

The Phantom Thieves' Stolen Youth

Having made their way to the center of the retirement home palace, all that remained for Joker and the rest of the Phantom Thieves was taking down the one responsible for the bizarre phenomenon affecting Shibuya. From behind his black eye mask, he watched Ryuji's skull face covering nearly slipped off as the blonde brought his bat down on a shadow. Just as another monster attempted to attack the young man, Ann was able to pull it back with a flick of her whip. A shot from Makoto's revolver whizzed just behind Ann's platinum blonde pigtails to further lessen the enemy's numbers. Rather than reload, Makoto's short brown hair was like a blur as she followed the visage of Yusuke's fox mask in order to come support with a pummeling of her brass knuckles. Though the blue haired young man readied himself to slash through the last shadow, Noire ended up dealing the final blow with a swing of her axe.

"Watch out, team," Morgana called out, the black, humanoid cat jostling Haru's curly, brown hair as he leapt off of her shoulder. "The ruler should be close."

"Correction," Futaba said, pushing her long, red hair out of the way of her glasses as she started down at her screen. "He's already here."

From the top of a long staircase descended an electronic chair attached to a rail. Sitting on the motorized seat was a man that couldn't have been any younger than his 80s. Showing off his remaining teeth in a snarl, he wrapped the robe around his scrawny, wrinkled arms and bulged out belly. When he finally reached the bottom, he carefully stood up on his slippers and let his awkward movements shift the wisps of grey hair on his head to graze the edge of his crown.

"You young'uns are all the same," the ruler said as he raised his cane towards the group. "So loud and obnoxious, with no respect for your elders."

“Well what do you expect when you’re going around making people just as old and crotchety as you?” Ryuji called out.

“Our own teacher even changed jobs in the process,” Ann added, she and the others having witnessed the aged up Kawakami acting as a nurse to the rest of the elderly people of Shibuya.

“Obviously you all don’t understand the wisdom of old age,” the ruler said. “Allow me to show you.”

The Phantom Thieves typical speed should have been enough to avoid the attack. However, they didn’t think that someone so frail could manage much with his feeble looking form. That was what led to a surprisingly fast flick of the ruler’s cane to capture the young adults in a wave of corrupted energy that sealed their fates.

Joker was the first to falter as a sudden weariness overtook his body. Forced down on one knee, he winced as he felt a sudden jolt of force around his gut. He soon discovered the reason as she stared down at a sizable potbelly ruining the sleek appearance his black clothes once provided. Before he could reach out to address his unsightly bulge, he was brought back to his face to take care of a strange, prickly feeling around his chin. Sliding his fingers along his skin, he felt the grey follicles that were starting to sprout up that matched the silver sheen that was taking over his hair.

As more of Joker’s beard grew out, he tried to look towards the others for support. Much to his horror, all of them were being transformed by the ruler’s strange powers. Even Morgana was going through his own troubles as his humanoid form was forcefully changed back into that of a regular house cat. While this wasn’t unheard of outside of Mementos and Palaces, it was unnerving to see the streaks of grey begin to form through his fur.

The feline's awkward stumbling inevitably led him to lumber his way into Ryuji. The formerly blonde haired man lost his follicles from the slight jostle. The misplaced strands drifted down past his developing jowls and onto the beer belly currently doing its part to rip through his jacket. Another bump from the aging cat made him let out a grumpy groan that seemed only to serve the purpose of showing off his chest was starting to sag under its own weight.

The angry shout Ryuji tossed towards Morgana momentarily got Ann to look away from her hair turning snow white. While the wrinkles around her eyes focused on her companions, the others couldn't help glancing at the way her curves began to shift. She still maintained her hourglass shape, but it began to rapidly degrade as her breasts and buttocks began to droop. Even more so when her leather outfit distorted to be replaced with something a lot looser and more comfortable.

Unconcerned with the model's drastic makeover, Yusuke was more interested in the sole, grey ponytail that managed to survive the rest of his hair falling out. Staring down, any relief he managed to maintain as his body kept its figure in spite of his developing wrinkles was of small comfort. Wriggling about his fingers as if to shake out the lingering weariness brought about by years of art, there seemed to be unnatural acuity as he continued to examine his altering form.

In direct contrast to Yusuke's slim body, Makoto's own kept being dragged down to the ground as weight was packed on to her lower body. Wincing at the feeling of her thickening thighs pressing together, her struggle came to a stop as a small, squeaky fart managed to leak out from her rear. Seating herself back down, she toyed with the hearing aid partially obscured by her greying hair in the hopes of keeping her senses peeled for a way to get out of this mess. This ended up working against her as the device started to work just as a belch rolled up her wrinkly, thick throat.

