinks about the plane crash. He can still hear the screams and the terrible sound of the plane slicing through the air as it fell

“There are bad people out there Eiji. People who will misuse Digimon. Digimon Crimes started small. A game server would crash, or a website would get overloaded, but they were brushed off as pranks. Soon, the news started trickling in about identity theft and random acts of terrorism. You saw what happened to that plane. There are already people committing Digimon crime at a concerning scale, but the world leaders and international organizations are covering it up!”

Ryusenji takes a moment to compose himself. His hands shake from the anger but slowly still. “Can you imagine what would happen if a criminal used one of the park’s mascots for an act of cyber-terrorism? Can you imagine the scandal? Publicizing the Digital world means publicizing Digimon Crimes, and the world just isn’t ready. Imagine the panic that would cause.”

Eiji nods his head as he listens.

“I can hear the news outlets fear-mongering headlines,” the professor continues. “Digimon are coming for your freedom, more on this at 11,” Ryusenji looks flustered as his rant grows angry. “It is shortsighted to assume all Digimon are evil...People just aren’t ready to understand.” The professor’s words trail off, turning into an incoherent rant.

“Professor?” Eiji asks, attempting to bring him back.

The professor wakes from his trance and remembers where he is. “There is another world beyond the network where Digimon are alive. The real world and the digital world both coexist. Do you want to see it?”

“Yes of course” Eiji replies with a hint of skepticism clinging to his words. He’d only known the digital world through the black and white screen of the palm-sized device he made from salvaged parts.

“Do you know why what I am telling you is top secret?”

“Because its real?”

Ryusenji smiles as he nods, “Yes. That was real footage from the digital world.”

Eiji looks at the Modoki Betamon on the screen. It’s alive! He thinks of the Tyrannomon he’s been using. *They’re alive too. They’re all alive.*

“That is why I have devoted my life to studying Digimon. To D4.” The transfer of Modoki Betamon is complete. The professor unhooks Eiji’s handmade device and looks over it once more.

Eiji moves forward with his arm extended “Thank yo...”

SNAP

Ryusenji tosses Eiji’s Digimon dock to a nearby bin.

Eiji moves quickly and catches the dock before crashing into the trash can and stumbling to the floor. Eiji spent a lot of time building it. Even though it was made from mostly junked parts, it cost him a lot of money. “What are you doing?” His face still recovering from the sting.

“There was an error in the memory”

“Seriously?!” Eiji couldn’t believe it. The memory had never been an issue.

Ryusenji was a Digimon Collector, and like most collectors, he was precocious about his collection. “My research requires Digimon data to be perfect, or else its worthless. That Modoko Betamon data was nearly destroyed.”

“That doesn’t mean you need to throw it away. It may be worthless to you, but this stuff is expensive. I don’t have the funding of a huge corporation or access to expensive equipment” Eiji snaps as he looks over his device for signs of damage.

Ryusenji ignores Eiji’s outburst. He seems preoccupied on a new thought.

“... Hello?” Eiji waves, trying to regain his attention. The man may be a genius, but he had no right.

“Sorry about that,” the professor replies suddenly. “You just gave me an idea. Let me see you left arm”

“My... arm?” Eiji studies the professor suspiciously. Ryusenji stands over him, flashing an eager smile. Eiji offers his arm up cautiously. Ryusenji attaches something to Eiji’s wrist.

Eiji looks down and finds a stylish smart watch wrapped around his wrist. The sight of the gift makes him tear up. It’s been a while since he’s gotten a present. He fights back the tears. He wants to be professional.

“It’s Abadin Electronics’ latest Digimon Dock. Make sure you take care of it Eiji”

Eiji studies his gift. AE products were top of the line and highly sought after by Code Cracker. Eiji could only dream of owning AE parts, but here he stands with the latest model strapped to his wrist.



“Now this is just a prototype I’ve been working on so there might be some bugs.”

Eiji manages to rip his gaze from the watch. “This is amazing professor, thank you!”

The watch starts cycles through the startup process. “It has a biometric vital sensor. Only you will be able to use it,” the professor explains.

“Just for me?!?” Eiji can’t hide his excitement.

The professor nods “It can record your pulse, blood pressure, and other medical data. Most importantly, it supports Digimon hololization. Digimon hololization is only allowed in at the DDL and a few other facilities, but this...is a special exception”

Eiji is too excited to hear the explanation. He continues to turn over the watch to appreciate it from every angle.

“But here’s the thing” the professor begins. Eiji’s heart sinks. Of course there’s a catch. He knew better than to think there wouldn’t be a catch, but he also wasn’t ready to depart with his new watch. “I want to see what the famous Cracker Fang can do with it the next time I ask him for a favor”

“You got it chief!”

“That was fast. Good. I like that about you.” Ryusenji takes Eiji’s arm and presses the switch on the side of the Digimon Linker. The screen begins to glow a faint green. A mysterious flame flickers across the screen before vanishing into black. Words scroll past the watch reading: *Loogamon, child, dark beast, virus type*

Eiji looks at the strange Digimon occupying his screen. A small blue...

“It’s a... Dog?” Eiji asks stary-eyed.

Eiji passes through the security gate alone. The professor’s words echo in his head. *Digimon are alive. The digital world is real.*

Eiji passes the reception desk.

“Oh, good evening!” This time Hatsune speaks to him first.

Eiji turns away from his watch “Do I return the pass here?”

“Yes please. Put it here. Thank you very much.” She says, pointing at a small basket in front of her.

As Eiji returns the bass, he notices Hatsune eyeing his watch curiously. “The professor gave it to me. It’s a Digimon Dock.”

Eiji shows off his watch. Hatsune scurries around the desk. She grabs his hand to get a closer look and whispers “Isn’t that the newest model? I thought those were top secret?”

Eiji is surprised by how well-informed Hatsune is. “It’s just a prototype. The professor asked me to test it for him.”

“Wow, that’s impressive.” Hatsune says, re-examining Eiji. “The professor must really trust you.”

“You think so?”

“Absolutely” Hatsune lowers her voice “The professor is so...strange. He wouldn’t give this to just anyone.”

“He is peculiar isn’t he?” Eiji blurts out. Eiji is surprised by Hatsune’s sudden change in attitude. She is a lot nicer towards him now. “I’ll see you later?”

“Sure Nagasumi.”

“You can call me Eiji”

“Likewise... Eh... You can call me Hatsune or whatever. Oh, this is your admission record. I noticed you left your occupation blank. If you don’t mind, what should I put down?”

“My occupation?” Eiji thinks for a bit before declaring proudly “I’m a Code Cracker!”

1-5: Thunder is sound of the Police

There are two major ways to obtain Digimon. The first is by capturing them with a special AI tool. The other is by hatching them from eggs known as Digitama.

Digimon aren't like the animals we are familiar with. Digimon have no gender, and don't reproduce. When a Digimon dies, it leaves behind data. Think of this data like a Digimon's soul. This data moves through the Digital World and becomes a new Digimon somewhere else. It's sort of like reincarnation, but there is still a lot we don't know about Digimon ecology.



It's night. The dark sky is full of stars, and there is a stillness that echoes over the ruins. A closer inspection of the sky reveals that the sky isn't full of stars but the flowing data between the interconnecting networks that exist above the firewall.

Below this sky sit ruins covered by mounds of garbage. Between it sits a putrid rotting sea of rusted sludge. It breaks against a shore filled with sand of a similar color. Bubbles form on the surface and pop, releasing a vile odor into the air.

How did this land become so rotted? A theory suggests that data from the real world accumulates here and poisons the land. Without natural defenses against this foreign data, the land is left to decay.

Ill-intentioned men roam within this rotted canvas, but so do the police who exist to stop them.

A schematic of the area appears on the virtual monitor. Below it, the words “The Last Coast” blink in a simple font. Whoever named it had an odd sense of humor. In recent years, it’s become a hotspot for poachers. Digitama sometimes wash up on these bloody shores, and they can be sold for a decent amount of digicoin on GriMM.

The police radio crackles “We have a suspicious Digimon in sight!”

A red dot appears on the virtual map. It’s an unidentified Digimon.

“Tamahime here. Continue the search with caution”

“Understood. Looks like... An Espimon, child, cyborg, virus type”

Tamahime watches the screen as the video from the search team starts to come in.
“Got it, so it’s like a Tin toy?”

The Digimon looks like a retro robot toy. It has a large domed head like a snowman with long metal robotic arms. It propels through the air on the rockets it has for legs.

“Four bodies total” the voice reports

“We’ve got code crackers. These bots are toast.” Code crackers loved using Digimon, and Cyborg-type Digimon are the easiest to control. These Digimon were sent here with the commands to search the area for Digitama. If this were a real server, the Digimon would be looking for secrets or personal information. Here, the code crackers are looking for scraps.

“How many Digitama did you get?” One of the Espimon asks.

“Only one so far” the other responds.

The culprits don't know their chat room has been hacked. The police listen in on the conversation. The voices are young. They must be kids in high school. To them, it's probably just a game. A way to practice. The first step to becoming real code crackers.

"What are you going to do deputy leader?"

Satsuki Tamahime analyzes the virtual map as the team waits for her orders. Police can't pick and choose which criminals to go after. "Arrest them"

Ten green dots move quickly surrounding the unsuspecting Espimon.

"Jam their coms. Commandramon squads move in. Cut off their escape"

Many voices reply in unison, "Understood!"

The Espimon continue their search. Their code crackers wouldn't be aware of the ambush either. They most likely don't even know where their Digimon are. The only thing the code crackers see are crude pixel images on simple LCD screens. But the police have more advanced tech than the rudimentary Digimon Docks the code crackers use. Satsuki can see everything through the eyes of her Digimon.

"How dare you?! How dare you code crackers come here?" Her warning rings. The Commandramon stand up, and the Espimons find themselves surrounded.

Commandramon (child, cyborg, virus type) are standard issue for the DigiPolice. They look like dragon men. They wear helmets and body armor with the word "Police" written on them. Each Commandramon carries an assault rifle. Commandramon's skin emits an electronic camouflage that lets them blend into their surroundings. This allows them to approach undetected. All that was left to do was to make the arrests.

"Who is that?" asks one of the panicked code crackers.

"It's the DigiPolice. Run!"

It is too late. Satsuki continues, "Stop resisting. There is no escape. We already have your schools and names. There is no escape"

"Arrested? On what charge? We've done nothing wrong" one of the voices responds.

“You are in violation of the Unauthorized Computer Access Prevention Act, the Basic Network Act, and the Digital Vandalism Prevention Act, and for the Poaching of Digitama!” Sastuki says bluntly.

“The Japanese police don’t have jurisdiction in the Digital World”

Satsuki sighs. Her Digimon, who had been hiding underwater, surfaces.

Squeeeeeeeee!!! The sirens blare. The red patrol lights start to rotate. The Espimon tremble at the sight.

Satsuki continues “you are all Japanese citizens and as long as you are committing crimes, you are going to be in trouble with the Japanese police”

The Espimon press a red button on their belly and vanish in an instant. Vanishing magic? No. It’s their AI defense protocol. Optical camouflage.

The Commandramon fire at the space where the Espimon were, but the bullets find no target. They slip past the police unnoticed.

‘Mekanorimon” As soon as Satsuki gives the order, two large robots appear behind her.

Mekanorimon stand larger than the fleeing Espimon and the Commandrom they served with. These are the DigiPolice’s special purpose vehicles. Each Mekanorimon has a Commandramon piloting it.

A twinkling beam erupts from one of the Mekanorimon, grazing one of the Espimon. It erupts into a flurry of sparks as its camouflage dissolves. The Espimon falls onto the beach. The remaining three Espimon continue to flee, unaware that they are now visible.

“Don’t let them get away. Fire!”

“The weapons are still charging. We won’t be able to catch all of them” the Mekanorimon unit responds.

Petite Impulse

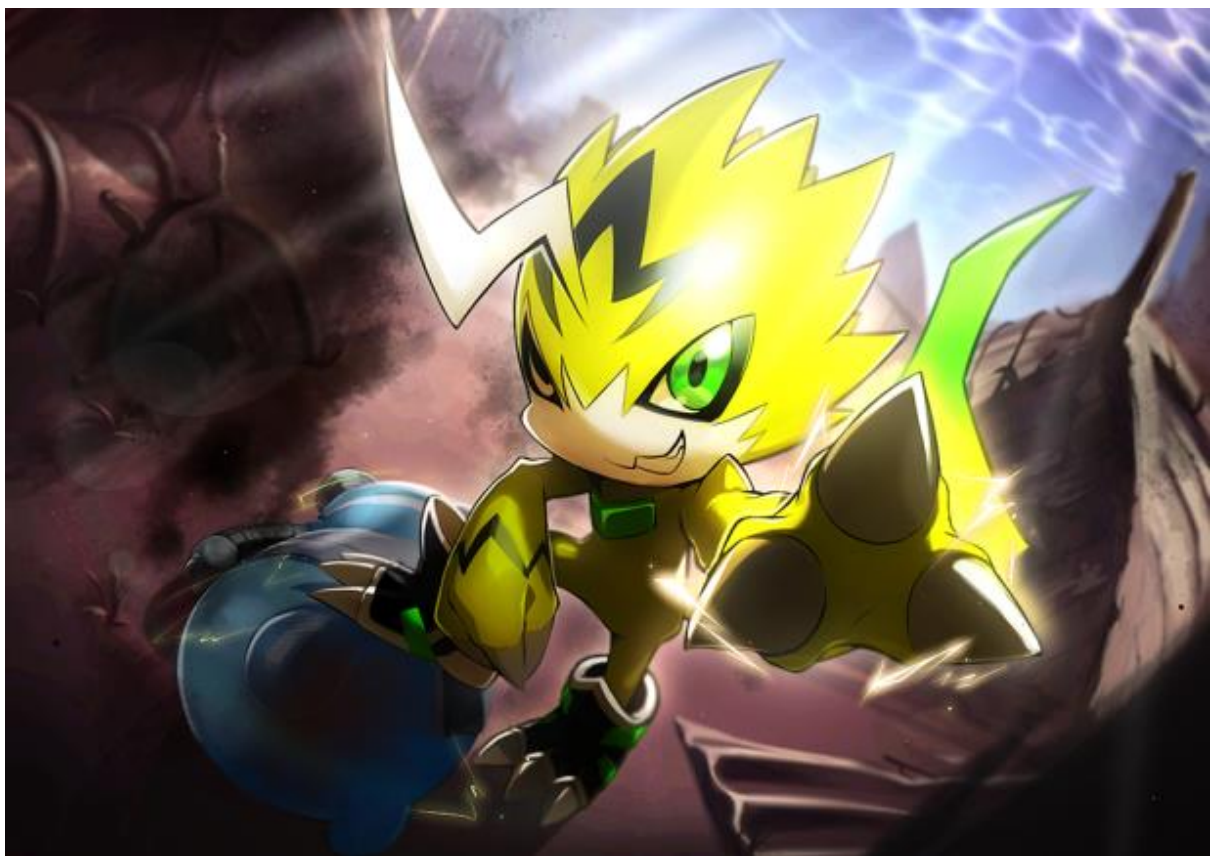
Suddenly, a bolt of lightning crashes into the rusty coast between. The bolt of lightning catches the police off guard.

“The Espimon?” a confused voice reacts from the radio.

One of the Espimon is left blackened, melted under the lightning’s heat. Bolts of lightning come down for the remaining two.

“What’s going on?” A new marker appears on the screen. It sits there, motionless.

A yellow Digimon stands over the deactivated Espimon. “Is that... Pulsemon?”



The Commandramon squad points their guns.

A voice comes in over the police radio “Looks like you just got beat by the hacker Judge!” says a familiar voice.

“Orders?”

“Judge!”

Pulsemon glances at Satsuki's Digimon and blows her a kiss before turning into a bolt of lightning and disappearing into the sea of networks.

"God Dammit!" Satsuki bangs her fists on the table.

"Squad leader?" The Commandramon wait for orders. Satsuki shakes in anger.

"We've got the Espimon and Digitama. We'll leave the rest to the police."

"And the Pulsemon?"

"Leave it. You can't catch him anyways. Pack it up. There's no overtime."

"Yes Ma'am... . Huh?" The radio goes silent for a moment. "The Digitama. They're gone!"

1-6: Eiji Becomes a Breeder

Eiji heads home with his new Digimon Linker and his new companion. His glances regularly fall onto his new accessory. He admires the sleek design. Watches as the face glimmers under the streetlamp. Occasionally he wakes it up to read over all its menus and is greeted by a sleeping Loogamon. Around him, crowds or people move around him, and a train passes in the distance.

His stomach growls and wakes him from his trance. He goes to the restaurant near the station and orders a meat bowl. The aroma is intoxicating, and Eiji almost drowns in a pool of his own drool as he waits for a meal that only existed in his dreams until recently. He savors every bite and wonders when Loogamon's last meal was.

Eiji takes a crowded train to his small apartment. The apartment is small and empty except for a few mats and a small altar. Small led candles flicker weakly as he stops in front of an old family pictures and one of a dog he used to have. "Hey, I'm home. Mom, Dad, Grandpa, Grandma. I'm home."

Eiji makes his way to his loft where he can finally examine the Digimon Linker without distractions. "I've never seen a Digimon like this before... Loogamon huh?" Eiji examines the blue dog sleeping on the watch.



“I want you to train the Digimon” Ryusenji had told him. Eiji begins scrolling through GriMM for advice on raising Loogamon. Digimon training jobs are extremely common on GriMM. Eiji needed to learn to be a competent Digimon breeder and trainer. He needed all the help he could get.

“I am interested in seeing how you raise Loogamon. It is important for my research”.

Eiji goes sighs as the the conversation replays in his head. “If Ryusenji expects so much from me, I have no choice but to give it my all” Eiji promises to no one. As the days events begin to sink in, Eiji can’t help but feel excited. But there was also

He had never been so excited in his life. But Eiji had no experience raising a Digimon, especially one so unique.

Eiji Looks over at the monochrome LCD screen that rests on his desk. A dotted Tyrannomon fills the display. It was Digimon Dock like the one he wore on his wrist, but an outdated model he built himself. The schematics can be found easily online. Eiji built it with readily available used parts he found online. Eiji owned a few Digimon Docks, but none of them were as good as the one he wore on his wrist.

The professor had mentioned something about the memory being corrupt in the Delivery Dock Eiji used to capture Betamon. “I’m going to need some parts,” Eiji says examining the parts scattered on his desk. But he already has a Digimon linker and doesn’t feel any urgency.

Eiji lays back in his bed and stares at the Loogamon. He smiles as he stares at the dog-like Digimon who seems to stare back. Loogamon felt like a good luck charm. One that he was determined to take good care of. But this meant that he would have to wear the Linker all the time. While the thought slightly bothered Eiji, he couldn’t help but feel excited. But there was also some apprehension. He had never done anything this important before.

Eiji spends the next few days learning how to use his new Digimon Linker properly and watching Loogamon grow quickly. He spends lot of time on GriMM’s breeder forums, asking questions and going through older threads. Eiji picked up a few basic concepts, but Loogamon was uncharted territory.

This might be tougher than I thought. He thinks to himself as the anxiety of failing the professor begins to settle. He begins thinking of what he saw in D4 and all of the professors accomplishments. *Digital World is real, Digimon are real, Loogamon is real, and I am just some high school drop out code cracker.* But Eiji wasn't just some Code Cracker, he was Cracker Fang. There was a small part of Eiji that was terrified of failure, but an even bigger part of him that was excited for the challenge.

"I'll get you to Ultimate Loogamon," he says to the Digimon Linker. Suddenly, notification flashes over the screen. Someone replied to his question on GriMM.

Fang! Gratz on becoming a breeder! If you want to raise a Digimon past its child stage, I recommend keeping it with other Digimon. If you have more than one, they will play together and learn from each other

"I see," Eiji says as he rushes to his desk, and searches for his old Digimon Dock. He brushes off the dock it's been collecting and links the devices. "Loogamon, meet the family," he says as he begins the transfer. In his excitement, he failed to read the rest of the message.

Be careful though. Some Digimon become obsessed with their rank in their pack. It's important to train them a bit before introducing them to the new Digimon.

Eiji barges into Ryusenji's lab in a huff. "Professor! Professor Ryusenji"

The professor looks up from his work nonchalantly. People suddenly barging into his lab was no novelty. "Good morning, Eiji." It was already afternoon, but the professor often loses all sense of time when he's at work.

"Good morning" Eiji responds with a quick bow, remembering his manners. "What's with this Digimon?!? It's not moving." Eiji rushes to the professor's side to show him the small blue pixelated wolf on his Digimon Linker. Loogamon naps soundly.

Ryusenji pulls Eiji's arm close and examines the sleeping Digimon. A smile forms on the professor's face. "He's just having a little nap. You're doing a great job Eiji, he's a healthy happy boy. I can't wait to see what he evolves into. If you can get him to his ultimate form, we'll give you a nice... incentive."

"An incentive? Like more money?"

Ryusenji nods his head. “You’ll get a very generous payout. I’m curious to see the type of Digimon Loogamon turns into. You guys will probably look super cool together!” The professor can’t hide his excitement as he starts theorizing about all the possibilities.

“I’ll do my best” Eiji replies. He was beginning to warm up to the eccentric old man. “Oh. Did you see yesterday’s training report? I sent it to your email.”

“Oh?!” the professor responds as he opens his email client. “I get hundreds of emails a day. I hardly ever open them. I don’t have the time to look through every single...here it is in your own little folder. I keep all your emails separate so they don’t get lost”

Eiji hugs himself and gives the professor a warm smile. “That makes me feel important”

“You’re a very important business partner of mine, Eiji”

The professor sounded sincere, and Eiji was slowly learning to trust him. Eiji felt strange having someone so important put so much worth onto him, but he was determined to make him proud. Here in this lab, Eiji wasn’t just another Code Cracker punk, he was a partner of the world-renowned scientist, Professor Ryusenji. This made Eiji feel good.

Ryusenji plays that video from Eiji’s report.



Loogamon, child, dark beast, virus type

Loogamon sits in front of four bowls of food but eats from one of them. Three Tyrannomon wait patiently across from the small wolf as it devours the food. Ryusenji's face inches towards the monitor as he observes the behavior.

"Loogamon is already stronger than three Tyrannomon." Eiji explains to an unmoving professor.

"Interesting..." Ryusenji's eyes remain glued to the screen. "Loogamon seems to have become the alpha. See how the Tyrannomon are behaving? It's like they respect him as their leader. This is truly fascinating. Putting them in the same cage has created this... Dynamic..." His voice trails as he continues his observations. His face is full of excitement.

"That must be why they don't bother him, even when he eats their food. He even tried eating this guy," Eiji says, pointing to one of the Tyrannomon.

"Oh?! That's interesting"

"Loogamon eats so much food though." Eiji begins to complain.

“That’s normal.”

Eiji pulls up another report. “Here’s the data for a benchmark I conducted. Loogamon is showing an above-average growth score”

“Interesting.” the professor strokes his chin as he reads over the data.

“Oh!” Eiji blurts out suddenly. He points to the jeweled mask on its forehead “What’s this thing on Loogamon’s forehead?” Eiji pauses the video and zooms in so that the face plate is fully visible. “That jewel even glows sometimes.”

Ryusenji moves closely so that his forehead is almost touching the screen “I am not sure, but that’s very perceptive of you Eiji.” The professor then turns to Eiji “How do you like Loogamon? Have you been using it for anything exciting?”

“I’ve been having trouble evaluating its performance as an AI tool”

“What do you mean?”

“It’s not that the command tools don’t work, it’s more like Loogamon won’t do what I tell it. It won’t work or walk either. It is a very stubborn dog”

“So, you don’t think you can raise it?” Ryusenji asks

Eiji panics. “No! I mean yes. I didn’t mean it like that. Raising it is my job and I take all my jobs seriously. I was just pointing out how...different it is from other Digimon I’ve raised.”

Ryusenji smiles back at the frantic Eiji “Try summoning Loogamon’s hologram.”

Eiji scrolls through his Digimon Linker before choosing the command. Loogamon appears in the room, sound asleep. It is about the size of an adult husky with soft-looking grey-blue fur. As it wakes, he blinks indifferent red eyes at the two men looking down at it. It wakes slowly, throwing slow indifferent blinks at the two men who now crowd him. It lets out a loud yawn.

“Fascinating!” Ryusenji suddenly shouts as he continues looking over the data “Look at these numbers!” The professor points excitedly at the evaluation report on the screen.

Eiji attempts to understand the information. “DS value...? I’m not sure what that means,” Eiji admits reluctantly.

“It’s an indicator I designed to calculate the compatibility between a Digimon and its partner. In other words, you and Loogamon are extremely compatible!” Ryusenji doesn’t hide his excitement.

“Seriously?!” Eiji looks down at Loogamon who has since gone back to napping on the floor.

“I knew I chose the right person for the job,” the professor claps.

“So...Does that mean that Loogamon can evolve right away?”

“I can’t say for sure”

“Why not?”

“The DS value doesn’t measure potential, only the user’s compatibility with a Digimon.”

“So it is possible to train,” Eiji whispers to himself. He had only ever used Tyrannomon, and a few other Digimon common in the code cracker circles. The more common the Digimon, the easier it was to train. Loogamon was unique and would require more work to train.

“Where have you been getting your Digimon up until now? GriMM?”

“Yeah. Since it’s illegal in Japan, I must get them from other countries. There are no borders in the Digital World.”

Ryusenji almost chuckles, “Do you know who you’re quoting?”

Eiji shakes his head no. It was a meme everyone repeated. “Do you?”

Ryusenji shrugs his shoulder as an involuntary smile escapes him. “What do you do again Eiji,” the professor asks, changing the subject.

“I’m a Code Cracker”

“Then you are familiar with the famous code cracking team?”

1-8: The Assignment

Code Crackers make up a community of anonymous individuals whose goals are to create a free Digital World, one not bound by the traditional social construct. Within this group exist multiple factions, each with unique beliefs of what a free Digital World should look like. Sometimes these beliefs clash, creating a healthy amount of infighting.

Code Crackers exist on the wrong side of the law, made up of misfits with nowhere to go. Whatever goal of dream they chase now, all crackers owe their roots to the original code cracking team.

“I’m a bit hazy on the details. I got into code cracking when I was a young kid in high school. One of the seniors talked me into it. Told me there was decent money in it, and it was at first. It definitely is a good side hustle for a high school kid, but I wanted to do something more serious. I want to use my skills to make a living.”

“You can do whatever you want” the professor replies, “But code cracking isn’t a stable profession. You’re always going to be breaking the law because the government doesn’t understand the Digital World yet.”

“Yeah. The DigiPolice make things...difficult” The DigiPolice is a secret organization only known to code crackers. They’ll stop at nothing to catch all code crackers, regardless of their intentions.

“Are you also trying to forge a free Digital World?” asks the professor

Eiji shakes his head “Shallow of me right? I just want a job so I can eat, and a clean record”

“And where will that lead you? What are your goals Eiji?”

Eiji thinks for a moment. “I...I want to win” he responds sincerely.

Ryusenji is taken aback by the response “Win? What are you trying to win?”

“It’s hard to explain. I can’t really do it in real life, but online... I’d like to be something so big that it changes reality. I want to make money, evolve Digimon, and become the best Code Cracker ever. I want to have a team of my own and be a boss”

“Do you have to be a code cracker to do that?”

“Yes!” Eiji startles himself with his sudden outburst. He composes himself before continuing. “For me, the Digital World is the only place where I can make a difference” Eiji pauses for a moment as he looks over the professor. “I want to be on your level professor. I want to be able to experience the Digital World with all five senses, not just through a monitor. That’s what I want to do.”

Eiji’s words make Ryusenji smile. “The Digital World can change a person”

Eiji thinks about his life. He pictures his small, cramped apartment and about his empty fridge. He’s a high school drop out without a steady job. Eiji has nothing, and as he looks onto the world’s wealthiest man, he wants more. Eiji makes up his mind. He has no intention of being a lowly code cracker anymore. He was going to learn everything he could from Professor Ryusenji, and finish training Loogamon no matter what.

Ryusenji murmurs something unintelligible.

“Professor?”

“You passed the test.”

“Again?”

The professor nods his head. “I needed to make sure you had the right intentions. If you were some run-of-the-mill code cracker kid drunk on freedom and ideology, I wouldn’t have offered you the job”

A familiar symbol flashes on the screen. It is of a gear wrap around a skull creating a radioactive halo. Under the symbol the words read “Sons of Chaos”



Eiji lets out an involuntary sigh.

“Do you know them?” Ryusenji asks

“Of course I do. They’re an infamous group of code crackers”

“What is your honest impression of them?”

Eiji takes a moment before responding “They’re on another level. They’re the best at what they do.” Eiji admired their skill, but the Sons of Chaos were right-wing extremists. They were almost militant in their organization. If you wanted to live a good and carefree life, you stayed away from them.

“They’re a group of code crackers known for using Digimon for crime,” Eiji continues. “They’ve made a name for themselves through extortion, theft, and terrorism. They’re bad news.”

The Sons of Chaos are run by the legendary Code Cracker Tartarus. No one knows Tartarus’ true identity, but he’s extremely popular on GriMM. Over the years, Tartarus has built a following of crackers who have adopted his ideology and created havoc in its name.

Ryusenji looks at Eiji “The Sons of Chaos are breaking the delicate balance between the Digital World and humanity. They are abusing Digimon and their ecosystem for personal gain and interfering with my research.” Ryusenji takes a moment to compose himself “It would be a shame if the Digital World and ours became isolated because of the misdeeds of a few punks. Wouldn’t you agree Eiji”

Eiji shrugs. “Can’t you just ask the government to help”

Ryusenji shakes his head, “they don’t understand enough about Digimon yet. The Prime Minister only wants to use government resources to study them, and the police are too focused on stopping Code Crackers to care about one individual...There isn’t enough being done!” Ryusenji’s voice is filled with anger and frustration.

“Is that why you hired me?”

The professor calms down and nods his head. “You can say no. I know I’m asking for a lot”

“No, it’s not that at all. I’m here to help, whatever it takes!” The offer is too exciting to pass up. Eiji has been searching for meaning in his life. He knew he was meant for something more than simply collecting Digitama and training Digimon. This was his chance to do something real. To start winning.

“Good!” Ryusenji exclaims as he clasps his hands together loudly. “For this job, I want you to infiltrate the Sons of Chaos and find out what Tartaros is up to.” The professor walks over and gently places his hand on Eiji’s shoulder “This isn’t just another job Eiji off the message board. The stakes are real, and much bigger than both of us in this room. This is for the sake of all Digimon. This is for the sake of the Digital World”

1-9: The Interview

The Sons of Chaos is an organization full of the strongest code cracking teams but have come together with the worst intentions. Rumors has it that the Sons of Chaos are planning something big. Something that could shift the balance between the Digital World and humanity. Intelligence agencies and police units from all over are investigating the organization, but Ryusenji has no faith they'll find anything. Instead of dealing with the tiresome channels of bureaucracy the selfishness of global politics, Ryusenji recruits Eiji to protect the Digital World, and the Digimon who inhabit it.

The job pays very well, but the passion that the professor fosters for the Digital world is what moves Eiji to action. If Tartarus and the Sons of Chaos are allowed to cause havoc in the Digital world, the international community will view Code Crackers and Digimon as dangerous.

"The lives of Digimon will be at stake. People are afraid of what they don't understand, and if this gets out of hand, it could mean the end of everything. Digimon are alive and we can't let such a group to be their extinction." The professor's words continue to ring in his head.

Eiji sits on the futon in his cramped apartment. "So I'm supposed to be a spy," Eiji says to himself. He looks down and finds Loogamon asleep across from him. It rests comfortable on the bed with its belly exposed. Occasionally, the hologram will flicker, but it it emits a steady blue glow into the apartment. "We'll be dealing with really bad dudes Loogamon," Eiji says to the unresponsive pup. "They're hardcore code crackers who are into some scary stuff. My Tyrannomon don't stand a chance against them, but you might be alright."

Eiji stretches out his hand in a feeble attempt to pet the wolf. Loogamon lets out a low growl as it flashes its teeth viscously at the encroaching hand. "I thought you were asleep?"

An alarm goes off. Eiji raises his wrist to shut it off. "It's time to go to work. Let's go Loogamon." Loogamon disappears into the Digimon Linker screen. Eiji puts on his headset. Leaning against the back wall, he scrolls through the different menus in a virtual terminal projected from the watch.



Eiji logs into GriMM. Joining the Sons of Chaos isn't difficult. Once you obtain the invitation code from their recruitment page, you join the official channel and apply like any other job. Eiji had already submitted his application and was logging in for his first interview.

A heavily modified voice comes through his headset. "The Sons of Chaos deal with government agencies, corporations... important people with high-level security. We need highly skilled code crackers who aren't afraid of anything. This is a risky job. It's easy to apply, but it's hard to get into the Sons of Chaos. Do you think you have what it takes, newbie?"

"It's Fang"

"Code Cracker Fang, huh? Are you ready to earn that name?" Eiji looked at the hologram of a generic avatar staring back at him. His username reads "interviewer. His voice was gravelly and sweet, like a cartoonish old man's.

"Will I get to meet Tartarus?" Eiji asks without wasting a minute on pleasantries.

"You're interested in our leader?" the voice asks suspiciously.

“Who wouldn’t be?! He’s the legendary Code Cracker Tartarus! He’s my idol.” Eiji feigns excitement.

The interviewer laughs “How old are you kid?”

“That doesn’t matter. Will I meet him or not?”

The voice on the other end remains silent for a moment. “Tartarus is a mystery even to us. Most of us have never seen him. If you are as much of a genius as you say you are, one of the executives will reach out to you. If you get invited into one of their chats, you might be able to talk to Tartarus.”

Eiji smiles. He will take advantage of the organization’s meritocracy and climb up the organization. “So, this job, is it a test?”

“That’s one way of looking at it. It’s a semi-A ranked mission...I’ve shared the details on GriMM. I’ve also opened a dedicated channel for the mission. Use it for future communications.” Eiji begins to read over the mission details. “What do you want to call the mission?” the voice asks.

Eiji thinks for a moment. “How about, Operation Wolf?”

The interviewer goes silent as the name of the channel changes to Operation Wolf. “This isn’t going to be easy,” the interviewer explains. “A Ranked missions aren’t for noobs. You are going to lose some Digimon. We don’t insure Digimon or provide compensation for any losses. Is that understood?”

“I understand, just be ready for my welcome party.”

“Welcome party?”

“We’re celebrating the birth of the Sons of Chaos’ newest executive.” Eiji is confident that Loogamon and his raw ability as a Code Cracker were more than enough for anything the Sons of Chaos threw at him.

The interviewer laughs. “Please check the file for the mission details. Good luck, I’m praying for you.”

“Thanks!”

The interviewer logs off, leaving Eiji alone in his small apartment. He lets out a sigh of release as he looks down at Loogamon. He remembers the Professor's words. *Digimon are alive!*

Eiji scrolls through the watch's menu. His finger hovers over the word "*Mindlink*"

Eiji stares at the word for a moment and takes a deep breath.

"Well then..." Eiji presses down on the screen.

Mindlink!

Chapter 1-10

Eiji loses his senses as the room melts away into darkness. He no longer has control of his limbs as the darkness consumes him. Eiji loses consciousness and wakes up in a world full of bright colors. The colors spin around him as he falls quickly into the unknown.

Suddenly, a memory from his childhood flashes before him.

Its summer. The day he and his family spent by the river. He remembers how refreshing the water felt on a hot day, the sound of the river crashing over the rocks, and the games he and his friends played.

“Eiji!” his friend Leon calls to him as he gets out of the water. Eiji turns his attention to Leon, but he’d unknowingly walked in too deep. His foot slips him into the deep part of the river. His feet search but find no ground. He tries to swim, but the force of the river is too strong. He can’t find the surface. The river bubbles around him as his limbs desperately search for air.

Eiji isn’t in the river, but his senses are overwhelmed by the familiar sensation. He tries to calm himself. The bubbles start to settle and quiet. A new world begins to unfold before Eiji. Eiji finds himself overwhelmed by the sudden rush of stimulation.

A bright light. It blinds him, but he can’t close his eyes.

What’s going on here?

Disoriented. Confused. Anxious.

Eiji tries to piece it together but can’t understand what he sees. His eyes continue to adjust, but he can’t seem to focus. Everything is a blur of color and light, zooming and changing as he attempts to make sense of it. His ears fill with a strange static buzzing in his ear, and the air fills with a putrid animal smell.

Is this a bad dream?

But it’s not a bad dream...

Over the static, Eiji can hear a voice speaking clearly to him.

Who...Who is it?

CRASH!

The sound of something being kicked over. Eiji hears someone running towards him.

Eiji's eyes begin to adjust. He sees a small pink rat Digimon quickly scarring towards him. It clutches a piece of data in its hands as if it were cheese.

"Chuumon, child, beast, virus type," his heads-up display reads.

Where am I?

Eiji's eyes continue adjusting. He can see more clearly. He finds himself in an empty dirty room made of concrete.

Suddenly, another Digimon appears. Another rat, but this one is made of cloth like a puppet.

ChuuChuumon, puppet, child, virus type.

It rides on the back of metallic poo-shaped Digimon. It carries a tonfa and chases after the pink rat.

Damemon, mutation, adult, virus type.

Eiji is confused by the scene unfolding before him. He is overwhelmed by the excitement of seeing real Digimon but takes the moment to compose himself. *This isn't a theme park* he reminds himself.

"How brave of you to try to steal from my family," Says Damemon in its metallic voice.

"Squeak! Don't let him do this ChuuChuumon! I beg you! For the love of all rats!" Chumon pleads.

Chuumon stole Chuuchuumon's food and is trying to escape.

“Not good, not good” Chuumon mutters to itself.

Damemon readies the tonfa for an attack.

“Is that a dog?” ChuuChuumon says suddenly, looking towards Eiji.

Huh, a dog? The Digimon is talking?

Damemon stops its attack. ChuuChuumon continues “I haven’t seen you around here before. The Wall Slum’s Sixth Street is our turf. You better turn tail and run if you know what’s good for you!”

“A rat picking a fight with a wolf? Don’t make me laugh?”

The strange familiar growls in his ear. *Out in front!* Eiji isn’t in control.

“This is my turf now”

“Do your worst!” ChuuChuumon yells, accepting the challenge. “Damemon! Gun Vulcan!”

Bam-Bam-Bam-Bam!



The Vulcan gun embedded in the tonfa erupts with fire. Bullets explode into the walls and floor. Chuumon zigzags, desperate to escape.

Whaaa?

Eiji is overwhelmed with nausea. A putrid smell fills his nostrils. The bullets Damemon fires aren't particularly strong, but they release a foul odor, almost like a poisonous gas.

"Hahahaha! That attack must be torture for a dog. Digimon battles are all about exploiting weaknesses!" ChuuChuumon taunts.

"Not good, not good!" Eiji lets out.

"Shall we get rid of this stray Damemon? Finish it off with Boo-st Atta..."

But before ChuuChuumon could finish his sentence, strange energy begins to swirl around Eiji.

What is this feeling?

-Howling Fire!

A fireball erupts from Eiji's snout and flies toward the enemy ChuuChuumon. Before Damemon has a chance to react, the flame engulfs the pair. The flame eats away at the room around them.

"HOT! HOT! HOT!"

The force of the impact knocks Damemon off balance.

"Just one shot?! But how?" Chuuchumon rolls out of the Damemon's cockpit and onto the floor. The flames continue to smolder. ChuuChuumon begins to short-circuit. It stares up as the wolf looms over it. It begins to tremble "Lo...Loogamon?"

Loogamon? Eiji asks himself as he looks down at the cowering ChuuChuumon.

"So you've returned to the Wall Slums?"

ChuuChuumon's tone suddenly becomes more respectful.

Eiji is at a loss.

"You're looking good... "

Loogamon turns away for a moment. ChuuChuumon attempts to make its escape.

Eiji regains his composure. "Loogamon? Can you hear me? Loogamon!"

Chapter 1-11

“Loogamon?” Eiji repeats as he begins to piece the mystery together. “You’re the voice, aren’t you?” There is no response. “Can you explain what’s going on?”

This time the gruff voice replies, “Explain what exactly?”

“For starters, what is this place? Why can the Digimon talk? How did I get here?” Eiji is bursting with questions.

Loogamon scoffs. “Didn’t you listen to Ryusenji?”

“Ryusenji? The professor?” Eiji is surprised by how informally Loogamon referred to the professor.

“Yes, the professor,” Loogamon replies with a hint of judgment. “Didn’t you listen to his Mindlink explanation?”

