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彼と人喰の日常3

Ordinary days with a Man-Eater....

She may seem just like any pretty girl with black hair, but "Chōe" is actually an ancient demon...



彼と人喰の日常³

Ordinary days with a Man-Eater.....

She may seem just the girl pretty girl with black hair, but "Orochi" is actually an ancient monster.



「あ、十夜君 おはよう」

家を出て、聞きなれた挨拶が
耳に飛び込んできた……………
しばらく聞いてなかったはずなのに
それが誰の物なのかを見るまでもなく
頭が理解できた。
……………だからこそ、そのことが理解できなかった。
そちらを見るのがどうしようもなく恐ろしく、
けれど確認したいという誘惑がどうしようもなく強い。
何の予想も覚悟もなかった十夜に、それを抑えられるはずもない。

「なんで……………?」

立夏がこちらを見ていた。家の前で笑顔を浮かべて手を振っている……………
まるで十夜が家から出てくるのを待っていたように。
ありえない光景だった。
起こるはずのない光景だ。

だって、それは十夜が望んで
なくしたはずの光景なのに。





「十夜君、おのま
まおいだよー」

「……おい、おんねんごまかたは」

『主よ、右に3度修正して
前方に七歩と半歩じゃ』

「先輩、動かないと始まりなごよー」

「先輩！まっおごいだよー」

満足そうに言つて葵は立ち上がる。

けれど押さえつけられていた女生徒は
それで立ち上がることもない。

両手足を無造作に

地面に投げ出したまま、

苦痛に動かぬ身をよじらせて

すすり泣いているだけだ。

「それで先輩何か用？」

Prologue: The Price of His Contract

“It’s quite hot today too, ne?”

Mashiro said, looking up at the sky. Her face was already sweating as she blocked the sun with her right hand.

Now that it was already the second week of July, sitting on a concrete rooftop like this with the sun shining directly on them was far from comfortable. And even if they stayed under the shade of the water storage tower, there was still the summer heat to contend with.

“It’s exhausting to come to the rooftop at a time like this.”

Tooya agreed, his forehead was already sweating too. Then again, he definitely couldn’t say something like ‘Maybe we should try another place’. There were a lot of cool places around here, but they’d all be definitely crowded with students.

“There’s still some wind today, it’s better than nothing.” Kuroe said with a cool expression. She was not sweating at all.

“Kuroe-senpai is very resistant to heat, ne?”

“That’s not true, I just don’t let it show.”

Kuroe answered with a grin. Actually, Kuroe was a monster literally.

『You are so rude, ne? I’m just cooling the air around me.』

Her voice appeared in Tooya’s mind along with the image of her shrugging.

Why don’t you think of making us cooler too?

[Is it fine to let Mashiro suffer the heat alone, master?]

She said it in a sarcastic tone. How Tooya could do something that unfair? It wasn't like he couldn't stand it, so he decided to just bear with it.

"Speaking of the heat, the holidays are coming up soon, ne?" Mashiro said.

"Yeah."

Heat. Summer. When talking about summer, it was inevitable for students like them to associate it with the concept of holidays.

"I feel like having fun somewhere when there's a holiday, ne?" Mashiro excitedly made a proposal.

It was a very natural thought. Only people like Tooya wouldn't think of doing anything in particular during the month-long holiday. He couldn't even imagine what he would have liked to do during that period of time.

"If that's the case, let's travel to somewhere far, ne?" Kuroe suggested.

"That's not a bad idea! A three day-two night trip!" Mashiro accepted Kuroe's suggestion immediately. Kuroe definitely looked at him with a smile.

"Since it's summer, it should be the sea, right?"

"That's right!"

"Then how about we look for a resort where we can see the sea?"

"Yeah, yeah! That's not a bad idea!"

A resort with a hot spring and a view of the sea was what Kuroe was going for. Ever since Tooya allowed Kuroe to take a bath, she'd been in love with the idea. Because of the bath, she also suddenly became interested in the hot springs she was averse to before and always asked Tooya to take her to one. Tooya had previously rejected her with reasons such as the lack of money and time. However, the reward for the Demon Sword incident took

care of the former reason, and the latter would not be an issue after two weeks.

『 Are you trying to dampen Mashiro's enthusiasm?』 Kuroe's delighted voice sounded in Tooya's mind.

He'd been seen through by Kuroe. Mashiro would be sad if Tooya said that he didn't want to go and Tooya couldn't think of any reason to reject her.

Just do what you want, was what Tooya thought.

Things wouldn't develop if all he did was think, though. If he wasn't going to reject them, he might as well agree with it. Watching the two discussing the trip happily, it was impossible for him to not join in.

"That's right, ne?"

Kuroe grinned, knowing everything. She had a horrible personality. Right now, at least, Tooya was in no mood to discuss the trip happily with them.

"We should decide the place early. Better to reserve it earlier, too."

"Alright! Leave the alternate location to me!"

"Yeah, I will be counting on you." Tooya forced a smile because he couldn't stand to see Mashiro being sad.

"It will be a very fun trip!"

"Yeah."

"Indeed, ne?"

A cheerful smile.

Melancholy hiding behind a bitter smile.

And a happy grin.

The three of them wore different smiles.

Xxxxx

That night, everything was surrounded by darkness. Even the moon at the sky seemed as if it was dejected.

Even though it was only 9pm, the store near the intersection they were instructed to go to was already closed, so the area looked dark.

“Is that it?”

“I think so ne.”

A lone car stopped at the roadside under the streetlights. It was a black and very upscale car. The driver flashed the car signal, showing they noticed Tooya and Kuroe, so they walked slowly towards the window at the driver’s seat.

“You’re punctual.”

It was Tanaka sitting in the car.

“.....Good evening.” Tooya greeted for politeness, even as his face remained expressionless.

The last time they met Tanaka was when they made a contract with the Order of Black Magic. Now they met again, to discuss some unpleasant business.

“Long time no see, ne?”

“Yeah, Kuroe-san was following, huh?”

“Of course, ne? It will be meaningless if I don’t come, right?”

“It’s just as you say.” Tanaka nodded gallantly. “Anyway, please take a seat at the back. We don’t have much time, so we’ll talk while I’m driving.”

“Alright.”

“Understood.”

The two of them opened the rear door and took a seat.

“Yo.”

Suddenly, Tooya heard a voice that made him shudder. It was definitely Akane’s voice. Her voice was very deep and low, filled with animosity, as usual.

“Good evening.”

“Tsk.”

