

OVERCOMING TRAGEDY

COMMISSION STORY

BY CHALDEACHANGE



The life of a Nikke was not an easy one.

And certainly not if you were of the mass-produced variety. Within the hierarchy of what determined one's usefulness within the war against the Raptures, being the mass-produced type meant that you were at the bottom of the barrel. One term was often thrown around to describe them: *cannon fodder*. But maybe I was speaking of them too impersonally. It was more like *we* were cannon fodder, because I was one of those mass-produced Nikkes myself.

Compared to the unique models that were stationed among the top-ranking soldiers on the defense line, we really *were* much more expendable. From the point of view of humanity, I at least understood why we were seen that way. Our bodies weren't as impressive, both in terms of appearance *and* in terms of durability. We weren't often as emotionally developed, and our egos were much more fragile. For that reason, even though we *were* mass produced, those of us that shared appearances could not be stationed together.

You would sometimes hear stories from those within the Ark about mass-produced models that had broken away from the chains of fate. Maybe their egos had been strengthened to the point that they were able to exist without the same crutches as the rest, or perhaps they were randomly selected to receive state-of-the-art upgrades. These cases *were* very rare – so rare that I wasn't sure if there was any merit to those stories.

Either way, I'd never expected that I would be the recipient of such an honor. I'd always assumed that I would die a meaningless death in

battle as most of the mass-produced models did. Even going out in a blaze of glory would have been a kinder fate, because at least then I could feel like I would make a difference on my death bed.

But, of course, fate wasn't *actually* that kind.

The operation that I had been on hadn't even been *that* important. I had recently been reassigned to a unit with a Commander that was something of a greenhorn. His experience wasn't really that important. Because our unit was *entirely* mass-produced, we weren't exactly handed any routes where the threat of a serious Rapture threat was high. We more or less walked the simplest and closest supply route to the Ark; a route that the Raptures had never dared to attack because of how close it was to humanity's last stronghold. They knew it would be futile.

Or, at least, that was what we had *thought*. It had happened so fast that none of us had known how to react. Explosions detonated near the outpost at the end of our route, and everything was thrown into disarray. Half of my unit was wiped out in an instant, while my Commander abandoned the rest. "**Coward.**" I could only mutter to myself, leg broken, as the wind bit my face.

I was aware of the casualty numbers because I was *one of them*. Or I was *about* to become one of them, at least. I had watched my Commander turn his back to me and run away, just because a single leg had been damaged. He didn't see me as someone worth saving. No, maybe he didn't even see me *as* 'someone' in the first place. But that was the fate of a mass-produced Nikke. We hardly registered as anything more than an inanimate object in the eyes of the humans that remained.

"**Tch.**" The visor that I wore had been cracked, allowing one of my blue eyes to show and my blonde hair to flow more loosely. The Raptures had fled as soon as they had attacked the outpost, leaving my fate uncertain but likely. I was leaking too much coolant from the damage, and so I would inevitably deactivate before someone could find me. Even if someone *did*, they would probably sooner recycle me for parts.

It was fine though. I was a little bit bitter, but it wasn't like the sudden end was unexpected. There was no one that would attempt to save someone like me. I was doomed... to... "**...What's that?**" Once left alone, I had crawled under a bunker entrance to shield myself from any other potential fire. I had propped my back up against a door that I couldn't open, content that it was more comfortable than just dying while lying in a crumpled mess on the ground.

But something had begun to *drip* from above. A wet substance that had landed on my bangs and slipped down my face. Water? No. After wiping some away, the residue on my hand was too *black* and goopy to be water. It was also too thick to be *oil*. **“Well, it probably doesn’t matter too much anyways. This is the end for me, either way.”** Someone could have pissed on me in that moment, and it wouldn’t have changed a single thing. I didn’t even have the dignity *to* hurt. Being abandoned wasn’t exactly a very dignified way to go out in the first place.

But the substance just kept dripping. When I reached up to wipe it off with my already soiled hand, however? It occurred to me that my hand was *clean*? I hadn’t wiped or washed it off, so how? It was almost like it had been *absorbed* by my body itself. But that couldn’t have been...? I could have claimed I didn’t feel any different, but with the damage my body had sustained I couldn’t feel much when it came to my internals, admittedly.