Eiji remembers the professor talking about jailbreaking the Digimon Linker. In order to infiltrate the Sons of Chaos, some of the watch’s functions needed to be deactivated. Ryusenji worked on a hack that not only made the Digimon Linker more inconspicuous, it also boosted the user’s hacking affinity.

“Do you mean the function that turns me into an elite hacker?”

“Ugh...” Loogamon can’t hide its disappointment.

“I didn’t really understand his explanation...” Eiji was becoming uncomfortable with Loogamon. He isn’t making a good impression on Loogamon. Loogamon starts moving without responding. “Careful! There’s broken glass everywhere...” Eiji notices the reflection of one of the pieces of glass. It’s Loogamon.

Wait...Eiji thinks as he stares at the wolf’s reflection. Am I not here? Am I seeing through Loogamon’s eyes?



Suddenly, a pink rat rushes up to Logamon and bows. then with its

“Master!” It squeaks in a respectful tone. There is a slight trembling fear in its voice.
“You’ve returned at last! All hail the Demon Wolf of the Castle of Nine! I...a lowly Chuumon, am at your service.”

Eiji watches the groveling pink Digimon and recognizes it as the Chuumon they rescued.

Eiji doesn’t have an answer.

“Where did you go? Rumor has it you were turned into a Digitama and captured by a human...”

“Who do you think you’re talking to?” Loogamon growls.

“Squeak! So... Sorry!” The Chuumon bows, desperate to apologize.

“Do you believe me so weak to be caught so easily?!”

A bead of sweat starts to make its way down Chuumon's trembling face. "P-p-p-please, forgive me, master."

Loogamon takes a deep breath and raises its head, absorbing its surroundings. "I remember now," it finally remarks, "The Dust Kingdom. You Chuumon served Sukamon, ruler of the Fifth Avenue Trash Heap."

"Yes! That's it!! You remember!"

Loogamon looks over the nervous-looking Chuumon who is on the verge of tears. "You serve me now and in return, I'll look out for you."

Chuumon is overjoyed by the news. "Thank you! Thank You! Thank you! You won't regret it!"

"The Demon Wolf...Huh? It's got a familiar ring to it," Loogamon whispers.

"So Chuumon"

"Yes?"

"Everyone thinks I was captured by a human?"

"It's only a rumor. You've been gone for so long. A lot has changed in your absence. Ninth Avenue is a shadow of what it used to be. It's mostly deserted now."

Loogamon looks over the dirty cracking concrete walls. Things have changed. It turns its attention to an eagerly waiting Chuumon.

"Here," Loogamon says as it tosses Chuumon some meat. "Take it."

Chuumon stares at the piece of meat. It doesn't know how to react. "Is this...is this real-world meat?" Chuumon gives it a deep sniff "Of course it is, a Digimon of your stature would only eat the best!" Chuumon bows its head respectfully. "Thank you, master. Until next time!" Chuumon gathers the meat and cheese and quickly scurries away.

"Are... are you done talking?" Eiji asks timidly.

Loogamon sighs, "You wanted an explanation?"

“Yes, please!”

Loogamon thinks for a moment. “What is it you humans say, seeing is believing?” Before Eiji can answer, Loogamon leaps out a broken window. Eiji finds himself in free fall as he watches concrete towers shoot up past him. Loogamon lands the four-story drop without issue. The pair find themselves in a valley of skyscrapers.

Loogamon begins its trot. Its claws dig into the dark asphalt. Eiji studies the deserted city as it blurs past the racing Loogamon. Suddenly, Loogamon begins his stride up one of the buildings.

Eiji feels the wind blow over him as Loogamon runs. He feels every step Loogamon takes. His senses are overloaded with new sensations. Sounds came more clearly, colors were more vivid, and smells were more pungent. It was like he and Loogamon shared senses.

So, this is Professor Ryusenji’s work? This is D4’s most confidential technology. Eiji remembers the professor’s explanation.

The Digital world isn’t like ours. People can’t see it normally without special tools, and even then, it is never the full picture.

But what if there was a tool that would give us the ability to experience the Digital World with all five senses? What if there was a tool that would let us explore it? Experience it like we experience this world?

After years of research, I finally found a solution. We can take a person’s mental data and convert it to Digicore, sort of like data. We then take this Digicore and inject it into a living Digimon where both consciousnesses can exist simultaneously. This is the essence of Mindlink.

It all makes sense now.

Loogamon continues to run as Eiji takes in the beauty of this new world. This isn’t a pixelated image on a cheap LCD screen or a video on a virtual screen. This is real and vibrant. This is the Digital World.

“I can’t believe I’m a Digimon,” Eiji exclaims in excitement.

“This is your first Mindlink. You’ll get used to it soon enough.”

“How is it I can talk to you?”

“What do you mean? We Digimon have always been able to talk. You’re just getting to know is better”

Digimon are alive! Eiji repeats to himself. Loogamon, Tyrannomon, and all the rest...They’re alive!

Chapter 1-12

Eiji looks over the ledge and is left breathless by the exotic skyline. The sky fills with a collection of vibrant neon colors as networks and data swim across it, creating brilliant dancing auroras. Large dirty buildings are densely jammed against this small patch of land, surrounded by an arid emptiness. Some buildings stand tall and greet the world with cracked, dirty, or broken windows, while others have already begun to crumble under the weight of neglect. This might have been a bustling metropolis at some point, but now it sits here as a seemingly abandoned slum.

It takes a moment for the initial shock to fade and for Eiji to regain his composure. “So, this is the Digital World,” he remarks, not hiding his amazement. “It’s like something out of Cyberpunk!”

“What does that mean?” Loogamon poses, not understanding the reference.

“I thought the Digital World would be wilder, but this...” Eiji trails off, remembering the images of the Digital World he saw back at the DDL. He remembered forests, mountains, and deserts, but he never imagined there’d be cities with modern buildings.

“It’s called the Wall Slum” Loogamon interrupts, sounding a tinge offended. “It is a city of security walls that protects the Digital World from the flow of junk data. Just outside those walls is where all the junk data collects,” it says as it turns their attention to the northern walls. “If you look carefully, this city sits on a rounded surface.”

Eiji examines the skyline carefully and sees how the horizon separates the sea of networks in the sky from the shelled city below in a clear dividing line.

“Ah...” Eiji explains “I see it now. It’s like a city built on the inside of an eggshell.”

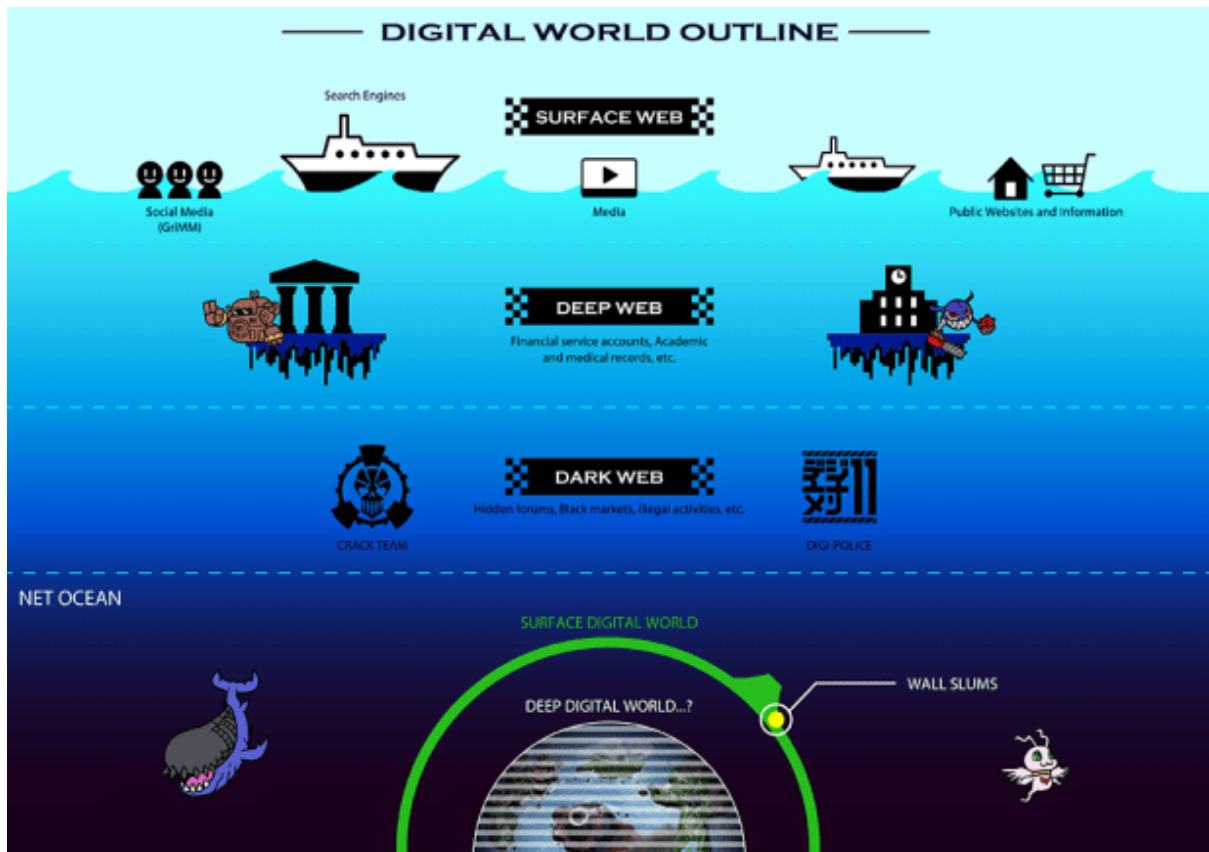
“if you try to go from the human world to the Digital World, you will be blocked by the security wall”

“Wait...Then how can code crackers control Digimon from the real world? I thought we were connecting to digital world?”

Loogamon chuckles, “It was just the Wall Slum. Those Digimon code crackers grab are just those you see running around the Wall Slum. Most code crackers don’t Mindlink, so they’ll never know the difference.”

Eiji is left speechless by the explanation. Eiji thinks about the time his Tyrannomon hunted down the Modoki Betamon. Were they just running around this place? “Has anyone gone beyond the security wall? Has anyone seen the Digital World?”

“No human has ever set foot in the Digital World, at least not beyond the Wall Slums”



“Beyond the wall is the “deep” Digital World,” Loogamon continues his explanation.

Everything Eiji thought he knew about the Digital World crumbles as he borrows Loogamon’s vision to see the bottom of the network. Eiji finally understood why the Digital World wasn’t mankind’s secret. Digimon are alive, and Eiji was standing at the tip of their world. Eiji continues to admire the alien landscape.

“Well...” Loogamon says as it begins filling the heads-up display with tabs of information. The virtual monitor appears in front of Eiji’s conscious mind. It looks like something out of Gundam or Iron Man. “Do you remember why we came here Eiji?”

Eiji is stunned by the sudden jolt to reality.

“Right, I forgot you’re a pathetic code cracker,” Loogamon snips as it pulls up a window with the words “Operation Wolf” scrawled across it.

“Right,” Eiji replies, remembering the Sons of Chaos Job. He begins reading over the details.

According to this, I’m supposed to be briefed by a local member of the Sons of Chaos somewhere around here.



Eiji rushes to the designated location. He arrives at what seems to be a deserted rooftop. A cloaked Digimon stares down at the pair from the top of the building’s antenna. The Digimon is roughly the same size as Loogamon, but its identity is hidden by the tattered cloak. Eiji tries to search for the Digimon’s data, but the search yields nothing.

“You’re late...” An annoyed voice comes from the cloaked figure. “Tartaros likes our people to be punctual.”

“We had some trouble. Maybe we can get a pass this time?” Loogamon replies.

“Hey Loogamon?” Eiji interjects.

“What? Oh?!!” Loogamon turns to find Eiji suddenly standing next to it.

Eiji, wearing his usual street clothes, looks down at his palms as he tries to move his arms and legs. “Well look at that!”

“Where did you come from?” Loogamon asks in its confusion.

“I don’t know,” Eiji begins “A lot of the functions in Mindlink work by thinking about them. The Digimon Linker has a hololize function. I thought maybe it would work the same in the Digital World, so I gave it a try and it worked!”

Loogamon is silent for a moment. “I can’t tell if that was impressive or just lucky,” it snarks.

Eiji chuckles as he extends his hands to pet Loogamon’s forehead. The metal brace feels cool to his touch, and the blue fur feels soft.

The wolf tenses as it growls in response.

“Did you just growl at me?”

“Don’t touch my forehead!” Loogamon snaps, bearing its fangs at Eiji.

Eiji quickly retracts his hand. “Sorry, I didn’t know I could touch you.”

In the real world, hololized Digimon were just a projection of data. You can’t actually touch them. But here...

“In case you’re wondering,” Loogamon interrupts “You can’t exist too far from me, so stay close!”

Eiji nods as he turns his attention back to the cloaked Digimon again.

“The name is Fang”

“...I thought it was Eiji?” the Digimon rebukes impatiently.

“No need to focus on the details. So what’s the job? The interviewer said I was supposed to ask you for details.”

“I’m sure the interviewer also told you this would be a test. You’ve already been deducted two points for being late.” A screen suddenly appears above the cloaked

Digimon's head, displaying a rough map of the Wall Slum. The city is shaped like a large circle, divided into districts. At the center is a volcanic crater. Sixth Avenue, Eiji remembers ChuuChuumon mentioned it earlier.

"I need you to survey and map the area painted in this color. As you know, the Wall Slum is undergoing a lot of redevelopments."

With the constant flow of data from the real world that moves through the city, nothing ever stays the same.

"So you want me to make a map? Simple enough."

"The Wall Slum is very important to the Sons of Chaos. We like to keep our map data up to date." The Digimon tosses Eiji a memory card.

Eiji accepts it as a mapping tool that appears on his virtual monitor.

"All you have to do is walk around the area while running the tool and it will do the mapping for you. We want you to investigate Ninth Avenue..."

Loogamon turns before the Digimon finishes its sentence and laughs. "Perfect!"

Eiji hurries after Loogamon. "...What do you mean?"

"I've got some business to attend to." Loogamon smiles, bearing its fangs as it continues its stride.

"Do you think we should listen to the rest of the explanation?" Eiji asks, but Loogamon doesn't answer.

The cloaked Digimon watches the pair hurry off toward Ninth Avenue.

"I wish you well Eiji. I hope for Tartarus' sake, you pass."

Chapter 1-13

The cloaked Digimon watches as Eiji and Loogamon make their way toward Ninth Avenue.

“I wasn’t told they’d be Mindlinked,” the Digimon says suddenly to nobody.

“I wasn’t told either. I didn’t know they were going to show up with a limit unlock,” replies the interviewer.

“I wonder if that dog... Loogamon noticed. I wonder if it noticed our Mindlink?”

“Who knows?”

“Fang and the Demon Wolf of the Castle of the Nine Wolves...Won’t mapping Ninth Avenue be too easy for them?”

“Normally, yes” - the interviewer replies - ” But I’ve made a few... Adjustments.”

Once on the ground, Loogamon begins weaving through the streets. Eiji follows closely. A tunnel takes the pair underground until they are standing at the edge of a platform. The platform is eerily empty. Eiji looks over and sees train tracks that seem to disappear into tunnels neatly dug on either side. Eiji watches as the stones that surround the tracks start to vibrate and jump to the rhythmic echoes of an approaching train. Out of the shadows, a familiar sight surprises Eiji. The train screeches to a stop and its doors open. The Wall Slum train.



Eiji watches as the world blurs past his window. He clutches unto a strap nervously.

“So this is the Slum Circle subway...” he finally says, breaking his silence.

The interior of the train looks like those he rode in Tokyo, but the riders here were Digimon. The train is also a Digimon. There were signs and electronic displays, but the information is written in the language Eiji had never seen before.

“Is this the Digimon lanugage? What does it say?” Eiji asks, pointing at one of the signs.

“It’s against the rules to cause trouble on this subway,” Loogamon answers standoffishly.

“So...no fighting?”

“This is a public place. Just mind your manners,” Loogamon says as it curls up, taking three seats.

The train passes through a station every couple of minutes. Eiji is fidgety and restless. He doesn’t know where they are going, nor can he read the signs for clues. He finally

turns to Loogamon and says, “I’ve been thinking about this Mindlink stuff. Is that how ChuuChuumon and Damemon work?”

“Don’t compare me to that... Thing” Loogamon snaps, clearly offended. “It’s nothing like that. Think about what’s happening with your body right now.”

“My body?” Eiji thinks about it for a moment. Only his mind was linked to Loogamon’s Digicore. Eiji’s body leans against the wall of his loft, unconscious.

“Your body is asleep back home. It won’t wake up unless you break the Mindlink. ChuuChuumon and Damemon are both here...Do you understand Eiji?”

“yeah...sure...By the way... ”

Loogamon lets out a sigh. “What?!”

“Do you mind if I pet you now?” Eiji is already reaching for Loogamon. Loogamon lies comfortably on the seats, looking like a puppy.

The wolf tenses up and flashes its teeth. “No!” it growls.

Eiji quits his attempt. “The dog I used to have didn’t let me pet it either.”

“I’m not a dog!” Loogamon replies, growing more annoyed. “I’ve had enough of your dog stories...”

A few passengers get off at the next station. Those who board the train are surprised to see a human sitting amongst the remaining Digimon.

“Hey Loogamon...the Digimon are staring...”

“There aren’t many humans walking around the Wall Slums”

“Right,” Eiji replies as he examines the rest of the train. The train is crowded with strange-looking Digimon. “These Digimon look injured like their data has been corrupted or something.”

“Most of the Digimon the live in the Wall Slums have been used by humans for whatever humans do with Digimon,” Loogamon explains bitterly.

“Used by humans?” Eiji responds as he looks at the Digimon more closely. They looked abused, damaged, sickly, and incomplete.

“These Digimon were discarded after they were no longer useful.”

“Discarded...Digimon...” Eiji repeats slowly. Digimon are used as tools by humans. All the top tech companies, military groups, and government agencies use Digimon for security. For code crackers and hackers, Digimon are the tools of the trade. Like most tools, Digimon wear out and break eventually. Eiji knew this truth well, but seeing the faces of the discarded Digimon made it heartbreaking.

“Digimon that die become Digitama,” Loogamon continues his explanation. “Those who survive end up here where they have built cities and villages on the outer wall. The abandoned Digimon thrive here, in the slums they’ve created.”

It was an admirable type of resilience.

“This slum has become a paradise for the abandoned. An escape from the cruelty of humanity or the troubles of the Digital World beyond the wall. There are even Digimon who are born and raised on these streets...” Loogamon’s explanation is cut off by the train’s loud screeching.

The subway breaches the surface. Its metal wheels splash through puddles of contaminated brackish water. The air fills with toxic putrid fumes. Mounds of trash and junk data make large messy mounds on either side of the trains. Chuumon, mutant Daimon, and other strange Digimon watch the train pass. Eiji watches as a couple of Chuumon fight over food.

“Do the Digimon here not get along?”

“The Digimon that live in the slums are poor. They don’t have enough food and must fight to survive. This is a city riddled with conflict. If Digimon aren’t fighting each other for food, they are fighting each other for territory. The only place there is no fighting is on the train and in the center of town.”

Eiji looks out the window and searches for the center, but his view is obscured by a river that flows upwards. “What’s so special about that place?”

“That’s the gateway to the inside,” Loogamon replies, referring to a Digital World untouched by humans.

The train crosses a polluted river before returning underground. The train grows dark. Eiji watches as sparks jump against the walls before the lights turn back on. Eiji stays silent for a moment as he processes the information. “Does the gate also keep out humans?” he finally asks.

“Not just humans, Digimon too.”

“All of the Digimon here?” Eiji is saddened by the realization that none of the Digimon here could return to the Digital World.

“Digimon in the Wall Slum have been contaminated by real world data. Once a Digimon is contaminated, it can’t return to the Digital World. The gate won’t let them.”

“And who decided that?”

“It’s always been like that. The Digital World’s systems were programmed long before the first Digimon drew breath. For a Digimon in the Wall Slum, below the wall is their long-lost home.”

Eiji watches the darkness outside the window. “Hey Loogamon? Do you know what’s on the other side of the wall?”

“We’re getting off here” Loogamon gets off its seat and walks towards the exit. The train continues to move. Eiji begins to form another question but is interrupted by the intercom. “Next stop, Ninth Avenue.”

Eiji gets up and starts to follow Loogamon. He would ask another day. First, he needed to pass his test.

“What kind of place is Ninth Avenue?”

“I’ll know when I get there.”

“You seem to know a lot about this place, have you been here before?” Loogamon had spent most of his life in the Digimon Linker, and Eiji had never thought about asking it anything personal. He didn’t know Digimon had pasts.

“I don’t remember...”

“What do you mean?”

“My memory is hazy. It comes back in fragments. I remember being a kid growing up in the slums, but I don’t remember much after that....”

“Maybe you have amnesia? Maybe we have to jog your memory.” Eiji suggests. “That Chuumon seems to remember you, maybe we can ask it”

Loogamon continues to walk in front of Eiji in silence. “When I try to remember,” Loogamon says suddenly “It comes back foggy. I can’t really make sense of much of it. But since I’ve come to the Wall Slums with you, I think I am beginning to remember. I get the sense that there is something Ninth Avenue that I need to see. Something that’s important to me.”

Chapter 1-14

Eiji steps out of the subway and stands hesitantly at the edge of Ninth Avenue. He keeps one foot in the subway tunnel and contemplates abandoning the mission. Eiji looks at the cramped, dirty, sketchy alleys reminiscent of Kowloon or Showa-Era Kabukicho and can't help but feel uneasy. He feels small at the bottom of this valley of towering slums. Illegible signs and advertisements clutter the skyline, spilling their sickly vibrant neon against the dirty walls. The air seems thick with danger, and it makes Eiji uneasy.

Eiji takes a deep breath as he takes it all. "Hey Loogamon?" his voice shakes with a bit of worry, "What is this place?"

Loogamon shoots an annoyed glance at Eiji. "Seriously? Are you dumb?"

"Hey be nice, it's my time in the Digital world. You have to guide me..." Eiji follows close behind as he continues surveying his surroundings. "Wait, aren't you a king or something?" Loogamon doesn't respond. "Am I supposed to bow down to you?" Eiji stops to give a joking curtsy "Your Majesty"

"Quit it!" Loogamon growls.

"As you wish your highness," Eiji laughs.

"This is why your dog didn't like you. Hurry up and get serious! You have work to do."

Eiji scrolls through his screen, looking for the mapping tool. "I love you Loogamon!" he sings. Loogamon shakes its head and continues to move through the alley. Eiji launches the mapping tool.

"The guy said we just need to walk around and leave the tool running."

Nothing made sense in Ninth Avenue. The streets wound into zagging mazes of uneven streets and alleys. Some buildings looked as if they were on the verge of collapsing, while others leaned to a degree that made Eiji uncomfortable. There were signs that dangled loosely from a single rusted bolt. It looked as if the lightest gust of wind could bring them crashing to the ground. There were old dirty wires that hung from walls like dirty dying ivy, and widows blacked out with filth. The streets were littered with bits of dirty shattered glass. They walked over and around mounds of trash.

Eiji checks the map as he walks.

“There are Digimon here, but they are hiding,” Loogamon explains as they move through the seemingly abandoned maze of decay. Eiji shivers as he feels hidden stares over him.

“Ninth Avenue is the worst neighborhood in the Wall Slums. Most newcomers get robbed the moment they step foot on these grounds. Those foolish enough to go deeper don’t make it out,” Loogamon says coldly.

“This place is scary.”

“Come on. We must make it to the Castle of the Nine Wolves. It’s at the heart of all of this.” Eiji and Loogamon continue their work. Their mapping goes uneventfully. Eiji begins to relax, but a hint of disappointment sneaks into him. There were no Digimon or much of anything despite Loogamon’s insisting.



The pair empty into a cul-de-sac. At the head sits an old run-down red building reminiscent of a Chinatown mausoleum.

“That’s the Castle of Nine Wolves? All we must do is map that and were done? This test is easy!” Eiji exclaims as he walks towards the mausoleum.

Loogamon stops.

“What’s wrong Loogamon?” Eiji stops his advance and looks down at the wolf.

“This...This is my home...Or it used to be” Loogamon explains as he struggles to force a memory.

Eiji looks at Loogamon and then at the red building. “Did you remember something?”

Loogamon shakes its head. “There’s a faint smell. Markings I left behind...It’s me, but not me. It’s something much stronger...” Loogamon’s voice trails off as it takes a big whiff of the air.

“Do you think maybe...” Eiji begins as he examines his surroundings with a new understanding, “do you think it might have been an evolved you?”

Suddenly, Loogamon tenses up. “Somethings coming!”

ROAAARRRRRR

A booming roar spills from the building, carrying with it a howling wind that forces Eiji to his knees. Loogamon digs his paws into the ground and braces itself.

“Loogamon? What was that?”

A winged monstrosity rushed from the shadows and takes to the sky above the two. Dust, dirt, and trash swirl violently around them. As the wind and dust settle, Eiji begins searching the sky for the source.

“Was that a bird? A Dragon?”

“Neither, look”

Eiji turns to the space Loogamon points to. It was a metallic Digimon with the head of a Dragon and the body of a helicopter. It has two rotors that hold it up above them.

Cargodramon, ultimate, machine, virus type.

Across the side, Eiji can read the word “Police” clearly.

“Crap” Eiji yells, his voice barely louder than the rotors. “It’s the DigiPolice!”

The doors from the hovering Cargodramon open. From it descends a squad of Commandramon.

A screeching siren sounds loudly. Eiji looks at the map and sees it fill with red dots. The DigiPolice were surrounding the castle. Panic starts to creep over Eiji. “They want us to open voice chat on the GriMM channel!?!” he shouts to Loogamon. “What should we do?”

“Open up chat code craker!” commands a voice from the Cargodramon.

“Um, I don’t have the password...” Eiji grows more anxious as the dots continue to close in on his location.

“Don’t play dumb with me. Surrender now. We have you surrounded!”

Chapter 1-15



Cargodramon hovers over Eiji and Loogamon. Its harsh spotlight rains over the pair as the sounds of the rotors drown out most sounds. Several squads of Commandramon slowly surround them.

“This is the DigiPolice. Give up code cracker. We have you surrounded!” The warning repeats over the megaphone.

“Dammit!” Eiji shouts. For a code cracker, there is no police force in Japan scarier than the DigiPolice. But despite his fear, Eiji couldn’t help but feel excited. “This is so cool! I’ve never seen the DigiPolice before. Loogamon, take a picture of the Cargodramon.”

Loogamon is tense, its fur standing on edge. “My eyes aren’t cameras,” it snaps. Loogamon glares at the hovering Cargodramon.

Cargodramon has its attention on Loogamon. Its sensors scan the blue wolf.

Mindlink active, a robotic voice announces as the scan completes. Satsuki Tamahime sits at her command station inside the Commandramon. She shifts her attention between the many monitors surrounding her. She watches as the Commandramon

move into position. She watches the two criminals frozen at the base of the cul-de-sac, She reads over the scan data as it comes in.

Satsuki doesn't look like the typical DigiPolice agent. She wears the standard DigiPolice uniform but has styled it to fit her aesthetic. Her black shoulder-length hair falls from under a baseball cap. She's dyed the inner layer a bright green. She wears a loose-fitting jacket that now hangs around her shoulder. Her thick combat boots are kicked up on the console. She smiles as she brings the mic to her mouth.

"You guys are with that Sons of Chaos group aren't you? I got it right, didn't I?"

"Got it right? I don't know what you're talking about." Loogamon replies.

"Don't play dumb forehead. I know you and lame brain are Mindlinked. I need you to come quietly and answer some questions"

"Lame brain?"

"Forehead?"

Eiji and Loogamon look at each other. The interaction felt a bit too informal than they expected from the DigiPolice.

"Cooperate with us and I'll make sure you won't get into... too much trouble," Satsuki says in a singsongy tone.

"Nah, I'm good," Eiji replies as he starts to walk away.

Satsuki giggles "Oh?! Don't say I didn't warn you! M16 Assult!"

RATATATATATA

Bullets explode into the ground around Eiji and Loogamon as the Commandramon move into position.

"Hey! They're really firing at us!" Eiji shouts as he feels the wind from a stray bullet pass over his head.

“Relax! Those were just warning shots.”

“You must have the wrong definition of warning,” Eiji mutters, looking at the nearby bullet holes.

Suddenly, the doors of the Cargodramon open. A long rope falls to a space in front of them. Satsuki slides down the rope, landing with a light thud. She dusts off her jacket and turns her attention to Eiji.

“Hey...You’re kind of cute”

Wind from the Cargodramon kicks up dust around them. The sounds of the Cammadramon’s boots continue to move in closer. Eiji doesn’t take his eyes off the policewoman.

“What do you want?”

“Ok, straight to business then,” Satsuki says as she moves closer to Eiji and Loogamon.

She’s cute, Eiji thinks before quickly shaking the thought. He needs to focus.

“So what are you doing for the Sons of Chaos code cracker? Are you poaching Digitama? We’re going to find out, so its better you just fess up now.”

Eiji can see squads of Commandramon pointing their weapons toward their location. Loogamon stands in a tense stance. Satsuki smiles sweetly at Eiji as she waits for a response.

“Hey, Loogamon... What would happen if you got shot?”

Loogamon lets out a fanged smile. “Let’s find out.”

RATATATATATATATA

This time, the explosions were much louder. Loogamon’s run was cut short as the ground in front of it explodes with a hail of 30 mm bullet fire. The railgun on the Cargodramon continues to spin as it fixes its aim on Loogamon.

The smell of gunpowder lingers in the air. Eiji finds himself crippled with the pain from a couple of lucky bullets that managed to hit.

“I get it now,” Eiji says, trying to fight through the pain. “If you get hit by a bullet, it hurts.”

Satsuki looks irritated. “I told ya code cracker, there’s no escape. Your only choice is to cooperate. You don’t want to die in Mindlink, do ya?”

Eiji shakes his head. He knew better than to mess with someone with such a short fuse.

“Good, now tell me what you’re doing here.”

“I was...I was just walking. Mapping the area for... Research. I am researching the Digital World!”

“You’re what? Cargodramon!”

A voice in Satsuki’s earpiece replies, “I see no signs of Digitama Ma’am.”

“In other words...?”

“Looks like they were just taking a walk, just as they claim.”

“Ugggg” Satsuki looks visibly frustrated. There is a hint of disappointment in her tone. Even if Eiji were a Sons of Chaos Member, there isn’t enough evidence for an arrest. Satsuki shakes her head and smiles devilishly. “Well, you must be up to something. No one just takes a stroll down Ninth Avenue. I know you’re up to something suspicious, and you’re going to tell me what it is!”

“This lady is crazy,” Eiji checks the virtual monitor. He looks at the Cargodramon floating above him, the Commandramon surrounding him, and Satsuki’s bloodthirsty stare. “It’s no use Loogamon, we have to get out of here...Loogamon?” Eiji turns to Loogamon, but he was already gone.

SPIRAL FANG

Two markers disappear from the map as sharp fangs rip through body armor. Before Eiji has a chance to react, two more markers disappear. Loogamon rips through a whole squad of Commandramon before appearing in front of the crimson mausoleum.

“This is my home!” Loogamon howls. Its fur stands down its back, its fangs clench in a snarl as it lets out a menacing growl.

‘Th-thi-this is obstruction of justice! You’re in trouble now!’ Satsuki shouts.

“Woah! Loogamon, you took out those Commandramon so easily.” Eiji is impressed by his partner’s sudden show of strength before a sudden realization overcomes him. “You can’t attack the DigiPolice!”

“Why not?” Loogamon remains in his tense stance. The DigiPolice begins recovering their felled comrades.

“Now you’ve done it!” Satsuki shouts back, “You’re under arrest for messing with the DigiPolice!”

“You have no authority here,” Loogamon smirks. “The only law in the Wall Slums is eat or be eaten!”

“This was supposed to be easy,” Eiji mutters to himself as he scratches his head nervously. He logs into Grimm to talk to the Interviewer, but he isn’t online. “Not good!”

“You’re going to pay for this!” Satsuki says as she rolls up her sleeve. Eiji notices a smartwatch device on her wrist. It is a Digidock the same as his but a different color. Suddenly, the police lights turn.

“Loogamon, this lady can Mindlink too!”

Loogamon returns to Eiji’s side as they brace for a new attack. Eiji looks at the chaos surrounding them.

“Her Digimon partner must be...over there!” Loogamon looks up at the Cargodramon as it moves to the space above them. A loud boom sounds as the cargo hatch opens, revealing a mysterious figure waiting behind it.

“What the hell is that?”

A hideous blob inches towards the edge.

Nucha...Nucho, nucho...

The Digimon shoves itself out of the edge and lands with a heavy thud.

“NUMEEEEEEEEEE” a huge slug shouts.

“Its a Numemon!”

Chapter 1-16

Numemon lands with a loud thud, kicking up dust around it. The large slug was the size of a small truck. On its head, a rotating police light shines splashes of red and blue light around the Digimon. It turns its attention to Logamon and Eiji who stand meters away, ready for a fight.

Satsuki smiles as she suddenly appears on Numemon's back. Her hologram shimmers in the same translucent blue Eiji does. "You've done it now code cracker. You and forehead don't stand a chance against my Numemon!"

"Don't call me Forehead!" Loogamon snarls. Its fur stands angrily down its back.

Eiji watches as the Cargodramon hovers over them, the blinding white light of the spotlight washing over them. Eiji can make out its cannons still fixed on Loogamon. Eiji watches as the Commandramon continue to move into position around them. He feels the muzzles of countless guns pointing in their direction. And Eiji watches the curious pair in charge of it all. Eiji tries to calm himself with a breath, but his heart continues to race.

Satsuki lifts the watch to her mouth and lets out a devilish smile. "All units, on my command..."

"My name is Eiji Nagasumi" he blurts desperately "What's your name?" His voice shakes as he waits for an answer.

"Not that it matters, but I am deputy squad leader Satsuki Tamahime of the Metropolitan Police, Cybercrime division and..."

"That's a pretty name. What kanji do you use for your name, Satsuki?"

Satsuki thinks for a moment. "It's 'tama' from shogi, 'hime' from princess, and... stop trying to distract me! I know you're an 'A' level code cracker..."

Eiji smiles as he cuts her off again. "You hear that Loogamon. I'm an elite-level code cracker! Satsuki approved." Satsuki becomes more annoyed with each interruption. Eiji can't help but enjoy messing with the officer.

"Your days living a normal life are over Eiji Nagasumi..."

"Call me Fang"

“You have been placed on the departments blacklist. There is nowhere you can hide Nagasumi. Come quietly or things are going to get... icky” she lets out a giggle.

“Nume!” the slug cries out as if on command. Eiji can see the slug clearly now. Its shiny skin shines under the flashing lights as slime sweats down its body.

“You got this Loogamon,” Eiji says unconvincingly, trying to reassure his partner.

“I hate slimy foods!” Loogamon growls as it begins to tense up a reaction.

Blap-blap-blap-blap!

Numemon rapidly fires bullets of poo toward the pair. Eiji and Loogamon jump to dodge the fire, narrowly missing the attack. Satsuki laughs loudly.

“What a disgusting attack,” Loogamon snaps as it lands. “Fitting for a trash Digimon and its loudmouth companion.”

Eiji had been looking himself over for traces of poo. “Um Loogamon?” he begins as a bead of sweat makes its way down his forehead, “she can hear you”

But it was too late. Satsuki stops laughing. Her expression becomes stern. “You Mangy mutt! Don’t talk about Numemon like that!” Numemon launches a large blast of sewage toward Loogamon. Loogamon swiftly jumps out of the way as the sewage explodes against the wall behind it. The explosion catches Eiji, covering him in a disgusting sludge.

“Loogamon!”

Loogamon smirks at the site. “You’re lucky it was only a ricochet”

Unfortunately, being Mindlinked made the sensation too real. Eiji could smell the foul stench as it stuck to his skin and feel the gross slimy warmth as it settled around him. Eiji retches as he tries to regain his composure.

Numemon and Satsuki burst out laughing. Eiji struggles to find the will to fight. Eiji can hear the snickers of the Commandramon far off in the shadows. Even the Cargodramon lets out an involuntary snicker as it continues to hover.

Eiji tries to wipe away the gunk, but the act only seems to smear deeper into his skin. “Hey, Satsuki?” Eiji says as he scrapes a clump of poo from his hair, “Why’d you pick Numemon?”

Satsuki thinks for a moment before cuddling against the Numemon. “Because it’s so cute! It’s slimy, shiny, and it’s got a ferocity that I find...Fascinating.” The Numemon smiles as it nuzzles against Satsuki. Suddenly, she sits up straight and turns to Eiji. “Hey, Eiji?” She says in a serious tone.

“Yeah?” Eiji replies, scraping off another chunk of poo from his arm, and dropping it to the ground.

“I’m bored now. I’m done with this”

“Dammit!” Loogamon snaps “Eiji, end the hologram!”

Eiji freezes for a moment, unsure what to do. He ends the hologram and Eiji and Loogamon become one.

Eiji finds himself suspended in an empty virtual space, surrounded by monitors. At the center, Eiji has a clear view of the battlefield through Loogamon’s eyes. The surrounding screens were filled with stats, menus, and programs.

“Commandramon! Fire!” Satsuki commands gleefully.

DCD BOMB!

The Commandramon start tossing bombs towards the space Loogamon stood. Before the bombs get a chance to explode, Loogamon is in the air above an unsuspecting group of Commandramon.

“Howling Fire!”

A wall of fire rains down over the Commandramon, leaving them blackened and unconscious.

Satsuki and Numemon are unphased by the sudden burst of flames.

“Let’s see how you handle my flame!” Loogamon roars as he lets out a burst of flame towards the advancing slug. The flames engulf the pair, but the fire has no effect. The attack doesn’t break the slug’s stride as it slowly closes the gap between them.

Eiji watches the battlefield helplessly from his void. Numemon was a Champion-level Digimon. Even if it is just a slug, the difference in power level is clear. Loogamon needed to be stronger to stand a chance. But what could he do from in here?

“Calm down Eiji!” Loogamon’s voice comes from within Eiji’s head.

Eiji tries to calm himself. “If we don’t give it our all, we’re toast”

There is a brief silence before Loogamon answers, “Ever since we arrived in the Wall Slum, I’ve been feeling this strange surge of power growing within me. I can feel it about to overflow, and I think it’s because of you. Can you feel it too?”

Eiji tries to calm himself further as he tries to concentrate. At first, he is hit with the overwhelming senses of the world around him. His nose fills with the burnt scent of gunpowder mixed with the foul order of sewage. He can hear the rotors slicing through the air and the sound of the remaining Comandramon moving their injured comrades. And he can feel the stinging pain of the bullet wounds on Loogamon’s flesh. Beneath all of this, Eiji feels a strange sensation. A power shared between the two ready to overflow.



Chapter 1-17

Loogarmon stands on top of the crimson mausoleum. Its bloodthirsty gaze scanned over the fumbling DigiPolice. Flames lick from the sides of its iron muzzle. The ruby gem on its forehead glows with the light of the magical flame burning around it. Loogarmon sniffs the air as its claws stretch and dig into the red brick below. A sly smirk forms under its mask.

“No fair” Satsuki hisses as her expression sours at the site of the massive wolf. “This Digimon wasn’t...”

Her voice trails off as Loogarmon’s booming laugh echoes over the cul-de-sac. Flames crackle from the gaps in his maw. “I am the Demon Wolf, and this is my castle. Bow to me, or burn!” Its command carries comfortably over the domain.

Eiji watches from the void inside Loogarmon, admiring his partner’s new stage. Eiji can feel the sudden burst of strength and power as if it were his own. As the shock of this new power passes, Eiji begins to look over the data populating the screens around him. “Hey, Loogamon... I mean Loogarmon. Does this mean you got your memory back?” Eiji asks into the void. There is no response. Instead, Loogarmon’s gaze continues fixed on the wretched Numemon.

Satsuki stands frozen as she stares back at the massive wolf above her. She grinds her teeth in frustration. “This wasn’t supposed to happen...” she mutters to herself.

An intense flame starts to bleed from the gaps in Loogarmon’s muzzle. A smile forms, licking up loose embers into the air.

Howling Burn!

Before anyone can react, Loogarmon shoots a ray of fire at Numemon. This time, its mucus does little to quell the flame. Numemon wriggles as it burns alive. Its squeals are muffled by the Satsuki’s piercing screams. “NOOOO!” She screams as she rushes toward the Numemon. “Not my poor Numemon!” The heat from the flame stops her from getting close enough to help. The flame grows as it burns. Angry tears fall from her eyes as she turns her glare to Loogarmon.