Tooya greeted her but he received a sound of clicking sound from the other side.

“So rude, ne?”

“Shut up you man-eating monster.”

Akane showed her killing intent towards Kuroe who was wearing a sarcastic smile. Akane, sitting at the front seat, didn’t turn her head, otherwise, Tooya would have definitely seen her glaring at them.

“Good grief, Tanaka, you didn’t need to bring this troublesome girl along.”

Kuroe said with a cheerful look despite the words.

“Well, she’s part of those who want your elimination.” Tanaka replied calmly, as usual. “Since she can’t do that, only me coming her should be enough but she’s not someone who will listen to what others say, you two can understand that, right?”

“...Well.”

Tooya could imagine Akane glaring at Tanaka until he was forced to accept her coming along.

“Since she agreed not to interrupt us, just think of her as a decoration.”

“.....Tsk.” She clicked her tongue.

What kind of decoration had such a strong presence?

“Anyway, it’s time to go. The journey will be three hours, so go buy a drink at the convenient store first if you’ll need it.”

The car was in total silence as it moved. Tanaka was driving, Akane clicked her tongue once in a while, Tooya looked out the window without saying anything, while Kuroe stared at Tooya in excitement.



“If there’s something you want to ask, you might as well ask it now.”

Tanaka said all of a sudden. He probably couldn’t stand the silent atmosphere. Tooya knew that he was talking to him. Something he wanted to ask, huh...

“.....”

Tooya felt troubled. He already knew what they were going to do today and he didn’t need to confirm it again. Something other than that... well, there was something, although Tooya felt that now was not really the right time for it.

“Um, I want to travel.” Tooya said, distinctly aware of Akane sitting in the passenger seat. “I have to apply for permission in order to do that right?”

Tooya was certain something regarding that was written in the terms of the contract they made with the Order of Black Magic.

“Yeah.” Tanaka nodded.

“The holidays are coming up soon, so I feel like wanting to go somewhere, is that all right?”

Tooya seriously thought the topic didn’t suit the current atmosphere at all. It wasn’t like he intended to ask right then with Akane there. Since the location and time of the trip wasn’t decided yet, it would have been better to contact Tanaka later and ask him about it. However, it would have gone through Akane anyway. That being the case, he might as well ask it now even with Akane there.

『 Master really is a masochist, ne?』 he heard Kuroe’s laughter in his head.

“Tsk.” An annoyed clicking tongue sound came from the passenger seat.

“It shouldn’t be a problem.” Tanaka answered, ignoring the sound.

“Since the two of you properly fulfilled the request given by the Order of Black Magic, going against the contract at this point doesn’t seem like something that would benefit the two of you. I guess it would be fine as long as there are staff members monitoring faraway.”

“You guys are really free huh.” Akane said frankly. “You want to have a cheerful holiday at the summer even though you are a murderer?”

“We’re planning to bring along Mashiro to have fun at the seaside for two days, ne?”

“.....Tsk.” Akane clicked her tongue after hearing Kuroe’s answer. A girl that she wanted to kill but saved at the end of the day. Akane was quite concerned with Mashiro too, so she wouldn’t be that harsh when it comes to her.

Mashiro was innocent. Since she was innocent, she would naturally be excited about the trip without any motives. Akane could imagine that. She was the same as Tooya, both of them were very kind, yet their relationship was the worst.

“If you enjoy the trip, I will kill you.”

“We will enjoy it for sure, ne?”

“There will be one day where I will kill you monster.”

“Impossible, ne?”

“I will kill you even if you don’t enjoy it.” Akane ignored Kuroe. “Understand?”

“.....Yeah.” Tooya nodded.

Tooya wasn't actually thinking of enjoying it in the first place. Although he would try to 'enjoy' it so that Mashiro wouldn't feel that something was off, that was already the limit of what he could do. Ever since he was separated with Rikka, Tooya didn't look forward to the future anymore. The drawing called future was totally blank to him and he was just went through his life day over day without thinking of it.

Tooya suddenly felt that the situation right now was somewhat similar. At the time, Rikka forcefully brought Tooya, who was suffering on his own, to the amusement park. While he was still gloomy at first, he ended up throwing that away and enjoyed it all with Rikka.

However, Mashiro was not Rikka.

Tooya did not intend to replace Rikka with Mashiro.

"I think you can relax a bit. This is a good moment to change the mood."

Tanaka said suddenly. He was totally oblivious to Akane who was in a bad mood beside him. "More accurately, it would be a problem if you don't take the time to enjoy things once in a while. You would be broken if you forget how to enjoy things as a human being. It would be troublesome if you were broken as a result of being too unhappy."

It wasn't for Tooya, but about gains and losses from the outcome as the reason. That was just the way Tanaka would think.

"Broken huh....."

It will be better if he was broken.....or maybe he already was. At the very least he was no longer normal from the moment he lived while accepted the fate of a murderer. Well, despite that, he didn't feel like acting independently.

“Tsk, you’re the worst anyway. No matter what kind of evaluation happens, it won’t change that fact.”

“.....Yeah.”

I am the worst, Tooya admitted. Therefore he would only expect the worst. And he was going to prove that shortly.

They reached the location the next day. It was a tightly guarded place surrounded with high walls, yet they just entered from the front gate and Tanaka drove them to an open place which seemed like a sports field.

“It’s right there.”

Even without illumination, Tooya could see something in the darkness with Tanaka’s instruction. A person was sleeping in the open area. Wrapped with something looked like restraining clothes, he looked like a bagworm.

“It’s, in there?”

“Since the aftermath over there wasn’t that troublesome, if it’s Kuroe-san, she could probably carry it out perfectly from the beginning till the end. However, this time, it is our responsibility to observe this till the end, so let’s go.” Tanaka moved forward as he said that.

“.....” Tooya followed with a confused expression. Behind him was Akane with an impatient look, and Kuroe with a pleasing face.

“He was also given sleeping pills, just in case.”

Like Tanaka said, that man was in deep slumber. He couldn’t notice Tooya and the others at all, and his eyes were still closed as he released quiet breaths.

“Fumu, so boring, ne?” Kuroe said.

“...would an active food will be better?”

“It would be more intriguing if it responded.”

“We will take that in consideration next time.”

A tongue clicking sounded after Tanaka answered. Akane was biting her teeth to tolerate something and glared at Kuroe to show her obvious animosity.

“Akane-san, we went through a lot of effort for this. Even if this is wrong, please don't fire you gun.”