The panic afflicting Makoto was nowhere to be seen in Futaba's sleepy eyes. In fact, she seemed the least worried out of the group even as her own legs were covered in fat. Nearly dozing off in the wake of her aging skin, she jolted back awake as she fell onto a seat that was reconstructed out of her equipment. While this managed to keep her conscious, it was at the cost of nearly making the dentures in her mouth fall out onto her lap in the process.

Futaba's tooth mishap sent a shudder down Haru's elderly spine. As she brought her own hand to her mouth, she let out a husky distressed yelp as she realized that her teeth weren't real either. The panic in her eyes began to fade as fat sprouted up along her figure to make her the largest of the group. As unsightly as the extra padding was, it helped to obscure any wrinkles and fill out the flower pattern dress that had replaced her clothing. The extra weight also appeared to bring a strange sense of calm as she looked at the others with a doting look.

Tearing his gaze away from Haru, Joker tried to focus on the man responsible for their changes. Shifting back and forth the wide-rimmed glasses on his nose, he managed to see the old man grinning from ear to ear. Instinct got him to reach for his knife in order to counterattack. Instead, all his efforts accomplished was swishing forth with swishing a cane through the beard that reached from the tip of his chin down to his gut.

"Nearly there," the ruler said as he waved around his own cane. "Just a few more finishing touches."

Far too shocked and tired to even attempt dodging out of the way, the Phantom Thieves were given another dose of the ruler's powers. The wave of energy served to further degrade their once youthful bodies as before, but it came with another side effect. The years that were shaved off were replaced with false memories and altered personalities. Their minds a mess of

these new lives, they were left confused and dazed as their bodies stabilized into their new identities.

Tightly clutching his own cane, Joker took on the monumental task of lifting himself up off the ground. Even after his rickety legs had managed to help him stand, the very tip of his long, fuzzy grey beard was only a few inches from the floor. The long strands constantly bumped up against the pudgy belly pushing at the front of his black polo shirt. As he ran a shriveled hand across his torso to take care of an itch, his fingers slid across the pair of suspenders keeping a pair of plaid pants from slipping down from his waist.

“Er,” Joker began, scratching at his head of scruffy hair while his free hand adjusted his wide rimmed glasses. “Where was I again? I’m always losing track of things.”

The ruler grinned. “You were just learning to properly respect your elders.”

“THE HELL DID YOU SAY?” shouted out a grumpy voice, making the ruler shudder in surprise.

The source of the unpleasant call came from Ryuji’s quivering mouth. In spite of his furrowed, grey brow, his ferocity was diminished by the set of sagging pecs and beer belly stretching out his sweatshirt. Shuffling around on his worn-out tennis shoes, the bald man made his way towards the ruler.

“You calling me old, huh?” Ryuji asked with a shaky fist raised. “Well I’ll have you know that I may be past by prime, but I’ve still got it. Whenever my bunions or aching knees aren’t giving me trouble that is.”

“Or on the rare occasion that you don’t sleep in,” commented a voice from below.

Turning his gaze towards the grey haired cat known as Morgana, Ryuji took an awkward swing. The slow attack was easily dodged by the elderly feline, even as his own legs took their

time getting him moving. Leaving the out of shape Ryuji to succumb to a bout of wheezing breaths, the cat made his way over to his preferred source of company.

“You look at fetching as ever, Lady Ann,” Morgana said with a bow of his head.

The comment brought a blush to the old woman’s face. Though most of her body had gone through the same aging process as the others, what remained of her curves seemed to be perfectly complimented by her cheetah print dress. Sliding her painted nails through her twin tails of bright white hair, she put on a smile that was only possible due to years spent keeping up with her modeling career.

“Aww, come here little kitty,” Ann said, gingerly picking up the cat to place a kiss on his forehead with her heavily painted, red lips. “No need to fear that old geezer. You can just spend your time cuddling with a beautiful model.”

Ryuji huffed. “Yeah, maybe in your younger days. Now the only picture you take are with you in diapers.”

A twinge of anger flew across the supposedly sweet old woman’s face. “How many times do you I have to tell you that they just use me for the face model? Someone else is actually wearing those things. It’s not like I have any need for them.”

“You seem pretty defensive about that last part,” Ryuji pushed, proving that his age had not come with wisdom.

While Joker stood on the sidelines trying to figure out how to end the argument peacefully, Yusuke saw this as an opportunity. Reaching into the pocket of his fine-tailored, blue suit, he produced a small drawing pad. Even with the years of wear and tear on his digits, he was still able to fairly quickly and expertly begin to draw.