“Numemon is heavily damaged. A retreat has been ordered. Recover the wounded!” A panicked voice crackles over the radio.

The DigiPolice scramble at the command immediately. The Corgodramon swoops down to pick up the burning Numemon. Its rotors extinguish the flames. A squad Commandromon carry the unconscious Numemon aboard before the Corgodramon takes off in a swift retreat.

Inside the Cargodramon, Satsuki tends to the unconscious Numemon. She grits her teeth as she gently cleans her charred partner.

“How dare they do this to my Numemon.” Anger floods over her as she recalls images of Loogarmon and Eiji.

“Captain, you’re exceeding the safety thresholds. You must deactivate the Mindlink!”

“No!” she snaps, not breaking away from her work.

“But...”

“Look at what they did to my Numemon! That insolent Code Cracker and his dumb dog!” She slams her fists on a nearby table. “Next time I’ll make them pay...”

Cargodramon continues its ascent unmolested. Satsuki walks over to a nearby window and watches the Wall Slim’s Ninth Avenue shrink below them. “I’ll get you for this Eiji Nagasumi. Just you wait...”

Loogarmon stands on top of the roof of the red mausoleum as the Cargodramon flies away. Eiji appears next to it, and they watch it disappear into the sea of networks.

Eiji turns to his partner and stares in admiration. It was the first time he lays eyes on Loogarmon. Standing over him like a giant Rhino, the wolf smirks. Its eyes lost in the sky.

“I finally remember something after Digivolving,” Loogarmon says, finally breaking the silence. “I used to be the boss of Ninth Avenue.”

“Yeah I heard. The Demon Wolf of Ninth Avenue. Impressive” Eiji remarks sincerely.

Loogarmon turns to Eiji. “But there is still a lot I don’t remember. I mean, I must have lost my position at some point... right?”

Eiji thinks for a moment. “Maybe you just have to keep evolving. If its slowly coming to you, maybe you just need to get stronger.”

Eiji is at a loss. He only knows about Amnesia from what he’s seen in movies.

“Maybe you’re right” Loogarmon looks pensively over the empty cul-de-sac. “I’ll get it all back” He says finally. “My power, memories, everything!” His voice trails off.

A sudden rustling sound comes from somewhere in the shadows. A Digimon emerges slowly from a nearby alley. Other Digimon start pouring from the surrounding streets and begin filling the plaza below.

“What’s going on?” Eiji asks as the plaza begins to fill with unfamiliar Digimon. Eiji begins to feel defensive, but Loogarmon calmly overlooks the Digimon that gather below.

LOOGARMON!

The crowd begins to cheer and chant. Their voices fill the dormant castle, bringing it to life.

Loogarmon! Loogarmon! Loogarmon!



The gathered Digimon celebrate the return of their king. Away from the crowd, on top of a building overlooking Ninth Avenue, the cloaked Digimon watches unseen.

“So the Demon Wolf Returns,” the cloaked Digimon says.

“It’s impressive, isn’t it?” the interviewer’s voice replies over voice chat.

“It was little overkill calling the cops like that, don’t you think?”

“I didn’t think they would send their own Mindlinker but never I knew they’d get out of it. Everything came out as expected. Loogarmon is a prototype Digimon.”

“What did you think of the Code Cracker?”

“I’m reserving judgement for now.”

“Looks like the mapping job was completed,” says the cloaked Digimon as it begins to receive the mapping tool’s data.

“Well of course he passed the entrance exam. I want as many Mindlinkers as I can get.”

“Do you think you can guide him? Eiji I mean. Can you take him to a new level?”

“I have to.” Silence falls over the pair as they watch over the commotion below. The chants echo off the walls around them. “It’s going to be interesting; don’t you think... Dorumon?”



The cloaked Digimon takes off its cloak revealing a small fox-like dragon. Small dragon wings wriggle from the small of its back and a big bushy tail wags behind it. On its forehead, Dorumon has the same jeweled metal interface as Loogamon.

Chapter 1-18

Are Digimon alive?

A question that has yet to be defined at least in legal terms. Most of the population is ignorant of its existence, so laws and legislation haven't caught up to deal with its existence.

But how can the Digital World be regulated? Can we punish the people who own Digimon? Who has authority over a world that exists outside of all physical borders?

Many countries have begun answering these questions, but the responses differ between nations. Japan's answer? The DigiPolice. A special unit created to combat growing cybercrimes. Although the DigiPolice is a part of the Metropolitan Police Department, they must work in secret. The world just isn't ready for the digital world.

The captain of the DigiPolice was a tall woman with short brown hair. She was always neatly dressed, and always scowling. She'd earned her reputation of Demon for her fierceness. Everyone in her department feared and respected her. They would die for her if she asked.

Yulin sits at her desk. The office is plain, except for a desk and a few filing cabinets against the wall. On her desk, only a few neat stacks of folders sit across it. She is busy reading Satsuki's report. Satsuki sits across from her, visibly flustered.

"Loogamon huh?" Shuu Yulin's voice trails off as she continues to read the report. She looks up at Satsuki "So it took out a couple of squads of Commandron on its own, digivolved, and beat your Numemon? Looks like we've got a dangerous code cracker on our hands..." Again, Shuu Yulin's voice trails off as she continues to analyze the report.

"Those bastards really hurt my Numemon!" Satsuki stamps, "Next time I see them, they're going to pay for what they did!"

"I'm impressed Satsuki. A level A code-cracker and you even managed to get his real name." Shuu Yulin scans the report "Eiji Nagasumi...I don't see him on the list of Sons of Chaos executives..."

"Well, he just gave it to me. He just gave me his name without me asking."

Shuu Yulin closes the folder and places it neatly on the table in front of her. “What do you mean?”

Satsuki shrugs, “he just gave me his full name. You’d think a high-level code cracker like him would use an alias, but he gave me his actual name.”

“What a peculiar kid. I can’t tell if he is smart, or really stupid.”

“My guess? He’s just a very skilled moron. At least that’s my impression anyways.” Satsuki becomes embarrassed by her analysis. That moron sent her Numemon to the infirmary after all.

Shuu Yulin’s expression grows stern. “Morons are one thing...But you exceeded the K-line again. How many times has that been this year now?”

Satsuki’s face grows red as she looks down at her boots in an attempt to hide her shame. “...Sorry,” she answers, dejected.

“Mindlinking has a safety limit for a reason Sastuki. If you push yourself too hard, you can get stuck in the Digital world. You need to be careful.” Shuu Yulin’s voice is stern, with a hint of disappointment mixed with concern. “I don’t want to lose any men. You hear me? Not a single one”

Satsuki seems to struggle to find the right words. “I’m sorry” she finally manages in a shaky voice. “I’ll be more careful, I promise...”

Yulin doesn’t seem to react. Instead, she opens Eiji’s file. She thumbs through his family history and lands on a blurry image of Eiji. “Isn’t this the DDL?” It was a picture taken from surveillance footage they acquired from the University of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

Sastuki shrugs, “Maybe he goes to school there?”

“Maybe, but it looks like he’s only registered as a freelancer at the moment. Zoom in here” Yulin instructs as she points to Eiji’s left wrist. The video pauses, and the camera focuses on his arm. The image becomes pixelated for a moment before AI starts reconstructing the image.

“That’s a Digimon Linker, and it looks like a newer model. Looks like the ones made by Abadin Electronics.” Yulin’s Digimon, Ryudamon, suddenly appears in the space next to her. Ryudamon is a small yellow dragon wearing samurai armor.

Yulin continues to analyze the image. “They do look similar don’t they. So this Loogamon and the latest Digimon Linker huh?” She studies the file carefully, taking note of how Loogamon and Ryudamon have the same ruby crystal on their head.



Ryudamon, rookie, beast, vaccine type

In a tower apartment building overlooking the Denrin District, Leon steps out of the shower into the bedroom apartment he rents as an international student. He dries his hair as he walks to the fridge. There are no lights on in the room. Instead, the small apartment is lit by the warm yellow glow Pulsemon gives off. Leon opens an empty Fridge and pulls out a bottle of water.

“The Sons of Chaos are up to something,” Pulsemon says, looking up to his partner.

“Because of the code cracker?” Leon drinks from the bottle as he walks past a trash bin full of takeout containers.

“This isn’t just an ordinary code cracker. I hear he go into a scuffle with the police in the Wall Slums”

Leon stops drinking for a moment. “There’s nothing alarming about conflict between a code cracker and a police.”

“No but this code cracker is a mind linker. You should see the rumors about him going around the Sons of Chaos channel”

CHAPTER 2 – Hacker Leon: WWW Airlines Flight 626



Chapter 2-1

The circumstances behind the crash of WWW Airline Flight 626 remain a mystery. Plane crashes usually go unnoticed, lost in the constant stream of bad news. They may populate news sights for a few hours, but people have become desensitized to tragedy.

But Flight 626 was different. There were a few other plane crashes over the years, but none were as big or under such strange circumstances. The plane inexplicitly veered off course and crashed into the ocean, killing everyone on board. All the public has are the rumors that still linger since the crash. Some say it was engine failure. Others say it was a pilot error. No one knows for sure because the flight computer went missing in the crash.

At least that is what the public is told. The official report has never been released. Only a select few government officials know the truth and the well-connected few work in the shadows. It wasn't engine failure or pilot error that brought down Flight 626, but a code cracker and his Digimon.

The official verdict is that people aren't ready for the truth that the Digital World exists and that Digimon is real. There are no systems in place to deal with the panic and fear-mongering that would surface because people aren't ready to understand. This is why Flight 626 has outlived most tragedies. Why it still lingers in the modern vernacular.



Leon Alexander wakes suddenly with a jolt. Sweat drips down his forehead as he shakes the familiar nightmare. His breathing is heavy. He hunches over in an attempt to calm himself. Sweat drips off his nose and lands on his bed sheet, leaving a dark spot in its place. A warm glow washes over him as Pulsemon rushes to his side.

“Are you okay Leon? I heard you scream?” Pulsemon asks. It is a hologram, but its look of concern is real. Its body crackles with electricity and gives off a warm yellow glow. Occasionally, a random spark will shoot out from him.

“Where you dreaming of the accident again? It’s been a while.” It asks softly

Leon looks over at his small companion and smiles weakly. “Yes, Pulsemon. It’s back.” He reaches over towards his nightstand for his water bottle. He drains it quickly.

“Do you need any medicine?”

“No thanks, I’m good.” Leon falls back and stares at the ceiling, letting out a loud frustrated sigh. “What a time to be awake!” The lights of the city trickle in and mix with Pulsemon’s glow.

“Don’t you have class today? You should try going back to sleep.” Pulsemon says, trying to be helpful.

Leon sits back up and considers the proposition. He looks out the window into the city. Dawn begins to trickle in behind the skyline. He sighs. “Nah, I’ll just get up now. It’s a boring class, but the professor is real strict about attendance.”

“Do you even need the class? I mean you’re basically work at Abadin Electronics.”

“I promised my father I would graduate and get a job. Besides, being a college student leaves me plenty of time for...other stuff.”

Pulsemon laughs impishly.

Leon gets out of bed “I’m gonna take a shower,” he says as he shuffles slowly towards the bathroom.

Eiji and Loogamon stand in front of the crimson Castle of the Nine Wolves. A few Digimon linger in the courtyard, but mind their business.

“Does this mean you have your memories back?” Eiji asks sincerely.

“It’s still a bit hazy. I remember being raised here, I remember this was my turf but...” Loogamon’s voice trails off as it attempts to remember more.

“Well,” Eiji replies sadly, “its a start. I’m sure you’ll get it back soon.” He gives Loogamon a reassuring smile.

“It doesn’t matter if I do.”

“Oh? Why’s that?”

“Do you remember everything from your past? Forever?”

Eiji thinks for a moment. “You got me there.”

“We tend to forget things that don’t matter.”

Eiji snorts “Look who’s all grown and tough now!”

Before Loogamon can respond, three Tyrannamon round the corner and surround the pair.

“Good work fellas” Eiji calls up to them. The Tyrannomon growl gingerly in response as they transmit the data they collected to Loogamon. They managed to map most of the district and collect a decent amount of data about its population.

“They’re actually useful,” Loogamon says, impressed. Eiji tosses them a couple of pieces of meat as a reward.

“You know, you could join them,” Eiji sneers.

Loogamon scoffs. “And what? Have them outrank me?!” Eiji laughs.

“Send them to patrol the area periodically. I fear there will be those who are foolish enough to invade while I am away.”

Eiji nods as he begins typing into a virtual monitor. “I’ll set up a schedule now.” Eiji pets the Tyrannomon, “Good luck fellas!” They respond with low, affectionate growls. Eiji couldn’t talk to the Tyrannomon, but he was beginning to understand them in his own way.

Suddenly a loud, piercing siren sounds over the district. The Digimon lingering in the square scatter into hiding.

“What’s going on?” Eiji asks, trying to understand the danger.

“Eiji!” Loogamon shouts over the wailing. “Get the Tyrannomon and leave!”

“Why?” Eiji asks as he pulls up the virtual monitor, sending the Tyrannomon back to their dock. He doesn’t wait for an answer. He quits his holo form and returns to Loogamon’s Digicore.

Loogamon dashes up the side of the castle, its claws digging effortlessly into the red tile. It climbs to the watch tower overlooking the district and sits, turning its gaze out to the vast digital ocean above them. Eiji looks through Loogamon’s eyes and can hear the

commotion unfolding around them.

“Vortex! Vortex!” He hears the panicked screams of Digimon below.

“Vortex?” Eiji repeats.

Loogamon shifts his gaze. “There.”

Eiji sees a large whirlpool digging away at the digital sea, sucking into it chunks of debris. It was a massive hole, the size of an entire district, slowly moving across the surface.

“The firewall that protects the Digital World isn’t perfect,” Loogamon begins, “It has cracks. Sometimes those cracks cause a vortex to form. Most of the time they are small and short lived, but every so often a large one forms. Usually, they are contained to the area over the Dusk Kingdom, but no one knows why. On rare occasions, a vortex will threaten the Slums, erasing whole districts and their Digimon.”

“What happens to the Digimon that get sucked up?”

“No one knows. At least no Digimon have returned to tell us.”

The vortex grazes the outer shores of the slums before disappearing, leaving the Digital Sea to return to its calm beautiful stream of data. The sirens go silent and Digimon begin to spill back into the square.

“Come on. We’re late.” Loogamon says suddenly.

“Late for what?”

“Seriously? You’re the one who set the reminder.”

“Oh shoot! My appointment with Professor Ryusenji!” Eiji severs the connection and returns to reality.

Eiji and Loogamon enter the professor’s lab and find him busy combing through the most recent report.

“Good morning!” Professor Ryusenji says as he looks up from his computer. “These are phenomenal results!”

“Thanks, Professor! We owe you for the Mindlink. It’s incredible!” Eiji can’t hold back his excitement. Loogamon’s hologram moves to the couch where he curls up for a nap.

The professor turns back to his data. “This is astounding! I mean I knew the two of you were compatible, but this is unexpected. You two share a special connection that doesn’t exist anywhere else.” The professor grins as he continues combing through the data.

“Still,” Eiji begins, “I feel sick when I wake up from the Mindlink.” The first time he woke from the Mindlink, he found himself leaning against the wall for support as the apartment spun around him. His stomach feels uneasy as he walks toward the professor.

The professor turns to Eiji. “I’ve been monitoring your vitals closely and haven’t noticed anything concerning. Nothing in previous tests suggests we should worry. It will go away with a bit of rest. You’ll get used to it in time,” the professor explains. “That’s good to know,” Eiji says, sounding relieved. “Oh there’s one more thing!” He looks over at Loogamon who is sound asleep, or at least pretending to. “Loogamon can talk in the real world too.”

“That’s normal, once you are Mindlinked, you should be able to communicate easily.”

“Wait? Does that mean there are other talking Digimon at the DDL?”

“That’s classified.” Before Eiji can prod more, the professor continues “Right then, to business.”

“Right. I heard back from the interviewer. I passed the test,” Eiji says as he shows the message to the professor.

The professor reads over the message carefully. “What was the test?” He asks without looking up.

“I had to survey the 9th district.”

“Ooh scary. Not even the Digipolice like to go there.”

“It was no problem for me and Loogamon! It also helps Loogamon is from the 9th.” There is no response from the professor. “...But you already knew that; didn’t you?”

“Well, the DDL took... collected Loogamon from the Wall Slums years ago. To keep it safe.”

“Safe from what?”

“That’s classified.”

“D4 classified?”

The professor ignores the question. “So Loogamon got his memory back?” He pulls out a legal pad and pen and waits eagerly for the answer.

“It’s still hazy. He remembers bits and pieces, but there is still a lot missing. The smell triggered his first few memories, but I don’t think he even remembers evolving into Loogarmon.”

“We did notice that there are errors in Loogamon’s memory. It’s what we would call amnesia in humans. It is possible that, as he remembers more, he will suffer bouts of mental anguish. When that happens Eiji, I need you to be there with him to help him through it. I need you to promise me that.” It was clear from the professor’s gentle tone that he truly cared about Loogamon.

Eiji looks over at Loogamon, who is sound asleep on a nearby couch. “I promise,” he answers with a smile. He turns to the professor. “You know,” Eiji starts, trying to find the right words. “When we were linked in the Digital World, I think I started to understand Loogamon better. I was experiencing everything as him or through him.”

The professor seems overjoyed by Eiji’s observation. “Is that so? That’s fantastic! You are a very gifted code cracker Eiji, and I am very fortunate to have you helping me with this endeavor.”

“Really? I’m just happy to be here. So much has happened since I met you and Loogamon... I promise I’ll work hard to make the Digital World a better place.” Eiji can’t hide the joy of hearing the Professor’s words. It had been a while since he received any proper validation.

The Professor clasps his hands. “Well I guess that makes you partners!”

“Hell yeah, we are!” Eiji thinks about his time with Loogamon. In the short time they’ve been together, they’ve become a team. Inseparable. Eiji would do anything for Loogamon, and he hoped it felt the same.

“Oh, right!” Ryusenji exclaims suddenly. ” Here’s a little something extra for you. A reward for getting Loogamon to Digivolve to Champion.” The professor pulls out his phone and makes a few inputs.

Eiji receives a notification. He studies it for a moment in disbelief. “This is awesome! Thank you.” Eiji stares lovingly at the amount freshly transferred to his bank account. He remembers the struggle of living paycheck to paycheck, and a sense of relief washes over him. He could eat meat tonight. His hard work was finally paying off.

“I want you to continue your investigation into the Sons of Chaos,” the Professor interrupts.

Eiji puts his phone away and nods his head in agreement. “I’ve already been contacted by the higher-ups. I have a meeting with them later today.”

The professor raises his eyebrow, “You certainly work fast, don’t you?”

“It’s all thanks to Loogamon. And this,” Eiji says as he raises his wrist, flashing the Digimon Linker.

“Who are you meeting?”

“Umm, let me see...” Eiji takes out his phone and begins scrolling through his messages.

“I’m meeting with a Code Cracker named Marvin.”

“The Songsmith? You’re certainly a big deal if you’re already meeting with him.”

“Is he famous or something?”

“He’s one of the lead developers for that app you use...GriMM. He’s one of the leading software engineers in the world.”

“Oh man, that’s huge! Maybe I’ll even get to meet Tartarus,” Eiji muses.

“Just remember why you’re there Eiji. You’re a spy, but you also have to be careful. I want you to have a long career.”

“I promise!”

“Good. Now there’s something I need to show you before you go. It’s important that you pay attention to this, it could mean your life.” The professor turns to his monitor and pulls up a file for Eiji to see.

D4 CLASSIFIED ML EXPERIMENT NO.■■■ DATE:■■■■, ■■SITE: DDL

Chapter 2-2

The GriMM network was home to a myriad of chatrooms and message boards. You can find just about anything on GriMM if you dig deep enough.

The Sons of Chaos host a special channel on Grimm for current, new, and prospective members. Their front page is dedicated to the recruitment of new members. The page is full of propaganda and information about the Digital world designed to attract prominent code crackers to their ranks. It also hosts an active marketplace for all kinds of Digimon tools.

Active members of the Sons of Chaos have access to a special virtual lounge where their avatars can hang out and chat. The room is rather plain-looking, especially if you compare it to modern VR Chat games, but it serves its purpose. It's a small room with a dirty cyberpunk aesthetic. It looks like a factor city with rows of pipes that wrap around the room in different directions, rusted metal plates, and vents that occasionally let off steam.

Eiji logs into the room for the first time.

YO! Eiji's here!

That's the dude who took out the squad of DigiPolice!

What a legend.

The chat quickly filled with voice memos. Soon, the whole room is talking about Eiji and his bout with the DigiPolice. Eiji walks through the chatroom with every set of eyes looking over him. The sudden popularity shocks him, but if he is going to get close to Tartarus, it is a necessary evil. Eiji needed to raise the ranks quickly. He needed to own his popularity.

Eiji sits in his room looking down at the virtual monitor transmitting from his Digimon Linker. His eyes move over the virtual chatroom as he studies the details. The voice chat bounces off the walls of his small loft. Next to Eiji's avatar, Loogamon sits and scans the lounge for danger.

"Looks like you're a popular guy Eiji," Loogamon says flatly.

"That's the plan," Eiji responds coolly. Eiji and Loogamon are in a private chat room. No one else can hear them speak.

“It’s a little offensive that they think you beat the DigiPolice all on your own. They think you’re some kind of hotshot code cracker.”

“Well,” Eiji says, getting cocky, “I kind of am. Only top-rated code can use mindlink.”

Mindlink is inaccessible to most code crackers. Mind Link requires special equipment like Eiji’s DigiLinker and compatibility with a Digimon. Most code crackers lacked the skill and resources to even attempt such a procedure. In this way, Eiji wasn’t lying.

Loogamon scoffs at the response. The pair continue their stroll through their lounge as strangers watch them closely.

Loogamon starts sniffing at the air. The fur down its back begins to lift. “Someone’s running a search on me,” it whispers. “We’re being watched.”

Eiji keeps walking, doing his best to look inconspicuous. “Should we be worried?” Eiji whispers back.

Loogamon shakes his head. “I don’t like it.” He turns his gaze towards a Digimon with large ripped wings, a dragon skull for a head, and a snake’s body.

Below the Airdroman stands an avatar with thick long dreads. It walks towards Eiji and Loogamon. “My name is Marvin. It’s a pleasure to meet you Eiji,” it says with a warm and friendly tone.

In the heat of the moment, Eiji forgot to use an alias. Eiji is a common enough name that shouldn’t be a problem, but it was jarring to hear his real name used on GriMM.

“The pleasure is all mine, Marvin. I’ve heard a lot about you.”

“So, you’ve read my messages then?”

“Yep! And this is my partner, Loogamon.”

Loogamon appears to say something to Marvin, but his chat is muted. Airdramon lets out a sharp cry.

“Your partner? Ok. I see how it is.” Marvin responds, looking impressed.

“So? What’s up?” Eiji asks.

“According to my records, you applied to join the Sons of Chaos only a couple of days ago.”

“That’s right.”

“Have you ever applied under a different name or belonged to another code cracking team?”

“Nope. I freelance a bit, but nothing serious like this.”

“You sure about that?”

“Are you always this suspicious of people?”

“Only under certain circumstances. A rookie joining the ranks after beating the DigiPolice single-handedly is a bit sus. It’s either a lie, or there’s more to it.” Marvin goes quiet for a moment.

Eiji’s heart pounds against his chest. He keeps quiet. Maybe Marvin’s suspicion was standard procedure.

“I uh...” Eiji starts to stutter. He feels compelled to break the silence.

“But a code cracker who can mind link can’t be that stupid. Follow me, we need to talk somewhere more private.



As they walk away from the crowd, Eiji gets an invite to Marvin's private room. Eiji finds himself in a smaller version of the lounge he was just in.

"This is my place," Marvin says as he sits on a chair.

"So you're a big deal in the SoC?" Eiji asks.

"I've got a few extra permissions in the channel, but I'm no more important than anyone else here."

"I've heard you're the guy who built GriMM. Is that true?"

"I was one of the first core members of the project, but it was a pretty big team. I did a bit of the code and suddenly everyone thinks I'm the creator," Marvin says with a smirk.

"So you make all the Digimon tools then?"

"I do. Let me know what you need. First one's free"

Eiji glances at the Airdramon above them. It curls its tail around a catwalk. Loogamon sits near Eiji, sniffing at the air.

“Anyways,” Marvin starts. “Down to business. The Sons of Chaos are planning something big, but we don’t have the numbers to pull it off.”

“Don’t have the numbers? Aren’t there a ton of people in the SoC?” Eiji starts to pry for information.

“Oh, we have more members than we need, but not enough skilled code crackers who can mindlink. Not many of them can hold their own against the DigiPolice.” Marvin smiles at Eiji. “But then here you are.”

“I’m in,” Eiji says bluntly.

Marvin is taken aback. “That was quick. This is going to be dangerous, I hope you know that.”

Marvin takes a breath. An uncomfortable silence hangs in the air. All Eiji can think about is completing his mission. He needs to get close to Tartarus.

“It can’t be more dangerous than facing off against the DigiPolice,” Eiji says, breaking the silence.

Marvin snickers. “Look I get it, you beat a bunch of Commandramon and the deputy squad leader, but now you’ve got a huge target on your back. If you get caught, their locking you up.”

“And?”

Marvin relaxes a bit. “As long as you know the risks. I mean you’re good Eiji, we wouldn’t be having this conversation if you couldn’t hold your own. I just want you to understand what’s at stake.”

Eiji nods. “So what’s the mission? Is Tartarus involved?”

“You want to know about Tartarus?”

“Well... Yeah? He’s a legend! Right Loogamon?”

“Woof!” Loogamon wags its tail excitedly.

Marvin looks down at Loogamon. “You’ve got a good dog here.”

“He’s a wolf,” Eiji responds.

Marvin bends over to pet Loogamon. It happily accepts the affection. “It sure acts like a dog.”

Eiji is at a loss. “He’s never done that kind of stuff with me!” Eiji can’t help but feel a bit jealous.

Marvin stands up and turns to Eiji. “Tartarus seldom comes around. The higher-ups don’t know much about him either. We just have the orders they give us.” Marvin sends Eiji an invitation to the private channel: Mission Infinity.

“That’s where we discuss the mission. I’ll share the files with you. It’s going down tomorrow at...” Marvin catches himself. “You’ll get the rest of the details once we’re all assembled here. You’ll need to mindlinked obviously. I’ll get you money for whatever you need.”

“Cool, I’ll see you then.” Eiji starts to log out.

“Wait, there’s one more thing,” Marvin’s words stop Eiji and Loogamon in their tracks. They stare at Marvin nervously. “You know anything about Black Agumon?”

“All I know is people are looking for it.”

“We’re looking for it,” Marvin corrects Eiji.

“You’re the ones offering the Million DC reward?!” The news stuns Eiji.

Marvin nods his head. “Tartarus wants this Agumon. It’s become his obsession...”

Chapter 2-3: Marvin's Room

Only eight members of the Sons of Chaos attend the Operation Infinity briefing. Eiji stares nervously at the seven other avatars around him. He only recognizes Marvin. The rest are strangers who occasionally share idle chatter, but the room is mostly silent.

A large screen suddenly flashes above them and fills with maps, pictures, and charts.

“Our Target is the Nation of X,” Marvin begins. His voice is more stern and serious than it was the day before. “They are a small nation with an almost negligible GDP, but they are one of the world’s biggest sponsors of terrorism. Bombings, kidnappings, genocide, you name it, they’ve done it. Recently, they’ve moved their operations into digital world.” Marvin flips through the slides filled with related news clippings. “A large number of cyber-attacks originate Nation X. Their latest exploit? The digital exchange where they made off with billions of dollars in crypto...”

“That was them?” Eiji involuntarily blurts out, interrupting Marvin’s flow.

Marvin nods. “Yep, it is state sponsored Digimon crime, and it has to stop. Attacks like these will destabilize the market, but more importantly, it goes against the fundamental beliefs we were built on. Nation X threatens freedom in Digital World.”

Eiji takes a hard swallow as the scale of the operation hits him. This was bigger than any freelance job he had ever taken. His hands tremble slightly as Marvin continues his explanation. Most of it goes over his head. Eiji understands bits and pieces, but his nerves become a distraction. Eiji takes a deep breath and tries to remember why he’s there. His breath echos throughout the small dark apartment as he tries to calm himself and focus on Marvin’s words.

“Nation X is using a Machindramon to commit their crimes and pinning it on us.” Marvin throws an image of the metallic dinosaur on the screen. “I don’t think I need to explain why we can’t let that continue.” There aren’t many forces that can take down a Mega Digimon. This wasn’t mission wasn’t going to be easy.

Marvin finishes his explanation. The room remains silent as they look over one another.

“Good, we’re all here,” a mysterious voice says suddenly. “Since there are some fresh faces, allow me to introduce myself. I am Tartarus, and I’ll personally be running this operation.”

Tartarus is here?! Eiji thinks to himself. He tries to recover from the shock and stay professional. He wasn't expecting to get this close to Tartarus so soon.

"This is a simple mission. We crash their servers and capture the Mugendramon."

Eiji studies the image of Mugendramon. This Digimon has the power to penetrate the toughest national security. Such a tool has already proven catastrophic in the hands of a small country, Eiji couldn't imagine what a group of skilled Code Crackers could do with it.

"It's time we show this dictator his place," Tartarus continues. "This is a fight for the freedom of the network."

"For the freedom of the network!" Marvin echoes enthusiastically.

"For the Freedom of the network!" The others repeat loudly.

"No team of code crackers are as unified or powerful as the Sons of Chaos. Soon the world will see that we are a force to be reckoned with. They will see that we are a team that can topple nations!" Tartarus continues charismatically. His voice commanded respect, and those who gathered around him were ready to give it.

One by one, the SOC higher-ups start bringing out their Digimon. Most of them were Cyborg types. Eiji mutes his mic and looks down at his Digimon Linker. "This is it Loogamon. You Ready?" Eiji takes a deep breath as he looks down at his pixel art companion, "Here we go!"

Marvin's room empties as one by one the members blink out of existence. Eiji scrolls through the options on his linker, stopping on the mindlink option. There was no going back now. Eiji is overwhelmed by a warm dizzying sensation that was growing more familiar.

They were now mindlinked. In the void of Loogamon's Digicore, Eiji's heart races. He goes over the mission directives in his head, repeating them like a mantra to calm himself.

Disable the servers, steal the Mugendramon, Eiji repeats to himself. *This should be easy right?* He takes a small breath to sooth his nerves.

“Loogamon, this is your conscious. You should let Eiji pet you,” Eiji manages in a playfully spooky voice.

“Shut up!” Loogamon retorts smugly. “Get serious Eiji.”

“I’m just trying to lighten up the mood. This can be our pregame ritual.” Eiji says, each word finding a more confident purchase.

“Pregame?”

“It’s something we do to pump ourselves up. Something to do before a big mission like this for good luck.”

“This isn’t a game. I need you to be serious for a moment and watch this.” Loogamon’s tone is stern as he pulls up a video on one of the screens.



Eiji stares at a man strapped to a reclining chair. Wires run neatly from the man and connect to nearby monitors and machines. A neat overlay over the video records his vitals.

“Who is that?”

“He was a hacker that used to work at the DDL. He was one of the institutes most promising subjects. He’s logged more mindlink hours than anyone else, and I think his record still stands. Keep watching, you need to see this.”

The video speeds up. The time stamp makes its quick climb, and Eiji watches the man’s vitals closely. Before he could ask what he was supposed to look for, the man starts convulsing wildly. The man fights against the restraints holding him to the chair, but they keep him from falling to the ground. The medical staff rushes to the man. Eiji watches as their silent screams carry useless instructions. He watches as they attempt to hold the man down in their wasted efforts. After a few moments, the man stops moving. The video cuts as the staff begins unplugging him from the machine.

Eiji swallows hard. “What happened?”

“Their Digimon ran into trouble. We believe the encounter overloaded the mindlink.”

“Overloaded? How?”

“There are limits to mindlink. Those limits depend on the skill of the code cracker, their compatibility with their partner Digimon, and the level of their Digimon. The higher the disparity between these factors are, the shorter the window becomes. If you go above this limit, your consciousness becomes melded to the Digital World. You’ll become trapped here.”

“What do you mean by melded?”

“I don’t have an answer for that. Worst case, your consciousness is destroyed. Best case, you’ll float aimlessly through the vast networks, forever lost in the endless stream of data.

A shiver runs down Eiji’s spine. The answer disturbs him. The cold reality of the assignment hits him like a bullet train. He tries to find his nerve again.

“So what happens to the body?” Eiji asks, knowing the answer.

“It becomes an empty husk.”

For the first time since he took the assignment, Eiji thinks about the stakes involved. He thinks about his body sitting alone in his tiny apartment. How long would it take for

someone to find his body? His rent was set up for automatic payments. It would be a few months before his account drained. Would his neighbors complain about the smell? Eiji imagines his corps, rotting away on his bed. Another computer junkie dead from too much gaming.

Eiji shakes off the dark thoughts. *It's too late to think about that. I just have to make sure I don't pass the limit. Easy Peasy.* The speech does little to settle his nerves.

"For your safety, I've set another limit to make sure you return to the real world," Loogamon replies as if reading his mind.

"Aw! You do care!" Eiji teases in an attempt to find his nerve.

"Can't risk having you melded to my Digicore," Loogamon says snidely. "I can't spend the rest of my life with your voice in my head. I'd rather be deleted."

Eiji lets out a nervous laugh. "Come on, Loogamon. Get serious. They are waiting for us".

Chapter 2-4: The Mugendramon in the Dungeon

Loogamon tears through the Digital World at the speed of light. The data surrounding him blurs, forming a tunnel of bright light. Marvin and his partner Airdramon race ahead of him. The eight members participating in the raid were split into teams of two. Each team would attack Nation X's server from a different angle.

"What do you think Tartartus will do with the Mugendramon?" Eiji asks.

"What do you mean?" Marvin replies. There was a hint of suspicion in his tone.

"The orders were to capture the Mugendramon, not destroy it. I just thought..."

"You seem a little too invested in our leader. What's your deal anyways?"

Eiji tries to find the right words to extinguish any suspicion.

"Well?" Marvin asks. Airdramon begins to slow his pace.

"I'm just a little nervous. I ask a lot of questions when I'm nervous. This is the biggest job I've ever pulled, and I don't want to mess it up." Eiji tries to sound shaken to sell his point.

Marvin lets out an empathetic sigh. "No one knows why Tartarus does what he does, but I'm sure he's got a good reason for going after this Mugendramon."

"He must be after something." Eiji continues to prie.

"Tartarus is taking on the Digital world and looking for...something."

"Anything in particular?"

"Who knows? It's not money or fame, I can tell you that much."

"Spinning Needle!"

Airdramon flaps its wings, sending a sharp wave of force through a horde of Nation X's defense. The attack cuts through the mass of guards without meeting much resistance.

Loogamon takes a deep breath. Flames begin to lick from the corners of his mouth.
“Howling Fire!”

Fire pours from Loogamon's mouth towards the mob of advancing guards. The flame repels their advance.

“Nice one!” Marvin shoots a compliment. “Stay in Rookie form. We need you to budget your mindlink in case we need to get out in a hurry. Use the timer I made for.” Marvin says as Airdramon takes out another group of guards.

Eiji turns his attention to the timer. It continues to tick down slowly. “I’ll be good. Don’t worry” Loogamon runs after Airdramon, taking down any security Digimon it comes across without much resistance.

Nation X’s servers were designed like an old-school dungeon crawler. It was a series of filthy stone tunnels that formed a seemingly endless maze, but Airdramon and Loogamon move confidently through its corridors. Loogamon stops on occasion to sniff for clues, Airdramon quickly snakes after him until they exit a tunnel and find themselves in a small corridor with a large ceiling.

“That’s huge!” Eiji reacts as they come to the base of a large door. It was about five stories tall and made of old sturdy iron.

“Decoding it is going to be a pain,” Marvin says as he begins running calculations.

“Nah” Loogamon says as he approaches the door.

“What are you doing?” Eiji asks frantically.

“Set your tool to decode,” Loogamon commands without slowing his stride.

“...Okay?”

The jewel on Loogamon’s head begins to glow.

“Are you serious?” Marvin yelps as he watches the decryption progress fill instantly. The massive door unlocks. The sounds of rotating gears fill the corridor as doors slide open.

“I guess I’m good at opening doors,” Loogamon says smugly.

“We should rob some bank next,” Marvin jokes.

The massive doors open, revealing a deep darkness. A low mechanical roar rises from somewhere in the shadows.



Loogamon and Aidramon make their way toward the roars. They find themselves running toward a massive metallic dinosaur. Its body is made for a mismatched collection of cyborg Digimon parts with massive cannons strapped to its shoulders.

“This is too much!” Eiji shouts as they continue their approach. He is clearly shaken by the scale of the Mega.

“Calm down Eiji,” Loogamon responds, “you’re making us look bad. It’s all tied up.” Eiji notices the restraints holding the Digimon in place. It lets out another series of emotionless roars.

Loogamon looks toward Mugendramon with an unusual amount of sympathy. “What a sorry sight. It can’t hunt or live its life. I wouldn’t wish this fate on my worst enemy.”

“Eradication attack!” Marvin shouts, not wasting a second.

Megadramon lifts its arms towards the Mugendramon. The large metal claws open, letting out a barrage of missiles. The missiles break through the Mugendramon’s restraints. The room fills with smoke from the explosions.

“Careful! Don’t kill it!” Eiji yells. The Machindramon doesn’t move. It couldn’t without human direction.

“Relax, I’m only targeting the restraints,” Marvin says dismissively. “We gotta bust it out of its chains so we can use our capture tool on it.” Megadromon moves into position as Marvin finishes his explanation.

“Ultimate Slicer”

Megadramon crosses its arms releasing a slashing energy of the same shape. It flies through the air cutting away the last bit of data holding the Digimon in place.

Eiji and Loogamon suddenly find themselves surrounded by the hissing and popping of firework-like sparks.

“What the heck?” Eiji yells as he tries to make sense of the flashes. Loogamon’s vision becomes obscured by the sudden spectacle. Loogamon sniffs at the air trying to make up for his lost senses while Eiji looks through his monitors desperately. The words “Mega, Diety, Vaccine” appear on one of the screens. “Are you seeing this?” Eiji says as he tries to find the Digimon belonging to the description.

A bolt of lightning dances along the walls, finally leaping through the air of the hanger.

“Megadramon!”

Chapter 2-5: when the demon wolf meets the god of thunder

Marvin's Megadramon now lay motionless on the ground. Smoke rises from the freshly made wound. Bits of its metal armor have broken or melted away, leaving badly burnt tissue beneath it. Eiji and Loogamon freeze from the shock of seeing Megadramon felled so easily.

"...Um, Marvin?" Eiji calls in an attempt to shake off the initial shock. There is no answer. Eiji and Loogamon stand alone in the hangar, desperately searching for the source of the attack. The Mugendramon pulls at its weakened restraints.

"You there noob?" One of the SOC's leaders calls over voice chat. "We're heading back to the meeting point. What's your status?"

"It's bad. We don't have Mugendramon and something took out Marvin. We need help." Eiji doesn't hide the fear in his voice. He knows they aren't strong enough for whatever stalks them in the shadows.

"Mugendramon hasn't been caught yet?" another voice replies.

"Hang tight, we'll be right there." Moments later two cloaked figures appear and rush towards Megadramon.

"What happened to Marvin?" asks one of the figures.

"I don't know. Something attacked and I haven't been able to reach him since." Eiji's voice shakes with panic. He continues his fruitless search. "I think they're still out there."

"I thought we got all the defense forces."

"Maybe its the DigiPolice?" Eiji asks. He isn't ready for another encounter.

"No, they wouldn't risk an international incident. Whoever it is, they have a Mega. Stay alert."

"What the..."

A bolt of lightning comes crashing down in the distance and lands with an explosion. The force of the blast knocks the group off their feet and sends them crashing into walls.

A purple haze forms around the crash site. Static sparks randomly around the cloud. A glowing figure steps out of the haze holding twin swords crackling with lightning.

“This is bad Eiji,” calls Loogamon. Eiji can feel the fear in Loogamon’s tone and the raw power emanating from Kazuchimon. They didn’t stand a chance against the mega.

“Dammit!” One of the cloaked figures curses, “Why is he here?”

“He? You know this guy?” Eiji asks.

“There’s only one person who can control that thing.” Replies the other cloaked figure.

“The Hacker Judge” both respond together, their voices choking with fear.