“...It's been snatched by you so I didn't bring it, are you satisfied?” Her gaze was saying that she would have already fired it if she was able to bring it.

“Well forget about it...now Tooya-san, please confirm.”

Tanaka then took out a fluorescent light and handed it to Tooya. He received it, took a look at that man, and nodded. As Tooya was right now, he could see things in the dark clearly even without light. There was meaning in him receiving the fluorescent light. It was to make sure that he had no excuses to escape with.

Tooya walked to the side of that man wrapped with restraining clothes and used the light to see his face. The man was around forty, with a ferocious look. Even being illuminated by the light, He didn't seem to be waking up. Tooya switched off the light after confirming the man's face and that the information regarding that man was correct.

“...It's correct.” Tooya handed the light back to Tanaka after answering.

“Thank you... and now, the final confirmation.” Tanaka looked at Tooya. “Is he good enough?”

“.....” Tooya turned his gaze away, avoiding the question.

Akane glared straight at him.

Kuroe looked at him with a smile.

And Tanaka was just standing, waiting for a reply.

...There was nowhere he could run at all.

“Yes.” Tooya nodded.

“Then.” Tanaka declared. “Please offer the sacrifice to Kuroe-san.”

It was something that happened a week ago, when Tanaka contacted Tooya, almost right after the incident regarding the demon sword was resolved. The information was already given a long time ago, and Tanaka would be in charge of the arrangements. They were to go to the agreed meeting place, and then taken to this place. All Tooya had to do was to give the command to Kuroe. Everything else was prepared by the Order of Black Magic... Everything except the most crucial part.

Asai Shouji. Forty-five years old. Arrested for burglary and the murder of all the family members in that house. He even caused arson at the place of the incident and the fire spread quickly to the neighbors, bringing in new victims. He was sentenced to death a few years ago with the trial, and was waiting for the time for execution- no.

The execution was going to happen right now.

However, it was not according to the law.

It was not an execution done out of righteousness, as a punishment for evil people. Since he was someone who was going to die sooner or later, what happened right now was just a reasonable thing.

But it was all because of a person's willfulness.

"Kuroe." Tooya called that name.

"En." Kuroe answered with a smile. She was happily looking at Tooya, who was showing a somber expression, as if asking for her supposed reward.

"This is the price of the contract." Tooya said and pointed at that man. "Eat him."

"Understood." Kuroe nodded with a smile. Then, she transformed. Her body started to extend and expand. The appearance of a human disappeared in a moment along with the darkness, her size increasing a few times in the blink of an eye.

"It's so spacious here, very easy to get back to my original form, ne?"

A few seconds later, she became a giant wolf monster. The only thing remaining the same was her voice. Tanaka couldn't stop his surprised expression as it was the first time he saw it. Yet, Akane didn't feel anything, continuing to glare at Kuroe.

"Then, I won't be welcome ne."

Kuroe opened her big mouth, oblivious to Akane. Although Akane felt remorse, she didn't have the power or an idea to defy this right now.

And so, Kuroe started to eat the sacrifice. The sleeping man's head was raised, his upper body held in Kuroe's mouth with her teeth.

One bite, and the man's upper body was gone. There was the sound of bones cracking.

Two bite, and the man's body disappeared from this world. Not even bloodstains were left, it was unbelievable. Only the sound of chewing was left, and that sound disappeared as well after a while.

"Thanks for the offering." Kuroe said satisfactorily after the man's body was swallowed. Her body shrunk rapidly and she turned back to human form in a moment.

"Master." Kuroe turned back her head and look at Tooya."I have received the price of the pact. So i will be in your care for the next month too."

".....Yeah." Tooya nodded, turning his eyes to Akane.

Their gazes connected. She didn't feel terrified because the person died without anything left right in front of her... The only thing she had was anger. Anger towards someone who killed unreasonably for his own convenience.

The ally of justice would never forgive Tooya.

Knowing that the day would come for sure where she would punish Tooya, he relaxed.

"We have confirmed that the price of the contract was paid and it is now done, so let's go back. There's still some work to do after this, but it's all just for documentation."

"You ate it nice and clean huh, that saves me some trouble." Tanaka said something like that in addition. As usual, he made the decision in a rational manner without considering feelings, which was totally different from Akane.

"Understood." Tooya answered.

"We're finally back, ne?"

".....Yeah."

Tanaka drove back on the same road they went there from, and it was already four in the morning when Tooya and Kuroe reached their home.

“Although I don’t really hate vehicles, it’s exhausting when you sit for so long, ne?”

They left at nine at night and didn’t even stay at that place an hour. Most of the time was used up in the travel and it was totally silent in the car, so what Kuroe said made sense. On the way back, she just kept looking at Tooya and Akane with a smile, looking very happy.

“Then, master.”

“...What?”

“Are we going to sleep?”

It was supposed to be sleeping time but Tooya wasn’t in the mood to sleep right now even though he was already home. She already understood that even though Tooya didn’t say anything.

“I am going to sleep, ne?”

“.....Just do what you want.”

Kuroe laid her bed sheet quickly and slept on it. Tooya slept on his own bed too. Although he didn’t feel like sleeping, he wasn’t planning to just keep on standing there.

“Master.”

“...What?”

Wasn’t she going to sleep?

“Are we going to school?” It would be the time for them to wake up after three hours, and the time to go to school after another hour.

“...We’re going.” Tooya answered without much hesitation.

“Is that so.” She sounded delighted.

“Master got used to it quickly, huh?”

What do you mean? Tooya wanted to ask but he didn’t.

But Kuroe continued as if she heard the unspoken question.

“Murdering.”

He couldn’t sleep. But he didn’t feel like vomiting, and the world was still turning as usual.

It was the fourth time Tooya murdered a person.

The first time happened without him knowing anything.

The second time was decided in a trance.

The third time was done with killing intent.

And the fourth time was to comply with the contract made with the Order of Black Magic. However, Tooya acknowledged that he murdered that person with his own will.

After only three times and Tooya was no longer acting up regarding murder anymore... no, was it two times? The first time, he didn’t know it was going to happen and didn’t mean to murder those people, so he vomited right away. The impression of a dead person was far stronger compared to murder.

The second time and the third time too... no, regarding the first time, if Rikka was not there, then he would definitely never want to go out anymore. The existence of Rikka was the reason why Tooya forced himself to go school, why he forced himself to smile even when he couldn’t find any reason to.

However, Rikka was no longer beside Tooya anymore. Even though the distance between them never changed, she was going further and further away from Tooya.