“Yes, this is exquisite,” Yusuke said, the old man’s declaration managing to garner the others’ attention. “I haven’t seen this sense of anger in who knows how long.”

“Yusuke, they do this every day,” Joker pointed out.

“Really?” the silver fox asked, using the back of his pencil to scratch at the bare part of his scalp. “I don’t seem to recall. And I think I would remember something so stimulating for my wizened mind.”

In the wake of Ryuji and Ann’s argument, Makoto merely helped herself to a collection of snacks she had stowed away in her handbag. Each chew jiggled everything from her jowls, all the way down to the sagging ass cheeks poorly obscured by her dark blue gown. Before she could get another handful of sweets into her maw, she was forced to pause to let out a rude belch. Figuring that there was no point in fighting against her usual indigestion, the gassy geezer let a fart rumble out from her thick rear.

“Ugh, you trying to make us choke?” Ryuji called out.

“It at least got you to stop bickering for a moment,” Makoto waved off as she waddled towards him. “Did you remember to take your vitamins today?”

Ryuji faltered a bit. With a series of annoyed mutters, he reached into a pocket to pull out a bottle of pills. When his feeble hand was unable to twist off the top, Makoto was more than happy to oblige by making use of her plump fingers.

“What about you Ann?” Makoto began as Ryuji swallowed his vitamins. “You doing alright? Need a change?”

“Shut your trap!” Ann said, subconsciously putting her hands on her hips. “I told you that I don’t need to wear those things.”

“Do you really want another incident like during your last shoot when you-“

“I said shut it, you old gas bag,” Ann said, easing her mind down by letting Morgana rub against her legs.

“Well, at least you remembered your cane this time,” Makoto commented as she shuffled up to Joker. “Here,” she said, reaching into her bag again to produce a handful of sweets. “You need your energy for... something. I don’t really remember what though. Futaba, do you know what we were doing here?”

The initial response Makoto received was the electric whirl of Futaba’s wheel chair. Her motorized chair provided comfort to the chunky, pale legs sticking out from her black skirt and the set bingo wing arms partially responsible for stretching out the antique gaming t-shirt adorning her saggy tits and gut. Behind her pair of thick-rimmed glasses, she stared at the screen attached to her chair as her bony fingers still managed to quickly type in commands.

“Hrrmm,” Futaba said as she paused to scratch her long locks of grey hair. “Don’t have anything on the schedule today,” she commented as she shifted her dentures around in her mouth. “Well, except for getting more diapers for me and Ann.”

“Cut that out,” Makoto said, easing Ann a bit by tossing her handful of hard candies. “And you don’t even need them. You’re just too lazy to get out of your chair. Maybe some movement would do some good for that big butt of yours.”

“Heh, you’re one to talk,” Futaba replied with a wicked grin on her wrinkly face.

“Come on now,” Haru spoke up as she used a walker to move around her own, overweight body. The frilly, flower dress draped over her body managed to partially hide the belly she had cultivated from many years of trying out different food recipes. To her mind, Futaba and Makoto’s own weight problems were partially because they had been so willing to be her taste testers when she lost one of her most important features.

“Fighting with each other will get us nowhere,” Haru continued, having to pause to make sure her dentures didn’t fall out. “Once this is over, we can all go back and try out a new dessert I’ve been cooking up.” Momentarily bringing peace to the group with the promise of baked goods, she slowly swiveled herself around to face the ruler. “Pardon me, but would you happen to know why we’re here?”

“Well it’s obvious you see. You are all here to... to...

The ruler paused as he absent mindedly scratched his head. “I... forgot.”

“No worries, deary,” Haru said as she shuffled over to him. “It happens to all of this at our age after all.”

“Eh, I’m sure it will come back to you eventually,” Futaba said as she wheeled herself over.

“In the meantime, have some sweets to tide you over,” Makoto offered, having to pause to stifle a belch.

“Save some for me, doing art always works up an appetite,” Yusuke commented as he showed off the amazing sketch his shaky fingers had somehow managed to put together.

“Makoto, wait,” Ann spoke up as she chased after the others. “Don’t go too far, I might need you to help with, er, something.”

“Yeah, yeah, let’s get a move on,” Ryuji added, begrudgingly reaching out to scratch Morgana’s chin.

“A move on to what?” the ruler asked.

His answer came as Joker placed a hand on his shoulder. “Our game night. That’s what you called us over for, right?”

“Oh... yeah, yeah, that makes sense,” the ruler said, getting caught up in the aged up Phantom Thieves’ mental decline as they shuffled their way into the palace. Though he didn’t fully understand what was going on, part of him was simply content with having a group of people his own age to hang out with again.