“Judge?!” Eiji asks. The handle seems familiar.

Kazuchimon slices his swords in the air, releasing slices of electrical energy through the air. They land, creating terrifying explosions that shake the hangar. A loud metallic roar follows. Eiji’s heart stops. He turns to find a newly freed Mugendramon shaking off the stiffness of its incarceration.

“What a pity,” Kazuchimon finally says. “You have no control over your actions but have committed multiple crimes. Final verdict? Guilty!”

Glowing orbs of electricity start to form around Kazuchimon as it charges an attack. When the orbs grow about a meter wide, they release blinding beams at the raging Mugendramon in rapid succession. Eiji and Loogamon stand far from the attack but can feel its oppressive heat. The Mugendramon lets out a blood-curdling screech as the beams tear through its body. Seconds go by before the attack stops. The Mugendramon’s lifeless body stands smoldering, full of holes, and its armor torn to shreds. The massive corpse falls apart, each piece creating small quakes throughout the hanger.



Kazuchimon sheaths his swords and claps his hands together and prays. “May you find peace in your next life.”

Kazuchimon turns to the code crackers. They remain frozen with fear. “Thanks for the assist,” it says in a superior tone.

“You swooped our kill!” Eiji snaps. Eiji doesn’t appreciate Kazuchimon’s mocking tone or its self-righteous smirk.

“We have to get out of here! The missions done.” Loogamon’s warning comes abruptly, tearing Eiji away from his misguided trance.

It takes Eiji moments to remember the danger. “Yeah.” Loogamon takes a step before Eiji remembers the unconscious Megadramon lying nearby. “Wait! We have to help Marvin.”

“Leave him, we don’t have time,” Loogamon snarls as it takes another step away from the danger.

“I don’t care. Marvin’s a good guy, we have to try.” Eiji switches voice channels and calls the remaining SOC members. “We’ll distract Judge, you get Marvin and get out of here!”

“You can’t...” but Eiji doesn’t hear the rest. He switches channels. “Let’s go Loogamon!”

Loogamon and Eiji turn to Kazuchimon as the cloaked figures make their way to Magadramon

Kazuchimon crackles with electricity. It lets out a taunting smile. “I guess you guys aren’t as strong as everyone says.” Its body glows into a bright silhouette of light. The static in the room drops as the figure shrinks and leaves behind a new Digimon.

Boutmon, Ultimate, Beast Man, Vaccine

“I’m not letting you get away that easy,” Boutmon shouts at the cloaked figures.

“Couldn’t keep your mega?” Eiji responds, slightly surprised by the sudden de-digivolution.

“I don’t need it. Without the Megadramon or Mugendramon, there really is no need for a mega. At least not against the likes of you.” Boutmon rushes towards the Sons of Chaos busy trying to move the Megadramon.

Judge’s dismissive tone angers Eiji. He doesn’t like being talked down to. The rage begins to bubble over.

“Calm down Eiji. He’s on a timer just like us.”

“But Loogamon...”

“He’s underestimating us. Let’s show him how it’s done!”

Eiji takes a calming breath. “You’re right.” A smile starts to creep across his face. “Let’s go! Digivolve!”

A surge of power flows through the pair as a familiar light engulfs them. Loogarmon lands in a heavy thud as the ground cracks under the sudden change in weight. Flames lick from between the wolf’s metallic muzzle as it lets out a menacing growl.

“Flame Blow!”

Loogarmon becomes engulfed in a ball of flames and flies toward the charging Boutmon. Boutmon manages to block the blow, but the impact sends it flying. Boutman stands its attention now towards the massive wolf. Its knees shake as the flames of the attack burn at the wounds.

“You...” Boutmon studies his new opponent.

Loogarmon stands ready. Flames spill from its maw. Its claws dig into the earth as its impressive plumage fan the embers that rain around its body. Eiji sees the members of the SOC make off with the Megadramon. An involuntary sense of relief washes over him.

“Howling Burner!”

Loogarmon roars, unleashing a torrent of fire. Boutmon raises its arms to block the attack, but the flames stick to them.

Judge grits his teeth as the searing pain bites at him and Boutmon. “This is annoying!”

Eiji and Loogarmon continue to kite Boutmon, keeping a healthy distance between them.

“You can’t keep this up forever,” Eiji taunts. “That’s why you de-digivolved, isn’t it? You used up all your energy as the Mega.”

“Eiji, its time to go!” Marvin’s voice calls to him.

“Marvin is alive,” Eiji thinks with a sigh of relief.

“Eiji...?” Judge says softly. The name feels familiar, but he can’t remember why.

“You’ll pay for this Leon!” Marvin shouts at the unmoving Boutmon.

“Leon...?” Eiji tries to remember why the name sounds so familiar.

Boutmon growls in frustration as its body glows and it shrinks down to its rookie form.

Pulsemon, Rookie, Beast Man, Vaccine

Eiji recognizes Pulsemon before the computer pulls the data. He has seen it before...

It takes a moment for the memories to return. Eiji remembers his elementary school days when his friend showed him the same Digimon.

“Pulsemon...” Eiji mutters as he begins to piece it all together. “Leo? Is that you?” Eiji’s hologram suddenly appears next to the Loogarmon. Pulsemon’s expression softens a bit. Leo appears.

Eiji studies Leo and remembers the blond-haired and blue-eyed boy he was friends with all those years ago. He had grown a lot since, but he was undeniably the same kid. The same look of recognition washes over Leon’s face.

An alarm begins to screech. Nation X’s reinforcements begin to close in on the intruders. Eiji and Leo don’t move.

“Leo, its you!” Eiji repeats in disbelief.

“How could you become a code cracker?!” Leon asks, his voice filled with a mix of disappointment and resentment. Bullets begin to rain around them as Nation X’s forces close in.

Leo disappears back into Pulsemon. Pulsemon lingers for a moment before turning into lightning and vanishing into the digital sea. Eiji stands alone in the hangar, security inching closer by the moment.

“So you’re a hacker now...”

Chapter 2-6: Revenge and Reunion

Back on the Sons of Chaos channel, the avatar of a cartoonish businessman stands at the door of Marvin's private chatroom. The avatar is unkempt and dirty. He leans drunkenly against a nearby wall and watches Marvin scrolling through the Grimm news feed.

The attack on Nation X was trending throughout GriMM.

Word had it that the hacker Judge singlehandedly stopped a large-scale attack on Nation X orchestrated by the Sons of Chaos. He was not only able to destroy Nation X's powerful Digimon, but he also outsmarted Tartarus and the Sons of Chaos.

"To what do I owe the pleasure?" Marvin asks, taking notice of the interviewer for the first time. "Come to wish me well?" His tone is playfully mocking.

"Glad to see you up so quickly. And I asume...No side effects," a different voice says sincerely. A small fox with dragon wings and a large ruby embedded on its forehead appears near the interviewer. Its tail flicks at the air.

Dorumon, Rookie, Beast, Data

Marvin smiles. "I wouldn't have made it back without you." He reaches to Dorumon and ruffles its fur playfully.

"What about Megadramon... Er Aidramon?"

"Luckily," Marvin stops petting Dorumon and stands to finish his explanation, "there was no heavy damage to the Digicore. It's currently undergoing repairs and will probably be out of commission for a while."

"That was close Marvin. We could have lost you out there." There was concern in the Digimon's tone.

Marvin grimaced at the thought. "That kid you scouted saved me." Marvin runs his fingers through his dreadlocks. "I can't believe I let a hacker surprise me like that. I'm getting old man." He lets out a nervous chuckle. "Maybe I should plan for an early retirement."

Dorumon ignores the joke. "We have to do something about Judge. We're exploring options for retaliation"

Marvin shakes his head and crosses his arms. "You mess with Leon and we'll have the Americans all over us. We have to think this through."

"He attacked first!" Dorumon shoots back, its voice almost a growl. "This is an insult to us and what we stand for. We can't let this slide." The fur down its back stands angrily. Its tail flails behind it.

"He's right," the interviewer speaks up for the first time. His voice is stern and gruff. "We can't let this go." The interviewer drops his disguise. Tartarus stands before Marvin with a bored look on his face. He is neatly dressed and well-kempt. He has a scar over his right eye and stands taller than Marvin.

"So what then? We go to war? The big war you...both have been planning?" Marvin doesn't hide his frustration.

Tartarus looks at his friend pensively for a moment before moving to a nearby couch to sit. He spreads himself out comfortably and turns his attention up to Marvin. "I'll admit, losing the Mugendramon was a....setback, but the pieces have fallen into place. This can still work."

"Loogarmon, you mean. And Eiji. Those pieces?"

"What do you think of them by the way? Good huh?" Tartarus smirks as he leans forward, eager for Marvin's answer.

Marvin sighs. "The kid surprised me," Marvin says, taking the seat opposite of Tartarus. "At first I thought he was just another cocky code cracker, all-flash, and no substance. But he did good. He doesn't get a big head and listens to directions. He's got good instincts too." Marvin starts to relax in his chair. "and he didn't leave me behind. I like him."

Dorumon gives lets out a smug smirk.

"His partner is still just at champion level though." Marvin sounds concerned.

"He's young, he's got room to grow." Tartarus leans back in his seat and folds his hands behind his head. "I've got something to help him grow a little faster."

"You don't mean..."

“We don’t know the full extent of Eiji’s power yet,” Tartarus begins as he brings up Eiji and Leon’s profiles on a virtual monitor. “We can’t rely on him until we know the extent of that power. We have to push him. We have to know that he is down for the cause and that he will stick with us to the bitter end.” Tartarus pauses for a moment to examine Marvin’s reaction. “Are you still with us?” He asks grimly.

“Of course I am.”

“Nice work Leon,” Pulsemon says, greeting his partner as he wakes from the testing pod. Leon sits up, taking off the helmet used to measure his vitals. His blond hair is matted from the sweat.

Pulsemon begins running around the lab impatiently.

“You too Pulsemon,” Leon says softly as he stands up from the pod and walks over to a nearby monitor. “We set a new record,” Leon remarks with excitement as he reads over the results of their endurance test.

Pulsemon nods eagerly. “We’re unstoppable! It’s all because they put you in that diaper.” It snickers at its own joke.

“Shut up!” Leon can’t help to laugh along with his oldest friend.

“Phenomenal,” a voice says over the intercom.



Professor Ryusenji stands on the other side of the observation window with a large smile.

“I didn’t realize you were here!” Leon bows his head slightly in an attempt to hide the sudden flash of redness on his face.

“Ryu-booo!” Pulsmon chirps, waving eagerly. “Did you see?! Did you see?!”

“Pulsemon my friend! You did such an amazing job!” the professor responds, matching Pulsemon’s energy. “And you too Leon.”

“Thank you, professor.” Pulsemon continues to fidget through the room.

“To think, the lone hacker judge taking out a whole nation, the Sons of Chaos, and a Mugendramon? America must be so proud.”

“It was now or never,” Leon says solemnly. “They had to pay for what they did. For killing all those people...” Leon pauses for a moment. “I had to do it, for myself. It was the only way I could move forward as a hacker.”

The professor nods and gives a proud smile. “I would have never guessed you would grow up to be so strong.”

Leon moved to Japan in elementary school. His dad worked as an assistant professor at the Tokyo University of Electrical and Computer Engineering. He would often take Leon along to work with him.

“You look like someone who is good at taking care of things,” the professor said to Leon one day. He crouches down to bring himself closer to Leon. He hands him a small screen with the pixel art Digitama on it. “I bet you’d be great at raising it with love and care. I’m giving this to you, can I trust you?”

Leon nods his head as he looks down at the small device and studied the strange video it plays. The small egg occasionally shakes.

“This isn’t a game,” the professor continues his explanation. “This is a Digimon, it’s alive and it exists in the Digital world.” The professor goes on to explain the existence of Digimon and the importance of this task.

Leon promises to take care of his Digimon. From that day on, Leon and Pulsemon became inseparable. Together they grew stronger, setting and surpassing limits until they were as part of the DDL as the professor was.

Leon walks out through the security gate and into the lobby. TV displays throughout the room report on the recent attack on Nation X. He sees Eiji sitting across the room, his head buried in his phone as he scrolls slowly through the day’s feed.

“Eiji!” Leon shouts, waving to get his attention. His voice echoes through the lobby. Eiji lifts his head and finds Leon walking towards him. He waves back as the memories from elementary start rushing back.

Chapter 2-7: When Old Friends Catch up

Eiji and Leon walked towards the Café. An awkward eagerness hangs over each step as they search for the right way to initiate conversation. Their footsteps echo off the empty corridor, and the news plays quietly somewhere behind them. The words have become unintelligible, but both knew it was about the attack on Nation X.

“It’s been a while,” Eiji finally says, breaking the silence.

“Since middle school,” Leon nods. They share a warm awkward smile between them.

“It’s good to see you, man,”

“Yeah. You got a lot taller, and buff!” Eiji flexes his arm.

Leon chuckles, “Yeah, I grew up.”

Leon and Eiji swipe their IDs to get into the Café. The place is mostly empty, with only a couple patrons enjoying a small afternoon snack. The boys are hit with the rush of freshly ground coffee, but there is a faint hint of vanilla mixed somewhere in its composition. Soft jazz fill the space left behind the espresso machine and coffee grinder. The two friends find a seat in the most secluded part of the cafe.

“I can’t believe you found my information so quickly,” Eiji says as he takes a sip from his iced drink. “So you’re a big-shot hacker now?”

Leon smirks. “It wasn’t too difficult. But I was surprised to see you moved.”

Eiji is silent for a moment. There is a moment of sadness in his expression, but he shakes it off almost as quickly as it appears. He clears his throat. “Yeah...I live on my own now. Been living alone for a while now.”

“Me too. Since I got back to Japan actually. I have a place in Denrin.” Leon takes a sip of his coffee. “So you work for Professor Ryusenji now? How’s that going?”

“Oh, it’s great! The professor is a little odd, but he’s good people. He got me this steady job, with a decent paycheck!”

“And you’re also a famous Code Cracker!” Leon laughs.

“Not yet, but we will be!” Eiji winks playfully.

“Oh that’s right, you got a partner now too.” Leon pulls out a keychain with a small LCD screen on one side. The pixel sprite version of Pulsemon bounces in place. Leon dangles the keychain off his middle finger and holds it in front of Eiji. The keychain spins slowly from its chain. “You remember Pulsemon? He’s been with me since we were kids!”

Eiji bursts out laughing. “I always thought it was a fancy Tomagachi!”

Leon laughs as he scoops up the keychain and presses the hologram button. Pulsemon suddenly appears on the empty chair next to Leon. His body gives off a faint yellow glow to the furniture around him, and small sparks occasionally ark over its body. Pulsemon vibrates impatiently. His feet kick wildly over the edge of the seat.

“Oh right, we can do that here.” Eiji raises his wrist and begins scrolling through the settings of his digilinker. Loogamon’s hologram appears next to Eiji. The fur down his back stands angrily as he turns his attention to Pulsemon. He lets out a growl as his body tenses. Pulsemon smirks as he jumps up on his chair, readying himself.

“Enough!” Both Eiji and Leon say in unison.

“Loogamon, chill. That’s my friend.”

“Pulsemon, behave!”

Loogamon sits reluctantly and eyes the yellow Digimon suspiciously. Pulsemon sticks its tongue out the wolf.



“So the professor gave you a keychain dock?”

Leon nods. “He said I looked like someone who would be a good caretaker, and here we are.” He turns to Pulsemon and smiles.

“What’s that shiny rock on your head for? Does it come out?” Pulsemon asks mockingly as it reaches for the gem. Loogamon growls and snaps at Pulsemon’s hand. Pulsemon laughs, “Geez, someone’s touchy.”

“So you’re the Professor’s apprentice or something?” Eiji asks

“More of an assistant. The professor is a busy guy, and I grab his mail, set his appointments, stuff like that.”

“Ouch,” Eiji replies, feeling a bit fortunate. “But it’s kind of funny that we both met because of him.”

“Small world.” Leon stares at the watch around Eiji’s wrist, somewhat lost in a thought. “So how is it you came to have the latest version of the Digimon linker?”

“Isn’t it sweet?” Eiji raises his wrist to show it off. “I came to him for a job. He asked me to go catch him this rare Digimon... ModokiBatamon and gave it to me as a bonus.”

“He does like his Batamon...” Leon responds, still somewhat distracted.

Eiji nods. “He then told me about this job,” he says, motioning to Loogamon. “He wanted me to raise Loogamon for him. Pretty cool huh?”

Leon shakes his head. “It should have been me,” Leon snaps suddenly. “He should have asked me. I’m his actual student...” There is a undeniable hint of jealousy and resentment in his tone.

Shocked by his friends sudden outburst, Eiji is at a loss for words.

“We would have won if we fought you know,” Pulsemon says to Loogamon.

“What did you say you little...”

“You can barely keep your champion form! I’ve made it all the way to mega,” Pulsemon smiles as he flexes for Loogamon.

Loogamon snarls as he stands up angrily. Its tail waves furiously behind it.

“Enough Loogamon! Pulsemon has a point.” Eiji remembers their encounter with Kazuchimon. At this stage, they didn’t stand a chance against them, but both Eiji and Loogamon were determined to surpass their rivals.

“Don’t be annoying Pulsemon!” Leon regains his composure. He looks down at his drink as the soft jazz attempts to cover up the awkward silence. “Sorry, it’s just...” Leon begins. “This is a serious deal Eiji. This isn’t a game. Loogamon isn’t just some Code Cracker tool. This is a huge responsibility, and you need to be sure this is something you really want.” Eiji looks over at Loogamon. The two Digimon continue to bicker quietly. The sight puts a smile on his face. “I am taking this seriously. I took this job because I want to help Digimon. He may be a little grumpy, but Loogamon is my friend. I made him a promise, and I am going to work hard to make sure we become strong enough to protect the Digital World.” Eiji looks over at Loogamon. The two Digimon continue to bicker quietly. The sight puts a smile on his face. “I am taking this seriously. I took this job because I want to help Digimon. He may be a little grumpy, but Loogamon is my friend. I made him a promise, and I am going to work hard to make sure we become strong enough to protect the Digital World.”

Leon sits in silence for a moment as he takes in Eiji's response. "Alright then" he extends his fist out in the familiar way they used to when they were kids, "It's a promise!"

Chapter 2-9 – A Test of Loyalty

Eiji finds the professor behind his desk. He is busy working on his lunch when the pair walk in. “Sorry. I’m running a bit behind” he manages to say between bites. He continues to scroll through the report on the screen in front of him.

“Oh, no worries. I can come back some other time.” Eiji understood that the professor was a busy man with important work.

“No no, I’m meeting with a student later. It has to be now.” He finishes off the last bite of his sandwich as he stands to greet the pair properly. “What news do you have for me?”

“Uh, well everything is in the report.”

The professor nods. “So they were after the Mugendramon, and they failed to get their hands on it.” The professor clasps his hands, “Not bad for your first night out.”

“But there’s more.” Eiji adds. “I think Tartarus is collecting Mega level Digimon. I don’t know why, but it can’t be for anything good.”

“Yes, that’s a serious problem.”

“There was also this hacker...” Eiji watches the professor for a reaction.

“Hacker?”

“Yeah, he had a Mega Digimon. It took out the Mugendramon and one of the SOC leaders with little effort.”

“Next time, they won’t get away,” Loogamon growls. The hair down his back begins to stand.

The professor lets out a laugh. “You’ll need to be a Mega yourself if you want to stand a chance.”

“Mega form?” Loogamon’s ears perk up, and its tail wags excitedly behind him.

“What would Loogamon’s Mega even look like?”

The professor shrugs, “Who knows, but it’s going to be exciting!” The professor can’t hide his smile as he continues to theorize all the possible Digivolutions.

Loogamon’s fang glistens into a smile. “You have to get me to my Mega Eiji!”

“I got you!” Eiji says, returning a reassuring smile to his partner.

“It’s a shame about the Mugendramon,” the professor interrupts. “I would have loved to study it, even if it meant sifting through the scraps.”

“That hacker got in my way...” Eiji studies the professor for a reaction. But the professor doesn’t react.

“Hmmm.” The professor seems to study Eiji for the same.

“I know who the hacker is...”

“I know. The hacker is a former student of mine. Leon Alexander.” The professor says as he turns the monitor towards Eiji and Loogamon, showing them a picture of Kazuchimon.

Eiji lets out a sigh of relief. “Good. I didn’t want to be the one to tell you.”

“It’s all fine.”

“I’m not going to get fired am I?”

“Why would you be?”

“Well, I was just talking to Leon and he doesn’t think highly of my being a code cracker.” Eiji can’t shake the worry from his words.

Ryusenji smiles. “Whatever Leon thinks about this has no bearings on my judgement of you, and it never will.” He places his hand on Eiji’s shoulder. “I chose you for a reason Eiji. I run this place, not Leon.”

Eiji lets out a sigh of relief. “Good, kuz I love this job.”

“Now putting all that aside, I hear you’re the only one he showed Pulsemon to all those years ago. All of this seems sort of...fated.”

“Huh, it kind of does. But um...” Eiji struggles to find the words. “He also said he didn’t like me coming in and out of here. He said it might ruin your reputation working with a... code cracker.”

“Well Leon can be...a little too serious at times. Don’t get me wrong, it’s a wonderful quality, but I wouldn’t put too much mind to him. You’re meant to be here Eiji. Don’t worry.”

“I didn’t say anything about you hiring me to look into the Sons of Chaos, but I’m sure he’s got his suspicions.”

“Hmm,” The professor goes silent.

“So, um...”

“Ah! So you’re worried about how to handle Leon, him being an old friend and all.”

“Well, no, it’s not about fighting him. I’m just worried he’ll leak that I am spying on the Son’s of Chaos.”

“I’ll think about how to handle Leon, you just...” the phone rings and cuts off the professor. His next appointment has arrived.

Eiji excuses himself as he returns Loogamon to his Digimon Linker. Before Eiji can walk out of the office, Eiji freezes and turns to the professor. “I forgot to tell you, I talked with Tartarus!”

The professor pushes the bridge of his glasses to his nose, “And is he well?”

“I only heard his voice over chat, but I know he’s looking for a Black Agumon.”

A woman appears at the doorway and knocks gently. The professor motions her to come in. A shiver runs down Eiji’s spine as he recognizes the woman. He ducks his head and hurries out the door.

“Thank you, professor.” She says as Eiji rushes past her. She doesn’t pay much attention to him.



Eiji walks through the security checkpoint and sees Hatsune behind reception. He makes his way through the lobby, “I thought you had some errands to run?”

“Are you free tonight? Let’s go grab a drink!” Loogamon adds, its voice rings from the Digimon Linker. Hatsune lets out a laugh.

“Shhhh, you’re not supposed to talk outside the checkpoint, remember?!” Eiji says he covers the watch face. His ears turn a bright red. A few people waiting in the lobby turn to look at him.

“Did Loogamon just ask me out?”

“I’m just saying what Eiji is thinking,” Loogamon says smugly.

“Shut up,” Eiji snaps as he mutes the Digimon Linker. “Anyways, um...That woman who just came to see the professor. She’s with the police isn’t she?”

“Yeah,” Hatsune says, lowering her voice. “She’s from the Digipolice.”

“I knew it...”

The professor has a lot of influence with the police, so she comes around every so often.”

“Do you know her name?”

“Shuu Yulin. Why? Are you into older women or something?”

Eiji hands the pass back to Hatsune. “So, about that drink?”

Hatsune looks over Eiji for a moment and smiles. “Sure, why not? You seem harmless enough, plus I have something I want to discuss with you. Here’s my Grimm handle.

Eiji’s phone dings as he reads the Hatsune’s name in disbelief. His heart pounds in his chest. “What do you need to talk about?” His voice shakes with nervous excitement.

“I’ll message you later. It’s something I can’t talk to anyone else about.”

Eiji wakes to the sounds of his neighbors talking next door. He groans as he checks the time. “Loogamon, do I have any messages?”

“Check them yourself,” Loogamon snaps.

“Fine,” Eiji says as he lazily reaches for his phone nearby. He begins scrolling through his messages slowly. Eiji sits up from his place on the floor when he sees Hatsune’s name. “Why didn’t you wake me when I got this?”

“I’m not your secretary.”

Eiji opens the message and begins reading eagerly. “I think my boyfriend is cheating on me. I was wondering if you could do a bit of... code cracking on his account for me...”

Eiji stops reading. His heart sinks. “Of course, she has a boyfriend.”

“Sounds like Hatsune trusts you at least,” Loogamon chimes in.

“You think so?”

“Well if he is cheating, they’ll break up, right? Then she’s single.”

“I can’t believe I am taking dating advice from a Digimon...”

“Oh, you got a private message on the Sons of Chaos channel. It’s marked important.”

“What’s it say?” Eiji asks, trying to forget his disappointment.

“It’s from the Leader Tartar sauce.” Loogamon laughs.

Eiji pulls up the message and reads, “Eiji, Your performance during the attack on Nation X’s server was exemplary. Marvin and I thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We request your services for another mission. “

“Wow, a personal request from Tartarus already?”

Eiji continues to read, “We need you to help us get back at the Hacker Judge. We can’t let his transgressions against the Sons of Chaos go unpunished.”

Leon falls silent. This would be the ultimate test of loyalty. This would be the fastest way to earn Tartarus’ trust, but would be able to defeat Leon?

“So you’re gunna fight him?” Loogamon asks.

“Yeah, I am.”

“Isn’t he your friend?”

“Yeah...” Eiji’s voice trails off. “This is going to be a hard one.” Eiji grows silent.

“So what’s the plan?” Loogamon asks finally.

“We can’t beat Leon and Kazuchimon in our current state. We have to figure out a way to Digivolve.”

“I’ll never say no to getting stronger!” Loogamon perks up from his place on Eiji’s bed.

Eiji lays back and stares at the ceiling as he begins formulating a plan. “Get ready Leon, we’re coming for you!”

Chapter 2-11: The Uncontrollable Wolf

When the soft glow of Digivolution fades, Eiji finds himself in a silent and dark Digicore. *Something isn't right.*

“What’s going on?” Eiji’s voice echoes. There is no response.

A strange black creature stands where Loogarmon did. A werewolf of pitch black bone and eyes full of blinding rage. Besides it falls two long arms ending in long sharp claws. Large spikes run down its back in rows of two. A long skeletal tail slams into the earth behind it.

It stands on its hind legs and lets out a roar. Its body bursts into flames as it comes down on all fours. It thrashes and wriggles violently as its claws dig furiously into the earth, propelling it towards Kazuchimon. It closes the distance before Kazuchimon has a chance to react. The creature lunges at Kazuchimon, claws and fangs digging deep into the flesh. Kazuchimon drops its blades as he tries to grab onto the creature and push it away. Pain shoots through its body fangs dig deeper into its neck.

What’s going on? Eiji watches the attack from within the Digicore, but he can’t sense his partner. He tries to connect like he’s done many times before, but there is no response. “Loogamon?” Eiji asks desperately as he types furiously at the control console. But Eiji is locked out. He has no control.

The beast lets out a blood-curdling roar. He bangs his fists at the monitor. The creature’s stats read, “Ultimate. Deamon Beast. Virus...” But there is no name.

Eiji stares at the stats. “We did it...Loogamon made it to Ultimate...” His words felt empty. The words on the screen are meaningless. This creature isn’t Loogamon. Nothing about this felt right.

Eiji’s hands fall to his side as he becomes overcome with hopelessness. He watches as the beast tears into Kazuchimon. He listens to the creature’s hungry rage.

“Your Digivolution failed! It’s out of control!” Leon shouts.

The familiar voice snaps Eiji from his trance. “Out of control?.... Failed?....”

“Eiji can you hear me? You’ve lost control....Dammit!” Leon’s voice barely carries over the beast’s commotion. “You weren’t ready. Look at what you did!” Leon’s voice is angry.

Eiji watches helplessly from within the Digicore.



Helloogarmon. Eiji reads the name as it appears on his monitor. *This is my fault...*

Eiji wanted to win. He wanted to be strong. He wanted to prove to everyone he was strong, but not like this. Helloogarmon continues to tear into Kazuchimon.

“LOOGAMON!” Eiji yells “I know you’re in there. Come back buddy. Please come back.”

Leon reads over the data.

“Helloogarmon?” There is nothing controlling the beast but its rage. It would spread and destroy everything in its path like a virus. “I don’t understand how an Ultimate level Digimon can be this strong...” An alarm goes off. “Dammit. Time’s up...” Leon looks

down at the flashing monitor. The levels were getting dangerously close to the C Line. He couldn't stay mindlinked any longer.

"You're probably running out of time too, huh?" Eiji's voice comes over the com. "I knew you wouldn't be able to keep Kazuchimon up for long. The plan was to make you waste all your energy before...Loogarmon went beserk..."

"Eiji..."

"This is all my fault. I'm sorry."

"You have to focus! This thing is still your partner. You have to focus to stop it from rampaging."

"I'm trying, but it's not..." The sounds of error messages cut him off. "I can't hear Loogamon's voice..."

Kazuchimon struggles to keep Heelogarmon back. Its strength was beginning to give and the pain was becoming too much to bear.

"You have to get out of here Leon. You can't stay here. You're running out of time!" It was clear from Eiji's tone that he had given up.

"I'm not leaving until you swear to quick code cracking! I'm going to save you. Whatever it takes!"

"Leon..." *Why is he so determined? Why is he still here?*

The two had grown apart, there was no reason for Leon to still be here.

"Why can't you let it go?"

Leon goes quiet for a moment before finally answering, "Flight 626..."

"What?"

A high speech squeal cuts them off. Kazuchimon is finally able to get a hold of Heelogarmon before flipping it into the electric barrier. A pulse of energy courses through Heelogarmon as it makes contact with the wall. Heelogarmon falls to the ground. Its flames extinguish leaving a blackened wolf flinging and writhing in pain.

Eiji almost blacks out from the pain of the impact. His fingers fire away furiously at the console. “Come on Loogamon. I know you’re in here...”

Helloogamon continues to writhe in pain. Kazuchimon stands over it, tending to its own wounds. Blood pours from the bites and scratches that run over its body.

“Flight 626 fell because of a Mugendramon.”

“I know... ”

“I didn’t pay attention to the passenger manifest...Eiji, I’m sorry...”

“You’re not making any sense Leon.”

Leon takes a deep breath. “There was a huge fight on the network while the flight was in the air. The U.S. Army’s counterterrorism unit was working on stopping the attack but...I couldn’t do it Eiji I wasn’t strong enough...I’m sorry...” Leon’s voice breaks as he grows silent. “I couldn’t save those people...I couldn’t save your parents.”

“But why...Why are you apologizing?”

“Because...You’re my best friend.”

A mournful silence falls over the two friends. Eiji continues to type furiously. “You didn’t kill those people Leon, that dictator did.”

‘But it was my responsibility. I was supposed to stop them...If I don’t stop you from being a code cracker, you cou...”

“Stop lumping all of us together. I’d never do that!”

“You’ve already helped the Sons of Chaos attack Nation X, and look what you did to Loogamon. As a hacker...I have to stop you, even if you are my friend.” Kazuchimon razes its lightning blades over its head. “I’ve got enough time for one more attack. I’m taking you back Eiji...”

A loud boom breaks Kazuchimon’s concentration. The barrier around them shatters and fades. “Dammit, did already reach the limit?”

A loud metallic howling noise fills the junkyard. A large hole rips at the top of the barrier revealing a massive black hole in the sky. Wind blows chunks of debris and junk data toward the hole. From the center, a figure appears.

Mega. Holly Knight. Vaccine. Omegamon

A large shining knight steps out of the vortex and turns its attention down at them. Its armor glistens, even in the dim light. A cape flows neatly behind it. Its right arm is a powerful-looking cannon, a sword falls from its left. Strange runes light up the face of the sword. Its voice carries over the chaos, "Delete all!"

2-12: The Holy Knight Appears



Omegamon floats over the two Digimon. Its armor glows from the energy gathering at the tip of the cannon. Omegamon aims it at Helloogarmon, who continues to wriggle in pain. The metallic wolf at the end of the cannon glistens preciously as arcs of energy spill out of its mouth. Omegamon releases the beam. It comes crashing down, engulfing Helloogarmon in a blinding white spotlight of frozen energy before vanishing in the same instant.

Helloogarmon lays motionless, its body and flames left frozen by the blast. Inside the Digicore, Eiji writhes in agony. He vaguely remembers the ice beam washing over them as he slowly loses consciousness. His body burns with unbearable pain. He feels his life slowly fading as he desperately tries to hold onto consciousness.

Eiji's vision blurs and darkens, but he can still make out the outline of the holy knight as it moves towards them. He struggles to concentrate, but he can make out the menacing blade thirsting for their lives. In his struggle with consciousness, Eiji can make out his own name written in the strange runes that decorate the face of the blade.

"Delete all!" Omegamon's words fall onto Eiji with a soothing calm. As Omegamon readies for his final blow, Eiji becomes at peace with death. Eiji welcomes the darkness.

CRACK

Omegamon stumbles from a blow to its back.

“Loogamon!” an unseen voice shouts.

Pulsemon?...the familiar voice pulls Eiji back from the darkness. His vision clears as he watches Kazuchimon crash into Omegamon, sending both Digimon flying.

The force of the vortex picks up the flying Digimon and pulls it towards its center. Omegamon struggles to pry Kazuchimon off, but Kazuchimon holds on tightly. Omegamon brings down heavy blows that leave Kazuchimon bruised and bloodied, but Kazuchimon remains unfazed. The vortex continues to pull them closer and closer to its pit.

“Eiji” Leon’s voice crackles from the distance. His voice is barely audible.

“Let go Leon...You have to let go. The vortex is sucking you up!” Eiji shouts back helplessly.

“This...Knight...the last...” Leon’s message comes in gargled with static.

Eiji tries to move but finds himself frozen in the darkness. His body still aches from the blast. His eyes swell with tears, “LEON!!” Eiji watches as his friend is pulled farther and farther away.

“I’m sorry Eiji. I don’t know if you can still hear me. This whole thing is fucked. I tried to save you...I just didn’t know what else to...” his message cuts off. Eiji sits in the silent darkness of the Digicore.

With one sharp elbow, Omegamon frees itself from Kazuchimon’s grip and turns its attention to Eiji.

Shido Ittetsu!

Before Omegamon can make its escape, an electromagnetic barrier forms around the two Digimon.

“You aren’t getting away!” Leon shouts. Around him, alarms blare loudly as Leon uses the last of his mindlink energy to seal Omegamon. Kazuchimon grapples Omegamon. Omegamon struggles as its limbs become locked in the hold. It turns its head to glare at Kazuchimon. Leon stares back at the angry eyes. “For as long as I’ve got left, you’re not going anywhere.”

Eiji continues to watch as Kazuchimon and Omegamon inch closer to the core.

“They’re nearly through...” Eiji says to himself.

Suddenly, the Digicore around him springs to life. Monitors start to fill with data and status updates. Eiji’s commands begin to register. He fights through the pain and begins typing furiously.

Helloogarmon rises slowly. It shakes off the last bits of frost. Its few lingering flames go out, leaving a charged werewolf skeleton. Hellogarmon splashes through black dirty puddles as it stumbles to its feet. It begins to glow and shrink as it turns back into Loogamon. It takes another step before falling back to the ground.

“Loogamon!” Eiji shouts excitedly, as he appears suddenly next to his fallen friend. He kneels beside Loogamon, “Hang in there buddy.”

“...Eiji...What’s...going on?” Loogamon makes out weakly.

“I’ll tell you later.” Eiji lets out a sigh of relief, forgetting for a moment about the danger around him. But reality hits him suddenly. Eiji looks toward his disappearing friend and shouts, “Leon! Get out of there! You win Leon, I’ll quit! Just get out of there!” The whirl of the vortex drowns out his words.

Eiji watches as Kazuchimon and Omegamon disappear into the Vortex. A moment later, it disappears. The sky fills with an eerie peacefulness. Around him, the world goes silent. Eiji begins tending Loogamon’s wounds. Tears fall down his cheek as the realization hits him. There was nothing more he could do.

2-13: Aftermath

The street lights come on as an ambulance zips through the campus streets. Its sirens echo as the. Flashing red lights bounce off large windows. The few cars out move over as the ambulance flies past. Leon lays unresponsive on the metal gurney. The sensors hooked to his arm indicate a steady heartbeat. His vitals are low but within normal levels. He lays unresponsive as the EMT flashes lights in his eyes. Around him, wires and tubes clank on hollow metal as the ambulance jerks through the city streets. The sirens sound muffled over the hum of the engine and the crackling of the radio.

Professor Ryusenji arrives at the hospital shortly after Leon does. He sits in the waiting room while the doctors run their tests. A couple of hours pass when a doctor finally calls him.

“It’s an odd one. Vitals are normal, there are no signs of trauma or drug use. This isn’t a reaction to any of his medication. We can’t determine the cause of his coma at this time, but we’re running more tests.”

“That’s unfortunate...” Ryusenji says sadly.

“I am sorry.” The doctor says warmly. “You can go see him now if you want. Talk to him. He’ll appreciate that.”

Ryusenji shakes the doctor’s hand and walks into Leon’s room. Leon lays peacefully in bed. Sensors monitor his vitals, and a drip slowly keeps him hydrated. The professor watches over his student for a moment before taking the seat closest to his bed.

He was still in his office when received Eiji’s frantic phone call. Eiji’s erratic explanation left him with many unanswered questions, but there wasn’t time for answers. It was Ryusenji who called the ambulance and let the paramedics into Leon’s apartments. It was Ryusenji who now sat as Leon’s only visitor.

The room was quiet except for the rhythmic chiming of the EKG. The chart at the end of Leon’s bed indicated an unknown cause for Leon’s coma, but Ryusenji knew better. Leon had pushed himself too far in his mindlink. He went over the L line, and now he is DMIA. Nothing was bringing Leon back to consciousness. His mind was lost. Scattered across the Digital world like pieces of junk data.

“Did you ever meet Yueling, Leon?” the professor finally makes out. His voice shakes a bit. He leans back in the chair, watching Leon’s peaceful expression. He would have to tell the police everything, and Leon being American complicated things.

Rysuenji sighs, “This is quite a mess...” He picks up the Digimon Linker that sits on the bedside table and puts it back on Leon’s wrist. “I’m afraid you knew too many lies,” he says softly to Leon.

Ryusenji watches the mounds of Leon’s vitals move across the monitor, and listens to the beeps in silence.



Eiji sits alone in his dark tiny apartment curled up in his bed. He stares blankly into space as a mix of dread and shame creeps into his consciousness.

“He’s not coming back...” Eiji says flatly. He can still see Kazuchimon disappearing into the vortex. No one has ever returned from the void. No one has recovered from DMIA. Eiji left Leon to die.

“It’s all my fault...” Tears well up in his eyes. An ugly truth gets stuck in his throat. “I...I killed Leon...” The truth hits him like a punch in the gut. The room starts to spin. He stumbles off his bed and rushes to the bathroom. His empty stomach aches as he

vomits only bile and stomach acid into a dirty toilet. He sits against the wall with a bitter taste in his mouth.

“Your readings are a mess Eiji,” Loogamon chimes in from his perch on the bed. Loogamon’s wounds have healed. It was as if the fight had never happened.

“I can’t do this anymore,” Eiji says weakly. He takes the Digimon Linker off his wrist and looks over it pensively.

“Hey careful with that!” Loogamon barks.

“Code crackers, hackers, mindlinks...digivolutions...none of this matters.” Eiji pauses to stare at the ceiling. “It’s all my fault...I pushed you too hard. I put you in danger, and now Leon is gone!” Eiji lets the Digimon Linker fall into the floor. “This isn’t what I wanted...” his voice trails off.

The linker beeps as its face comes to life with a notification. It’s a text from Tartarus. It reads:

Excellent work. You’re a hero!”

Eiji scoffs. He doesn’t feel like a hero. Guilt begins to choke at Eiji. “It should have been me....” The room starts to spin again. Eiji lurches over to vomit.

“Are you sick or something? What’s causing you to vomit?” Loogamon jumps down from the bed and makes its way to the doorway.

Eiji wipes vomit from the corners of his mouth. “Guilt,” he answers flatly, sitting back against the wall.

“Why?”

“He was my friend Logamon...My best friend and now...Now he’s gone and it’s all my fault.” Tears start falling down his cheeks.

The two sit in silence for a while. Eiji’s quiet sobs echo off the tile.

“Hey Eiji,” Loogamon finally says. “I just remembered something.”

“What?” Eiji asks hoarsely.

“That box Pulsemon gave me, the one we thought was a virus. It was just a present.”

“Really?” Eiji looks up at the wolf.