That was why it *was* strange. I began to feel *warm*? **“What’s... happening?”** Systems that had been flashing red in the back of the diagnostics popup that only I could see all turned *green*? It was like my body was being repaired? Seared flesh healed, debris that had lodged itself into my artificial skin was pushed out as if it had never been there, and perhaps most blatantly, my broken leg was popped back into place with a disturbing twitch, allowing me to feel my toes again.

It wasn’t like the Ark didn’t have systems for restoring damaged Nikkes, but there definitely wasn’t something as potent or prompt that I was aware of. Could that ooze have been some sort of experimental compound? In the end, I decided not to think too much about it. It had given me working legs, so that meant I could find help and potentially survive the attack. I pushed myself up with a groan, thinking that maybe I’d been blessed with a miracle.

But I should have known better. There wasn’t a miracle that didn’t have a cost attached to it.

This was a reminder that was delivered bluntly to me when I shakily stood and noticed clumps of *blonde* falling from my head. The black ooze *had* fallen into my hair first, but it was undeniably that *hair* that was falling out of my scalp. I was at a loss for words and reached up with gloved hands. Any hair I pulled on came out with ease. I was accelerating the problem. Briefly, I had decided that balding was a small price to pay for surviving, but...

“...I’m not bald?” Eventually, I realized that there was hair that *wouldn’t* pull out. Like my blonde locks had been an exterior layer, and

there had been a layer underneath that wouldn't budge. That was, in a way, more or less correct. Because what had *actually* happened was that new hair had grown out from my roots, pushing out my longer, blonde hair until there was a short *bob* that only reached my nose. It took me a moment of examining my bangs, but it appeared to be *silver* in color; a color that my pubes and eyebrows had taken as well.

While the warning window in the back of my head *had* disappeared, I subconsciously opened a different status window when something else occurred to me. **“What’s going on? My personality data...?”** Something was rummaging around in my mind to adjust things. Thankfully, it didn't touch my *memory storage*, but I could feel my personality schematics being adjusted. Which should have been ill-advised. As a mass-produced model, my mind was too fragile to give me too colorful of a personality.

...Right?

Those adjustments had yet to show in any meaningful way when it came to how I was acting, but I was already juggling concern about my hair and that tampering when an additional pang of confusion hit me. Before we continue, however, I need to touch a little on my body. It wasn't especially notable, as most mass-produced models weren't. I had a plain face, a height of around 5'3", and a figure that was average at best. Everything was just sort of... *average*.

From an efficiency point of view, it made sense not to give the mass-produced models big breasts and butts, because if you had to create gear for them then you'd be wasting more money on materials to create clothing big enough to fit them. Then again, a lot of the unique Nikkes didn't wear much of anything. This was all relevant because I had begun to notice that my gear was being disheveled by more than just the damage I had sustained in the explosions.

In this case, it was more like— **“Oh my! It doesn't seem to fit correctly, does it!”** I was *right*, but my eyes went wide in equal measure in my words and voice. The modifications to my personality data had clearly begun to manifest, because there wasn't a world where I had ever sounded that expressive, much less *bubbly*. I had to shake my head to focus on what I'd brought up in the first place: my gear.

The pants that I had worn on this mission were fortunately baggy, although the damage to my one leg had torn up most of them on that side. Regardless, this was important to note because they weren't feeling *as* baggy, especially around my thighs. I leaned slightly forward, still somewhat amazed that I could even stand, to get a look at what I could tell from the sensation.

“I’m getting bigger!” That was probably a strange way to phrase it when deep down I thought it deserved more skepticism than the sheer *joyful curiosity* I had ended up conveying. Nonetheless, my thighs *were* thickening yet also moving *away* from each other in a process that led to the waistband and belt of these pants feeling tighter as well. My knees slowly pointed in towards each other as I stood still, eventually leading to me lifting a leg to correct my posture. It was all because my hips had widened a few inches, which honestly might have been for the best. Not only did it leave a sizable thigh gap and prevent them from touching...