There was no longer any reason to force himself but he still decided to go to school. Since he could see the Mashiro's smile at school.

"Got used to it, huh."

That should be the case but, something was different. Was it because the person Tooya relied on had changed? From the childhood friend who always supported him, to the ally of justice who always denied him.

It was because someone who would punish him one day was there that Tooya felt his guilt getting mitigated.

...despite the fact that he didn't think that he would be punished at all.

"Seriously, I am the worst." Tooya mumbled and closed his eyes.

He still didn't feel sleepy at all. It was just that the world of darkness was quite peaceful

Chapter 1: He and the Man Eater and the Transfer Student

[There was a transfer student.]

As usual, they gathered at the rooftop to have lunch. Mashiro said that just when they reached. Her expression was so bright. In other words, that incident seemed to have been a pleasant event for Mashiro.....maybe because of that, she didn't seem to be aware of Tooya's subtle state.

[Strange, isn't it.]

In this period, moreover this time. Not in spring but summer, to transfer to this school at this timing which took place two weeks before the summer vacation, it was very unusual.....and it was very strange. In general, one should transfer to another school after the end of summer vacation. Well, everyone has their own circumstances, so it couldn't be concluded unconditionally.

[Yeah, it is said that there are all kinds of circumstances at home.]

[Ah.]

An expected answer.

[Seemed like Mashiro and that girl got along.]

Suddenly Kuroe said that.

[Yes!]

Mashiro nodded happily.

[Kuroe-senpai, you got it right.]

[Because Mashiro is easy to understand.]

Kuroe answered with a smile. Well, she was easy to understand. She talked about the topic of the transfer student with full interests, and it seemed that she heard of the circumstances of the transfer student directly from that person. This meant that not only she had the chance to talk with the transfer student, they seemed to get along as well.

[That's good.]

[Yes!.]

Mashiro nodded happily again. For Mashiro who was isolated in class was able to make friend, Tooya was very happy with it.....well, though it was not just simply feeling happy. He was sure that transfer student didn't know Mashiro was isolated by the others in class. Not sure if they would still get along after knowing that.

[Well, actually.....]

Suddenly, Mashiro stopped talking even though she wanted to say something.

[.....Huh?]

[Ah, well.....]

[Could it be, you brought that girl over here?]

Kuroe asked.

[.....Yes.]

After hesitated for a moment, Mashiro nodded.

[I know it is very sudden, but because senpais took care of me so much so I want to introduce to her.....that girl is now waiting at the door.]

Mashiro's feeling was not incomprehensible. Tooya and Kuroe were the one lent a helping hand to Mashiro when she was being bullied, and getting close to her. It was natural for her wanting to introduce her friend directly to them.

[That, because in fact it is forbidden to enter here, so I know that I have to keep it in secret.....but I still want to introduce her directly to senpais.]

[It's fine. It's not good for her to keep waiting, bring her over here.]

[I am really grateful!]

After Tooya replied, Mashiro nodded happily and walked to the door.

[Such an interesting kid ne.]

[Yeah.]

Tooya agreed with Kuroe that Mashiro has a lot of uneasiness before. So in any case it was worth to be happy that Mashiro was able to make friends.

[So master tries not to cause any trouble.]

[.....I know.]

Tooya was the same as Mashiro, a person being isolated in class. Furthermore Tooya was more well known compare to Mashiro. Maybe Mashiro would be avoided by others because she got along with such a messy person.....in order not to cause such a thing Tooya had to work hard to show his good side.

[Here they come.]

Followed by Kuroe's words, Tooya looked at the door and saw Mashiro walking over here with a girl he had never seen before. That girl was taller than Mashiro, and had a very slim body. Her hair was long like Kuroe and

the bangs were tied with a hair band which seemed to emphasize her little wide forehead.

[Nice to meet you, my name's Inaba Aoi.]

She smiled and introduced herself.

[Nice, nice to meet you.]

Tooya blundered because they were too close. A half step closer than the ordinary distance. She was looking directly at Tooya like trying to seek out something from Tooya's eyes.

[That.....]

[So you are Tooya-senpai.]

[Ah, yes.]

Aoi turned her gaze after a nod.

[So here is Kuroe-senpai.]

[Yes.]

Kuroe responded as usual. Probably Aoi heard our names from Mashiro, but this child was kind of straightforward for calling our names directly.....although they were not that intimate, but Tooya didn't feel unpleasant about it.

[Please take care of me after this!]



From the conversation during their lunch, Aoi was really a straightforward child as she had shown right from the beginning. Normally people would be cautious and asked things slowly for those they met for the first time, but she just went straight into the point. From the reason why they used the rooftop which was forbidden to enter, until why Tooya was isolated in school. She had inquired all of them.

It was the same for Mashiro, it seemed that Aoi heard everything from the girl sitting next to Mashiro in class. Even so, she didn't look at Mashiro with strange gazes or even avoid Mashiro like the others, that was why she appeared here.

[Because Mashiro is not the one at fault from what I heard. Even if they don't want to get involve with bullying, isn't it too mean for keeping a distance with Msahiro just because of that? If you know that they will leave you alone at crucial times, then there's not a need to be friends with them right from the beginning.]

Although it was a very extreme remark, but seemed like Aoi had given up to be friends with everyone in class to be close to Mashiro. Instead of making lots of friends which cannot be trusted, it was better to have just one trustworthy friend.....but did Aoi really trust Mashiro whom she just met, it was a mystery.

[As long as we look to each other face to face, I still can know whether you are lying or not.]

Is that so.

[So I think Tooya-senpai doesn't need to be concerned about it. Even if you are alone in school, you still have Kuroe-senpai such a great fiancée right?]

[.....Ah ah, yeah.]

Tooya nodded ambiguously. Although she may be a great fiancée on the surface, but Kuroe was a giant wolf monster, an existence that couldn't be trust at all.....however, it was impossible for Aoi to know about this.

Moreover, Tooya didn't care much about the fact that he was isolated in school. Although he thought that Aoi's idea was wrong at the beginning, but their conclusion were the same. It was just that in the end Tooya couldn't make any trustworthy friend.....but for now it was better to say that he felt more relaxed that no one else was concerned about him.

[And from now on I also want to be closer to senpai.]

Aoi smiled sweetly.

[Ah, of course along with Mashiro.]

Then she got close to Mashiro and hugged her suddenly.

[A, Aoi-chan!?!]

