

KING OF THE DEAD

People can change, and sure as hell Death changed Brook. Follow the Yomi no Mi's eater as he takes his fate in his own hands. What will the world do against someone who's already dead? OOC Brook, massive AU

(Just 2 chapters for now)

DAY OF THE DEAD I

The fog and mist clung one to another, perpetuating the endless, damp greyness that my consciousness was able to pick up. And while my eyes couldn't pick up on a single light, on a single twitch, shade, or memory of colour, I only managed to move because I willed myself to.

Not that I had eyes to see, nor muscles to move me around. And quite frankly, I also missed a body to contain both, seeing as I was some kind of gaseous green whatever roaming over an endless stretch of what I guessed was water. And no ordinary water at that. It felt, even if I kept myself away from it, following an instinct that I couldn't quite name, heavy, constraining and... adverse, if I had to choose a name, to my very existence.

Then again, I called it an endless stretch of water, but maybe I simply kept running in circles, it wasn't like the sound of the almost dead waves could truly steer me in a direction or another.

Time quickly became something beyond my grasp, I could somewhat distinguish a moment from the following one, if nothing else by picking up on the constantly shifting sounds of the water, but even that accomplishment felt... hollow.

Slowly, or immediately, as I have stated, I couldn't truly relate to a concept of time flow, I realized that I was *something*, and that I held two sorts of point of view regarding what I could perceive. It was like choosing to look straight ahead of you, or trying to focus on your own nose, not that I had one, but I remembered... I remembered!

At some point, I was sure that I had a nose! *This is better than nothing, I guess.* I thought grimly, still not content about the response of the gaseous form that substituted my body, I returned to my previous line of thought: *I walk between two perspectives: one, is empty waiting, passive, accepting, heavy and uncaring.* And as I focused on those feelings, I managed to feel the faintly glowing greenish gas that I was dimming just a bit. *While I have another perspective, one that looks through eyes that I don't have, one that awaits a touch that I cannot feel, one that receives and recognizes sounds...*

Sounds is vibrations through the air... how can I recognize them without a body? I had no ears, it was painfully obvious, and yet, given that I was submerged in a damp greyness, I willed myself to listen.

There should be something, anything, a whisper, a hope... Nothing. I was Deaf, Blind, and Dead... *dead? I remember... No... Nononono...* How does one accept that everything he had fought for is gone? That all of the pain, all of the efforts, have amounted to nothingness in the end? That dreams have been abandoned, that promises have been broken... *No.*

Something inside of me rebelled at the thought. Something awakened, something... something... *I died.* I thought somberly, once again beginning to collect myself.

They are all gone too... I slowly, or quickly, accepted it. I didn't know why I was trapped in the eternal purgatory of grey and quiet waves, of dead sunlight and shattered dreams... *I died... but I'm not dead now.* I decided. How could I think if I were dead? How could I ... feel...

Something twisted inside me, where I once had my heart, even if there was no landmark against which measure where on my gaseous body should have been what. It wasn't pain, it wasn't a literal weight, but it was there nonetheless.

Failure. I named it. There had been laughter, defiance, and sheer strength of will to overcome the odds... there had been... *music. Music.* Beautiful, timeless and Immortal, as I apparently was now, in my body-less state. There had been clear notes and grating errors that had brought forward a soul. Not only mine, no, nothing so selfish and quaint. Something more. I could remember, almost as twitches of fingers I no longer had, a piano, a violin, voices more or less gifted in the Art. I remembered *life.*

And Music soared through my muddled memories, making them sparkle anew with colours that I hadn't been able to define, it gave a depth and a pillar upon which I immediately started to build back the fragments of my shattered self. The songs had been hundreds, tens of voices, countless instruments, from a palm slamming on wood to a breath swirling in a flute, dancing on its own and yet with everybody else. All of that, along with memories of sunsets and harsh waves, of storms and summer islands, all of

that had existed carrying over not our memories, not my hopes, but our Soul. Mine, coloured and enriched by others, by my scared captain and proud cook, by our brave navigator and greedy bookkeeper, of our inhuman friend that nonetheless managed to sing and dance along with us... *Our friend.*

Laboon! The thought sung through me with a cascade of moments shared together, the food tossed from the back of the ship into his awaiting mouth, the cries when we had to leave him back to protect him, it was truly... there. It was all there, nothing had been lost in the Purgatory I had been walking, all of it... *Laboon is still there... but the crew won't be able to go all the way around and come back to meet him.*

Bitterness threatened once more to overwhelm me, but then again, with Music I had found back something of what I was, and sure as hell I wasn't going to let it crumble apart.

Slowly, or as fast as my thoughts were capable of following one another, a purpose anchored my will to my existence, and the faintly green light that I had been giving off blazed for a couple of seconds, or hours, there was really no way to tell the time.

I will leave this empty wasteland.

I will find Laboon.

And from there, I would see...