But it also gave some room for my *ass* to expand. Rather than contort my spine to try and get a good view of that, I instead reached both of my hands behind me to grab onto my cheeks instead. Before, they’d been just a little fuller than ‘flat’, but the moment I grabbed them I could tell that they’d *doubled* in size, filling the back of my pants and bubbling out what was likely four or *five* inches beyond that they had before. **“Okay... So, I have silver hair, a big ass... Just what in the world was that goop!?”**

Nothing that had happened to me thus far seemed to be dangerous on its *head*. My body was changing, sure, but I still had my memory data, and I was in *much* better shape than I had been before. Running diagnostics revealed that this was true in ways that went farther than undoing the damage. My muscle density, durability, and strength all *vastly* overperformed what a mass-produced model should have been capable of. No... Those values vastly exceeded the standards for unique models too.

I was so caught up in this data that I didn’t notice that my spine and limbs had elongated, bringing me up to roughly 5’6”. My clothing was already struggling from its changing shape, and my cropped shirt meant that there wasn’t all that much left to reveal on my torso, but my hands *did* feel a little too snug in my gloves, and my feet a little too large for my shoes. Signs that they had grown bigger in kind. In terms of ‘growing bigger’, there was still one area left to be addressed though.

“Oh!?” Once again, I almost sounded a little *too* excited to realize that a piece of my body was swelling. Well, *two* pieces if you wanted to get technical. It was both of my B-cup breasts that were swelling, which made things a little tricky with the armor I was wearing across my chest. It didn’t allow much room *for* growth, and so any fat that bled into my tits to inflate them could only pool underneath the cloth and steel – with the base of these tits eventually peeking out beneath the base of my crop top when they finally grew to *DD* perfection. I certainly didn’t have any personal issues with having bigger tits *or* a fatter ass.

Something akin to an *instinct* told me that whatever was happening to my body was almost complete, and sure enough the final traces of the mass-produced model I had once been were adjusted. No longer did my face appear *mundane* as my face's shape contorted, a rounder bone structure then used as a canvas for a beauty I had never once in my life expected to possess. My lips grew fuller and poutier, my nose smaller, and my eyes large and more expressive, only for those enlarged eyes to glow with a bright blue that replaced their usual amber... and with irises that expanded into incredibly unique, white stars.

Nothing about me now, from my body to my demeanor, could be mistaken for 'ordinary'.

“Hm~! This is certainly quite the upgrade!”

Considering the fate that had awaited me before, it would have been in pretty poor taste for me to *complain* about the transfiguration that my body had undergone, wouldn't it? My ego was stable, my body was bigger and stronger, and there was no way I could possibly be mistaken for the mass-produced models. I was the spitting image of *Liliweiss*, otherwise known by her nickname *Lilith*. A Nikke that was once thought to be the strongest Nikke of all before her defeat.

Her rise and fall had happened so long ago that she had practically been a legend to modern Nikkes like me, but I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that I had become that legendary figure. **“What could the cause be, though?”** Now that I could stand, the leak above me had stopped. Was the facility I had rested underneath damaged in the explosions? Perhaps they had been conducting some sort of experiment on some of the remains of Lilith – of myself? And that had flowed down to *save* me?



“Well!” I laced my fingers together and stretched my hands up towards the roof that had gifted me with new life, with *another* life. **“It's probably best not to sweat the small stuff at times like these!”** I would wholly accept this blessing and start anew if that was what fate had in store for me. And speaking of *stores*... **“If I'm going to live like this from now on, I'm going to need new gear, won't I?”** My body had been fixed, but my mass-produced gear was both damaged and too small for the woman I had become. It was naturally an easy enough fix, but well...

“I guess I'll have to turn myself into the Ark before I can access any of that? Hm... I hope they don't react negatively to the return of their strongest soldier?”

Either way, there probably wasn't a future where I *wasn't* going to have to undergo a million tests before I was finally returned any semblance of freedom. A small price to pay for not being *dead*, though.