[Although it's a little hot over here. But no one else is here so we don't have to worry about anything. It's a good place where you can take a nap or being lazy.....it will better if we have the copy of the key.]

[Aoi-chan, you have spoken your true feelings unintentionally.]

What Mashiro said was unintentional, but in fact Aoi just said it frankly.

[Well, if you use it in secret, then we can give you the key.]

For them to be dignified to this extent, Tooya couldn't help but wanted to smile instead of feeling stunned.

[Really!?!]

Aoi showed a snobbish smile.

[I will make one for each of you next time.]

Indeed, it was inconvenient for Mashiro as she couldn't enter when Tooya was not here.

[[Master.]]

Suddenly Kuroe's voice sounded.

[[Don't you have something want to inquire about?]]

What Kuroe trying to say was telling Tooya for reconfirmation. Although Tooya was a little confused because it was hard to explain Aoi's similarity with that person.....he would just inquire about it.

[Uhhh, Aoi?]

Aoi said that she wanted Tooya and Kuroe to address her name directly.

[What?]

[Ah----I say Aoi.....do you have an elder sister?]

Aoi in Inaba Aoi was her name. And that surname was familiar.....and Tooya didn't think that such a rare surname could be seen casually. It was not surprising for him to think there was a relationship between Inaba Aoi and Inaba Akane.

[Yep.]

Aoi answered immediately.

[My sister called Inaba Akane.....I think she's ten years older than me? But she ran away from home when I was still an elementary student.]

[Eh, I see.....]

What Tooya knew about Akane was she was the stuff of the Order of Black Magic. After all, they were not that close at the beginning. So it was the first time he heard that she ran away from home.

[My family lives in an ancient shrine.....and because of that my family is very strict. My sister seems to not able to accept it and ran away from home after a quarrel with my parents.]

[Eh.]

It was kind of.....expected. Maybe this was the reason why Akane's rhetoric would be so rude.

[Aoi-chan's house is a shrine!]

Mashiro seemed to be interested on something different from what Tooya did.

[Yeah. But it is in a very remote country.]

[That, that means Aoi-chan is a priestess?]

[Yep.]

Aoi nodded and smiled.

[So I know something bad was attached on Mashiro.]

[!?!]

Tooya forced himself not to show that he was wavered.

[Bad thing?]

[Well, it's not a good thing. Although it seems like it's all right now, but I can see there still some fragments of it left in Mashiro's body.]

Tooya's mind began to grumble up and running up when Aoi spoke that confidently. Aoi's words could be said to be directed at the core of the recent events happened to Mashiro. Did Aoi say this because she knew it, or she really felt it through the power of the priestess.....since Aoi was Akane's sister, no matter which side it also could be accepted.

[Although the fragments don't have any power, but in the end it is not a good thing.....therefore Mashiro need this!]

Aoi took something like talisman from her pocket.

[This is my family's special demon talisman! With this, I can ensure that the evil spirits will gone and prevent diseases! Now it's only twenty thousand yen! And as a concession, when it's broken there are still two reserves at any time!]

[Ah ha ha, just like the sales program,Aoi-chan.]

[.....Eh eh, did I fail?]

Mashiro laughed----but not to the extent of a laughter, and Kuroe just smiling while Tooya was in a shocked expression.

[Well, that's just a joke.....]

Aoi had a cough and tried to fool it over.

[I will give this to Mashiro as the proof of our friendship. Although I was joking, but it's really useful, and wearing it can make you safe.]

[Well, thank you.]

Since it was a gift from her new friend, Mashiro happily accepted it. It seemed that she was thinking that what Aoi said before was just joking

only.....however, Tooya was thinking, in the end where was the beginning of the joke.

[[What exactly is it, ne?]]

Kuroe's voice sounded in his brain. Did she know what happened to Mashiro.....but this was not the important thing. Whether she knew about it, or she felt it because of her own power, both would lead to a common question.

Did she know about Tooya and Kuroe?

Or did she felt something?

This was the important one. And if it was one of them, then what was her standpoint in front of Tooya and Kuroe. Would she be like Akane, on the side of the Order of Black Magic.....or something else.

[[What master will do if she's our enemy?]]

As always, she said something that Tooya didn't want to think about. Aoi was Mashiro's friend, and also Akane's sister. Moreover a kouhai had good impression towards himself.....Tooya really didn't want to imagine that they were going to be enemy.

[Ah, yeah! Do senpais have time after school today?]

Suddenly Mashiro asked.

[Eh.....there should be nothing to do.]

Tooya answered while looking at Kuroe.

[I'm okay too.]

Kuroe replied.

[Aoi-chan?]

[Me too.]

Aoi nodded.

[How about we go to the station after school? To make a welcome party for Aoi-chan.....let's eat some desserts or play some games?]

Mashiro looked at Tooya and the others with expectation.

[Well, uh.....there's nothing bad with it.]

Tooya had no reason to refuse.

[Well, I think it's a good idea.]

Kuroe smiled and nodded.

[For me it will be a great welcome! Thank you, Mashiro!]

Aoi nodded while clinging to Mashiro tightly.

[Then, let's meet at the school front door after school ended.]

And so it was settled.

[Ah, well. He's much more ordinary than what I thought.]

Aoi replied in such a tone, like she was having a conversation with a very close friend.

[Kuroe-senpai was a little terrifying.....eh, don't judge from the appearance? Okay, understood. Because I always believe what you said.]

Aoi nodded as if she accepted the advice.

[Mashiro is a good girl. I have given the talisman to her just like you told me to, there shouldn't be any effect, right? I think that girl should be happy.....ah, yeah. I want to remain as her friend if possible.]

What she said doesn't sounds like a lie.

[Eh, uh. It keeps staring over here. It seems to be very unhappy to me.....just leave it alone if it doesn't do anything. If anything happens then I take it back along with Mashiro's share.....no problem. I will definitely follow what you said.]

Vroom vroom vroom

Aoi's pocket vibrated. There was a text message. She took out the phone to confirm, Mashiro's name reflected on the screen. It seemed that Mashiro was telling her it was going to reach the agreed time.

[Well it's time to leave.....yeah, just going out for a while.]

After answering, Aoi opened the door of the toilets and went out. The other doors were open, except for the one that Aoi entered.

[Well, better hurry.]

Aoi walked quickly and left the empty woman toilet behind.

[Why desserts can be so delicious.]

While saying that Aoi's front was filled with a lot of cake. Like they had agreed, the four of them met at the school front door and walked to the station. While walking they were discussing to go eat some desserts first. Since there was no objection, so they went to the coffee shop popular with its cake.....and the result was the table that they were sitting around was filled with cake.