AN

I know that I've already got an SI going on in the One Piece universe, one that I started with the birth of an OC, one that is actually a slow burn and follows steadily the shounen path of becoming constantly stronger and gaining super strong people that have your back. Even so, I wanted an SI with Brook powers, because, let's be honest, Yomi Yomi no Mi, where Yomi means Underworld, is the most bullshit Devil Fruit ever, at least in the hands of someone willing to abuse it.

And yes, having a legitimate reason to take music into the game was something that I couldn't leave alone.

I confess, I also wanted to play a bit with a free canvas to describe an 'underworld' and as a starting point, in particular, the potentiality that an awakened Yomi Yomi no Mi would entail. Necromancy? Corpse Hopping? Killing with a touch? I don't know, but my MC will find out.

People change, and sure as hell death changes people, especially if accompanied by years of solitude.

So, Brook dies as in canon, however, the Yomi Yomi no Mi works with the littlest of the snags, it opens the doors to the Underworld, and his experiences give birth to an OOC Brook.

This is just a short introduction, since I've literally just thought about this, but let me know what you think an OOC Brook could manage to do.

(He isn't waiting to be saved)

DAY OF THE DEAD II

Given time and opportunity, humans manage to adapt, and find resources and solutions to problems that would have been otherwise thought unsolvable. Brook had been a regular human once, he had been even a regular pirate which required some kind of love for the unknown and freedom that was somewhat rare.

Brook had always been a lover of Music. In a world with monsters in and out of the sea, sailing under both Jolly Rogers and the Marines' white sails, the inherent value of an expression of beauty that couldn't be tainted by propaganda, that couldn't be stolen, and that freely expressed emotions too deep to be named, was undeniable. Or at least that had always been true for him. In many ways, Music was true freedom. One needed only a voice, or two fingers to tap against a wall, and there could be music, a simple tune, a heartbreaking race, a slow crescendo.

Music couldn't be taken away, and for people like Brook, who spent thousands of hours practising, it gifted something difficult to name. If a great crew could brave the seas, free of any restriction, Music from the hands and mouth of a master could soar the skies themselves. Brook always had a strand of Music within, a tune, a rhythm, an idea for some lyrics, or simply images of twitches of his own wrists as he handled a violin.

So, after the monumental shift in focus and purpose that had recently occurred, or months before, Brook couldn't be sure, he suspected that the songs and wild music that he so often thought about to reassure himself had shifted, from a carefree and outgoing twirl of the chords into a minor shift of the fingers on the guitar that he held in his soul, with a deep and constant bass drum that echoed his resolve and determination.

When Brook first heard something besides the subdued waves and his own song, a song that fingers he no longer had itched to play, a song that the mouth he missed wanted to sing, he first believed that his wild hope had brought him to imagine things. And yet, after a few instants, he could well recognize a note of longing and despair different from the constant empty scraping of wave against wave, so he willed himself in that direction.

Time began again to make a lick of sense, given that Brook could finally measure it against the progress he as making towards that 'note', towards what he dreaded and knew was real and undeniable.

Soon enough, the creaking of tired wood and defeated whispering of defeated and torn sails greeted him along with that 'note', enriching it and granting it support and landscape, making it more and more real as Brook approached. The music became louder and wider, reaching beyond him, and the last 'living' member of the Rumbur pirates (without counting Laboon) made his way on deck.

The note of longing made itself stronger and louder as he hovered through the rotting ropes that hung from the masts like some sort of worm on a corpse, the song grew subdued as he took stock of the sad state of the sails and the broken pieces of wood that had surrendered to time. When he saw himself, a chill different from the one that characterized his more recent travels made itself known.

In a battered purple suit, against the bulwark on the side of deck, rested a skeleton roughly two meters and half tall, a few feet from his hands there was a violin with strings that had long since surrendered to the dampness and lack of care, and beyond the thrumming of longing and belonging of those bones that he would have refused wearing, the bass drum that echoed his determination and resolve resonated with another, clingy and unyielding presence.

As the eyes that he no longer had travelled over his skull, Brook couldn't deny the pride that he felt surging forward from within, like he had clung to life itself despite his 'dead' status, his afro had endured, lush and powerful and charged with a roaring, fierce will that thundered like from a thousand of golden trumpets.

With a smile without a mouth, Brook fell upon what was left of his own body.

There was a shift, it felt as the world had just tilted on its axis, and where before Brook could only perceive the world in shades of grey, colours found their way into his empty eyesockets, greeting him like he was born anew. Even sounds changed, as the notes and music that he used to navigate up until that moment dimmed considerably, letting the groaning of wood and the wailing of water against the hull

taking their place, he felt, even if it didn't make sense, his clothes shifting against his bones, and the weight of his body anchoring him on the wood of the ship.

"Well, this is certainly different." He immediately spoke, and was marvelled at the sound of his own voice echoing on the empty deck, while the 'note' of longing that had dimmed when he returned into his body toned down and twisted, becoming 'wistful', like he had gently blown on a dying ember, coaxing a last flare of warmth out of it. And his ears picked up the 'song' of groaning wood and tearing cloth, as the Ship of the Rumber Pirates welcomed him and cried with him for the lost comrades.