Loogamon’s expression saddens for a moment. It nods slowly. “He left a note. It said ‘Lets hang out again sometime mutt.’ Stupid fairy...”

Another somber silence washes over them.

“I think I know why I went beserk when I digivoled into Hallogarmon.”

“Why’s that?”

“I wanted to fight Pulsemon so badly. I wanted to be better than them. I didn’t want them to look down on me anymore. So when I digivolved and went feral, it was because you didn’t feel the same way.”

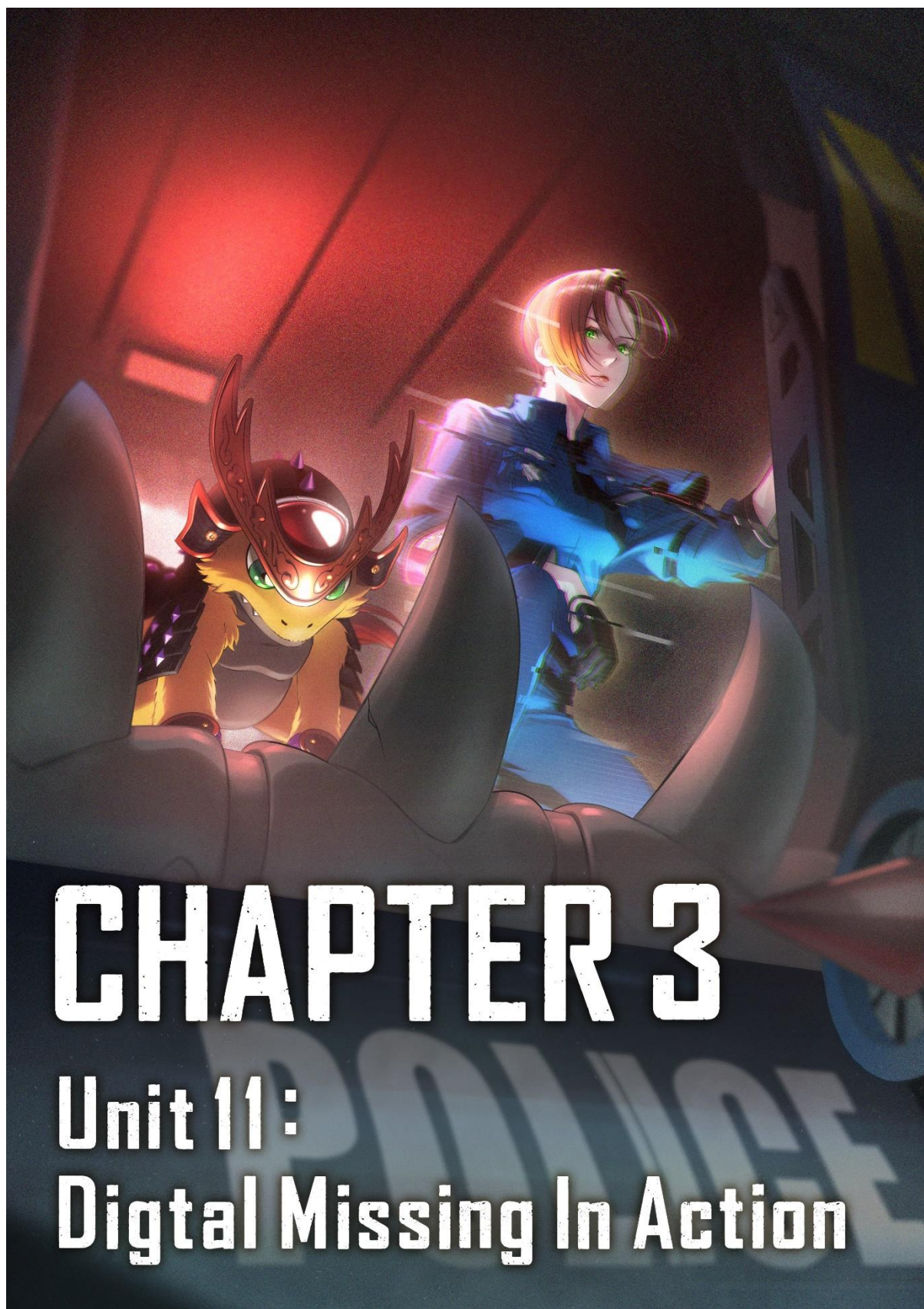
Eiji sits in silence and stares at the wolf. Leon’s voice rings in his head. The memory of his guilt sends his head into the toilet. Eiji sits back. This time he can’t hold his tears back. He cries hard into his arm.

“Do you want to save your friend Eiji?”

“Of course I do! It’s my fault!” Eiji yells, looking up.

“I want to save Pulsemon too,” Loogamon says solemnly. “We’ll save them Eiji. Even if it means facing down an army Royal Knights!”

CHAPTER 3 – Unit 11 – Digital Missing in Action



Chapter 3-1: The Rise of Tartarus



The Digital World is vast and full of mystery. Its biggest mystery lies hidden behind its impenetrable firewall. Early Code Crackers swarmed to the Digital World in search of answers to this mystery. Many put their lives on the line in the name of discovery. Somewhere along the wall was the gateway to the other side, and one brave code cracker was destined to find it. After years of exploration, it is widely believed that the Vortices that appeared indiscriminately along the wall were gateways to the other side.

While most Vortices appear randomly over the wall, one takes its permanent residence at the center of the wall slums. Tartarus and his small team find themselves at the edge of this vortex, with the intention of seeing what's on the other side.

The expedition starts smoothly. The code crackers and their Digimon work in perfect unison as they make their careful descent toward the void. Suddenly, a swarm of Digimon appear above them.

Megadramon rears back and raises his arms, taking careful aim at the oncoming swarm.

ERADICATION ATTACK!

The cannons at the ends of his arm open up with a swarm of missiles, each exploding its target. The attack leaves a hole in the swarm, but the hole quickly fills with more Digimon.

“There’s too many of them, I can’t hold ’em off for long!” Marvin says from within Megadramon.

The guardian Digimon attack like a swarm of Locust. Megadramon continues to fire, holding back the swarm for the time being.

Dorumon stops his trek and floats in place as he watches the swarm. The small-wing fox waves his tail eagerly.

“Time to get to work Dorumon” Tarturus says from within its core. “Initiate phase 3!”

“Right!” Dorumon shines brightly as it Digivolves into a large strange dragon.

Metal Meteor

A massive metal orb begins to form over DoruGreymon’s head, drawing the swarm’s attention. The crystal on DorGreymon’s forehead begins to glow. Strange runes of light appear on the face of the orb. It slowly starts to drop into the vortex. The swarm of Digimon moves to push away the projectile, but the orb continues its descent unmolested.

“Let them try,” Tartarus smirks as he watches the swarm’s vain attempt to stop their attack.

The orb continues to drop, crushing the piles of Digimon until it finally makes contact with the gateway. The orb looks like a tiny pebble against the vast mouth of the vortex. The impact lets out a high-pitched screech.

“Begin decoding! This can still work,” Tartarus commands.

Inside the Digicore, Tartarus starts typing away furiously at his console. A small meter begins to fill across his screen. 20%...25%....

Cracks begin to form on the gateway letting light slip in from the other side. It groans under the growing strain.

“The gateway is breaking!” Tartarus says to himself.

The remaining guardians swarm DoruGreymon in a desperate attempt to stop the attack.

Seeing this, Marvin shouts, “We have to buy them more time, Let’s go!” The group launches a final desperate defense.

The grinding sound goes silent as the orb stops moving. The decoding progress bar stops at 30%.

“What’s happening?” Tartarus barks.

“Process terminated. This is as far as we can get with a single prototype Digimon,” DoruGreymon says coolly.

Tartarus slams his fists on the console. “Dammit. Just like we predicted.” He lets out a heavy sigh.

“The gate requires a tripartite key. We need all three attributes in order to crack it. We need Virus and Vaccine prototype Digimon for this to work.”

“Yueling’s Ryudamon is a Vaccine type, all we need is a virus type...” Tartarus gets lost in thought, staring at the gateway. “Whatever lies beyond the gateway is going to change the world. I don’t know how, but we’re going to change it!”

The metal orb begins to crack, letting the sounds of grinding and bending metal. The symbols on its face fade as the ball breaks into pieces and fades to dust.

“They’re here! The Royal Knights!” DoruGreymon shouts.

“Everyone fall back!” Tartarus shouts. Tartarus and his team flee without hesitation.

“The Royal Knights...” Tartarus mutters to himself as he takes one final glimpse at the gate behind him.

Chapter 3-2: Lost in a Memory

Yueling zips through the digital world on the back of her dragon Digimon Hisyaryumon. She is dressed in her formal DigiPolice uniform, clearly pressed and finely decorated. Hisyaryumon's obsidian scales shine as brightly as the ember-colored gem on its forehead.

Hisyaryumon suddenly changes direction, diving towards a group of code crackers. Each controlled a cyborg-type Digimon. They scramble as they see the dragon, but Hisyaryumon is too quick. Hisyaryumon knocks them out with very little effort.

"Code Crackers Contained," Yueling announces through her radio.

"You're sharp as ever captain," Satsuki replies.

"Spare me the flattery and call in processing."

"On it!"

Satsuki's Numemon waddles onto the scene. It kicks one of the unconscious Digimon as it begins to secure the criminals.



“What’d we catch, Hisyaryumon?”

“The usual. A bunch of Cyborg-types used for data collection.”

“So it seems,” Yueling replies as she scans Hisyaryumon’s report.

“Looks like they were after state secrets. Judging by their tools, I would guess they were hired by someone overseas. It appears that a few are still in operation. We could send them back with a little souvenir,” Hisyaryumon continues maliciously.

“If your hunch is right, this is above our pay grade.” Yueling continues to read the report. “Why not? I’m feeling playful today. Send them something nasty.”

“As you wish,” Hisyaryumon says cheerily as he gets to work on the restrained Digimon.

Yueling watches from inside the Digicore. Easy days like this made her think of the old days. With nothing to distract her, she gets lost in a memory.

I wonder what Kosuke is up to?

Yueling walks into Ryusenji Laboratories. The air conditioner hums, blowing cool air into the room. The desks are cluttered with papers and books. Large server racks are pushed against one of the walls. The professor sits at his computer, absorbed in the letters moving across his monitor

“Good Morning Professor,” she says cheerily. The clock on the wall reads 6 p.m.

“Good morning,” he says without looking up.

“Got some mail for you,” she says, setting the pile of letters on his desk.

“Mhm,” Ryusenji grunts.

“I delivered your mail! Can you acknowledge me with your words and eyes please? I don’t want you calling me later asking for your mail!”

“There!” Ryuseji announces suddenly, pointing at the screen. “There’s the bug. Who wrote this awful code?!”

“You probably.”

“No...It couldn't have...Could it?” The professor becomes distressed by his question looking over the code again.

“Has my proposal for a proper server room been approved? It's freezing in here.” Yueling puts on a jacket she keeps hanging over a chair.

“They're going to move the entire campus over the next few years. They aren't approving any new projects until everything is settled.”

Yueling shrugs. “I'm just trying to help.”

“I keep telling them how important our work is. I hear investing in our field is quietly exploding around the world. Our advantage could disappear overnight,” Ryusenji grumbles without lifting his eyes.

“Maybe we should pack up and go overseas then.”

“You can't seriously be suggesting that,” answers a gravelly voice. Kosuke pops his head from his makeshift cot from between the server racks. He wipes the sleep from his eyes as he makes his way over.

“Slept in the office again?” Yueling asks.

Kosuke nods as he runs his hands through his unkempt hair and lets out a big yawn. The scruff on his beard had grown thick, and it was clear he'd been wearing the same clothes for several days.

“At least wash your face and brush your teeth. Did you at least bring a change of clothes?”

“About that...”

The door busts open. A petit woman barges through carrying several takeout bags.

“Feeding time!” She begins organizing the spread on the large table they use for meetings.

“Good! I'm starving.” Kosuke answers.

“Here’s your change of clothes,” the woman says, tossing Kosuke a paper bag.

“Saya...Did you go all the way to Kosuke’s house to get him a change of clothes?”

“Yep! I also brought you a pork bowl. I hope you’re hungry,” Saya beams as she hands Yueling her bowl.

Yueling reaches into her pocket “Thanks. Here, how much do I owe...”

“None of that. It’s dad’s...I mean the professor’s treat.”

The four sit and eat their lunch. The room fills with chatter and laughter over the hum of the air conditioning.

Chapter 3-3: The business proposal

Ryusenji Laboratories becomes the world's leader in Digital World research in a short time after its founding. Although the building has changed, its founders still work tirelessly to achieve their goals.



Thank you so much for keeping up with these translations! I am hoping to get back on a regular posting schedule starting Monday. Please make sure you always support the original release. If you've been enjoying this project, don't forget to like, comment, follow, and share this with your friends!

Ryusenji Laboratories becomes the world's leader in Digital World research in a short time after its founding. Although the building has changed, its founders still work tirelessly to achieve their goals.

Saya walks into the office with her usual takeout order and a fresh change of clothes for Kosuke. Yueling gets up from her desk to help her set up for dinner. It had become a ritual between the founders. One that they each cherished in their own way.

"You have to stop coddling him," Yueling says as she grabs her bowl and takes her seat. "He's a grown man, and you're not his mother."

Saya smiles. "It's fine, it's on the way."

Yueling swallows her mouthful. "I don't know why you married this bozo, you're way too good for him."

Saya rolls her eyes, letting out a playful chuckle. She turns to Kosuke who looks like he's waking from a trance. "Here's your soup. Make sure you eat your salad too!" She kisses him before sitting down to her own dinner.

"Yeah yeah, thanks," he replies. He has deep bags under his eyes. He seems lost in thought.

Ryusenji watches the guests around his table and laughs at the familiar banter. They spend the rest of the dinner talking about their research. They talk about the digital world and newly discovered lifeforms that inhabit it.

"Suppose the professor's hypothesis is correct," Soya begins, "Suppose these creatures are living AI, what then?"

"If they're AI life forms, then we could keep them as pets," Ryusenji chimes in. "Just like that this one," he says pointing towards a monitor. The monitor is filled with a stream of flowing numbers.

"It's so cute!" Kosuke says, stopping to admire the flow of data.

"You two are the only ones who think so," Yueling says in an attempt to bring the men back from their trance.

"But just imagine if you could see it all for yourself! Not just the numbers, but the world and the creatures that fill it. Wouldn't that be amazing?" Saya says dreamily.

"Exactly!" Ryusenji exclaims, shooting a warm smile at his daughter. "We need to be able to see the Digital World if our research is going to scale in any meaningful way."

"I know that," Yueling replies, finishing the last of her pork bowl.

"And on that note," Ryusenji says, clasping his hands together. The table turns their attention to the professor. "I'm starting a business."

"A business? Like turning this into a company?" Yueling asks.

“I want to see the Digital World with my own eyes, and hear it with my own ears,” the professor continues.

“and the business?” Kosuke interrupts.

“Right. The university has money set aside for incubating businesses. We use that to make Ryusenji Laboratories a publicly traded company. We create some buzz, grab some investors, and we’re on our way to making it all happen.” The professor finishes his proposal with a hopeful smile on his face.

“I’m in,” Yueling says without a moment of hesitation.

“Good, kuz we need you to make the presentation,” the professor answers.

“Are you sure?” Yueling asks, still recovering from the shock of his sudden proposal. “What about my background?” She thinks about her status as a first-generation Japanese. It would be difficult to get public funding as a daughter of immigrants.

“How is any of that a problem?” The professor walks over to Yueling who continues to look more unsure by the second. He places his hand gingerly on her shoulder. “You’re the only one who can do this. I’m counting on you.”

A smile escapes Yueling’s mouth as she fights a sudden flood of happy tears. The doubt she feels fades, and a burst of newfound confidence replaces it. “I won’t let you down!”

“It’s settled then!” the professor exclaims. “Things are about to get busy around here!”

Chapter 3-4: The Birth of the Digimon Dock

Saya stands in front of the freshly built warehouse that would serve as their factory. Above her, a freshly painted sign reads “Ryusenji Electronics.” She places a small bronze plaque with the company’s name over the mailbox. She takes a step back to examine her work before making her final adjustments. “Perfect!” she exclaims before walking into the warehouse.

Inside, she is greeted with the loud whirring of machinery. She’d gotten used to it by now and found the noise strangely comforting. Saya makes her way to the workshop where she finds the professor humming cheerfully surrounded by his chaotic collection of unfinished gadgets.

“You seem pretty happy these days,” she remarks.

Ryusenji turns to her, revealing an enormous grin. “How could I not be? I am proud business owner!”

“And a huge amount of debt!” Saya adds with a chuckle.

“You gotta spend money to make money,” Yulin adds as she enters the room. She looks exhausted but gives a warm familiar smile as she finds a seat near the pair. “The professor is the only one who knows anything about all this Digital World stuff anyways. The cash flow is in his hands.”



Some time goes by, and the founders find themselves in the workshop. The mess seems a bit more organized. The professor is busy tinkering at his station when he turns suddenly, “It’s done!”

Yuelin and Saya turn to the professor who proudly holds a small palm-sized gadget in his hands.

“What is it?” Yuelin asks as she walks over for a closer look.

“It’s an external storage device designed to house AI lifeforms. A prototype Digital Monster Dock System!” He almost shouts excitedly.

“Digital monsters huh? It looks like a toy,” Yuelin says, reaching for the small device. It was smaller than a deck of cards and housed a monochrome LCD display. There are three buttons down its face that serve as basic controls.

“The professor needs his hobbies,” Kosuke says with a shrug as he walks over from his station.

“That’s exactly it! Think about it for a moment. A device that allows people to feed and raise digital pets. It’s the next innovation in the toy business!” Ryusenji continues

enthusiastically. “Until now, we weren’t able to keep these Digital Monsters alive for long. But with this! This changes everything!” His voice fills the room.

Yulin looks over the small device, trying to understand it, when something on the LCD screen catches her eye. “Is that...an egg?”

“Yep! Its a Digital tamago. Digitama for short. We thought it sounded cuter,” Saya adds with a grin.

“A Digitama...Okay...”Yulin says, trying to keep up.

“We found the data for this one while we were exploring the Net!” Saya continues enthusiastically. “And the dock allows us to see a virtual representation of its actual form, not just a series of numbers!”

“This is incredible!” Yulin shouts as the pieces come together. She gasps. “Did it just move?”

Kosuke nods coolly. “It’s about to hatch.”

The Digimon Dock put Ryusenji Technologies on the map. Soon, investors from all over wanted a piece of the device that would let people keep Digimon. It was obvious to anyone who was paying attention that these little AI creatures would shift the balance of power on the net for the decades to come.

Chapter 3-5: The Early Mindlink



Saya and Yulin stand outside the warehouse, taking a break away from the busy factory floor. In a short time, the floor was full of new employees eager to work on the next piece of innovation. Investors lined up eagerly trying to fund the next big thing from Ryusenji Technologies. The two women look tired, but happy as they enjoy the touch of the midday sun.

Saya turns to Yulin and flashes her new ring. She lets out an excited giggle as the diamond glitters in the sun.

Yulin lets out a laugh. “So it’s official. I guess I should say congratulations. I didn’t think that dope Kosuke could be bothered to ask for a ring size.”

Saya pulls the ring back to examine it lovingly. “Congratulations are appropriate, yes.”

“Well congratulations, I mean it. You’re good for him.”

“I know!” Saya says as she flashes the ring once again.

“Surprised you got a wedding in with how busy things have gotten. All the projects, the meetings, its exhausting.”

“Who would have thought Digimon would change things for us so quickly?”

Kosuke bursts out of the building with a VR helmet in hand and an excited look on his face. He is neatly groomed and is wearing clean pressed clothes under his lab coat. “Saya!” he shouts as he rushes to the pair.

“Where’s the fire?”Yulin asks playfully.

“Look at this!” Kosuke says proudly as he offers a VR helmet to Saya.

Saya takes it. She examines it for a moment before asking, “What is this thing?”

“You have to look into it.”

Saya puts on the helmet and begins looking around. “What is this?” Her vision fills with lofi compounded images of a distorted and strange world.

“That’s the first footage ever taken through a Digimon’s eyes! You’re seeing through a Digimon’s eyes right now!

Ryuseniji worked tirelessly towards his goal of experiencing the Digital World with all his senses. The theory stood that if Digimon were AI creatures, their sensory data should be easy enough to capture and interpret. All he had to do was imbed the human consciousness into the Digital World and link it to said data.

“This ought to keep me busy for the rest of my life,” Ryusenji says to himself as he looks over his notes.

Ryusenji Electronics had begun exploring the fundamentals of mindlinking technology in secret. They had to minimize the risks and answer the ethical questions later.

Saya was one of the first to successfully link her consciousness with a Digimon.

“Mindlink test complete,” Yulin’s voice buzzes over the PA system.

Saya lays on what looks like a repurposed dentist chair wearing a VR helmet. Wires and cables come down around her and wrap into her arms and helmet. Around her lay an array of monitors, computers, and stacks of notes.

“Vitals are stable. DS levels are dropping. Subject is regaining consciousness. Severing the mindlink,” Kosuke says calmly as he walks over to his wife.

Yulin walks into the room carrying a bucket. She walks over to the chair. Saya begins convulsing, letting out a soft groan. Her arms and legs flail as she slowly regains consciousness. She becomes still and sits up, carefully removing the helmet.

“Here.” Yulin hands her the bucket.

Saya looks uncomfortable as she fights the nausea. “I think.... Ugh... I think I’m getting used to it.” She gives a weak smile as she holds back the vomit. She remembers the mess she made the first time she mindlinked.

Professor Ryusenji claps softly. “Magnificent! These results are astounding. Sufficient rest is required between sessions, and there are some serious side effects we need to address, but the experiment was a rousing success!”

Saya smiles weakly as she picks up the Digimon Dock with the word Agumon written under it. “Nice job Agu!” An image of a small bipedal dinosaur seems to jump in reaction.

Chapter 3-6: The Night Before Tartarus

Eventually, each founder had a Digimon partner. Saya had the bipedal dinosaur Digimon, Agumon. Kosuke's partner was the ladybug-like Digimon, Tentamon. Yulin had the strange plant reptile, Palmon. Its leafy limbs ended in root-like tendrils, and a massive flower grew out of its head.

Saya, Kosuke, Yulin, and the professor gather in the secret test chamber away from the factory floor. Around them, the air fills with the whirring of servers and computers. The tables are filled with unfinished gadgets and notes. Saya wakes peacefully from her test, and the four get busy looking over the latest batch of test results.

"That's it for today," Yulin says as she submits the last bit of data. "The image is still blurry and pixelated. There is still no color, and all I can hear is static."

"That's a hardware issue," Kosuke says looking up from his notes. "We need more processing power."

"We're so close..." Ryusenji trails off in his disappointment. Silence falls over the group as they continue to make notes and study the results. "We have to see the Digital world. The tests here are fine for now, but we need to get into their world somehow....If we could get into the Net and somehow control the Digimon..." The dangers of mindlink left them little room for error.

"I wonder what the Digital World looks like. Would we even recognize it?" Yulin says in her daze.

"The Digital World has its own systems similar to Earth's," the professor mumbles.

"What was that Professor?" The three turn to him curiously.

"I believe that these AI creatures exist in their own natural order. They have a food chain, evolution, and are forced to survive many environmental dangers...." The professor trails off as his mind drifts to a different problem. The students had grown used to the professor's scattered grumblings. They fill in the blanks as he continues to mumble to himself incoherently.

"How's work on the retrieval tools going? What is our failure rate at now?" Yulin asks bluntly.

"With our current toolset, our success rate is above 80%," Kosuke answers.

“We’re treading on undiscovered ground. It is unreasonable for our initial results to be perfect, but we’ll get there. I know a solution is within our reach. Science is full of moments where the impossible is made possible, and I just know we’ll be the ones to do it,” Ryusenji says enthusiastically.

They dubbed the program, Tartarus. Like the many explorers before them, they would not rest until they set foot in the Digital World.

The night before Tartarus’s official launch, Yuli, Kosuke, and Saya visit the plot of land that would become Tokyo University of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

Their breath hangs in the frigid air as they look over the empty plot of land. Heavy machines sat to one side, but construction hadn’t started.

“Can’t believe this will all be a university,” Saya muses.

The three stood quietly in the dark of night. The cold air makes Kosuke shiver as he puts his hands in his pockets. The light of a nearby vending machine catches his eye. He makes his way over.

Yulin fumbles a pair of car keys into her pocket. “What possessed you to come all the way out here tonight?” She asks Saya. Yulin’s voice shakes from the cold.

“Don’t you want to see where we’re gunna work one day? I just wanted to check it out.”

“I guess we will be working here...”Yulin’s voice trails off.

“This is the only chance we’ll get to see it empty. Soon it’ll be full of buildings, people, and dreams...”

“Mhmm” Yulin says, not paying attention.

“I hope we’re all still together ten years from now.” Saya grips her Digimon Dock tightly. She raises the LCD screen towards the plot. “See this Agu? It’s going to be a whole new town. I hope it will be easy for you and the other Digimon to live here.”

The small pixelated Agumon looks back and forth on his screen, studying its surroundings.

“You talk to that thing all the time, huh?” Yulin asks.

“Don’t you talk to Palmon?”

“Um...well...” Yulin stumbles for an answer. Talking to her Digimon never crossed her mind.

“I mean it’s not that crazy. People talk to their pets and plants all the time. If Digimon don’t know human language, maybe they can start learning. If Digimon could understand us, we wouldn’t need special tools to control them.”

“Yeah, that would be handy.”

“Regardless of what you think,” Saya begins as she looks down at her dock, “I’m pretty sure Agu understands me.” She lets out a loving smile. “Right Agu?!” Saya turns her attention back to Yulin. “At least I’m pretty sure someone’s talking to me when I’m mindlinked.”

“So our partners can talk to us when we’re linked? And you never reported that?”

“You have to keep it a secret,” Saya pleads worriedly. “If they think I’m hearing things, they’ll kick me off the project!”

Saya’s fears weren’t unfounded. While she was the most promising candidate, she took the longest to adjust to the mindlink and still struggled with her nausea. Regardless of the numbers, they were ready to replace her with a more suitable candidate the moment she outlived her usefulness.

“What does it say?” Yulin asks, changing the subject.

“I don’t know, but it feels... friendly? Like its calling my name, or its happy to see me. It’s just like you said.”

“What I said?”

“Connecting with Digimon is incredible...and incredibly dangerous.”

“We think we’ve discovered the Digital World, but what if we’re the ones being discovered?”

“All the more reason to continue with our studies. It’s too late to keep our worlds separated now.” A silence falls over them for a moment. “You know? My dad thinks you’re the most important member of the team.”

“Me?”

Saya nods. “You make this feel official. Like a real company.”

The sudden compliment stuns Yulin. She doesn’t know how to respond.

“When ever we make a mistake or lose focus, you’re the only one who can get us back on track.”

“What are you talking about?”

“I know it’s a lot...”

“It’s freezing! I can’t believe the vending machine still has cold drinks in winter,” Kuske grumbles as he walks back to the girls, holding three hot drinks in his arms. He hands each girl one.

“We can head back if you’re ready to go,” Yulin offers as she accepts her drink.

“Let’s stay a little longer,” Saya asks. She holds her drink tightly.

“I’m good either way. It’s nice to have a moment to zone out for a bit.” Kosuke takes a sip of his drink. “

“I’ll wait in the car then,” Yulin says as she walks away. She turns on the car and turns up the heat. She looks over at Kosuke and Saya as they huddle together and stare up into the night sky. The glow of the construction lights washes over them. Yulin takes a moment to snap a picture.



Chapter 3-7: The First DMIA

Launch day started like any other day. The sun rose as it always did, and the buses and trains filled with people commuting to the start of their day. Across Japan, it was business as usual, but at Ryusenji Technologies, the air was a thick nervous stew of uncertainty.

People sat on empty stomachs full of butterflies, and time seemed to pass too slowly. The code was checked and double-checked, equipment was thoroughly inspected, and the coffee pots boiled furiously throughout the morning. When the time came, Yulin, Kosuke, and Saya were carefully plugged into their stations. A final walk-through was conducted. Scientists and investors watched, filled with nervous excitement. *Mindlink Initiated* Palmon, Tentamon, and Agumon flew through the sea of networks in a ship controlled by their human partners. The humans struggled to make sense of the Lofi image that was rendered before them, but the excitement remained immeasurable. They were explorers braving a new frontier. They were making history. Saya was making her initial descent into the Digital world when it all happened. Yulin and Kosuke still don't know exactly what happened. Yulin who was the closest remembers dark blurs moving across her screen, but she could make out nothing that could solve the mystery. Kosuke remembers watching Saya's signal disappear from his screen. "Saya! Saya! Say something!" Kosuke shouted desperately. The helplessness sunk in as he realized there was nothing else he could do. Even if he could have seen the events clearly, the probe was too damaged to give chase. The professor pulled the plug. He couldn't risk losing all three. Kosuke and Yulin woke up dazed as the world around them erupted in chaos. Kosuke screamed hysterically as he ran towards Saya's lifeless body. He didn't notice when the cables ripped from his skin. He didn't notice when the blood began dripping from the holes they left. He grabbed Saya and pulled her close to him. "Please wake up! Please wake up!" Angry tears burned down his face. Aids came to pull him away, but he shoved them away. "She's going to wake up...She has to!" Yulin sat in her chair and cried with her head down. She clutched at the pain in her chest as she struggled to piece the events together. It's a pain that grew more painful with each of Kosuke's shouts. Around her scientists and aids run frantically, failing to take hold of the situation. In her daze, all she could make out were the sounds of Kosuke's agony.



Years later, Yulin stands in the lobby of Abadin Electronics. She continues to carry the guilt from the incident. They should have prepared more. There should have been more contingencies. More tests. But Saya is gone, and hindsight is a bitch. There was nothing anyone could have done to save her.

Time still for her after the accident. It stood still for all of them. Kosuke took his sorrow and vanished from the world. He quit his job, and school, and stopped answering phone calls. Yulin can't remember the last time she saw him. She wonders what became of him. She couldn't bring herself to reach out to him after he cut her out of his life. It would be too painful.

The professor became a serious man and buried himself in his research. She could no longer joke with him. She still visited him on occasion to check up on him and his research. The accident devastated Yulin, but she wasn't done with the Digital World. She wasn't any closer to finding answers, but she was going to use her power and her badge to keep searching.

Chapter 3-8: The hospital room

Leon lays unconscious in a hospital bed at the DDL's medical facility. Wires and tubes run from machines into several points of his body. There is an eerie silence except for the machines that work to keep him alive.

Yulin stands beside him in her Police uniform. She holds incendent in her hand but is busy examining the patient. Leon had grown pale, and his lips had turned purple and cracked.

"So this you're the hacker Judge? I always figured you'd be...older." Her voice trails as her eyes fall to his soft, helpless face. An image of Saya flashes in her mind as she is overcome by a familiar sense of sadness.

Yulin opens the report.

The direct cause of DMIA: Vortex developed along the Wall Slum Outskirts. Appearance of Royal Knight.

Even the infamous hacker Judge didn't stand a chance against a Royal Knight. They were in a league of their own, even above a skilled Ultimate-level Digimon.

"Why didn't you run?" she asks the unconscious Leon, but only the machines answer. She continues reading.

"DMIA was reported by code cracker Eiji Nagasumi..." Yulin looks down at Leon's wrist. His Digimon Linker was still fixed snugly to his wrist. It was the same model as hers, just a different color. *Eiji had one too...didn't he?*

She sighs as she puts the report down for a moment. *What would compel you to take such a risk?* Yulin becomes lost in her theories.

"He's a student of mine," A familiar voice wakes her from her trance. Yulin spins to find Professor Ryusenji standing behind her.



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“Professor! You scared me.” She places her hand over her heart in a playful reaction.

“Forgive me...” He bows his head slightly. His eyes wander towards the unconscious Leon. “Thank you for coming all this way. You’re the only person on the police force I can trust.” Ryusenji makes his way towards the bed.

“You know,” she starts. “I met him once. I know he’s your favorite student.”

“Hmm. I suppose you did meet.”

An awkward silence fills the air around them. “Thank you for the other day. I know you helped with the equipment selection. I appreciate that,” she says in an attempt to change the subject.

“And how are the pieces fairing?”

“Very well. The 11th only uses the best, and everything is still in use.”

The professor fidgets with something in front of him. He doesn’t seem to be very attentive. Suddenly, a hologram of Betamon appears perched on Leon as he sleeps. The professor stares off into space. “I told myself I’d never let it happen again...” his voice trails off as he becomes lost in thought. The two sit in silence for a moment before the professor turns to Yulin. “I need to show you something,” he says as he lifts the virtual monitor towards the officer.

Yulin looks down and finds herself staring at a live feed of her old friend Saya. She seems to be sleeping soundly suspended in a glass tube full of unknown liquid. She is overcome by the painful realization that in the many years since the incident, she has

accomplished nothing. How many years had it been? Saya looked the same as she did the day she went missing.

Yulin begins to imagine what life would be like if Saya never disappeared. She'd be happily married. They'd all be together. They'd be... The fantasy becomes too painful. Yulin composes herself.

"I need you to clarify a couple of things professor," she says in her professional tone. She pulls out her phone and starts recording. "Our records show that Leon met with the code cracker Eiji Nagasumi before the incident. Any idea what they talked about?"

The professor shrugs. "I couldn't tell you."

"But you've met with him before. He's contacted you, has he not?"

"Eiji shows a lot of promise, I thought he could help me with some research," he responds casually.

"Is Eiji the type of person who would DMIA a person intentionally?"

"That was an accident, Eiji would never!" Ryusenji snaps.

"Okay." The sudden outburst surprises her.

The professor fixes his coat as he composes himself. "He's a member of the Sons of Chaos and rose through the ranks rather quickly."

"I'm aware. He had a little...run in with my second."

"Now that Eiji is a Leader, Tartarus will back him up. I will too, seeing as I am the one who asked him to join," the professor says sternly.

"Are you trying to shield him?"

"Just like I did for you and Kosuke."

Yulin's heart grows heavy. He had gone to great lengths to prevent them from having to admit responsibility for Saya's coma. Yulin wouldn't be running the DigiPolice if he hadn't. She sighs. "I'll tread carefully around him then."

“That’s all I ask.”

“But I can’t promise the same for Kosuke...I mean Tartarus. I can’t afford to let him operate unchecked.”

“I understand.” A sad silence drips over them as they think about the times before the accident. Back when they would sit around that small room eating from plastic takeout containers. Back when things were simpler.

“Oh right,” Yulin says suddenly, sifting through the options of her Digimon Linker. A hologram of Ryudamon suddenly appears besides her.

This is Professor Ryusenji. Say hello,” Yulin nudges at the Digimon.

Ryudamon bows, offering a meek greeting. “Hello there, sweet Ryu,” the professor responds gently.

“The Professor is the one who entrusted you to me. Tartarus has a partner similar to you. Do you know how?”

Ryudamon pints to the plate on his head, “You mean this thing?”

The professor nods. “According to our analysis, that interface classifies you and Dorumon as an older type of Digimon we call Prototype Digimon. Prototype Digimon are a rare species. So far we only know of you, a vaccine type, Tartaru’s Dorumon the data type, and there’s a virus type Digimon Loogamon out there as well.” The professor turns his attention to Yulin. “We took Loogamon from the Wall Slums, and I’ve decided to entrust it to Eiji. He shows a lot of promise, like you and Kosuke. He already has a DS score with Loogamon that rivals Leon and his partner’s.

“He’s that powerful?” Yulin gasps incredulously.

The professor nods. “And getting better every day. With the technology you all now have at your disposal, there is no telling what you all can discover in the Digital world!” His words carry enthusiastically through the halls as he reaches down, attempting to pet Ryudamon’s forehead.

“But why him?”

The professor sighs. “I think the Digital world is ready for a new generation. I’ll spend the time I have left looking after them as they take that journey. Somewhere out there is something far better than I could ever imagine, and I am no longer the one who will find it. It’s for the good of my research, the Digital World, and all of Digimon that I do this.” Yulin smiles at the sincerity of his words.

Yulin looks at the clock. She stops her recording and sends Ryudamon back to the Linker. “Thank you for your time today. The DigiPolice is grateful for your cooperation. I’ll be asking Eiji a few questions regarding Leons...”

“You know, I’m glad,” the Professor interrupts. “I’m glad people still want to explore the Depths of the Digital world. It doesn’t matter who, be it a hacker, code cracker, police, or the government.”

Before Yulin has a chance to respond, her phone starts to ring. She excuses herself to answer the call. “Go ahead Satsuki.”

“Siss, you’re gonna want to see this. Something strange is happening in the Digital world.”

Chapter 3-9: Eiji Bounces Back

Eiji takes the next few days after the incident wallowing in his small apartment. Guilt weighs heavily on his soul. The images of Kazuchimon pulling Omegamon into the vortex haunt him constantly. It is his fault Leon is DMIA.

Eiji regretted answering the Professor's ad. He regretted taking his job offer. He regretted joining the Sons of Chaos and plotting against his friend. It's the regret that left him feeling so helpless.

He spent most of his days lying in bed and staring into the darkness. He would only get up to vomit what little stomach acid he had left. The depression dulls his hunger, not that he could keep anything down anyway.

"Are you just going to wallow in your pity till you die?" Loogamon asks.

Eiji blinks and stares blankly into space. His eyes are red and puffy. "It was my fault..." he manages in a gruff voice. "It was my fault you turned into Helloogarmon and went berserk."

"Yeah," Loogamon chirps. "I would have never messed up so badly." A smirk creeps up its face.

Eiji sighs. "I just had to beat him. I needed to beat him..." Eiji's voice trails.

"I wanted to win too. I wasn't about to lose to Pulsemon."

Tears begin to creep over the corners of his eyes. "That's the difference. You didn't want to lose, I was terrified of losing... I had so much to lose." Eiji fights back his tears thinking about the frivolity of it all. "I didn't want to lose the trust of the Sons of Chaos....I didn't want to let the Professor down. I didn't want to lose it all and go back to how it used to be...before." Eiji thinks about the times when he barely made enough to make it paycheck to paycheck. He remembers the struggle of constantly searching for the odd job.

"Well, let's do something about it. Let's go save Leon and Pulsemon!"

Eiji sits up and looks down from his nest. It had been a while since he moved or did much of anything. He watches Loogamon who waits eagerly for an answer. He lets out a long sigh and wipes the tears from his cheeks. He jumps down from his bed and lands on the floor with a thud. "Alright. Let's do it!"

“Alright, Eiji. Mindlink!”

“Let’s go!” Eiji exclaims, pressing at the face. An error message fills the face of the Digimon Linker. Eiji stands bewildered in his dark apartment as nothing happens.

“The vital check failed. We can’t mindlink,” Loogamon sighs. “I could bypass the lock easily, but I might go berserk if I let you drive...like this.”

Eiji hadn’t showered or changed in days. His hair was greasy, and bits of vomit stained his shirt. Dark bags had settled under his eyes.

Eiji’s stomach growls loudly. “Good point.” Eiji can’t remember the last time he ate and kept it down.

“We’ll have to find a way to find them from here,” Loogamon adds.

“Can you ask around the Wall Slums?”

“I did a bit when you were wallowing in bed, but I didn’t get much. Nobody knows what’s on the other side.”

The doorbell rings. It takes a moment for Eiji to register it as his. He shuffles slowly towards the door. He looks through the monitor, but there is no one there. On a second look, Eiji makes out the edge of a shoulder. Someone was doing their best to hide from the camera. His Digimon Linker chimes as he receives a message. It’s a message from Tartarus.

I’m outside, the message reads.

The message leaves Eiji stunned as an unexpected knock follows. “I know you’re in there Fang. Open up!” A deep voice calls through the door.

A second voice chimes in, “Aren’t you Tartarus?” The voice feels strangely familiar.

“Who’s asking?”

“Wait a minute...” Eiji mutters to himself as he turns to search for Loogamon. “Where the hell...”

The door unlocks and slowly swings open. Loogamon slides through the crack. “Hey Eiji, the boss is here, and he’s old!”

“Seriously...”



An older unfamiliar gentleman darkens the doorway. He is slender and neatly dressed in a black jacket and nice slacks.

“May I come in?” Tartarus asks as he takes off his glasses. He looks down and finds the entrance cluttered by a pile of sneakers.

“Erm... umm,” Eiji stutters as the man removes his shoes and steps into the small apartment.

“At least make some tea for your visitor,” Loogamon scolds

“... Right,” Eiji begins to move towards his kitchen.