[It's so delicious.]

Aoi cut the cake with a large spoon and put it into her mouth, her face was filled with unparalleled smile.

[I'm really grateful, Tooya-senpai.]

[As as long you are happy.....]

Tooya sighed. All the cake on the table were Tooya's treat.....it always happened like this naturally. Since it was in the name of Aoi's welcome party, of course Aoi would not be counted, and he couldn't accept the other two treats.....although that was not the entire reason.

[Is it better for me to treat you guys?]

[Oh, it doesn't matter.]

Tooya replied to Mashiro, who with a worried face. Yeah, it was no big deal. It was not like he opposed the idea of Mashiro treating. But she was his underclassman, the demon sword event was still vivid, he really didn't want her to spend money. This way, it was natural for Kuroe not to treat them.

The problem was, the amount. Tooya could not help but to think what was going on with this amount. There were at least two dozen of cake on the table. Although each of them was not so big, but it was not the amount where four people can finish it.....by the way one was enough for Tooya right now.

[[This extent is no big deal ne.]]

Kuroe's voice sounded. Well probably, because Kuroe was not human. Tooya thought, it was nothing incredible even if she ate all the cake in the store. But what the matter was for Mashiro and Aoi who were normal people to choose the same amount of cake.

[[For girls, desserts are filled in another stomach.]]

But you are not a girl, Tooya refuted.

[[You are so rude ne.]]

A picture of Kuroe shrugging appeared in his brain. Tooya sighed regarding this.

[By the way Tooya-senpai.]

[Yes?]

[It's about during noon, why did you think I have an elder sister?]

Aoi asked while eating the cake.

[And your reaction.....do you know my sister?]

[That.....]

How should he answer it, Tooya produced a moment of confusion.

[[Just answer it normally oh.]]

Kuroe's voice sounded.....well, let's do that.

[Well,yeah. Because it is a very rare surname, so I can't help but to think of the possibility.....]

[Indeed it is a very surname ne, Inaba.]

Aoi nodded to show that she accepted the answer.

[Is the relationship between senpai and my sister very close?]

[No, well, not that close.....we just saw each other a few times, and I don't even have the way to contact her.]

It should be the relationship of sworn enemies, if he must say it.

[But you two just met recently right?]

[That.....yeah.]

Though it was not at a good place.

[Is she still fine?]

[.....Well, very good.]

Good up to the point where she could kill someone just by using her gazes.

[Uhm, did Aoi not want to meet Akane.]

[Completely.]

Aoi shook her head.

[No letters from her ever since she left home.]

[Is that so.....]

[So I felt shocked to meet someone who knew my sister in this kind of place.]

Although her words could not hear the taste of surprise, but she did not seem to be lying.....well, Tooya didn't have the ability to see through a person whom he just met was lying or not anyway. At least he felt that was not a deliberately compiled lie.

If it was true, then the possibility of Aoi hearing the information regarding Mashiro from Akane would be a no.....then did she said that because of her own ability or it was really just a joke.

[How did Tooya-senpai knew my sister?]

[Eh, that is.....well, because of all sorts of things.]

[All sorts of things?]

[Yes, all sorts of things.]

[Huh----]

Tooya did not know whether he can fool Aoi, but Aoi did not ask more.

[Does my sister get a good job?]

[Eh, that.....it seems to be.]

[What kind of job.]

[.....Civil servants.]

He was not lying.....although the Order of Black Magic was an informal organisation but it still belonged to the country.

[Civil servant heh, in the end she got a very solid job ne. Then it's fine to tell my father they all.....but the atmosphere will become very bad if I said out her name.]

Aoi issued a [uh----] voice, and a troubled look.

[Is their relationship that bad?]

[Super bad.]

She could always summarised everything with only one sentence.

[Because I knew about it so it doesn't matter.....but she seems not wanting to talk to me too because of that. Even though she will still concern about me when I was very young.]

Aoi said with a nostalgic tone, while sending the cake into her mouth.

[That, should I help you ask for her contact when I meet her next time?]

Even Akane would not be so ruthless to her own sister.

[Although she will be angry if she knows this.....but please.]

[Okay.]

Tooya promised.

[By the way senpai.]

[What's the matter?]

[Can I order for more?]

[Eh?]

Tooya looked at the table surprisingly, the cake had been wiped out.

[Uhm, can I have it too?]

Mashiro looked at Tooya shyly.

[.....Go ahead.]

Tooya had to nod.

It seemed that desserts were really filled in another stomach ah.

[.....My wallet got much more lighter.]

[Be a gentleman ne.]

[Well, although it doesn't matter to me.....]

They went to have fun at karaoke for about two hours after came out from the coffee shop, then they said goodbye to Mashiro and Aoi. Because there was nothing else to do, so Tooya and Kuroe went home directly, and now they were in their own room. Although the cake and even the karaoke were also Tooya's treat, but it was not a big problem. Although his purse did get lighter, but he had a lot of savings before this, and the reward from the demon sword incident also gave a lot of money.

[.....Kuroe, what do you think about Aoi?]

This was important. The sudden arrival of a transfer student. Mashiro's friend. Akane's younger sister.

[What do you mean?]

[That's what I meant.]

Tooya forcefully turned the conversation back to the topic when Kuroe tried to turn it away.

[Then it's just like what master has seen.]

[I ask you because I don't understand about it.]

Tooya would not care about it if it was a transfer student in general and be friend with Mashiro, yet what Aoi said about what happened to Mashiro did hit the middle of the core. Did she actually know the details about it.....since Aoi being Akane's sister was a fact, then it was highly possible that Aoi had some special power. If so, did she also feel about what Kuroe was.

[We are basically no difference with human beings in this gesture.]

[.....Wasn't your identity exposed when we met Tanaka.]

[He might be speculated it from the situation.]

That meant even if Aoi had the power to perceive monsters, she also would not know about Kuroe. If the matter of she and Akane had no communication was true, then the possibility of getting information from there was very low. In conclusion, the possibility of her knowing about Tooya and Kuroe was.....very low?

[Is master really think that way?]

[.....]

She always went into where people did not want to think of as always. Although he had accustomed that she could read his mind, but he couldn't get used to her habits.

[.....I don't think so.]

In current situation, there was not enough conditions to give a proper judgement. What Tooya knew right now was the same as what he thought, he did not felt that Aoi was afraid of Kuroe. The two of them looked like normal friends.