Brook rose from his position on the deck, marvelling once more at the contrasting feeling of having a body once more, instinctively feeling it lighter than the one he had once been used to. *Of course, I'm only bones now...*

Slowly, as if he still couldn't believe that what was happening was real, Brook walked through the ship, trailing his fingers against the wood, reassured by the presence of his own cane at his side, which after a quick check revealed that his blade had remained untouched by time, safe as it was inside of the waterproof sheath. He crossed his ship several times, grimacing when his eyes landed on the ruined musical instruments, and wistfully seeing the ghosts of his comrades in every nook and cranny.

The song came forward once more, timidly, slowly, it came as a plea from the ship, and as a tribute from within the pirate: "

Yo-ho-ho-hoo, yo-ho-ho-hoo!
Yo-ho-ho-hoo, yo-ho-ho-hoo!
Yo-ho-ho-hoo, yo-ho-ho-hoo!
Yo-ho-ho-hoo, yo-ho-ho-hoo! "

As he started to sing, his voice stretched to encompass the timid 'song' that the ship and the memories on it had been whispering in the back of his head, hoping that someone could come and relieve them from the crushing loneliness of failure and death, and as Brook's voice gained momentum and direction, the groaning of the wood quieted down, almost as if a simple voice could strengthen it.

"Making a delivery, bringing it across the sea
Binks sake in the hold as we sail through the breeze"

The sails shivered, almost fluttering despite the total lack of wind, the damp cloth almost trying to dance to the one who carried the voice of the Rumber Pirates.

"Far across the eye can see, the sun is shining merrily
As the birds fly in the sky as they sing out with glee
Bid adieu to everyone, as we sail under the sun
Sailing on from dusk 'til dawn and singing out as one
Cross the gold and silver waves, changing into water sprays
Sailing out on our journey to the ends of the sea!"

Brook's voice reached into the empty cabins, skittered over the masts until it reached the Jolly Roger that had remained utterly still since the crew had died.

"Making a delivery, of Binks sake through the sea
Let be shown that we are known as pirates sailing free
Time to raise the flag up high, of Jolly Roger in the sky
Raise the sails and tell the tales that never pass you by
Somewhere in the endless sky, a storm has started coming by
Waves a-dancing, sails a-prancing through the wind and rain
If we let blow winds of fear, then the end of us is near
Even so tomorrow the sun will rise again!"

Brook's feet stomped on the wood, who thudded cleanly despite the dampness of the air imposing a muted cover of dullness over every sound, while his cane tittered on the bulwark, accompanying the song with a rasping sound that could resemble a laugh.

"Yo-ho-ho-hoo, yo-ho-ho-hoo!
Yo-ho-ho-hoo, yo-ho-ho-hoo!
Yo-ho-ho-hoo, yo-ho-ho-hoo!
Yo-ho-ho-hoo, yo-ho-ho-hoo!"

The colourful images of those who had died rippled in front of the dead pirate' empty eyesockets, an echo of laughter and defiance resonating once more upon the Rumber Pirates' ship.

"Making a delivery, of Binks sake through the sea,"

Brook's free hand rattled against the wood, offering a counter to the rhythmic shifting of his feet across the wood, shadowing the walks and dances that his crew had once taken.

"Through today and through tomorrow all your dreams will lay,"

For an instant, Brook dropped his cane, his hands meting in a dry clap that followed and concluded the previous drumming of fingers on wood, before his right hand found once more the handle of his walking stick.

"his voice raised itself beyond the sails,
Say goodbye should we depart, and keep your memories in your heart
Don't you frown and don't feel down but live to seize the day!"

The skeleton' boots thudded again and again against the deck, scraping against each other to contrast the wave that had tried to interrupt the song by making an unwelcome noise against the hull of the ship.

"Making a delivery, of Binks sake through the sea
Sailing on from dusk 'til dawn and singing out as one
After all is said and done, we all end up as skeletons
Tales unending, rules a-bending, journey just begun

Yo-ho-ho-hoo, yo-ho-ho-hoo!
Yo-ho-ho-hoo, yo-ho-ho-hoo!
Yo-ho-ho-hoo, yo-ho-ho-hoo!
Yo-ho-ho-hoo, yo-ho-ho-hoo!"

The Rumber Pirates had died, and he died with them, they failed and fell, so this anthem for the dead that he was singing, this requiem for what could have been, would be his farewell. He would follow Music wherever it brought him, but only after meeting once more with Laboon, that was still his first objective.

Without a clear objective, Brook still found himself quickly losing the sense of time, but as he had acknowledged the failure of the Rumber Pirates, the only thing that was left was finding a way out of the Purgatory that was the Florian triangle.

AN

This concludes the introduction. And yes, Brooks interprets the results of Observation Haki in terms of music, because in my opinion, Haki is always subjective to the person using it, it's a sixth sense, but the human brain isn't truly equipped to manage 'more' than what we already have, so in my mind, Observation Haki comes with some sort of natural synesthesia, that nonetheless grants instinctive understanding of what is being perceived.