“Oh don’t go to any trouble. Besides, it doesn’t look like you have any.” Tartarus looks around. “Not bad. You got a kitchen, loft, and bathroom.”

“Yeah but the walls are thin, and Eiji barely fits in the bathroom,” Loogamon adds.

“The apartment I first lived in was old and infested with rats.” He says before stopping at the small altar Eiji kept. “Is this for your parents?” Tartarus presses his hands together and kneels.

Eiji bows slightly to show his thanks, but can’t find the words to say to the man.

“The WWW flight...such a tragedy.” The two sit in silence for a moment.

“Oh here. I brought you some supplies.” Tartarus says as he places the small plastic bag on the floor. Inside is a sports drink and a bottle of tea.

“Er.” Eiji lets out in a dry and raspy voice.

“Just take it. You haven’t had anything in ages,” Loogamon urges.

“I thought that be the case. That’s why I came.”

Eiji chugs at the sports drink. The cool liquid feels good as it goes down his throat. He drinks about half the bottle before asking, “What do you mean?”

“I know what you’re going through...Someone close to me went DMIA too, and it was all my fault...” Tartarus voice trails. “I didn’t eat. I didn’t sleep. I tried to drown it out with alcohol, but nothing made the pain go away. I kept seeing the events, over and over till I nearly went mad with grief.

“Wait? What? When?” Eiji struggles to keep up with the events unfolding before him. The familiar smell of beef bowls and miso soup creeps into his nose and makes his stomach growl.

“Good, that means you’re alive.” Tartarus smiles as he hands Eiji the bag of takeout.

Chapter 3-10: Heart to Heart

Eiji walks out of the shower wearing clean clothes. The steam empties into the room. He smiles as the sound of Loogamon's voice carries over the bathroom fan behind him. Eiji walks into the living room and finds Tartarus sitting across from Loogamon.

"Thanks for sticking around..." Eiji makes out before tripping over a pile of clothes on the floor. Worry and disgust creep into his expression as he looks over the mess in his apartment. "Sorry about the mess...It's been a ... week." He scrubs his hair dry before making his way to his guest.

Tartarus gives Eiji a sympathetic smile. "Don't worry, my place looks the same. I'm sorry I barged in unannounced."

Eiji shakes his head. "Not at all...er...Who are you again?"

The man smirks as he takes a sip of his coffee. "They call me Tartarus."

Eiji bows, "I am Eiji Nagasumi. Nice to meet you."

"The pleasure is mine and... Dorumon's". Tartarus raises his wrist to press a button on his Digimon Linker. A small purple-winged fox appears next to the man. Dorumon's wings flap gently as it floats next to his partner. The gem on its forehead glimmers in the apartment's dim light.

"It's the raggedy Digimon from the Wall Slums," Loogamon barks.

"My name isn't Raggedy, its Dorumon!"

"This is my friend and partner," Tartarus adds.

"Wait... You're the interviewer?!" Eiji exclaims, putting the pieces together.

Tartarus nods.



“I don’t understand...Why would you be the one to oversee the tests? Unless...You already knew about my deal with Ryusenji.”

Dorumon lets out a chuckle. “Marvin was right. You look dumb, but you’re observant.”

“Wait... What?”

“It’s the raggedy Digimon from the Wall Slums,” Loogamon barks.

“My name isn’t Raggedy, its Dorumon!”

“This is my friend and partner,” Tartarus adds.

“Wait... You’re the interviewer?!” Eiji exclaims, putting the pieces together.

Tartarus nods.

“I don’t understand...Why would you be the one to oversee the tests? Unless...You already knew about my deal with Ryusenji.”

Dorumon lets out a chuckle. “Marvin was right. You look dumb, but you’re observant.”

“Wait. What did...”

“We know Ryusenji sent you to spy on us,” Dorumon interrupts. “We’ve always known.”

“And you let us join anyway?” Eiji asks, unsure where to turn his attention.

Dorumon shrugs. “We needed your skills. Besides, you saved Marvin’s life. Thanks for that by the way.”

Eiji stares blankly at the Digimon. “Yeah, no problem...”

“So you can be polite,” Loogamon adds, mocking the fox.

Dorumon ignores Loogamon. “We knew we could trust you because the professor trusts you.”

“I didn’t know the professor had that much pull with the Sons of Chaos.” Eiji opens his energy drink and takes a sip. The cool liquid soothes his throat as it goes down. Eiji suddenly remembers something. “So what were you planning to do with the Mugendramon?”

Tartarus sets his coffee down and clears his throat. “I guess it’s my turn,” he mutters. The change in tone catches Eiji off guard. “It’s a story that now involves the two of you...”

“Wait, so we’re just part of your plan?” Eiji asks.

“It’s a little more complicated than that. There are a lot of moving parts. A lot of unplanned...complications.

“I don’t care what your plan is, Eiji and I are saving Leon and Pulsemon,” Loogamon barks suddenly.

“That’s why I am here. But...we’re the ones who sent you after Leon in the first place.”

“Yeah but...” Eiji begins to tear up. “Leon is DMIA because of my mistakes. No one deserves that.”

“Then we want the same things,” Duromon chimes in. Eiji eyes the pair suspiciously. They were hiding something, but Eiji couldn’t make out what. “Tartarus started the Sons of Choas to help those who went DMIA.”

The words trigger something in Eiji. He turns to Tartarus. “Earlier you told me you knew how it felt to lose someone. I thought you’ve never lost anyone during a mission?”

“Well, he...” Dorumon starts, but Tartarus raises his hand to stop the explanation.

“That’s a misunderstanding,” Tartarus pauses to let out a long sigh. “I was the first person to ever lose someone in the Digital world...But I’m never making that mistake again!” Tartarus speaks with reassuring conviction.

The small apartment remains quiet for a few moments as Eiji struggles to find a response. Curiosity gets the better of him. “How did it happen?”

Chapter 3-11: Hope

“My real name is Kosuke Kusakata,” the man says, fiddling with the half-empty coffee can in his hands.

Dorumon shoots Kosuke a worried look. Kosuke continues, “It’s only fair you know my real name. I don’t get to use it much these days.”

Eiji bows respectfully. He remains silent as he struggles to find the right words to say. “So...” he begins awkwardly. “Who are you looking for?”

Kosuke sighs as the room around him grows silent. “It all started back in college. In the early days of the Digital world. I was one of the first people to mindlink, but back then it was a much more...limited experience. It was far less precise, and a lot more dangerous.” He takes a sip of his coffee. “I was part of the first people to see the Digital world and...” his voice trails off.

Kosuke clears his throat. “That’s why I became a Code Cracker and dedicated my life to finding...them.”

Something in Kosuke’s story triggers a sudden memory for Eiji. “Black Agumon!” he shouts.

Kosuke nods his head. “Black Agumon was...their Digimon.”

“So your friend has been in a coma all this time?” Loogamon asks.

“Yes. They’re in a special facility overseas.” The room grows silent.

“Suppose you find Black Agumon, can you save the person who went DMIA?” Eiji asks.

“We believe that people who DMIA lose the capacity for self-awareness.” Dorumon answers.

“In theory, the person’s fusion to a Digimon’s Digicore would cause several issues for them as well. If a person who DMIA merely went unconscious, the Digimon would be able to communicate with the outside world. Unfortunately, there is no real way of testing this.”

“And even if they somehow maintain their consciousness,” Dorumon begins, “Leon and Kauchimon fell into the vortex, past the firewall. There is almost no hope of him finding his way back.”

“But there is some hope,” Kosuke says as he flips through the options on his Digimon Linker. He sends some data to Eiji.

“A Syringe?” Eiji says, examining the hologram spinning from his watch.

Kosuke nods his head. “It’s medicine tailormade for DMIA patientes?”

“A cure?” Eiji asks in awe.



“Of sorts. It contains a medical-grade stimulant. In theory, it should peel the human consciousness away from the Digicore, granting the person enough self-awareness to return to the real world.”

“And this works?”

“Well, it was originally designed to extend the amount of time one can safely mindlink. In simple terms, the medicine increases focus. That focus should also bring a person back.”

“That’s awesome!”

“Sort of,” Kosuke continues. “The side effects make it...difficult to get approval. But the trials have shown promise.”

“So giving this stuff to Leon...”

“We can’t give this to Leon’s physical body. It has to be administered to his Digimon, wherever it may be.”

The hologram continues to spin slowly in the air between them.

“Did you come up with this medicine?” Eiji asks.

“No. It came from a lab.”

“What...What lab?” Eiji asks, already knowing the answer.

“Professor Rysenji’s” Dorumon replies.

“But why... why would he give us something like this?”

“We made a deal with the professor,” Dorumon explains.

“What kind of deal?”

“If we share the data, we get access to the vaccine. Simple as that.”

“Are you okay with that Kosuke?” Eiji turns his attention to the silent man across from him. He remains silent for a moment before pulling up a video on a virtual monitor. The video was a security camera feed of a hospital room. The room is full of large tubes filled with liquids, and devices busy measuring vitals. At the center of the group, Eiji could make out the fuzzy image of a young woman.

“Is that the person you lost?” Eiji asks.

Kosuke sighs sadly. "This is the only way I can see her now. We don't know what will happen if we successfully administer the drug and she regains consciousness..." His voice trails for a bit. "But the drug gives me hope." He closes the virtual monitors.

"Do you trust the professor?" Eiji asks suddenly.

"Do you not?"

"I do!" Eiji replies without hesitation. "If you two say there's a chance, that's enough for me!"

"So can we count on you two?" Dorumon asks.

"What do you say Loogamon?"

Loogamon smirks. "Like I'd let you do this on your own!"

Dorumon chuckles.

"So we're after Leon and the Black Agumon. How much of that medicine do we have?"

"Just the one," Dorumon says gravely.

"Cool, I'm sure the professor will give us another after..."

"No. All you have to do is recover the Digimon. The lab will take care of the rest," adds Dorumon.

"Ok. Simple enough. Do you have a plan?"

Kosuke smiles. "I'm glad you asked. I've got a car waiting. Gather your things and come with me. I'll explain on the way."

"Right now?" Eiji asks, surprised by the sudden urgency.

"It's not safe here. The Digipolice will be here any minute."

"Wait.What?!"

Kosuke nods his head. “Don’t worry, I’ve got a safehouse nearby, but you do need to hurry,” Kosuke says calmly as he walks out the door.

Eiji quickly throws a few things into a bag and chases after Kosuke. Kosuke is already sitting in the car when Eiji walks out. Before Eiji can get in, Kosuke stops him. “Before you get in this car, you have to be sure about what you’re doing. Once you get in, there is no going back to your old life.” Kosuke waits for an answer as the severity of the situation hits Eiji.

“So what’s it going to be Eiji? Are you coming or not?” Kosuke asks politely.

Eiji looks back at his apartment. It looks so small from where he stands. He thinks about the life he’s leaving behind. “In that case,” Eiji says, turning to Kosuke, “I’ll have no regrets!”

Eiji steps into the car and shuts the door behind him.

Chapter 3-12: Raiding the Gateway

Satsuki's call sounded serious. Yulin rushes out of the Ryusenji's lab and makes her way back to the station. The station is a plain glass building with the department's logo displayed on one side. The words Denrin Police Station are printed clearly over the entrance. There is an eerie calmness that hangs over the station as her boot heels echo off the concrete steps.

Once through the glass doors, Yulin is greeted by the cacophony of chaos that fills the building. Alarms blare around her as she pushes her way through the hurried officers. They stop to greet her respectfully before returning to their panic.

Satsuki hurries to meet her in the middle of it all. She dresses in her casually altered uniform and smiles as she joins the captain's hurried steps. "Nice of you to join us Captain," she says playfully.

"What's going on?" Yulin asks as they enter her office. Only a few cabinets and a big wooden desk fill the office. On her desk, there are a few neat stacks of paperwork and a computer that waits idly. She makes her way to her seat as the door closes behind them. The sounds of the chaos outside become muffled behind the small fogged glass that decorates the door.

"We're picking up a large-scale Code Cracker activity in the Wall Slums." Satsuki stands attentively in front of the captain's desk. She holds onto a tablet.

"How large? "

"Maybe 200 or so."

"Have they made contact? What do they want? Who's leading them?"

"I'll give you a guess," Satsuki says as she hands her the tablet. Yulin plays the video that had been sitting idle on the screen. The words "Sons of Chaos" appear briefly as the video cuts to a chorus singing.

"I should have known...Fucking Tartarus..." Yulin grumbles. She watches as hundreds of Digimon storm through the slums. One figure catches her eye. "Dorumon?" Yulin gasps.

"We're headed to the depths!" Tartarus' voice carries through the madness.

“Dammit Kosuke...” Her voice trails off as she becomes lost in the video. Yulin jolts up suddenly as she is hit with a sudden realization. “They’re going for the Gateway!”

Satsuki nods her head. “It’s a mad dash to the center of the slums. Most of them are bots running simple commands, but there are a few high ranking crackers in the mix to make things...interesting.”

Yulin slams her fist on her desk and shouts “Dumbass!”

The sudden outburst shakes Satsuki. “I’m sorr...,”

Yulin raises her hand to cut her off. “Not you. Its these dumbass Code Crackers! They’re messing with things they don’t understand.” Yulin becomes visibly frustrated. “Do we have a recon team on the ground?”

“Of course! “I’ll bring them up now.” Satsuki taps a few commands on the tablet. A virtual monitor appears behind her and begins playing footage of the wall slums. “Seasldramon, this is HQ, what’s your status?”

“Copy that. This is Seals leader. It’s a warzone out here. The Code Crackers are clashing with the Gatekeepers.”

“Can you confirm this is a SoC attack?”

“No confirmed SoC units present, but it seems that Slum Digimon are also on the move.”

“What?” Yulin takes a closer look at the footage. She can make out groups of Digimon that Code Crackers hardly use rushing the Gateway.

Yulin raises her Digimon Linker and taps on the screen. “You seeing this Ryudamon?”

Ryudamon’s hologram suddenly appears in the space next to Yulin. “Indeed,” it responds as it watches the video.

“Are they being coerced?” Yulin asks.

“Not all of them. Some of them are helping the humans out of their own accord. Some of those Digimon just want to go home to the other side. There are also Digimon that respect Dorumon and see it as their leader. It wouldn’t be hard for them to rally the slums for their cause.”

Yulin’s eyes widen as she listens to the explanation. “Dammit!” she grumbles as she switches to the emergency channel.

“We have reason to believe that the Sons of Chaos are inciting this attack on the Gateway under the orders of their leader, Tartarus. They are planning to crack the Gateway and gain access to the depths. This will cause irreparable damage to the Digital World should they succeed. We must do everything in our power to stop this attack and bring them to justice. All officers, prepare for immediate dispatch. Equipment type D!”

“Ooo, the new stuff!” A mischievous grin creeps up Sastuki’s face.

“All A Rank units and above, mindlink prior to departure. All Cargodramon, even those in maintaince are to be deployed.” Yulin turns to a giddy-looking Satsuki. “That includes you Satsuki.”

Satsuki stands tall and salutes. “Copy that!” she replies as she hurries out of the office to her desk.

“If anyone sees Tararus out there, contact me immediately. Do not engage!” Yulin sits back at her desk. “You can’t win Kosuke,” she mutters to herself as she engages her Mindlink.

The mountain of debris and junk data that looms over the center of the Wall Slum had become a warzone. Hordes of cyborg-type Digimon flood towards the center, fighting off the swarms of Gatekeepers. The air fills with smoke and explosions. Laughter and playful banter escape from amongst the chaos. To most of the Code Crackers in the Frey, this was just a game.

Hight above the battlefield, in the skeleton of an old rotting building, Marvin watches with a grin. “Magnificent,” he as the glow of explosions lit up the sky.

Dorumon walks up next to Marvin. “Wall Slum mobilization is higher than anticipated.”

“It’s all thanks to Loogamon,” Tartarus replies as he admires the scenes below.

“Can you hear me Eiji? Loogamon?”

“Tartarus?”

“You did good kid. Where are you now?”

“Were still on the subway.”

“We’re almost at the last stop. We’ll take off running from there,” Loogamon adds.

“Move quickly. We have to keep this momentum for this to work.”

“Understood.” Eiji replies.

“Just so you know, the 9th District Digimon will quit when they feel like it.” Loogamon warns.

“That’s fair. We can’t control them all, but there should be enough to get the job done,” Tartarus replies.

“It’s getting hard to hear... chat.”

“Leave your admin channel open. I’ll be in touch,” Koske commands as he ends the call.

“Sir! We have a problem!” A panicked voice reaches through the radio.

“What is it?”

“The DigiPolice!” the voice shouts. A squad of Cargodramon suddenly appear over the concrete horizon of the Wall Slum. “They’re here!”



“It’s about time,” Kosuke says as he watches the incoming Cargodramon. He pets Dorumon on its head. “Thank you for everything.”

“Hm?” Dorumon asks, his eyes glued to the battlefield.

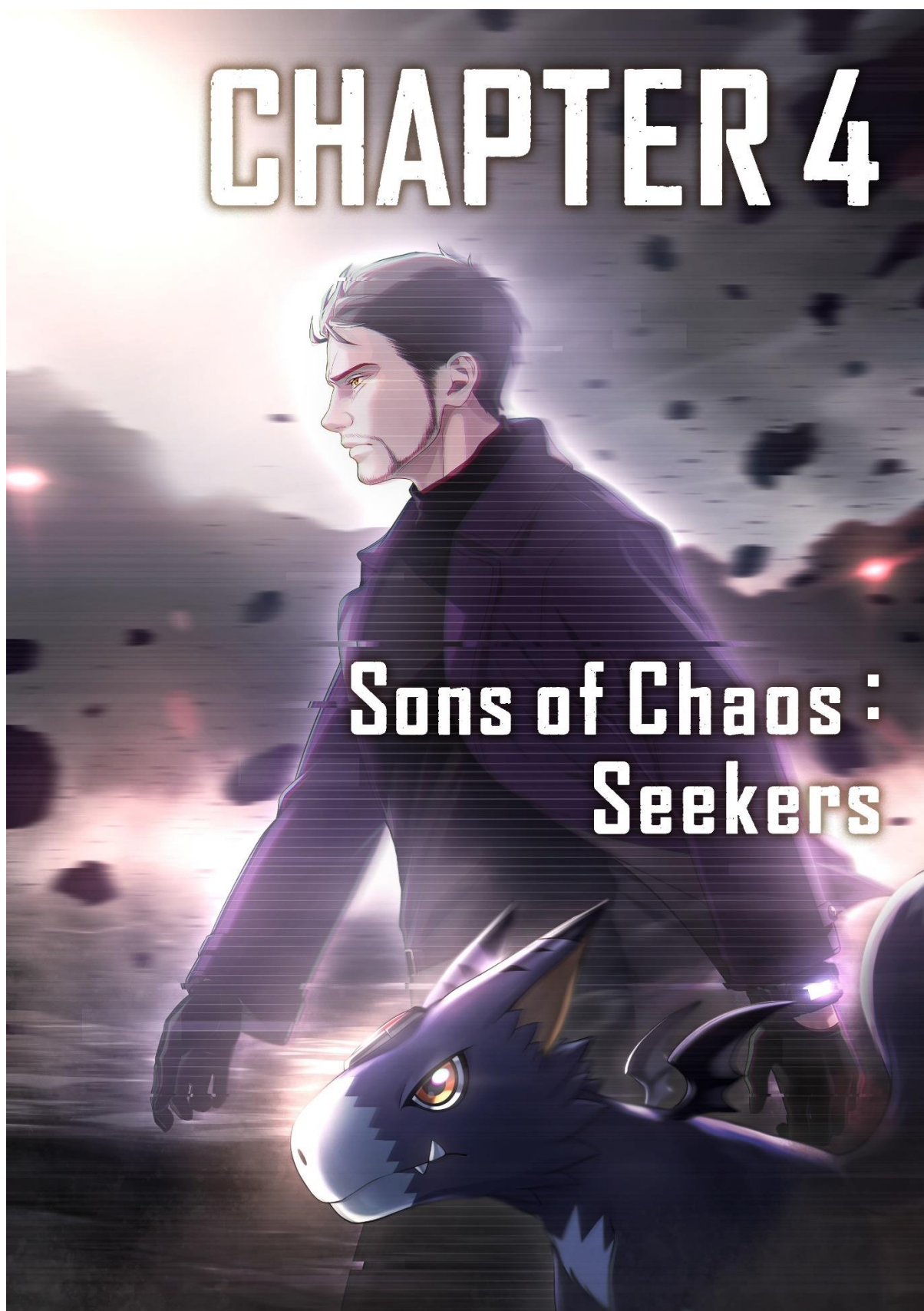
“This is it Dorumon. Are you ready?”

Dorumon nods and points at the Cargodramon. “They’re looking for something.”

Kosuke smiles. “Yeah. Us. Let’s go say hi.”

I’ll see you soon Saya.

CHAPTER 4 – Sons of Chaos: Seekers



Chapter 4-1: The Two Dragons

No one will stand in my way. I'll turn the whole Digital World upside-down if I have to. I will find her. I will get her out.

The center of the wall slum erupted in chaos as Code Crackers and guardians clashed. The plan had worked, and now Code Crackers from around the world gathered for one crucial push towards the Gateway. To them, this was all a game. But to those in the higher echelons of the Sons of Chaos, it was a chance to break through. The network was taking its bold step at something that had never been done, and the outcome was sure to create ripples.

A battle rages at the center of the Wall Slum. Rockets fly in every direction. Beams of burning light light up the sky. Lightning bolts reach out hungrily and explode violently. The Wall Slums glows brightly with explosions and newly formed fires. The laughter of Code Crackers slowly creeps through the chaos. To them, this is just a game. But to the few in the upper echelons of the Sons of Chaos, this was their chance to break through the gateway.

Perched above the chaos, at the edge of the caldera, Dorugoramon watches intently. Explosions reflect off its body, giving it a warm glow. Its long neck stretches as it examines the battlefield. Long sharp blades come down its wings where the bones should be. They twitch as it smirks. Its claws itch in anticipation.

All the pieces are in play. Kosuke thinks to himself.

Suddenly, a blinding beam of light falls from the sky. It slowly dissipates to reveal the gold-armored dragon, Ouryumon. Each taloned hand holds a sharp golden blade that seems fixed on its prey. Dorugoramon has taken flight, and the two dragons charge fiercely at one another.



“Not even a hello, Yulin?” Kosuke asks calmly.

The two Digimon clash as blades and swords collide, creating white hot sparks with each impact. Yulin lets out a gasp as Kosuke’s voice reaches her. She knew she would have to face her old friend, but she wasn’t ready to hear his voice so soon.

Ouryumon doesn’t break its stride. All four of its blades slash furiously against swift silver claws. Ouryumon usually only needed two blades to best his opponents, but Dorugoramon was no ordinary Digimon, and Kosuke was no ordinary Code Cracker.

“So this is what the captain of the Digipolice is capable of...should I call you the Crossroads Witch? For old time’s sake?” Tartarus taunts.

The two dragons separate for a moment. Ouryumon growls as it readies its swords for the next attack. “That person doesn’t exist anymore.” A hint of sorrow seeps into Yulin’s words.

“Didn’t expect to fight a mega so soon.”

“You digivolved first.”

“What an honor...” The two clash again, this time with a more intense ferocity.

“What do you hope to achieve from all this?” Yulin asks. The Golden dragon grits its teeth in frustration.

“You’re about to witness the greatest revolution in human history! Isn’t that right Dorugoramon?”

Dorugoramon clasps its talons together, stretching them away from its body. Glowing light begins to gather between its palms.

DORU-DIN!

A shockwave of pure destructive energy rips through the air. Ouryumon’s blades raise quickly, blocking the attack with a loud clang that rings over the battlefield. Some of the attack crashes onto unsuspecting Digimon and Gatekeepers, sending them flying in every direction. The rest explodes into the wall behind Oryumon. Large chunks of the wall fall towards the gate, leaving a massive hole behind.

Sastuki watches the clash from below, marveling at their sheer destructive power.

“Captain!” she shouts involuntarily. She had never seen the captain go all out before, or seen a Digimon capable of keeping up with her.

The squad of Cargodramon carrying additional units descended upon the caldera, dropping heliborne units that quickly formed along the interior wall. Numemon slides down after them. Its eyes bob through gaps of the Mekanorimon it sits inside of.

“All squads, get in position! The Sons of Chaos are our targets, don’t worry about anyone else,” Satsuki orders. “Don’t let them open the Gateway!”

The Commandramon and the officers pilot their answer with a resounding “Yes sir!” as they scurry into position.

“Enemy sighted. 9 O’clock,” one of the Commandramon warns. Satsuki turns to assess the danger. A swarm of Gatekeepers charges towards them. Satsuki clicks her tongue, spinning the Mekanorimon around. She targets a single Gateker before firing a Twinkle Beam. The hot laser flies through the air, vaporizing the Gatekeeper.

“Open fire!”

Bullets rain down from the Cargodramon’s rattling guns, annihilating the oncoming swarm. The stench of gunpowder fills the air. “So we gotta fight those things too...great!” Satsuki huffs. “I could take these guys out easy if I could just go ultimate.” But Satsuki was under strict orders. She would act as squad leader and pilot the Mekanorimon. Satsuki grows frustrated as she can make out the sounds of the clash above her.

“Seals one, reporting in,” a voice interrupts Satsuki’s thought.

“This is Satsuki. Do you have eyes on the target?”

“Search is underway,” the Sealsdramon replies as it searches the battlefield for the SoC leadership.

“Keep looking. Tartarus’ big splash here might be a diversion. The other could be lurking, waiting to strike.”

“Copy that. Over.”

A loud thud startles Satsuki, as something suddenly lands on top of the Mekanorimon’s domed head. She lets out a yelp. Someone was using her as a stepping stone to join the fray behind her.

“What the hell are you doing Eiji?!”

“My bad. I slipped.”

Loogamon and Eiji stand facing Satsuki, its tail wags excitedly. Satsuki becomes consumed with rage.

“Eiji and your stupid mangy mutt,” she growls.

“Wait...how did you know my name?”

“Who are you calling mangy?” Loogamon snarls.

“Wait I know that voice...”

Loogamon looks around at the uniformed Digimon surrounding him. “Dammit Eiji...We landed in the middle of a Police unit.”

Sastuki smirks. “This is going to be so much fun!”

“Sastuki?” Eiji says as they search for her Numemon. “So you can pilot the Maenormon?” He asks, finally noticing Numemon’s eye stalks poking out.

“So the slug found its shell,” Loogamon says with a snicker.

“Careful Loogamon, she’s crazy.”

“Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!”

GYRO BREAK!

Mekanorimon’s arm begins to spin rapidly, letting out a terrifying mechanical whirr. It heaves forward, launching a corkscrew punch flying towards Loogamon. Loogamon hops out of the way. The arm drills into the empty space Loogamon leaves behind.

“Urgh!” Eiji lets out as a hunk of rock smacks him in the chin.

“This is war Eiji Nagasumi!” Sastuki shouts as she aims her next attack. The Commandramon move into position and train their riffles at the wolf.

“Eiji, get into the core!” Loogamon yells. Eiji had already vanished.

“So what am I wanted for now?” Eiji asks from the safety of the Digicore.

“Wanted? This isn’t some ordinary Patrol. This is war. The Sons of Chaos will answer for their crimes!”

“What?”

“We’re taking you out, whether you like or not. Fire!”

Muzzles flash as the Commandramon unleash a hail of bullets Loogamon. But Loogamon had anticipated the attack and dives behind a nearby boulder. The bullets clang on the stone around them.

“Are you okay?”

“She’s got a squad of 100 or more out there. This is an upgrade from the last time we fought her.”

“She said she this was war.” Eiji begins thinking of ways to deal with Satsuki. As the bullets crash nearby, Eiji realizes this isn’t a game anymore. It never was.

“If it was just Numemon, we’d have nothing to worry about,” Loogamon adds.

The rudders of the Corgodramon circle overhead. Occasionally, they let down a rain of bullets to chip away at their cover, pinning Loogamon to his hiding spot.

Satsuki watches Loogamon through a live feed from one of the Cargodramon. “Ready one of the DCD bombs,” she commands. “We’re going to smoke them out.”

“This is Seals One. Target aquired!” A voice shouts urgently over the radio.

“Send me the coordinates!”

“I would but...they’re nearly on top of you!”

Chapter 4-2: The Demon Wolf's Stand

The Cargodramon leaves a thick cloud of smoke as it falls to the ground. Loogamon jumps through the cloud of smoke and reappears next to Airdramon.

‘You guys really saved us down there,’ Eiji chirps in relief.

“Thanks old man,” Loogamon adds.

Marvin chuckles. “You guys are crazy man, taking on the Digipolice like that.” His words ring with a mixture of admiration and exasperation. “So what did we just walk into Eiji?”

“Satsuki is down there in that Mekanorimon. She’s running this whole operation, and she’s a bit...cranky today. Even more than last time.” Eiji remembers their encounter during his entrance exam.

Marvin reads over Statsuki’s profile. “Yeah I remember. She’s an odd one.” Marvin lets out a sigh as he looks at the Mekanorimon commanding the Digipolice. He watches as the Commandramon move in perfect unison to set up for a counterattack. “This is going to be interesting.”

“Is she stronger than you?” Loogamon asks, mockingly.

“Well I definitely don’t have the attention span to command that many people. Is everyone in position?” Marvin asks suddenly to the others on the line. “These Commandramon have a basic camo feature, so stay sharp and don’t get ambushed. We gotta give Tartarus more space. Come on guys, just like we planned!”

Loogamon smirks. It’s tail wags excitedly as it salivates over the prey moving below. “Me and Eiji will take care of these pests.”

“Let’s do it Loogamon. Digivolve!

Loogamon burst into a large ball of flames. Loogarmon springs from the fireball, flames lick down its fur and feathers. It charges towards the scrambling Commandramon.

FLAME BLOW!

Loogarmon's body becomes covered in white hot flames as he slams into a unit of Commandramon. The Commandramon are too slow to react, and the wolf pierces through their ranks effortlessly, leaving behind bodies of burning Digimon.

Marvin watches the wolf for a moment before issuing his command. "Move in!"

The remaining Sons of Chaos follow Eiji into the fray. The surprised Commandramon struggles to react, and the field erupts into chaos.

A fresh swarm of Gatekeepers moves towards the madness, creating a thick black shadow that cuts through the sky. Marvin isn't phased. He types a simple command into his console, activating the army of Espimon bots at his disposal. Behind him, a swarm of Espimon appears and charges at the oncoming Gatekeepers. The two metallic swarms collide, filling the sky with explosions. Their incoherent struggle continues until it fills the space above the Digipolice.

Satsuki watches the chaos unfold around her. She clenches her fists in frustration and grinds her teeth furiously.

"Those fucking Code Crackers!" She watches as the swarm of Gatekeepers flies towards her. Watches as the Airdramon commands the Sons of Chaos that have joined the ambush. She smirks. "So that's how you want to play." She takes aim. "Open Fire!"

A twinkling beam erupts from the Mekanorimon's torso and collides with the Gatekeepers. The DigiPolice follow her lead and begin spraying the swarm with bullets. Bits of Gatekeepers begin raining around them.

While the DigiPolice shifts its attention to the oncoming horde of Gatekeepers, Loogarmon continues to decimate the ground forces, quickly making its way towards the center.

"Keep it up Loogarmon!" Eiji exclaims!

"This is too easy" Loogarmon responds snidely. Loogarmon jumps between Commandramon. Its claws slash effortlessly through body armor and send bodies through the air.

"There's a Mekanorimon!" Eiji points out the large robot commanding a large squad. "You think you can hit it?"

Small embers lick from between Loogarmon's iron muzzle. "No problem!"

Howling Burner!

Fire begins spilling from its iron grates. A torrent of flames engulfs the Mekanorimon below, leaving a scorched in its wake.

Satsuki watches in frustration as she watches one of the Mekanorimon disappear from her map. "God dammit!" she shouts angrily. The Commandramon hold their position as the wolf slices through them. Satsuki grits her teeth. "That Eiji kid is a problem." She watches Eiji and Loogarmon from her monitor and lets a subtle smirk escape. "We're not done yet Mr. Nagasumi," she says to herself.

"Satsuki switches to one of the private channels. "Tachibana! Sakurada! Get in position. We're ending this!"

Two voices respond in unison "Yes sir!"

Satsuki's smirk turns into a smile. "Hit that wolf with everything you've got!"

Eiji watches the battlefield through Loogarmon's eyes. The Left flank was now considerably weakened. He catches a glimpse of Koske and Yulin's bitter battle over the Gateway.

"So that's what Dorumon's mega?" Eiji points out.

"We have to do something about that Ouryumon, or else we're not getting through that gate," Loogarmon adds.

"That's going to be tricky. There's too many forces in play. For now, lets just focus on our mission."

"Should I digivolve one more time?"

Another mega would tip the battle in their favor, but Eiji's mind jumps back to the incident. They couldn't afford to lose control here. He shakes the thought. "Right now, we gotta focus on getting that gate open and giving Kosuke his space..."

Gunfire suddenly explodes from both sides. Loogarmon jumps out of the way quickly, narrowly missing the hail of bullets. They scan for a source but don't see one. "They must be hiding. Hit them with a howling Burner?"



Two large heavily armored bipedal dinosaurs take their place. They carry a riot shield in one hand and a large grenade launcher in the other.

Hi-Commandramon, Champion, Android, Virus. Eiji reads as the data populates his console.

Loogarmon braces his body. The feathers down its arms begin to quiver and embers erupt from its maw.

HOWLING BURNER!

Flames rush towards the Hi-Commandramon. One moves forward with its shield raised to absorb the flames. Flames burn brightly around it, but the Hi-Commandramon

seems unaffected by the attack. The other Hi-Commandramon jumps from behind its partner and makes a dash towards Loogarmon.

A club comes crashing towards it, but Loogarmon is quick to reach. It raises its arms and blocks the blow. Sparks fly from the impact, and Eiji becomes briefly blinded by its light.

“is the club electric?” Eiji yelps as he initiates a scan of the weapon. The scan confirms his suspicion. It was a stun baton.

“That tingled...”Loogarmon responds.

“Look out!” Eiji shouts as he watches the second Hi-Comandramon ready its attack. It plants its shield on the ground and sticks the muzzle of the grenade launcher through a small cutout.

DCG GRENADE!

THUNK, THUNK, THUNK, THUNK. Grenades start flying out of the slit in the shield. Loogarmon moves out of the way, but a few chunks of shrapnel hits them. Eiji and Loogarmon are now cut off from the rest of the Sons of Chaos. The Digipolice had quickly recovered the space Loogarmon cleared. Eiji couldn’t let the Digipolice interfere with Kosuke’s fight.

Eiji takes a deep breath. “Lets do this Loogarmon.”

Eiji can feel Loogarmon smile as he responds, “I thought you’d never ask.”

Nothing else needed to be said. The two become in synced as mind, body, and soul meld together in a last-ditch effort to turn the tide of battle.

“Digivolve!”

A bipedal wolf steps from the light. This wolf is more humanlike, and covered in protective plating. Long rabbit-like ears shot from the top of its head. In its right hand, it carries a large wrench. Two large engines cling to its shoulders and suspend the wolf in the air.

This was not the monster they had released during the incident. This was the demon wolf's ultimate form.

It looks at the bewildered Hi-Commandramon and takes a deep breath before shouting, "ALL SHALL BURRRNNNN!!!!!"

Chapter 4-3: Kosuke's Plan



The air smells like burning exhaust. Smoke rises around Soloogarmon as white-hot flames erupt from the generators on its shoulders. It grips its mace tightly as it watches the police Digimon before it. It can't help but smirk as they tense up in preparation.

"I got a bit of my memory back," Soloogarmon whispers.

"Yeah?" Eiji lets out a sigh of relief, seeing they are still in control.

"Yep!" Soloogarmon takes a deep breath. "I'm burning everything!" It bellows as a menacing grimace creeps across its face. The generators burn brightly, releasing a high-pitched whir as they continue to gather energy. Before the Hi-Commandramon can react, Soloogarmon vanishes. It leaves behind a swirl of smoke in its place. Suddenly, one of Hi-Commandramon's shields begins to buckle and break under the weight of the mace. Soloogarmon stands at the other end of the impact. Its grin widens with each new crack.

"AWWOOOOOO!" Soloogarmon lets out a howl that rattles the shattered armor. Flames begin to spill from its maw.

ERUPTION HOWL

Torrents of red-hot hellfire melt effortlessly through the armor, leaving the Hi-Commandramon defenseless. It shrinks away from the heat as the other shield fruitlessly appears in feeble retaliation. The shield shrivels into a burning husk of debris. The two police Digimon spring into a defensive stance, and take careful aim in retaliation. Both grenade launchers empty furiously as twelve grenades find their target. Soloogarmon explodes into flames and vanishes behind its veil.

The flames vanish in an instant, revealing an unscathed Saloogarmon. Magical flames move around it in a protective aura. Soloormon smirks. "Is that it?" The Hi-Commandramon become visibly shaken.

"Careful, you're taking damage," Eiji says as he watches the monitors flash with warning.

"It's all part of the plan!" It grips Vanargand tightly and readies for another attack. The Hi-Commandramon lift their batons for another attack. "No more games Eiji. Let's burn 'em!"

"Their mindlinkers too. Don't wreck their Digicores!" Eiji pleas.

"Don't worry. They're tough. They're not gonna die." Before Eiji can respond, Saloogarmon takes off into the air. A shockwave of energy explodes behind it. It lifts Vanargand

Skoll Rage!

The fight between the two legendary dragons rages furiously over the gateway. The sudden flash from Loogarmon's evolution forces them to pause as they shield their eyes from the blinding illumination.

Yulin looks down towards the source and watches as the humanoid wolf tears through her strongest officers. With one mighty blow, it leaves the pair unconscious. Yulin grinds her teeth in frustration as she watches the unknown code cracker make a mockery of her and her unit. Something about the code cracker seems familiar. She ponders for a moment. "Is that Eiji Nagasumi?"

Kosuke chuckles, "He really did it. Isn't he awesome?"

Yulin watches as her opponent's attention drifts for a moment. She readies for an attack. "I'll just have to deal with him after!"

Dorugoramon wags its finger. "None of that," Kosuke responds. "I need both of you for this next bit."

"What bit?"

"Don't you see?" He shouts ecstatically as his Digimon raises his arms wide towards the sea of networks above them. "Three ultimate Digimon, each with the three key attribute. Data, vaccine, virus! We're all here!"

Yulin tries to piece together the words but struggles to follow Kosuke's thoughts. "What are you plotting?"

Tartarus turns to Yulin. "I'm not plotting anything. I'm just finishing what we started."

Suddenly, it clicks. The pain and anguish Kosuke carried with him all these years could no longer be contained. The chaos of Kosuke's obsession erupts all around her, and all she can feel is sorrow.

"Unlike you," Kosuke continues. "I haven't forgotten about Saya."

His words cut Yulin deeply.

"I don't blame you." He continues. "Forgetting was the only way you could move forward. Isn't that why you became a cop? To prevent others from going DMIA? Is this," Kosuke motions to the chaos around him, "Your penance?"

"Don't you dare talk to me like you still know me!" She snaps.

Kosuke smiles through his Digimon. "I know you better than anyone Yulin. But have it your way. Today's the day we put an end to this chapter. I'm going to save Saya Yulin. I'm going to bring her back."

"And how the hell do you plan to do that?"

"With an old relic of the Digital World. It sits down in the depths of the Digital World. It has the power to fix everything, and I am going to be the one to get it!" Dorugoramon begins to glow bright with energy as it charges an attack.

“Ouryumon!” Yulin shouts. Ouryumon begins redies its blades and begins to glow with its own aura.

“I think this counts as police brutality,” Kosuke snides.

“Some situation need a little force.”

“I haven’t done anything wrong. What happened to innocent until proven guilty?”

“That doesn’t work here...” Her words trail as she becomes filled with rage. Ouryumon crosses its blades and charges the silver dragon. Before Dorugoramon can react, the two swords plunge into Dorugoramon’s neck. “I’ll be the one who saves Saya!” Yulin snarls.

Dorugoramon shrieks in pain, and Yulin catches a glimpse of its fear. She freezes as she remembers shes a cop. Dorugoramon smirks and takes advantage of the distraction. It grabs Ouryumon’s arms and pulls the blades out. They leave behind shallow wounds.

“You lost Yulin. This is all going according to plan.”

“Dammit Kosuke!”

“Like I said, I know you better than anyone.”

Dorugoramon delivers a fierce kick that sends Ouryumon flying back, creating space between the two dragons. Dorugoramon launches itself forward, turning into pure destructive energy.

BRAVE METAL!