However, Tooya didn't think it had no problem at all.

Transfer school at this timing.

Talked like she knew about Mashiro's thing.

Akane's younger sister.

.....There were so many elements, it was impossible to think there was no problem. If she really was just getting close to them accidentally, Tooya would definitely punch the god that arranged this coincidence.

Tooya would not be surprised if there really was problem.....the important was.

[Is she our ally, or our enemy ne.]

This was it. When he was being asked at noon, Tooya really did not want to think about the situation. However, reality would always betray his expectation without hesitation, Tooya had been deeply experienced this kind of nasty things.

If Aoi got close to them because she knew about them, then what was her purpose of it.....did she have an eye on Tooya's and Kuroe's life like Akane?

[Maybe she wants to use us.]

[Use.....]

[Our power is something extraordinary for this world. Since we are existence that cannot be placed anywhere casually, then naturally they have to put a collar on us.....it's not impossible for people who wants to use us appear right?]

[.....]

It could not be denied. After looking at Tooya's state, Kuroe smiled.

[Fortunately, the one holding the collar is master.]

[.....What do you mean.]

[That means you are easy to manipulate.]

Kuroe asserted.....yet Tooya couldn't deny it. Kuroe's power was indeed beyond ordinary, and the one who owned this power was both a cunning and man-eating monster. It was dangerous to consider how to use Kuroe directly, but it was another matter if Tooya was the opponent.

[I have to say that the order of black magic was quite naive ne. Well, maybe they think that minimise the risk will be better instead of use it randomly.....if it's a person trying to manipulate master, then that fellow will definitely try more radical means.]

[But she doesn't seems to be that kind of child.]

[Is master a person who can get through the nature of the other person with just one day?]

[.....]

Of course it was impossible.

[And the person who wants to use master, doesn't mean he or she is malicious ne?]

[.....What do you mean.]

[For example. In general, murder is evil. But not every murder happens because of malice right?]

[That is.....]

Indeed. Homicide was evil, but sometimes it was out of goodwill. Since there were people who killed other people out of their desire, naturally there were situation where people killed other people in order to protect the other people. The police shot a brutal murderer, but he could not be blamed for being evil in that situation.

[So there's a situation where she uses me out of goodwill?]

[But it's just something she thought it is.]

[.....That kind of thing----]

Tooya just cannot imagine.

[Well, the fact will not change no matter what her motive is.]

Kuroe scoffed.

[Whether it is malicious or goodwill, killing is still killing, and using us is still using us ne.]

Kuroe looked at Tooya happily.

[Right?]

She was like seeking for agreement.....Tooya understood that. After all, Tooya himself had also killed people. But that was not out of malice. He knew that he was the worst for what he did, and understood that he himself had no goodwill at all, he even killed people not because he wanted to kill.

However,he actually said that it did not matter.

.....She purposely asked for confirmation even though she knew everything.

[That's why I said human is very interesting ne.]

Kuroe was laughing happily from her heart.

[Ah----I am exhausted.....]

[Thanks for your hard work.]

Tanaka complimented Akane who entered his room and exuding a sense of fatigue like she said. Akane fell on the couch as usual after she waved her hand as a reply.

[My room is not a lounge.]

Tanaka was sitting in front of his table and shrugged his shoulders.

[It's cooler here.]

[The lounge over there also have air-conditioned room.]

[It's full of sweat smell.]

[They are your subordinates.]

[Even if they are, sweat is still sweat.]

This was already a custom, so Tanaka just accepted it.

[Well forget it.....just wanted to ask you something.]

[Ah?]

[There are some information I concerned about in the surveillance report of that two fellow.]

[Do I have do that kind of thing again after this too?]

[The signs remains growing, so we can't simply ignore it.]

[That's true.]

Although they exchanged contract and can be trusted, but that was nothing more than a scene. A catastrophe might happen even if there were a little abnormality. So it was impossible to put it aside.

[Then, what to do with me? To be honest I've been working for the whole day.]

[I know.]

Because there were precedents so Akane could be considered under semi-surveillance.

[Actually, his school got a transfer student.]

[Is that so? It's really rare in this timing, but it's not like absolutely not possible.]

[Though it is.....I am a little concerned about her name.]

[Ah?]

[Then, I did a brief investigation.]

Tanaka looked at something like information, then glanced at Akane.

[She seems to be your younger sister.]

[!?!]

Akane's lazy eyes opened wide in a moment. She quickly got up and looked at Tanaka.

[Just now, what did u said?]

[You no need to ask again right, I don't think your ears are that bad.]

[Okay please say it again.]

[Your younger sister went to the same high school with Kamisaki Tooya and Oogami Kuroe.]

[.....]

[Inaba Aoi, she is your sister right?]

[.....Yeah yeah.]

Akane nodded and looked away.

[As long as it's not someone else with the same name.]

[Your name is in her family list, and the birthplace was the same as yours.]

[.....Is that so.]

Akane sighed and answered like trying to escape reality.

[So,what did that fellow do?]

She looked back at Tanaka once again and asked.

[No, there's nothing for now. From the status quo, she befriended with Kuromine Mashiro, then knew Kamisaki-san and Oogami-san through

her.....because she has the familiar surname so I made some investigation, just that.]

He confirmed again that she indeed was Akane's younger sister through the answer from Akane.

[Do you not know about this?]

[.....I have never contact with my family ever since I ran away from home. They shouldn't know that I am working for the order of black magic.]

[I think so too.]

Tanaka did know something about Akane's affair. Ran away from home because had a quarrel with her parents, then the order of black got interested in her when she was working as something like magician in her hometown. Because she would show explicit disgust, so the topic of her home can be considered as taboo between the staffs.

[Did that fellow come here alone?]

[Seems like it. She seems to be renting a room in the apartment based on the information given by the school.]

[Reason for transfer is?]

[It is because of family, the detailed situation is not documented.]

[Tsk.]

Akane clicked her tongue.

[It is only a matter of interest, I haven't go through deep yet.]

Tanaka said with a wry smile.

[The order of black magic does not do anything?]

[There is no reason for action.....but even if she is not your sister, it's kind of suspicious to have a transfer student in this timing and try to get near to those two.]

Maybe, Tanaka asked.

[You know the reason for us to take action?]

[.....Who knows.]

Akane looked away.

[Is that so.]

And so Tanaka stopped asking.

[Once again, in current situation there's no reason for the order of black magic to take action. Since it's a matter between the family, I advise you to solve it personally.]

