

Touch

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Synopsis

Aya, a young woman cloistered in the Temple of the Dead, experiences a mysterious clang that sounds in the air one night. From that moment, Aya and everyone else in Centralia City cannot touch each other without feeling unbearable agony.

Four years pass. Aya's daily life does not change because the only people she touches are the dead in funeral rites. But everyone else suffers under the curse. During a funeral, Aya encounters a man named Zhedboyut ("Zhed"), a theater performer. By accident, their hands connect and they feel no pain. However, because no one else is cured of the curse, no one at the funeral believes them. The next day, Aya and her friend Feia descend from the temple into the city on the pretext of collecting supplies. They seek out Zhed in the theater district. Backstage, the two prove to Feia that they can touch hands without feeling pain. However, only Aya and Zhed are immune only to each other and still cannot touch anyone else.

The three venture deeper into the city to consult Feia's former mentor Bellithan about this mystery. He deduces from his knowledge of ancient scripture that Zhed and Aya are immune because they are half-blood children of gods. Zhed refuses to accept the news that he is divine and runs off. Feia refuses to return to the Temple of Dead and chooses to stay in the ruins of the abandoned temple with her mentor.

Aya searches the city and finds Zhed in a tavern. While riding in a taxi carriage, they stare deeply into each others' eyes and their souls magically blend. Aya's spirit flies away from her body. She sees a mystical vision of several immortal people held captive in a mountain cave and tortured by a gigantic crab-like monster. One of them is Zhed's mother. When she wakes up, she tells this vision

to Zhed. He doesn't believe her; although he is a storyteller by trade, he does not believe in myths and legends.

They go to consult again with the pastor in the abandoned temple. Outside the gates, Zhed and Aya show the crowd that they can touch, and this starts a riot in the streets. In the chaos, the group of four escapes the city on a river boat. The group sails into the next valley to discover that everyone there is cursed with blindness. Aya has a second vision about a woman in a country cottage holding a newborn baby. Aya assumes this is a vision of her own birth, and she leads the group on foot to the nearby mill.

At the mill, they find instead it is present day and meet the woman with the newborn. The man—who is Aya's father, an immortal—is suffering a mysterious seizure that comes from the gigantic crab in the mountain cave. They watch him be whisked away in a flash of lavender lightning. Now, Zhed believes her vision of the pantheon of gods in trouble.

In the snowy mountains, the group encounters a tribe of marauders who dwell in a volcanic cave. The clan affected them with the curse of being unable to eat food; they only eat ashes. Their leader Kurggh is surprised when the group does not succumb to the treacherous conditions and agree to help the group rescue the immortals.

Working together as a team, the marauders help them gain entrance into a hidden ice cave. Zhed builds a puppet of the giant crab as a decoy. Aya uses her power of flame to cook the monster. As soon as the monster dies, the curse is lifted from everyone.

The group of half dozen or so immortals, who were captive and suffering for centuries, departs through secret magical tunnels in the icy walls of the crystal cave. In the end, only two immortals linger behind the rest—Zhed's mother and Aya's father. Zhed's mother is returning to the volcanic cave with the marauders and invites her son to join her. Aya plans to return with her divine father to the mill and take care of her newborn half sister. It looks like, after all they've been

through together, they are going separate ways. But at the last second, Zhed chooses to stay with her.