Chapter 4-4: Phase 3

The blast of energy connects with Ouryumon before it has a chance to react. Its twin blades drop as the wings on its back vanish. Ouryumon is sent plummeting towards the Gateway. Its body bounces once as it kicks up thick clouds of dust and debris. Yulin and her partner remain unconscious as the dust settles around them. Ouruyumon glows a sickly yellow as it dedigivolves into Ryudamon.

Dorugoramon looks down at its opponent and reverts Dorumon. “The DigiCore is intact,” It says as Kosuke’s hologram appears beside it.

There’s a glimpse of sadness in his expression as he looks down at his old friend.

“I know you can’t hear me, but I’m going to restrain you,” Kosuke says as he pulls up a program that restrains Ryudamon. The program wouldn’t allow anyone to control Ryudamon as long as they were mindlinked, but it wouldn’t prevent it from moving. Kosuke lets out a loud sigh. “I’m sorry, but this was the only way.”

Kosuke turns an unremorseful gaze towards the battlefield. “Phase two is complete. Commence phase three,” he commands.

“Copy that! Note mindlink uptime is higher than anticipated, but still within acceptable parameter,” Dorumon responds.

“Yulin is a tough girl,” Kosuke replies flatly.

“Indeed,” Dorumon responds, his gaze fixed on the restrained Ryudamon.

Kosuke opens up his coms. “You still alive Marvin?”

“Barely,” came in a shaky reply. “Looks like we’ve got plenty of time though.”

“Status report,”

“The DigiPolice’s biggest weapon is out of commission, Eiji was able to take out the two Hi-Commandramon. We’ve knocked out a third of the police force. The Wall Slum Digimon are still going strong, but it looks like the code crackers fighting the Gatekeepers are losing steam.”

“The turning point’s approaching,” Dorumon says gravely. They couldn’t risk the battle shifting against them. Not when they were so close.

“Right then,” Kosuke says suddenly. “Time for the main event.”

Dorumon nods. “Marvin, bring Eiji over here.”

“On it boss. I’ll get ’em there without a single scratch!”

“If you’re gunna use it, now would be the time,” Kosuke adds.

“You don’t even gotta ask,” Marvin replies as he activates a tool from his console. Suddenly, a guttural unearthly groan floods the airways.

Satsuki grits her teeth as she watches over the battlefield. A third of her force was gone along with the two strongest mindlinkers and the captain.

“That damn Eiji,” she growls. “This wasn’t in the notes...” Her voice trails. Their intel had placed Eiji and his partner only at Champion level. It frustrated Satsuki to know that their intel was wrong. He had jumped a level since they last fought, and now he was...her level. Regret fills her as she thinks about their first encounter. Satsuki clenches her fists tightly. “I should have taken him out when I had a chance.”

“Squad leader,” a voice breaks her trance.

“Go ahead.” She shakes off the frustration and regains her focus.

“Orders?”

“Left flank, retreat and regroup with the remaining forces. Right flank and center, take care of the Gatekeepers. Everyone retreat after regrouping.”

“But...”

“That’s an order,” she commands, cutting off incoming protests. Yulin had given her command of the Police with the condition she wouldn’t push Numemon past champion, and they would retreat if Yulin lost.

“But the Captain?”

“I know!” Satsuki shouts as the rage continues to bubble within her. “There’s no other choice.” The Sons of Chaos had the upper hand. Fighting any longer would end in defeat.

“Tachibana, Sakurada, can you move?”

“Yeah”

“Good. I need you to retreat for now. I’ll cover you.”

“But...”

“It’s an order, not an invitation. Get moving!” Satsuki barks.

“Yes Mam!” They respond as they begin limping away toward the Cargodramon. She watches as the rest of her battered forces make their make their retreat.

“Right then, where did Eiji go?” She says as she switches coms. “Seals one come in.”

“We’ve got eyes on Tartarus. It looks like they’re getting ready for their next move.”

“Keep watching, but retreat the second things get hot.”

Marvin joins Kosuke and the others with Eiji hidden. “Alright, I brought the kid. Now if you don’t need me, I need to get going. I better take advantage while the Police are retreating.”

“You’ve done enough. Thanks. Where are you off to?”

“Gotta pick up my kid from school.”

“Right, right! You better hurry then. I’m sorry to take up so much of your day.”

“It’s fine, now I got a cool story to tell them when they’re older!” Marvin chuckles.

“I’m glad you see it that way.”

“Catch you later!” Marvin says as he and his Digimon leave.

“Are they really reatreating?” Eiji asks as his hologram appears next to Loogamon.

“They’re probably just following orders.” Tartarus responds.

Eiji turns to the unconscious Ryudamon. “Are they all right?” He sounds concerned as he examines the restraints.

“They’re just unconscious. The DigiCore is still intact. I just put them in restraints for their safety.”

“So what now?” Loogamon asks.

“Now we crack the gateway,” Kosuke says with a smile.

“We’re going to use the old interfaces on the prototype Digimon to open the gate.” Dorumon adds.

“Old interfaces?” Eiji asks, puzzled by the explanation.

“Oh? I thought the professor would have told you.” Dorumon asks, taken aback.

Eiji and Loogamon shake their heads for a moment before Eiji gets an idea. “Wait! The thing on their foreheads!” Eiji exclaims suddenly, pointing at Loogamon’s forehead.

Dorumon smiles, “Exactly! Digimon with those interfaces are known as prototype Digimon. We’re going to use them to access the backdoor that leads to the depths.”

“We’ll slip through where the system administrator can’t see,” Kosuke adds.

“Damn Loogamon, that means your forehead holds some sort of legendary power! I always knew you were incredible buddy.”

“I don’t need you to tell me I’m incredible,” Loogamon responds as its tail wags furiously behind it.

“So what do we have to do?” Eiji asks excitedly.

“You don’t need to do anything.”

“Sorry?”

“Tartarus will take care of the Gateway. The Prototype Digimon act as intermediaries while the cracking occurs.”

“That makes sense,” Loogamon says as he looks at the still-unconscious Rydamon.

“Well if you only need Loogamon’s interface, what should I do?” Eiji asks, feeling lost. Loogamon and Dorumon exchange a nervous glance.

“Pray.”

Loogamon, Dorumon, and the restrained Ryudamon form a triangle around Kosuke.

“Alright, time to move into phase three,” Kosuke announces. “Once we start the process, there’s no cancelling. Loogamon and Dorumon won’t be able to move while the Gateway is being cracked. We’re counting on the rest of the Sons of Chaos to see us through.”

“Yes sir!” comes the resounding response from the remaining members.

Kosuke starts typing quick commands on his console. “I hope this thing of yours works Marvin.”

Suddenly, the ground begins to shake as violently. The Sons of Chaos close their ranks and brace for an attack as a gigantic dragon appears over them. The beast is completely metallic, with thick crimson armor covering its body. Large metal talons flex as its tail waves wildly behind it.

‘Is that a Mugendramon?’ Eiji asks.

“No, but similar,” Loogamon adds.

“You’ve seen this thing before?”

“I recognize that red armor anywhere...That’s Chaosdramon.”

HYPER INFINTY CANNON!



Two red-hot beams of energy fly through the air and melt away swarms of Gatekeepers. The sky around them fills with explosions.

“A mega? Who can even pilot a Mega like that? Eiji asks stunned.

“It’s a bot,” Tartarus says.

“What? No one is controlling it?!”

Chaosdramon lets out a roar. Eiji marvels at the sheer unmanned destructive power before him.

“No one would be able to mindlink with that.” Kosuke adds finally.

“Wait what about the Wall Slum Digimon.” Eiji asks suddenly. His voice filled with genuine concern.

“I told them to leave the moment things got dicey. None of the are risking their lives if there’s no benefit,” Loogamon responds.

“We’re on the clock,” Dorumon says suddenly.

“Right.” Kosuke opens up his terminal and begins typing at it furiously. He glimpses at the unconscious Ryudamon. “Sorry Yulin. I need to borrow you for a bit.” He stops typing to take a deep breath before hitting his final command:

Crack Gateway.

Chapter 4-5: The Royal Knight Returns

The Gatekeepers turn their firepower towards the Sons of Chaos. Chaosdramon fires away furiously, keeping the swarms of Gatekeepers away. The rest of the Sons of Chaos clean up any bits of swarm that manage to break through the blast of Chaosdramon's Hyper Infinity Cannon. The Sons of Chaos move to form a defensive perimeter around their leader.

Kosuke stands behind the three prototype Digimon and watches as they crack the Gateway. Explosions and beams of hot energy fill the air around him, but his attention never falters. The progress bar makes its slow crawl across the screen...30%...33%...

The last time Kosuke attempted to crack the gateway, the progress stalled at 30%. They surpassed the first attempt, and each second brought him closer to Saya.

Dorumon announces their progress periodically. Kosuke's screen fills with a stream of endless code as he sends commands to the prototype Digimon. The code creates a visible stream of light that becomes tethered to the backs of each Digimon. They continue to work furiously. Their feet begin to glow as streams of code stretch from beneath them across the face of the Gateway, revealing a complex geometric pattern on its surface.

At some point, the Gatekeepers had turned their attention to Kosuke. Bits of Gatekeepers occasionally rain around him, but he never takes notice. His fingers tingle with anticipation as they glide over the keyboard.

Eiji watches Kosuke curiously. He becomes moved by the man's unwavering focus. Unable to do much else, Eiji opens his monitor to check on the progress.

66%

The Gateway groans as the glow of flowing data eats away at its face to complete the pattern. It looks to be a third of the way done.

Loogamon's ears twitch. It flicks its nose toward the air.

"What is it?" Eiji asks.

"Something's coming..." Loogamon's voice trails. There is a hint of fear in its voice.

"What...Wait....Crap! Tartarus!" Eiji cries out.

“Stay calm. There’s nothing we can do right now. Just focus on the job,” Dorumon calls out. Its voice seems a bit distracted.

“Its time!” Kosuke shouts. “Everyone fall back!”

“Tappin out!”

“That’s it for me!” The Sons of Chaos Leaders slowly chime, letting Tartarus know they’ve hit their limit. Only Chaosdramon would be left to hold the line.

“Let’s all raise a glass when all this is over,” one of the leaders adds.

“You got it!”

“Loggin AUGH!” A deafening scream blasts through the chat before everything goes silent. Eiji’s mind begins to race. *Have they been attacked?* He searches the skies for answers.

Suddenly, a Digimon drops from the sky and lands on the Gateway with a sickening thud. Smoke and dusk kick around it furiously. As it clears, Eiji can make out a severely damaged machine. Its body is covered in deep gashes. Exposed wires let off sparks of electricity. It begins to move towards them. Each step releases thick black smoke from its gashes.

“Mekanorimon?” Eiji asks in disbelief. ” I thought the DigiPolice retreated?”

A series of small explosions erupt throughout Mekanorimon’s body. It lurches to one side and topples over to its side. Inside sits a damaged Numemon. It spills out of the seat, flopping onto the ground as it makes its escape from the wreckage. Satsuki appears next to the Mekanorimon and gingerly touches its cold steel body. “I’m sorry,” she whispers as she gently strokes the unmoving Digimon.

She turns her attention to the prototype Digimon. Her expression fills with rage. “I’m getting the captain back, and none of you filthy code crackers are going to stop me!” she shouts.

“Hey, Satsuki?” Eiji says as he leaps between the enraged officer and the Prototype Digimon.

Satsuki clenches her fist and begins to grit her teeth. “Eiji Nagasumi...” Satsuki scowls harder.

“It’s too dangerous to stay as a hologram. One stray bullet and you’re gone.” He adds, trying to calm her down.

Don’t talk down to me boy. I know what I’m doing,” she growls as she pulls out a small device from her pocket. The label on its side reads: CLASSIFIED. Metropolitan Police Department. Unit 11: D-003799. “I’m putting an end to this, once and for all!”

“Is that a Digimon Dock?”

” Sorry, Captain. Consider this my resignation...” Her voice trails as she looks down at the unconscious Ryudamon.

“Satsuki... ?” Eiji stammers.

“Get ready kid, I ain’t holding back!” she yells as she turns on the device.

A horrific metallic scream fills the air. Eiji searches for a source, but nothing happens.

Genocidal Rain!



A hail of heavy-caliber bullets rain from above. Each bullet explodes into Chaosdramon with thundering force, but the crimson dragon absorbs the blows effortlessly. Bellow, Eiji ducks his head expecting a stray bullet that never comes.

RATATATATATATA

The defining explosions continue. Eiji lifts his head slowly to search for its source. Above it, Chaosdramon is pinned down by the endless hail of bullets. At the other end, a heavily armored bipedal dragon fires its Gatling gun furiously towards them. A jetpack blows viciously, keeping it over them. Its blue armor glistens with each explosion. Its blank expression remains fixed on the prototype Digimon.

“So they just had a Mega Digimon sitting around?” Eiji lets out.

“Impressed?” Satsuki asks mockingly. She turns her attention to a terminal that floats in front of her. She enters a few commands and smirks as Brigadramon continues to rain down fire.

“I only left for five minutes...” Marvin’s voice comes through chat as he takes control of the Chaosdramon remotely. “Let’s see how you handle this!” Chaosdramon closes the gap between them and grabs the Gatling gun. “Gotcha!”

Satsuki lets out a sly smirk. “Not so fast!” Brigadramon adds Brigadramon lifts its left arm, revealing three rocket launchers hidden under its claws. “Did you think that’s all I had?”

“Stop it!” Eiji shouts suddenly. “It’s here!”

DELETE ALL!

A metallic voice echoes over the battlefield as a small vortex forms above the chaos. From it falls a silver knight Digimon.

Omegamon raises its right arm. The cannon at the end begins to glow as it gathers energy. The cannon fires without warning.

GARURU CANNON

The frozen beam falls towards the gate.

“Tartarus!” Marvin moves the Chaosdramon to intercept the blast. Ice creeps over its hard metallic body, slowly choking the life from it. With its final breath, it lets out one last defiant breath.

HYPER INFINITY CANNON

Omegamon moves quickly, dodging the blast and closing the distance between it and the prototype Digimon.

EXA DESTROYER

Three missiles explode against Omegamon, forcing the Royal Knight to land. Omegamon remains unscathed as it turns its attention to Satsuki’s Brigadramon.

GENOCIDAL RAIN!

RATATATATATATA

Brigadramon’s Gatling gun begins to spin as it releases a turret of bullets. Omegamon disappears behind a cloud of dust and smoke. The gun comes to a stop. Smoke wisps rise from the end of the barrels. Omegamon steps out of the smoke, unscathed. The runes on its blade begin to glow as it inches toward Kosuke and the other Digimon.

..... 95%....96%....97%...

TRANSCENDENT SWORD

Omegamon charges.

“Kosuke!” Eiji shouts helplessly.

Kosuke pulls out two Digimon Docks from his pockets. “I told you, everything is going to plan.” He presses a button on the docks. Two mega Digimon suddenly appear to intercept Omegamon’s attack.

99%.

The Gateway lets out another massive grown. The prototype Digimon begins to glow as ghostly images of their ultimate forms appear briefly above them. As the projections disappear, beams of data shoot from their bodies toward the sea above them.

Omegamon makes quick work of Kosuke's Mega Digimon and continues its charge towards Kosuke. Its blade swings for his neck.

"100% Gate Cracking complete!" Dorumon announces as Kosuke, Eiji, and the three prototype Digimon vanish.

Chapter 4-6: The Gateway Opens

Eiji, Kosuke, and Yulin vanish. Omegamon's blade slashes through the space Kosuke's neck used to be. It pulls up the glowing blade to examine it for signs of contact. It lets out a powerful sigh in its disappointment as it realizes it has failed.

"Did they make it?" Marvin asks as the shock kicks in. He and Satsuki freeze, as they watch the frustrated knight plan its next move. If it turns around, they didn't stand a chance.

Marvin looks at the destruction around him. Sees the half-frozen Chaosdramon, the overheating Brigadramon, and the two Mega Digimon Kosuke sacrificed. Watches as Omegamon stands at the center of the aftermath, motionless. Moments go by before it leaps into the air. It takes a sudden dive into the gate and disappears out of sight.

The battlefield falls silent. The mangled corpses of Gatekeepers and Code Cracker Digimon form scattered piles over its face. The Wall Slum Digimon had long since disappeared, leaving Marvin and Satsuki alone. The raid is over.

Marvin appears as a hologram and walks over to Satsuki whose hologram stands over the wrecked Mekanorimon.

"Thanks for the assist," Marvin says coyly.

"Where's the captain?" She asks flatly, without looking up. Sadness, anger, and frustration all jumble inside her as she tries to make sense of what just happened.

"We should really get out of here before that thing decides to come back.

Satsuki turns angrily and pulls Marvin by his collar. "I asked you a question!"

Marvin lifts his hands up in protest, "I have no idea where they went. We didn't get that far."

"LIAR!" She shouts as she shakes Marvin violently. "Tell me where she went!"

"Woah, calm down." Marvin pulls himself free and brushes himself off. "Look, my parts are done. The battle is over. Now if you'll excuse me, I got to check up on my friends. I'll be seeing you." He gives Satsuki a brief wave as he walks away. Marvin summons a small virtual console as he walks, and inputs a few commands. The felled Digimon and the screen vanish as Marvin turns his attention to help his comrades.

Satsuki remains frozen where he left her and stares blankly into the distance. Moments go by before Marvin finally turns to her and says, "It's been nice, but I'm out of here."

Satsuki turns slowly towards Marvin and stares at him with a lost expression. She clenches her fists tightly but doesn't say a word.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to be rude. You can come join us if you need a place to crash. I can even fix that Mekanorimon if you want."

Eiji, Kosuke, and Yulin stand at the center of an endless void. Around them, white empty space stretches away from them for miles.

"Is this...The depths?" Eiji asks as he searches for something to fix his gaze. Nothing seems to stand out. Except for the solid floor below them, everything around them was an endless formless blight.

"Well we can summon our holograms which is a good sign that this is 3D space," Kosuke says. His voice trails off as he summons his virtual console and begins typing into it furiously.

"I always imagined the Depths to be a wild place full of untouched nature, like a forest or something," Eiji says, his hologram also testing his surroundings. "That's what the video at the DDL showed." Kosuke doesn't respond. He doesn't seem to have heard Eiji's comment. Eiji continues his search, and Loogamon sniffs at the air for clues.



“So what is this place?” Loogamon asks. “There’s a bunch of scents in the air, but they don’t make sense. It’s like there’s something here, but there isn’t.”

“Something?” Eiji asks in a shaky voice

“Yeah, it’s like this whole place exists and doesn’t at the same time. It’s confusing.”

“I didn’t peg you for a philosopher Loogamon.” Dorumon chuckles.

“Shut up,” Loogamon snarls, blaring its fangs at the fox.

“This is the Source Domain,” Kosuke says finally without looking up.

“The source? So this is where it all started?” Eiji says as he takes another look around him.

“The Digital World was born from noise and chaos. This is a place full of ancient and forgotten data. Only old Digimon can access it, or Digimon compatible to the old standards like...” Kosuke’s voice trails off.

“Like the Prototypes,” Durumon continues, pointing toward the interface on its forehead. “These things gave us access, and since you were fused to our Digicores, you came along too.”

“Ah!” Eiji chirps.

Durumon turns his attention to the unconscious and restrained Ryudamon. “Still asleep captain?”

Yulin’s hologram suddenly appears between them. “Kosuke!” she shouts.

“I’m sorry Yulin, but this was the only way. You wouldn’t have helped me otherwise.”

“Wait!” She looks at the void around her, frozen with shock as she struggles to piece the truth together. “The Gateway...What happened?!” Her voice shakes as she demands answers.

“We cracked it. This is the other side,” Kosuke answers, his gaze still fixed on his work.

Yulin is speechless. The mission failed because she hesitated.

“The DigiPolice watched you fall and withdrew. Your deputy fought till the end. She even deployed a Mega-level Digimon in an attempt to rescue you.” Durumon begins.

“Sastuki deployed Brigadramon? No!” Her voice fills with genuine concern. No one could fully control Brigadramon. It wasn’t ready to be used in combat.

“We didn’t know you were sitting on such a nifty little Digimon. It even stood toe-to-toe with Marvin’s Chaosdramon, but then Omegamon showed up, and well... that’s when the real party started. The thing came inches from Kosuke’s neck, but he was just too smart.” Durumon ends his story with a proud smile.

“What...What happened to Satsuki?”

Kosuke shrugs, “She’s not my responsibility.” He steals a quick glance at the distressed captain and sighs. “I’m not sure what happened after we cracked the Gateway, but Marvin’s a good guy. I’m sure he’s taking good care of her.”

Eiji is surprised by how casually the two foes address each other. “Do you know each other?”

“I guess there’s no reason to lie now that we’re in here,” Kosuke responds as he goes into their history.

Eiei takes it in for a moment but remembers where they are. “That’s a lot, but...shouldn’t we be worried about Omegamon coming back?”

Dudumon shakes his head, “Only prototype Digimon can enter here. We’re safe.”

“That’s good.” Eiji begins to relax.

“In theory,”

“Huh?”

Durumon shrugs, “It’s entirely possible that I am wrong. The Royal Knights will show up and end us. It’s all Jazz from here on out.”

“Please tell me you’re joking.” Eiji tenses up.

“That’s the worst case scenarion.”

Loogamon wags its tail. “Relax kid. I don’t smell any Royal Knights.”

“You’re younger than me Loogamon.”

“We don’t know that,” it sneers. Its nose twitches suddenly as it catches a faint unfamiliar scent.

“What’s up, Loogamon?”

“Something stinks over here but...GAH” Loogamon’s face twists as it fights back disgust. The area Loogamon was sniffing reacts suddenly. A strange translucent shape begins to form around it.

“What did you do?!” Eiji shouts.

Loogamon jumps back as the shape begins to form. “Nothing I... ” Loogamon freezes partway through his leap. Its body remains suspended, frozen in the air.

Digimon Seekers Chapter 4-7: Phase Four

Loogamon falls to the ground. Its crash echoes over the void. Three strange shapes materialize before the group: a blue raindrop, a purple sun, and an orange cube. Each shape glows brightly as it begins a slow orbit in the space Loogamon once stood.

Loogamon's heart races. Attempting to catch its breath, Loogamon tenses up and moves into a defensive stance. "What the heck is that?" It shouts, eying the strange display cautiously.

The others have begun a slow retreat and watch the orbiting shapes suspiciously. "You're the one who activated," Eiji replies.

"By accident, I don't..." Loogamon's voice trails as one of the carvings catches its attention. "I think I've seen this thing before."

"Now you're just making things up, it's okay to be scared buddy," Eiji replies with a nervous chuckle. He studies the objects carefully. They feel familiar somehow.

"It's the three types!" Yulin blurts out suddenly.

Eiji focuses on the strange shapes and recognizes the letters written between the shapes. "Oh yeah! The things in the lobby." Eiji recalls the three hologram objects he passed before every visit with the professor. The shapes represented the three types of Digimon taxonomy: virus, data, and vaccine. The objects spin for a moment before each makes their way to their respective Digimon.

"These are the terminals that control this fortress, and we are the interface," Dorumon says, breaking the silence. "We made it. This is where we'll find the Sacred Chalice."

"It's been quite a journey," Kosuke responds.

Dorumon nods. "It's not over yet."

"Commence phase four," Kosuke says as he takes a step forward.

"We're so close!"

"Now we have to access the source code." Kosuke turns to Eiji, "Do you still have mindlink time left?"

“Of course I do!” Eiji says, putting his hand on Loogamon’s back. “Readyu buddy?”
Loogamon’s tail begins to wag slowly.

Yulin is stunned. She attempts to process the events unfolding around her. “The ...source domain...” Yulin was a gifted coder, but this was outside her knowledge base.

“I doubt you’ve even heard of this place Yulin,” Kosuke says. “This place is what the professor what all those expeditions have led up to. This is all of the professor’s research, but now it is no longer just theories. This is how we save Saya!”

Something clicks for Eiji as he takes it all in. Suddenly, his involvement with the Sons of Choas wasn’t wasn’t random chance. Standing here in the Source Domain with Ryusenji’s two former students was by design.

“I get it now,” Yulin says, grabbing one of the Ryudamon’s clawed paws to help it up. “You want to crack the Digital World!”

Kosuke smiles, “That’s right. We’ll surcumvent the Royal Knights, slip past the system admin, and take control.”

“That’s too dangerous!”

“I’m not here to rule the Digital World, I just need to controll it for a moment. Just enough to do what I need to.”

“No! You can’t! If you put the Source Domain to the whims of man and...”

“These are no mere whims,” Kosuke says coldly. “This is to save Saya and nothing more.

“That doesn’t matter. We shouldn’t even be here. We can’t risk destroying the fragile connection between humanity and the Digital World. You don’t understand the forces you’re dealing with!” Yulin’s words echo through the void.

The group stands in silence for what seems like an eternity. Kosuke is the first to break the silence. “...This is for Saya. If it brings her back, it will all be worth it.”

“I don’t give a crap why you’re all here,” Loogamon interjects. “We made a deal, and we’ve got people to save here. So if we can move it along...”

Yulin turns to Eiji. “Are you willing to take responsibility then? Are you okay with this Eiji?” Her voice pleads desperately.

Eiji sighs as he thinks for a moment. “Look. I hear you, but we didn’t come all this way to just turn around. We came here to rescue our friends, and we’re so close.”



The three shapes begin to spin and rise, slowly coming together and rushing into one blinding orb of light. Around them, massive stone pillars shoot out from the ground, reaching up until disappearing past the eye line. Stone begins to pile around them, forming a large circle around them.

“This looks like some kind of altar.” Eiji finally adds. “How big is this going to get?” No answer. He looks over to Kosuke, who watches as the ancient structure continues to form around them. The temperature drops suddenly, forcing the group into a shiver.

“Can’t you light us a fire?” Durumon’s asks with a tremble.

“I’m not a space heater?” Loogamon snarls.

The structure stops shuffling, sending everything into silence. “When you’re ready Loogamon, commence Phase 4.”

Loogamon takes a step towards the floating object. Durumon takes hold of Ryudamon's restraints and drags it behind. The half-conscious Digimon mutters under his breath. "You awake back there?" Durumon asks mockingly.

"You've...made your choice." Ryudamon manages. Its voice is frail.

"I'm here to back up my partner," Durumon begins. "I'll help him free the Digital World, and whatever happens...happens."

The stone circle begins to glow.

"Hey, Kosuke?" Eiji asks, his gaze fixed to the center of the fixture.

"If you have questions, keep them brief." Kosuke types away furiously at his console.

"When you access the source code, can you do a search of Leon's Pulsemon?"

"I only have the identification code for the Black Agumon," Kosuke says coldly.

"I know the scent," Loogamon adds as he sends over the identification code.

"Now all we need is the Ryusenji's treatment," Kosuke says as he pulls up the data.

Yulin's heart stops. The professor not only knew, he was behind this whole operation.

"There's no turning back now," Kosuke says.

The air around them grows colder as a stream of light from the floating object reaches towards each Digimon.

"Woah," Eiji lets out, overwhelmed by the sight.

Strange, glowing symbols fill the wall around them. "Decryption in progress," the three Digimon say in sync. The whole structure glows bright for a moment before ending in a flicker. Kosuke's monitor shuts off. Everything around them goes dark and silent.

"Good morning friends," an unfamiliar voice says softly.

Chapter 4-8: The Voice in the Shadows

Eiji searches fruitlessly through the dark for the voice, but his vision fails to grasp anything tangible. For a few moments that followed, there was nothing. No sounds, smells, or light to tease the senses. Shock overwhelms the panick as Eiji continues to fight through the daze.

Just as quickly as they were enshoured by darkness, the lights flicker, illuminating the void. The sudden bright light forces Eiji to squint. He begins to feel the coold smooth stone pressed against his back and sares up onto an inverted wall. “What?” he lets out, as he begins to come to his senses. Eiji realizes he is no longer standing.

“Rrgh,” Loogamon grunts.

Eiji turns to his partner and gets up as quickly as he can. He fights through the faint dizziness and makes his way towards the wolf. “Loogamon! You okay?”

Loogamon lays on the ground, making weak twitches with its paws. “I...I can’t move,” it manages to say.

Eiji looks around and finds the rest of the group in a similar state spread across the circle. Scattered and unconscious. The interface on the prototype Digimon glow dimly but begin to fade with each passing second.

Eiji reaches for his partner, “Loogamon!?!” he shouts as his arms wrap around the wolf’s neck. The interface on the prototype Digimon go dark for a few seconds before rebooting.

Kosuke sits up and pulls up his console and virtual monitor. “What?” he murmurs as an endless stream of unintellible code floods his screen. Kosuke begins typing desperately at his keys, but his console seems to be stuck in an endless reboot loop. The source code decryption had been canceled without warning.

“Good morning friends,” a familiar voice says softly. Eiji instantly recognizes the voice. He turns quickly in disbelief, but finds the professor standing in front of him. “Professor Ryusenji?” Eiji lets out softly.

With his back turned to the pupils, the Ryusenji says “I’ll take it from here.”

Yulin begins to regain consciousness. Through her fog, she can make out the professor's silhouette. "Professor?" She says weakly as she slowly comes to consciousness. "What are you doing?... Why?"

Kosuke stares at the professor incredulously as his console continues to reboot.

"Why are you so surprised?" The professor says as he turns around to address his pupils.

Kosuke and Yulin quietly get to their feet. Their balance wavers, and they fail to find the words to respond.

"After all," the professor continues. "I'm the one who asked you to raise these prototype Digimon for me. Now if you don't mind,"

RESTRAIN

"Gah!"

"What is this?!"

Loogamon and Dorumon fall to the ground as they become restrained by the same tool used on Ryudamon.

"How did you do that?" Durumon shouts.

"Did you really think I would just give you my Digimon?" Ryusenji says sternly.

"He had it...programed into us," Loogamon shouts. Dorumon's eyes grow wide in disbelief as the truth begins to sink in.

"Did you tamper with Ryudamon too?" Yulin is finally able to say.

"It's a little...safety feature I installed in each Digimon and Digimon linker. Did I not mention it when I gave them to you?" The professor's voice is cold. "I can also take control of the Digimon if I need to. Progress requires these types of safeguards, wouldn't you agree?" He turns around and continues towards the center of the circle. "These Digimon are my tools, and I will use them as I see fit." The Digimon continue to struggle in their restrains.

The group notices as a strange shimmer occasionally run across the professor's hologram. His hologram was a mere projection from the three Digimon linkers. It was clear at that moment that everything was by his design.

"What the hell are you going on about!" Kosuke shouts, slamming his virtual monitor away.

The professor stops at the center of the circle. Without turning says, "Let me put it simply. Your story is now mine. Now watch closely." The professor begins typing at his console. Dorumon's interface begins to glow as a beam of data begins flowing through it.

"What are you doing?!" Kosuke shouts.

"Isn't it obvious? I'm decrypting the Source Domain's code. It's only fair that I do it."

Kosuke stands helplessly and watches his Digimon be hijacked.

"Accessing source domain code," comes an announcement from the cold robotic voice of the Source Domain.

"Loogamon!" Eiji shouts as he slams his fingers through various commands in a feeble attempt to regain control of his partner.

"It's not looking good," the wolf replies. Eiji continues to struggle, looking for any way to sever the connection and take back his friend. What if they couldn't stop the professor? A cold shiver runs down his back.

"We're supposed to be on the same side!" Kosuke cries desperately. "I want to save Saya too!"

"Professor! Please! Don't!" Eiji shouts helplessly.

"What is it Eiji?" the professor asks coldly.

"Why are you doing this? Why put us through all this trouble? We're on the same side. Don't you want your daughter back?"

The professor smiles. "I've always liked you Eiji, so I'm letting you in on a little secret. I'm not really interested in finding her."

“But then...why did you make the stimulant?” Eiji feels the weight of the world crashing into him. He stumbles and almost falls to the ground.

“Not...interested?” Kosuke clenches his fists tightly.

The professor shrugs. “What’s lost is lost. This whole plan you’ve dedicated your whole life to, Kosuke, it is a monument to wasted effort.”

“Don’t let him...get to you Kosuke,” Dorumon shouts.

“I...I always had my suspicions,” Yulin manages. “but I didn’t want to believe them. I couldn’t”

Professor Ryusenji smirks, “You should have listened to your gut, Captain.”

Without warning, the infinite space around them fills with an endless stream of data. “This is it. The universal directory,” the professor says as he sifts through the data.

“Search Complete,” the Source Domain’s voice announces.

Bit by bit, a small yellow Digimon begins to appear before them, occasionally letting off small strikes of lightning.

“Pulsmon!” Loogamon shouts, reigniting his struggle.

“What’s it doing here?” Eiji asks with delight.

“And there you have it boy, the Pulsemon you and Loogamon were looking for,” the professor adds.

Eiji takes a hard swallow.

“This is but a taste of what can be done with the control of the Source Domain’s data.”

Another Digimon begins to materialize. A small black dinosaur appears next to Pulsemon. Kosuke lets out a gasp, “Black Agumon!”



“Just as I suspected,” the professor continues as he examines the Black Agumon. “Even if the mindlinker perishes, the partner Digimon doesn’t suffer the same fate.

“Wait... what did you say?” Eiji stammers as tears fall down his face.

“Saya’s... ” Yulin’s heart drops. The sudden pain of realization almost knocks her off her feet. “Saya’s dead?!” She can’t hold back her tears.

“Oh, yes. For quite some time, now,” the professor answers coldly.

Chapter 4-9: Breaking Free

“You’re lying!” Kosuke shouts. I saw the facility. I saw her...” His voice trails as he is overcome by emotion.

“Such a predictable reaction. I needed you to believe she was alive. How else was I going to get you this far?” A smile creeps up on his face.

Shock sets in and brings Kosuke to his knees. The world around him starts to spin as he feels the warmth of vomit creeping up his throat.

“Isn’t this, the Black Agumon you’ve been looking for?” Eiji says as he makes his approach to the suspended Digimon. “So you’re the Digimon everyone’s been looking for.”

Eiji’s words pull Kosuke from his trance. He turns his attention to the black Agumon. There it was, the Digimon he spent half his life looking for. He was so close, he could reach out and touch it. Kosuke shakes off the shock. “I don’t believe you!” he growls.

“Hm”

“I refuse to believe Saya is dead. Not until I see her with my own two eyes.” He walks towards the Black Agumon. A virtual syringe materializes in his hand. He grips it tightly.

“Go ahead,” the professor adds. The professor’s sudden encouragement stops Kosuke. “That Black Agumon is hers, there’s no doubt about it. But that medicine can’t cure death. Are you willing to face those consequences?”

“What consequences?”

“I thought you were smarter than this,” Ryusenji shakes his head. “Suppose you wake her up inside Black Agumon’s core, but she has nobody to return to. What do you suppose would happen then?”

The syringe falls from his hands, landing with a hollow clang. Kosuke had clung to the hope that Saya was alive. The hope that he could bring her back. But here he stood with a choice he couldn’t crack. The medicine would either save her life or seal it. It was too much to bear.

“Data Sector Decryption Complete” the Source Domain’s voice announces.

An anguished scream rips through the air. Dorumon bends backwards, its head snaps violently until it collapses. Kosuke rushes over. “Dorumon!” he shouts as he drops to his knees beside his partner.

“Kosuke....”

“Forgive me Dorumon. You deserved better.”

“It’s not your fault. We chose the right path... I never suspected Ryusenji would betray us....” its voice trails off as it offers a weak smile. The glowing gem on its forehead continues to fade.

“How touching,” the professor says with a dry laugh. “And what were your plans with the data?”

“I would have given you all the credit. All I cared about was getting Saya back.” Kosuke’s voice trails.

“I appreciate your love for my daughter,” the professor says flatly. Kosuke groans and clutches at his chest. “I’ll make sure you look good when all this is over. I don’t want to lose you just yet.”

“Why bother?” Kosuke asks bitterly.

“You’re my prodigy. You still hold some value. Now if you’ll excuse me, I must get back to work.” He summons his virtual console and begins typing in commands. A code stream flows from the vaccine object into Ryudamon’s interface.

“Decryptin Vaccine Sector” the metallic voice announces. Ryudamon begins to convulse. It’s too weak from the battle to struggle. Yulin sits helplessly. She no longer has the energy to Mindlink.

“Why are you doing this? How can you abandon your daughter so easily?”

“What happened to Saya was...unfortunate,” Ryusenji’s response is clinical and without emotion. “But it will all be worth it when I find the Source Digimon.”

“What’s the Source Digimon?” Eiji asks.

“The Digimon born at the same time as our world. It is the seed from which all other Digimon come from.” Ryusenji’s fingers move quickly across the keyboard.

“You can’t.... it’s too dangerous!”

“You’re quite right.”

“Then why not leave it alone?”

“Because I’ve come too far. I’m going to make contact with the Source Digimon, communicate with it, and...become one with it.

“You want to take the most powerful Digimon for yourself and then what?” Eiji’s voice shakes with anger.

“Progress,” Ryusenji sneers.

“I thought I had found the chance of a lifetime when you offered me this job. I thought I had finally found something worth fighting for. You gave my life purpose!” Angry tears begin pouring down his cheek. “I would have followed you anywhere...”

“I’m sorry I couldn’t fill you in sooner but...”

“Yeah yeah, d4 classified.” Eiji wipes the tears from his eyes. “Was I just a convenience?”

“No, you had some aptitude in code cracking, and your compatibility with Loogamon didn’t hurt. But had I told you everything from the start, you and Loogamon wouldn’t have grown.”

“Whatever.”

“Do you ever shut up old man,” Loogamon snaps as it rises to its feet.



“You were watching when we fought Kazuchimon, weren’t you? When Loogamon turned into Helloogarmon...You could have stepped in, but you didn’t.”

“Loogamon’s Digivolution was more important than Leon’s life. Rather, it was more interesting.

“He was your student! He trusted you... we trusted you.”

“Insolent boy! You were nothing when I found you. I pulled you from that squalor. I gave you purpose, and this is how you repay me? You betray me?”

“That’s rich coming from you. After everything you’ve done to Leon, Kosuke, and Yulin...” Eiji’s voice shakes with anger. He takes a soothing breath. “You know? I used to want to be just like you. I respected you...”

“Do you hate me now?”

Loogamon’s restraints begin to tighten. He stumbles as he resists the pressure.

Eiji shakes his head. “Ready Loogamon?” Eiji touches the gem on Loogamon’s forehead. The gem lights up as an invisible code flows between the two. Loogamon gains a sudden burst of strength. With a quick flex, it breaks through the restraints, sending bits of broken chain in every direction.

“How?”

“I’ve got hellfire flowing through my veins. Your little virus didn’t stand a chance.” Loogamon sneers. The pair begins to glow as an aura of magical flame surrounds them. “This isn’t going to end well for you,”

Chapter 4-10: The Fight Begins

Ryusenji cackles at the threat.

Eiji opens a private chat. “Stay sharp Loogamon. We don’t know what he’s planning”
Loogamon nods as he moves to a defensive stance.

METAL CANNON

A cannonball flies towards the pair. Eiji jumps to the ground. Loogamon jumps out of the way, narrowly dodging the projectile. Dorumon stands at the source of the attack and glares emotionlessly at the pair.

“What are you doing?” Loogamon shouts, but Dorumon doesn’t answer.

Eiji turns to Kosuke for answers. Kosuke had broken under the weight of the professor’s revelation. He had become lost in his grief, but Dorumon’s sudden attack slowly breaks him free. He lifts his head towards the commotion and mumbles, “Dorumon? What are you doing?” He is on the verge of tears.

The Source Domain shakes violently.

“What’s going on?” Kosuke shouts. Dorumon answers with an empty blank expression.

“Dorumon can’t hear you now.”

“But how? We’re still mindlinked?”

“You don’t need to be mindlinked to control Digimon. How shall I put this?... I cracked your connection. Dorumon is mine now.”

Kosuke helplessly looks through this watch and attempts to take back control, but his efforts are fruitless. Words fail him as his world crumbles around him. The great Code Cracker Tartarus was powerless.

“Now Digivolve,” the professor barks. Dorumon nods and digivolves into Dorugoramon.

Dorugoramon towers over the pair. Its blank emotionless stare remains fixed on them as it stands at attention, gripping its blade, ready to attack.

The professor smirks as he takes a step next to the Mega Digimon. “This is your last chance your chance Eiji. Join me, and all is forgiven. Work for me and I can promise you a nice apartment, great benefits, and a steady salary. Imagine how impressed Hatsune will be.”

“How did.?” Eiji becomes overwhelmed.

“You have ten seconds. Then I’m taking the offer off the table.” He begins counting down.

Eiji wrestles with the offer. This was everything he ever wanted. A steady job, a good college, and maybe even a girlfriend.

“You can’t be seriously considering this,” Loogamon snarls.

“It’s tempting... ” Eiji crouches down next to Loogamon and begins petting its head. “You don’t know what it was like before all of this. I’d have stability...I mean I wouldn’t even have met you if it wasn’t for him...”

“Sure, but...”

The professor extends his arm. “I knew you’d understand. Now-“

Eiji shrugs, “But then again, I was never in it for stability.” Eiji stands and turns to the professors. “I came here to make my mark on the world because, at the end of the day, I’m still a code cracker.”

“Well said Eiji.” Loogamon’s tail wags as it perks up enthusiastically.

“How disappointing...”

“Shut up old man,” Loogamon growls.

“Don’t get me wrong,” Eiji adds. “I still respect you as a mentor, but I was wrong to put you on a pedistal. In other words...”

“Get out of our way!” Loogamon barks.

The professor remains silent. His smile had disappeared as he glared at the pair. “Well if you insist on losing, don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

Eiji lifts his Digilinker and cycles through the commands. “You’re not stopping us.”

“Let’s fucking go!” Loogamon howls.

“Digivolve!” Eiji disappears into the Digicore as Loogamon digivolves into Soloogarmon. Bright flames pour out of his shoulders with great intensity. It groups at its mace and lets out an earth-rumbling howl.



PROMINENCE LASER

A white-hot beam of plasma erupts from Soloogarmon’s hands and washes over Dorugoramon. Dorugoramon takes the hit head-on without flinching. It remains unphased as its armor loses its red-hot glow.

“What the?” Soloogarmon shouts.

“Very impressive,” Ryusenji commends.

“That was just the warm-up,” Soloogarmon scoffs.

“Careful Soloogarmon, we didn’t see their fight. We don’t know what we’re up against.”

“Durogoramon has a shockwave and charge attack that make it effective at long and short range. There are no obvious openings to take advantage of either attack. In your current form, one hit will likely fry your Digicore.” Yulin interjects.

“It’s taking commands from a tool, there’s no way it can be that strong,” Soloogarmon rebuts.

“You should listen to the captain on this one. Tools or not, the professor is on the other end of the terminal.”

Soloogarmon swings its massive mace as it readies for another attack. “We don’t have the luxury of being cautious.”

“Right,” Eiji says, trying to psych himself up. “Let’s give him hell!”

The professor smirks. “I guess I need to start getting serious.” Dorugoramon absorbs Ryusenji’s projection.

DORU-din

A shockwave of energy roars through the Source Domain, but the attack is too slow. Soloogarmon howls as the engines on its shoulders come explode with energy, and shoot him into the air. Soloogarmon hovers over the battlefield with a smug smirk as it braces for the next attack.

Dorugoramon stalls for a moment, searching the battlefield. It smirks as it turns its attention to the center of the circle where Pulsemon and Black Agumon remain suspended. It begins charging its next shockwave.

SKOLL RAGE

Soloogarmon shoots toward Dorugoramon without hesitation, leaving a trail of hellfire in its wake. It closes the distance and takes a swing with its mighty Vanargand.

“Predictable,” the professor says. Dorugoramon stops its charge to swing at the charging wolf. The strike sends Soloogarmon flying back. “You have to do better than that.”

Eiji felt the force of the strike, the sting lingers in his abdomen. He peers over his screens. Their levels remain in a normal range.

“What an annoying prick,” Soloogarmon growls.

“Let’s try this,” Eiji says, inputting commands into his virtual console.

Soloogarmon releases another laser, but Dorugoramon deflects it easily. Soloogarmon follows with a turret of blasts, slowly engulfing Dorugoramon in flames. The flames never catch. Smoke billows off Dorugoramon’s body.

“Nice try, but you’ll need to be more imaginative than that,” Ryusenji sneers. “But I’ve wasted too much time playing with you, I have to get back to work.”

The smoke around Dorugoramon’s body begins to clear, revealing an empty space where Yulin, Ryudamon, and Black Agumon stood. Only Kosuke and a Tyrannomon stand at the altar.

“Tyrannomon? Where did you come?” The Professor asks incredulously.

Tyrannomon stands next to Kosuke, looking concerned. Kosuke remains frozen in place.

“Kosuke, you have to move,” Eiji whispers.

“Using your little Tyrannomon under the cover of smoke, very clever Eiji.”

“Get out of there Tyrannomon!” Soloogarmon orders.

Tyrannomon doesn’t get a chance to react. An attack pierces through its shoulder and brings the Tyrannomon to the ground. It lets out a pain-filled roar.

“Such a weak Digimon,” the professor says. Dorugoramon had refined the shockwave into a fine point, making it like a bullet.

“Tyrannomon!” Eiji shouts.

“Dorugoramon is too powerful.” The professor looks down at the trembling Tyrannomon. It is too terrified to move. “Poor thing. I think I’ll put it out of its misery.”

Dorugoramon launches a salvo of focused attacks. The Tyrannomon shuts its eyes, waiting for a hell of fire that never comes. It hears the attack connect but doesn't feel it. Tyrannomon opens its eyes slowly and finds itself unharmed. Around it, the earth is filled with clusters of deep impacts. Soloogarmon hovers over the Tyrannomon, its arm hangs limp to one side. Scorch marks run up its arms like a sleeve and steam bellows from the injury. Soloogarmon gives the Tyrannomon a warm reassuring smile.

"You saved my Tyrannomon..." Eiji whispers.

"That's what packs do."

Eiji feels the pain running up his arm. Senses the heat of the thrusters from his shoulder. His lungs fill with the scents of the battlefield. Loogamon's anger, frustration, and determination had become his and Soloogarmon felt the same. At that moment, all their remaining reservation melted away as they became determined to win.

Energy begins to build within their core as the two become one. Soloogarmon begins to glow.

"Let's show this asshole what hell really looks like," Eiji says.

A bright light engulfs the pair. Out of the light steps out a new Digimon, Fenriloogamon.

Chapter 4-11: Fenriloogamon Appears

Fenriloogamon drops from the Digivolution light onto all fours. The atmosphere around its body burns from its heat. Each mighty paw leaves behind a molten print as it sparks into an unextinguishable blue flame. Bright blue fur spills from between its platinum armor that rattles elegantly with each step. Fenriloogamon's tail wags as it turns its attention to the professor.

"Here I am, Professor. I'm finally part of the club," Eiji and Fenriloogamon taunt in unison. They stare down at the professor with a hungry determination.

"Remarkable," the professor lets out. "I never thought your desire to save Leon would be enough to trigger your mega Digivolution. You are full of surprises Mr. Nagasumi." He chuckles.

"Aren't friends important to you?"

"I don't see a need. People are either useful or they aren't. Why complicate things further?"

"So that's all we were to you? Useful?"

"Very," the professor says with a smirk. "Which reminds me. I still owe you a fat bonus."

"How fat?"

"Don't tell me you're reconsidering my offer?" Ryusenji jests.

"Nah, there's nothing to consider. I already know the type of person you are." Inside Fenriloogamon's Digicore, Eiji looks over his monitors. He examines the readouts before cracking his knuckles. "We're going all out bud," he says to Fenriloogamon.

Fenriloogamon leaps into the air, unleashing a mighty roar that shakes the Source Domain.

RAGNAROK HOWLING!



Yulin watches Fenriloogamon charge toward the professor. She felt safe behind the pillars and slabs that surrounded her. The Tyrannomon that brought her here stands nearby with an unconscious Ryudamon at its feet. A second Tyrannomon carefully lowers Pulsemon and Black Agumon on the ground nearby.

Kosuke rides in on the third liming Tyrannomon. He gives it a gentle pat on the head as he gets off and begins limping towards Black Agumon.

“Kosuke...” Yulin lets out.

Kosuke limps past her and drops in front of Black Agumon. “Forgive me,” he makes out weakly. “Your warning wasn’t about the Source Domain. It was about Ryusenji.” Kosuke clutches his fist tightly.

“What’s in your hand?”

“I’m here to put an end to it,” he says as he reaches towards the Black Agumon. Yulin can make out the syringe in his hand. Black Agumon stares back with an unchanging blank expression.

“I can’t hear Dorumon anymore...he took everything from me... If only...” his voice trails.

“Snap out of it Kosuke!” Yulin says sternly. “At least wait to see what the kid can do.”

Fenriloogamon burns a pale blue in the distance.

Fenriloogamon releases a searing shockwave towards Dorugoramon. The attack sends Dorugoramon skidding several meters back. Fenriloogamon readies its next attack, leaping through the air until it was directly overhead. It rains down fiery beams from its limbs.

JOTUNHEIMR GALE!

Kosuke turns towards the battle for the first time since it started. “I don’t believe it.” Kosuke watches in amazement. “The kid actually did it.”

“It’s easy when you’ve got nothing to lose.” Yulin interjects.

“He’s fighting for his friend. That’s not nothing.” Kosuke follows the fight carefully. “He’s always been determined to be on the winning team.”

“You used to be like that, once,” Yulin says as she moves closer to Kosuke.

“Maybe I was,” he says quietly.

“We were all like that once. Now, we just have to do what we can.” Yulin places her hand gently on his shoulder.

Kosuke looks over to her and smiles. “Thank you. I needed to hear that.” He lets out a sigh as he tightens his grip around the syringe.

A blinding pillar of light shoots up from the center of the stone pillar, pulling Durogramon and Fenriloogamon’s attention from the battle.

“What was that?” the professor asks.

“Eiji,” Fenriloogamon calls out. “It’s them!”

The light begins to pulse.

“Did he?” Eiji looks down to search for Kosuke, but there was no sign of him or the Tyrannomon. “He must have administered the Medicine.” The beam turns a familiar warm yellow hue. “LEON! PULSEMON! COME BACK!” They shout.

Leon lays lifelessly in his bed. Wires and tubes run from various machines into his body. A sudden jolt wakes one of the monitors as it fills with unusual activity as the Digimon Linker on Leon’s wrist flickers to life.

The pillar of light fades. Suddenly a bolt of lightning jumps from the center of the stone circle.

“Pulsemon!” Eiji cries with joy.

“Sorry we’re late.” Pulsemon and Leon say at once. “You look...different.”

“Leon? Is it really you?”

“Who else would it be?” they answer.

“Isn’t this sweet?” Ryusenji interjects.

“Professor?” they turn to the silver dragon now staring down at them. “Why are you inside Dorugoramon?”

“I’m here to stop Eiji and the rest of the Sons of Chaos,” the professor explains sheepishly.

“You’re fighting Eiji?”

“He betrayed us Leon. He’s siding with the enemy. They’re trying to destroy the Digital World.”

“Don’t listen to him Leon! He’s the bad guy, not us.”

Leon and Pulsmon look around them. They take in the strange new scenery. Their talon scratches at their chin as they continue to process. They nod suddenly and let off a snap. A spark flashes and consumes their body as they Digivolve.

When the sparks fizzle out, Kazuchimon stands between the Eiji and the Professor.

“How... how is that possible?” Yulin asks, watching the new Kazuchimon spring to life. “He was DMIA.”

“The recovery medication was originally designed to extend the amount of time someone can be mindlinked.” Kosuke watches in amazement. “The drug worked.” He had done all he could do.

“Remember Leon. Remember what he did to you. He’s made his choice. Now join me and help me defeat him.”

“Don’t listen to him, Leon. He’s using you!” Eiji yells as he watches Kazuchimon swing around to stand beside Dorugoramon. Kazuchimon begins collecting electrical energy in its fists.

SHINDEN SHOURAIKO!

Kazuchimon releases the energy in a powerful strike, exploding with powerful force against its unsuspecting target.

Kosuke lets out an anguished scream as he falls to the ground in pain.

Dorugoramon’s arm smolders. Black fumes rise from the wounds. “Leon?” Ryusenji lets out. “Why?”

“You didn’t bring me back professor,” they respond. “Tartarus did.” They release a flurry of blows, each one connecting violently against the silver dragon. Dorugarmon falls to the ground and the attacks stop. “And it was Eiji who came after us.

“Leon!” Eiji exclaims.

Kazuchimon rushes to Fenriloogamon’s side. “It’s hard to explain...but we heard the whole thing.”

Eiji smiles. “So you’re saying you’re siding with us Code Crackers?”

“Kazuchimon smiles. “Never.” It draws its lightning blade and points it at the professor.

“You’re making a huge mistake Leon!” The professor shouts.

“So be it.”

“We’ve got your back,” Eiji and Fenriloogamon say as they move next to Kazuchimon. The two Digimon ready for their next attack.



Kazuchimon and Fenriloogamon open up a private channel.

“Hey Leon...” Eiji says sadly.

“Don’t worry about it.” they reply before Eiji can apologize.

“Give up quietly professor,” Kazuchimon commands.

The professor cackles. “This is my domain now. You don’t stand a chance!” A tree diagram splits the sky above them.

“What’s going on?” Leon shouts.

“Something’s happening to the alter!” Eiji yells.

“Did you already forget that I cracked the Source domain?” the professor gloats. “I’ve run out of patience.”

Dorugoramon’s body begins to bend and stretch suddenly.

“Kosuke!” Yulin shouts as she watches her old friend fall to the ground unconscious.

Dorugoramon continues to contort violently. A strange force pushes against its insides, trying to burst from within.

“It’s downloading data directly from the source Digimon. He’s going to kill them if he keeps this up!”

“This is bad!”

“Lets go Kazuchimon!” Fenrilogamon barks. The two Digimon charge at their terrifying new foe.

DEATH-X-EVOLUTION

Chapter 4-12: Birth of the Source Digimon

Fenrillogamon and Kazuchimon watch as Dorugoramon's body breaks and melts into an unrecognizable blob of liquid. It wriggles painfully as it continues to download the massive amounts of data from the Source Digimon.

They jump into the air. Fenril readies his hellfire blades, and Kazuchimon's lighting blades release hot static as they watch what is left of Dorugoramon disappear below them.

"It's like the time we Digivolved into Helloogarmon," Eiji says.

They continue to watch in silence as the blob continues to mutate, rebuilding and reforming itself into something entirely alien. Into a new type of Digimon.



A menacing metallic dragon rises from the corpse of Dorugoramon. Thick black and purple metal plates cover its body. Its sharp claws dig into the earth as it makes its first stretch in life, testing its limits. It straitens its body and expands its wings to reveal its entire gargantuan form. Its massive tail crashes behind it, leaving behind a deep impression of the impact. The Digimon turns its head towards the Digimon above it and gives a sinister smile of fangs that glisten brighter than its armor.

“Impressed?” the professor asks mischievously. “I’ve used data from the Source Digimon to force one last digivolution. What you see is a product of Death-X-Evolution. This is DexDorugoramon, the DigiCore Predator!”

“Death-X? Predator?” Eiji asks, trying to piece it all together.

“It eats other Digimon?” Leon adds.

Before they could say another word, DexDorugoramon flaps all ten of its wings, creating a torrent of damp, sickly air that swirls around the Source Domain.

Eiji studies the strange new Digimon below him and notices its pained movements. Something was off. This was no longer Kosuke’s partner.

“What did you do to Dorumon?!” Eiji shouts.

“Fascinating! Do you notice something special about this Digimon Mr. Nagasumi?”

Eiji struggles to formulate an answer. None of the reports on his screen produce any helpful information. “Are... are those multiple Digicores?” he finally blurts out.

“Exactly!” You’ve got keen Eyes. Now why would a Digimon have multiple Digicores?” the professor continues as if giving a lecture.

“You didn’t answer my question!” Eiji demands.

The professor sighs. “Dorumon is safe. All its major functions have been paused, but it’s in there. Death-X-evolution offers DexDorugoramon new life as an Undead type, a Digimon that survives by making use of the Digicores of others.”

“Like a zombie?” Eiji lets out.

“More like the perfect zombie. This creature has consumed and stored the data of countless others, and it is bursting at the seams. The only thing holding it together is the armor, and can hardly keep up. Isn’t it marvelous?” The professor explains gleefully. “Death-X-evolution is a digivolution en route to death.”

“Dorumon is dying?”

“You’re missing the point! DexDorugoramon is now the closest to the Source Digimon. This is the purest expression of digivolution!” The professor cackles as he admires his discovery. “This is my masterpiece!”

METAL IMPULSE

Fenriloogamon and Kazuchimon attempt to jump out of the way, but the attack is too swift. It connects with Fenriloogamon. Eiji feels the shockwave of agony run down his body. He almost passes out from the pain. Around him, the monitors flash with errors and warnings.

“So this is just a third of the Source Digimon’s power?” Eiji mutters in despair.

Hellfire clings to the earth surrounding Fenriloogamon. It slowly loses its vigor. Fenriloogamon had erected a wall of fire in a futile attempt to stop the attack, but the flames had no effect. This creature before them was too powerful.

“If he manages to fully decrypt the source code, it’s game over,” Eiji manages to say.

“No kidding,” Loen responds. Both friends brace for the next attack.

“I should mention that the creature isn’t even under my control anymore,” the professor says smugly as he raises his hands over his head. “DexDorugoramon is completely autonomous, acting on its own instincts. Isn’t it phenomenal! Now all I need is your Loogamon and Ryudamon to make it complete.”

DORU-Din

The attack makes no sound as it erases a piece of the source domain. Eiji turns to find a section of the stone circle missing and begins to panic. “This is real bad!”

“How... ?” Leon tries to find words to respond but can’t. The Digimon’s quick reflexes allowed them to dodge the attack, but there was no guarantee they could do it again.

“You have to get out of here Eiji,” Leon says sternly.

“What are you talking about?” Eiji snaps.

“If DexDorugoramon Eats you and Fenriloogamon, it’s all over.”

Eiji knew Loen was right, but he wasn't ready to let himself sacrifice himself again.

"You're afraid too Leon, I can hear it in your voice."

Leon flashes a nervous smile. "This whole thing is scary."

"Leon... "

"I've made up my mind. You searched for me until you found me, so I'm going to fight to protect you."

"No!" Eiji shouts. Fenriloogamon's fur begins to stand.

"What?"

"I'm not waiting around helplessly while I lose you again."

Fenriloogamon lets out a howl that shakes the entire Source Domain.
DexDorugoramon's wings perk up at the sound.

"You ready Leon?" Fenriloogamon turns to Kazuchimon. Leon hesitates for a moment as good memories of the professor hit him suddenly. He lets out a sad sigh as he shakes them away. "I guess there's no talking you out of it."

Kazuchimon transforms into a massive blade of lightning.

FUSION



Fenriloogamon: Takemikazuchi stares down DexDorugoramon. Blue flames and green sparks jump from its body, scorching at the world around it. It clutches at its magical sword as it braces for its final battle.

So this is how much you've come to despise me?" the professor asks in a last-ditch effort to earn sympathy.

"You've gone too far. I cannot hold my head high and live with pride until I've bested you," they reply.

Warning lights begin to flash around Eiji. There was nothing they could do. It was all or nothing now.

"So be it," the professor bellows. "I'll consume you all. Your efforts, your dreams, your future, its all going to be meaningless!"

DexDorugoramon's wings open and form a massive maw, ready to consume Fenriloogamon. "I will crush you!"

"Shut up!" the shout as Fenriloogamon redies its blade for one final strike. In a flash that was faster than light, they disappeared.

Ultimate War Blade Takemikazuchi!

THE END

EPILOGUE

“Cheers!”

Eiji said, raising his beer-filled glass to another with a satisfying clink.

The yakitori restaurant buzzed around him, conversations flying every which way as people dug into their fixed-price food and drink courses. Its clientele consisted mainly of college students and young professionals. Workers hammering out overtime on their laptops were sprinkled among young couples grabbing a bite.

“Happy birthday, Eiji!” Leon said in return.

“Happy birthday to me! Farewell teens, hello twenties! What a wild ride,”

Eiji said, his mouth ringed with foam. He was finally able to drink in Japan, and he was taking full advantage of it.

His exploits at the SoC’s Gateway “festival” were the hot topic all across the deep web. He was among the first humans to travel to the depths of the Digital World and live to tell about it.

More than that, his venture into the unknown was a success.

Everyone involved—Yulin, Kosuke, Leon and the others—agreed never to divulge full details to the public, and had thus far kept their word.

Then again, the fact that an upstart code cracker by the name of Eiji Nagasumi rescued Leon Alexander’s consciousness and brought him back from being Digitally Missing in Action was hard to keep under wraps.

“I’m so glad we finally get to share a drink, Leon. All this time I’ve been thinking about how badly I wanted to make this moment a reality, and now it’s actually happening.”

“And you made it happen, because you came looking for me. So thank you once again.”

“What’s all this ‘once again’ business? All this painful earnestness is gonna make me cringe.”

“Hey, you’ve gotta tell people how you feel while you have the chance.”

Eiji couldn’t help but pick up bits and pieces of other conversations in the place. “Europe just keeps moving the goalposts, whether it’s in sports or electric cars.” An exasperated middle manager forcefully expounding upon the state of the world markets.

“Can’t we just split the bill? It’s not unheard of.” A woman hashing out the bill with the

man attempting to pick her up.

A peal of uproarious laughter studded with expletives from a nearby group of college students—mirth incarnate.

"This always happens when we come to places like this! You should know better by now!" A girlfriend incensed by the arrival of a water she clearly did not order, overwhelming her partner with showy displeasure.

A nearby waiter eyed them warily, secretly wishing they'd leave. And there in the middle of this greasy tableau sat Eiji and Leon, a code cracker and a hacker simply having a chat.

"--Don't say anything nice, Leon. When you grow up, you never know when you're going to die."

Next to Eiji, the waiter placed a skewer on the table, looking agitated.

"Actually almost died, that's what I call it."

"Even among my fellow crackers, there are some who lose touch with each other at some point."

Everyone has various circumstances, various things.

"There is no shortage of people who become DMIA. They are still treated as Unidentified people for Unidentified reasons, but how long will they be able to keep the reality of Digital World and Digimon a secret..."

"That's right."

"That's right... Before I forget this. It's my birthday present."

Leon brought out his Digimon Linker arm.

"Oh? What?"

Eiji is also Digimon Linker and receives the data sent by Leon.

"I have compiled information that can be shared regarding the incident in country X last month."

"Oh, seriously. That's helpful... You really don't have any regrets, that bald guy."

After checking the data, Eiji ordered a refill on the store's tablet computer.

"Once you get a taste of Digimon crimes... That terrorist nation has no other core industry."

“As expected, these days he doesn’t call out the SoC and make false accusations anymore! That bald dictator needs some more moxibustion.”

“The next time something happens in country X, as a hacker, I will tolerate it.”

“Oh yeah? Look at you getting all conspiratorial! What a productive meeting of the hacker and code cracker minds.”

Eiji and Leon lifted their heads to see a woman with green streaks peeking out of the inner layers of her hair.

“Satsuki, you found us!”

Eiji leapt up to greet Satsuki Tamahime, Deputy Squad Leader of the DigiPolice.

“I didn’t find squat. You invited me,”

Satsuki snarled.

“Haven’t been here in a minute,” the tall woman behind Satsuki said, her eyes scanning the restaurant’s interior.

The voice belonged to none other than Shuu Yulin, the head of the DigiPolice.

The four split a large bottle of beer, and the conversation gradually loosened.

“So what was that little bit of data you two shared with each other just as we walked in? C’mon show me, you little punk!” Satsuki barked.

“Oooh, are we gonna have to cut you off after one bottle? You’re getting pretty heated!”

Eiji said as he yanked his Digimon Linker arm away from Satsuki’s prying hands.

“Leave him alone, Satsuki. We’re off-duty, remember?”

“There’s no such thing as a day off for the DigiPolice!”

Satsuki shouted, in full defiance of her superior. Such was their working relationship.

“I think you need to make some friends other than that slug of yours.”

“Don’t think you can say whatever you want just ‘cause you’re cute, Leon Alexander!”

Satsuki snapped, jabbing her finger in Leon’s face.

“Go on, have another glass,”

Eiji said, angling for more drama.

“Oop, okay,” Satsuki said.

“This is cause for celebration! We finally get to have a nice little chat—and in the real world, no less!” Eiji beamed.

It felt good to shed their labels and talk to one another like real human beings.

It turned out that Satsuki’s resignation letter over her unauthorized deployment of Brigadramon was rejected.

Yulin was still the head of the DigiPolice, and there were no major shake-ups in the wake of the Gateway breach. Of course, there were plenty more internal matters the squad leader and her deputy weren’t at liberty to talk about.

“You, uh... You really like that stuff, huh?”

Yulin asked, gesturing at the pile of chicken skin skewers in front of Eiji.

“I love it!”

“Heh. I know it’s the first time we’re meeting face to face and all, but—” Yulin began.

“Well, there was that one time we passed by each other back at DDL!”

Eiji said as he poured Yulin another glass.

“Whatever the case, I feel like I’ve been had. You’re no different from any other college kid!”

Yulin said with a derisive sniff.

“Don’t let him fool you, squad leader! He may have those puppy-dog eyes, but he’s still the leader of the SoC!”

“Indoor voice, Satsuki,” Yulin chided.

“Did you just call Eiji cute?”

Leon asked with surprise, sensing she’d revealed more than she intended.

“You’ve got it all wrong, Satsuki! Tartarus is still the leader of the SoC.”

“Or is he?! He hasn’t made any moves or shown his face since, and I need to use the bathroom!”

Satsuki announced loudly and stood up from the table.

“Tartarus was just a title given to Kosuke and his partner Digimon, apparently. Always had been,”

Eiji said, lowering his voice to avoid drawing attention.

It was reserved for whoever happened to be in charge at the time, and ensured that Tartarus would be a constant, stable at the head of the SoC.

“What happened to Kosuke after all that, anyway?”

Leon asked.

“Y’know, I don’t even know,”
Eiji said through a mouthful of skewer.
He hadn’t seen Kosuke since Operation Tartarus.
“Really? Color me surprised.”
“Well I only met him in the real world once. Though now I’m living in his former safe house.”
“Wait, isn’t your address still that three-mat apartment?”
“Officially, yeah. That’s where the family altar is, and Loogamon really likes the place.”

“The DigiPolice were aware,” Yulin cut in, “that you and Leon were working more closely now, but I get the sense we’ve overestimated just how closely. The left hand doesn’t seem to know what the right hand is doing.”

“Hmmm, I suppose not,” Eiji said.

“It’s been a couple months since we last met up, at any rate,”
Leon added.

There was no point in trying to hide that from the DigiPolice. Leon and Eiji were constant topics of conversation on GriMM, but they themselves didn’t correspond every single day.

“We’ve each got our own things going. And Leon’s still a student, anyhow,”

Eiji said, giving Yulin further food for thought.

“Is it fair to say you’re taking care to protect me, too? It wouldn’t be great optics for the person on whom all the real world’s Digital World research hopes—and seed money—have been pinned to be seen openly hanging out with a code cracker from the SoC.”

“Yeah, exactly,”

Eiji replied with a nod.

A year later, they were all still trying to reconfigure their lives around what happened in the Digital World’s Source Domain.

Leon was the first DMIA patient in living memory to recover, though he’d also spent relatively little time in a coma, which minimized the harm to his body.

Upon completing rehabilitation, he resumed his studies at Tokyo Electrical where he became a preeminent researcher of DMIA treatment and recovery. He also continued his extracurricular activities as the hacker Judge.

Eiji Nagasumi kept on with his code cracking work, albeit from a brand-new perspective. He was now a folk hero on the Net for his actions during the Gateway crack and subsequent foray into the depths of the Digital World.

And for once, he was on the winning team.

For all intents and purposes the other code crackers on GriMM saw him as the de facto leader of the SoC, and neither Marvin the Songsmith nor any of the other SoC leaders

challenged that assertion.

He didn't feel any different, though, and he certainly didn't feel like a leader.

"So much can change in a year,"

Yulin said wistfully.

"Ultimate War Blade Takemikazuchi!"

In an instant, DexDorugoramon disintegrated into the Source Domain's ether.

Kazuchimon, now a sword in Fenriloogamon's mouth, sliced through the armor protecting the zombified DigiCore predator, sealing its fate.

All of Professor Ryusenji's work—researching the Source Digimon, applying that data to stave off Dorugoramon's death by turning it into an undead nightmare—vanished.

Bits of DexDorugoramon's wings floated gently to the ground and vanished like so much pixelated mist.

The data downloaded from the Source Domain returned to the vast networked sea from whence it came, spared its shambling fate.

Leon and Eiji prevailed.

They'd activated a fusion digivolution deep down inside the DigiCores of Fenriloogamon and Kazuchimon with their shared desire to put a stop to any monster that would toy with the lives of others, and now they stood victorious.

Only Dorumon remained in the wake of the attack; Fenriloogamon scooped up the Data type prototype Digimon for safe keeping.

The attack from Takemikazuchi had at last freed the small Digimon from Professor Ryusenji's restraints.

Eiji, meanwhile, was in a daze.

He'd been so eager to strike that he hadn't given himself time to process what was happening, though he ostensibly witnessed it blow by blow.

"DexDorugoramon is no more."

"Sorry?"

Eiji said in bewildered response to Leon's statement.

He looked down at the talking sword that was Kazuchimon in surprise.
“Dorumon secured. No sign of further transmissions from Professor Ryusenji.”

They’d sent the professor packing.
They’d protected everyone from his attack, and far more people beyond that.

It was hard to put into words the magnitude of what they’d saved, but life in the Digital World was at the top of the list.

“Operation Tartarus, Phase Four: Complete.”
“Kosuke, is that you?”
Eiji said, spinning around to locate the voice.
He spotted Kosuke’s hololized form standing beside Yulin, Ryudamon, and Eiji’s three Tyrannomon at the altar.
“We didn’t complete the mission to the letter, but I’m counting this as a win,”
Kosuke said, revealing the Black Agumon next to him.

“Kosuke,” the Black Agumon said in a small voice, gripping his hand tightly with all its might.
“Thank you, Eiji. From the bottom of my heart,” Kosuke said.

Eiji was at a loss for words, but Fenriloogamon’s hastily downgrade back to Loogamon alerted him to a much more important matter.
“Yeesh, I’m about to hit my limit here! Sorry to cut and run, but I’ve gotta go, like, five minutes ago! Great job, everybody!”

“I imagine you two feel it even more strongly at your age. Once you notice a change, it can feel like you’ve turned into a completely different creature in the span of a single day,” Yulin said, continuing her contemplative tone.
“Once you notice it, eh?”
Eiji asked rhetorically.

“And that change is precious, like a Digimon digivolving to a new form for the first time,” Yulin mused. Despite the gravity of her little monologue, she was in a very good mood.

Eiji had been in regular conversation with her via GriMM backchannels ever since the Gateway incident, where she assured him there would be no public investigation.

“Speaking of precious things, I just wanted to thank you for not branding me a criminal here in the real world, by the way.”

The DigiPolice absolutely had the power to ruin his life, legally speaking.

So far, they hadn’t.

He figured he’d earned Yulin’s trust through his dealings with Kosuke, but he knew he was still a code cracker in their eyes. Their relationship could change at any moment.

“On that note, I wanted to ask you about Kosuke,” Yulin said bluntly. “Where is he now? What is he doing? Hearing about the untraceable Tartarus is the whole reason I even showed up for this.”

She wasn’t leaving without an update.

“Funny you should mention him. I actually invited him to this little get-together,” Eiji replied.

“You what?” Yulin flinched.

Her head whipped back and forth, scanning the room.

“Yeah, but he said he literally couldn’t make it in time. He must be out of the country or something. I invited him to the afterparty, though! He’ll probably show up to that.”

“What afterparty...?” Yulin asked.

“You mean...?”

Leon asked, glancing conspicuously at his Digimon Linker.

Pulsemon’s image was nowhere to be seen on its display.

“Yep, you got it.”

Loogamon wasn’t visible on Eiji’s Digimon Linker, either. Their partner Digimon were out and about.

“There you are! So sorry I’m late!” came a voice from across the room.

“Hey, Hatsu, you made it! Over here!”

Eiji said, getting to his feet to wave her in.

“Did work keep you late?” Leon asked genially.

“Oh hey Leon, it’s been ages! My fan club’s been withering ever since you stopped coming by DDL, I’ll have you know!”

Hatsune said with faux grumpiness as she plunked herself down at the table.
“They sure are keeping you busy, huh?” Eiji inquired.
“Like you wouldn’t believe. It’s been nonstop since last year! People are getting shuffled around all the time, which means I have to wear SO many hats now...”
“The professor relocated his main research facility to America, didn’t he?” Yulin cut in.
“Oh goodness, the head of the DigiPolice is here!”
Hatsune yelped, taking notice of Yulin.
“You didn’t tell me she’d be coming,” Yulin quietly griped to Eiji.
“I didn’t know if she’d show, myself!” Eiji said in surprise.
For that matter, he hadn’t even told Hatsune who would be at the party.
“She’s the DDL receptionist, right?” Yulin said just loud enough to catch Hatsune’s attention.
“Hi! My name is Hatsune Moka. Thanks so much for everything you do!”
“We don’t need to bother so much with the formalities today,” Leon offered.
“Oh, good. That means a lot coming from you, Leon!”
“Yeah I mean, come on! I’m the one who put this together, of course it’s casual,” Eiji chirped.
“Ugh, the wait for the toilet was horrendous—hey, who’s the new cutie?”
Satsuki said, looking at Hatsune.

In the year following the showdown in the Source Domain, Professor Ryusenji maintained control of Abadin Electronics and his prominent position in the field of Digital World research.
There weren’t any laws against which he could be tried, and so he remained a free man.

He did, however, announce almost immediately after the incident that his research center would be moving out of DDL and relocating to America.
Whether this was a change of heart or simply discomfort at having been bested, it was impossible to say.
He was never outwardly nasty to Eiji and Leon afterward.
Leon retained his hacker contract with DDL, and Eiji continued to receive his fees, complete with bonus. For obvious reasons, Leon elected to move out of the apartment the professor provided.
Shuu Yulin and the DigiPolice, as well as Kosuke Kusakata’s quiet presence, undeniably loomed over the professor. They hadn’t voiced it, but everyone at the party quietly figured that contributed to his exodus. Eiji imagined Professor Ryusenji, spitting mad, sat at his desk in the DDL laboratory after DexDorugoramon’s destruction, his video feed to the Source Domain severed.

“How could they have defeated my DexDorugoramon?!”

Eiji pictured him yelling to no one in particular.

He probably would have followed it up with something lofty like, “I appreciate the advantage your youth gives you. But do not think you have defeated me.”

“Now that we’re all here, let’s do a proper toast! Does everyone have their drinks?” Eiji asked, looking out over the table.

“Cheers!” everyone shouted in unison.

“So anyway,” Hatsune continued, “Professor Ryusenji said he wants to come!” Eiji, Leon, and Yulin simultaneously spat out their drinks.

“Ha-Hatsu?”

Eiji choked out through a coughing fit.

“Are you serious?”

Leon managed.

“Yeah! But I’m in charge of his scheduling for Japan, and he had another meeting he couldn’t get out of so I went ahead and canceled his appearance here.”

“A meeting?”

“Mhm, with the U.S. Secretary of Defense! He was all set to take a private jet out here and everything. It’s a real shame,” she lamented.

Eiji and Leon locked eyes.

“Oh man, that was close,” Eiji said with a heavy sigh.

“Thank you, Pentagon. Mission accomplished.”

Leon matched his sigh of relief. Yulin, too, looked more at ease.

Meanwhile, in the Wall Slum on the outskirts of the Digital World, a gentle breeze rolled in off a destructive offshore vortex.

A year later, the Digimon in the Wall Slum still spoke of the humans who managed to crack the Gateway.

It had since been closed again, but there was palpable excitement in the once-gloomy Wall Slum air.

Someone had punctured a hole in the barrier that kept them in exile. It was possible.

The biggest change, however, came to the Castle of Nine Wolves.

“Leon and company are gonna be late,”

Pulsemon said, sitting on a rooftop looking out over the castle square.

“Leaving us hanging, as usual. That’s Eiji for you,”

Loogamon said as they bit into a hunk of meat.

The Demon Wolf of the Castle of Nine Wolves was back on their home turf.

The ground floor of the illegal building that once blighted the district was now their base of operations; an SoC mark adorned its façade.

The Ninth District Digimon cavorted in the castle square, enjoying the celebratory feast.

“Somethin’ wrong, Ryudamon?” Loogamon asked, turning to the helmeted prototype Digimon.

They sat quietly, not so much as touching the food right in front of them.

“I have am only in attendance by virtue of my partner having been invited. Forgive me, but I cannot help but feel I do not belong here,” they replied.

Worry spread across their face as they tried to reconcile their role as a member of the DigiPolice with their attendance at a feast held in the heart of code cracker territory.

“Well your DigiPolice partner is out having drinks with Eiji and the others as we speak, so I think you have permission to enjoy yourself, if it helps.”

“And my hacker partner is with ‘em, too!” Pulsemon said, urging Ryudamon not to think too deeply about it.

“Indeed. Perhaps it is fine... .”

“Of course it’s fine! Go on, have a drink!” Pulsemon said, taking up a bottle.

Ryudamon picked up their glass, watched as Pulsemon poured a liquid of indeterminate color into it, and downed it in one swift gulp.

“Ngh... . That... . That is fierce,”

Ryudamon said, blinking furiously. They glanced at the label on the bottle.

DEMON WOLF PURE BREW

“A Ninth District specialty, proudly and illegally brewed right here,” Loogamon said, puffing out their chest.

“Illegally... .!” Ryudamon said with a start.

“Not that there are any laws here in the Digital World. It’s just data about real world liquor that I took from Eiji’s Digimon Linker and approximated here. Should bring in enough to fund our operations, anyhow.”

Loogamon had a mind for business, as it turned out.

Eiji’s three Tyrannomon, meanwhile, were the entertainment for the evening. They danced about the square, wowing the other Digimon in attendance with periodic bursts of fire.

“It’s been quite the journey, but it sure seems like it all worked out,” Pulsemon said with a smile.

“I guess it did ‘work out,’ yeah. It sure wasn’t boring,” Loogamon said flippantly. Eiji’s flair for the casual had rubbed off on them.

“So like... . Do you remember everything, now?”

Pulsemon eagerly asked, spurred on by their drink.

“Eh?”

“Y’know, your memories! Of the past, and all that,”

Pulsemon tried again, trying to reframe the question around Loogamon’s corrupted memory.

Loogamon sat for a moment, considering their answer.

“You seemed to remember a bit more each time you digivolved, and then we overheard Leon and Eiji’s nice long talk... You said you were captured by DDL, right?”

“Maybe,” Loogamon said with a sigh.

“Maybe?”

“Does it matter? It’s all in the past, now. Besides, I wouldn’t want to talk about it even if I did remember. Eiji, well... He needs me. He’s got his own future ahead of him, and I want him to do something great with it.”

“Huh. Wow.”

Loogamon’s answer had taken a heavy turn, but Pulsemon’s attention was already elsewhere. They took another drink.

“Hope Leon and Eiji pace themselves tonight! We won’t be able to mindlink if they don’t!”

Digimon had the built-in benefit of being able to break down and process alcohol data in the span of a clock cycle, while the humans were left to rely on their imperfect biological solutions.

“Eh, if it comes to that we can just release the locks on their Linkers.”

“Speaking of, did you invite... You know, ‘him?’”

Pulsemon asked conspiratorially.

“Eiji said he sent him a message.”

“Wooow. He’s been mindlinked ever since, right? He spends more time in here than out there, from what I’ve heard.”

“Yeah, I bet the old man’s more Digimon than human by now. Hehehe.”

“Wanna bet on whether or not he shows?” Pulsemon prodded.

“What?” Loogamon said wearily.

“C’mon. A month’s worth of food says he—”

Pulsemon stopped mid-sentence as they took notice of the shadow that fell over the castle square.

Everyone turned their eyes to the networked seas above.

A winged dragon’s silhouette passed through the air above them, the Wall Slum’s lights reflecting on its silver body.

“Dorugoramon! They’ve come!”

a somewhat unsteady Ryudamon yelped, raising their claws to the sky in delight.

“So, you made it after all,” Loogamon said as Dorugoramon slid in for a soft landing.

“Hello to you too, Loogamon. Where’s Eiji?”

Kosuke asked, his hololized form strolling amiably through the castle square.
“Not here yet, but he’s on his way. You wanna go greet him?”
Loogamon said as they leapt down from the roof.

Kosuke took a look at the SoC marking on the building before him.
The Black Agumon stood by his side, clutching his hand.

Kosuke took up a glass and raised it to the sky.

“To Eiji, the new leader of the SoC, and his partner Loogamon, the Demon Wolf of the Ninth District!”



DIGIMON 25 PROJECT
DIGIMON SPECIALS

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