[.....Ah ah, I will do that.]

Akane replied, then muttered in soft voice.

[I will show you how I do it.]

Chapter 2: He and the Man Eater and the Transfer Student Ordinary Days

It'd been three days since Aoi transferred to this school. Aoi had been very familiar with Tooya and the others thanks to her straightforward personality. Her friendship with Mashiro seemed to be good too, it seemed she did not care about being isolated by other classmates and still got along very well with Mashiro.....so she looked to be a very extreme person. Although it was something glad for Tooya that Mashiro was able to make friends, but Aoi did not make friends with her classmates just because of Mashiro was like.....it should not to the extent of declaring a war against the whole class. What Aoi did was like trying to tell the whole class how fickle they were so there was no reason for her to make friends with them, or something like that.

And so, what Tooya worried about came true.....

[I am feeling very bad today.]

Aoi looked like in bad mood. She had been staring at her lunch box for the whole time even though she took it out to have her lunch.....there was a feeling that she and Akane were indeed sisters based from their appearances. Her expression and face was exactly the same what Tooya often seen from Akane.

[Nothing, I am just a little angry.....even though I have prepared for today.]

Aoi was just talking to herself. While Mashiro who was sitting beside her looked over here and showed a troubled expression.

[Actually, there's something in class.....]

Mashiro hesitated for a moment and said.

[What happened?]

[Although it was not like what happened to me.]

Mashiro said that at first. It seemed not like a big problem like before.

[Aoi was stumbled when she was walking out the classroom. Although there's no injury.....but her lunch box.....]

[Oh, I see.....so that's it.]

Aoi put a very unpleasant expression after she opened her lunch box. What Mashiro said happened when they were going out from the classroom, that means Aoi was holding lunch box in her hand at that time.....and then, the lunch box became a mess when Aoi fell. From what Aoi said when she was mumbling, she seemed to have spent a lot of thought on her lunch box.....it was reasonable for her to be in bad mood when her lunch box became like this.

[I'm sorry Aoi-chan.....it's all because of me.....]

[It's not Mashiro's fault.]

Aoi said immediately.

[It's my own choice to be a friend of Mashiro, it's not Mashiro's fault that I got stumbled. If they don't like me then just say it out.....instead they go and do such petty tricks.]

[But.....]

[In fact, I don't care about it. Karma did really exist oh.....soon that fellow will be retributed.]

After that, Aoi sighed again.

[Because Mashiro will be troubled so I am not angry anymore.....it's just that I am a bit sad that my well prepared lunch box became a mess, but it's time to give up that feeling and eat it.]

Aoi untied the cloth wrapping around the lunch box and opened the lid before she finished her words.

[Uh.....I'm still a bit frustrated.]

Since the impact was external, the content in the lunch box must have been a mess----And as expected, it was in a messy state. Beautifully arranged dishes mixed into the rice, and the tomato sauce prepared for the fried chicken was all spilled on it, the food dyed in red colour.

[.....You can trade with me if you don't mind.]

[The taste will not change anyway.....]

Although all the food in the lunch box were taste of tomato sauce only.

[At least give me some dishes.]

[Ah, me too!]

[Although I am very grateful to you two.....but you will get fat.]

[Okay.....]

It was really bad to continue to persuade her when she had said to this extent.

[Then trade with me.....]

[I don't really want senpai to evaluate my cooking skill based on this messy thing.]

She went into a dead end.....Aoi wryed up.

[Actually it's not a big deal. It's not to the point where you can't eat at all.....besides isn't there's someone senpai need to care more about?]

[Eh?]

[Kuroe-senpai is your fiancée right?I heard that you two are in cohabitation from Mashiro.]

[.....]

Tooya turns his gaze to Mashiro.

[Sorry, because she inquired me about all kind of thing.]

Mashiro laughed.

[Not that.....well, forget it.]

Tooya was not trying to seal Mashiro's mouth, after all he also knew that girls liked this kind of topic.

.....Just, well, Tooya felt a bit annoyed regarding that information was assumed as real and spread out.

[Kuroe-senpai is a beauty ne.]

[Kind of.....]

She did have a beautiful face, but only her face.

[I think a normal boy will not leave Kuroe-senpai such a beauty alone.....like today, won't Tooya-senpai concerned about Kuroe-senpai?]

Basically, Tooya had lunch on the rooftop every day, but Kuroe would occasionally have lunch in class. According to what she said that was for class communication, and Tooya allowed it since he felt more relaxed without her being around. This situation did not change since they started

having lunch with Mashiro, and Kuroe did not intend to change even if Aoi was blended in this group right now.

[Well, because I believe her.....]

Although it had a different meaning.

[And our engagement is quite widespread.]

[Is that so.....but you can't be too careless because of the situation.]

[.....You really like this kind of topic.]

Tooya really wanted to leave if possible.

[Because Tooya-senpai acts very cold towards Kuroe-senpai.]

[.....Is it?]

[Kuroe-senpai was obviously very active towards Tooya-senpai, but how Tooya-senpai treats Kuroe-senpai is totally different.]

[.....]

Well, maybe what she said was correct.....after all, Tooya did not pay any attention regarding this. Because Tooya was totally oblivious to the opinion from the surrounding, so he simply set aside his fiancée, and Tooya did not think of cooperate with the act. As a result, he did not care at all like what he said.....however, the situation seemed to have changed----

[Since you two are marriage partners, Tooya-senpai should also give a proper respond towards Kuroe-senpai's feelings.]

Because, here was another person spoke with a sense of empathy.

[Well, about that.....]

[Or there is another person that you like?]

[!?!]

Tooya's heart pounded vigorously at the moment of hearing that sentence.

[Well, a dubious response.....is it true?]

[No, there's no such thing Aoi-chan!]

Suddenly Mashiro interrupted.

[That.....?]

Tooya looked over there, Mashiro was saying with a desperate look.

[Although Tooya-senpai usually did not show it because of embarrassment, but actually he and Kuroe-senpai are very lovely-dovey!]

[.....Mashiro?]

Tooya could not help but stare at her super-serious face. This was the first time Tooya have heard of such a thing.

[Is that right?]

Aoi asked.

[Yeah, Tooya-senpai is very lovely with Kuroe-senpai in their home! They sleep together and even bath together.....maybe they have did this and that too!]

[Umm, Mashiro?]

Tooya tried his best to remain calm and asked.

[Where did you heard that from?]

[Of course it's from Kuroe-senpai.....ah, I forgot I can't tell Tooya-senpai about this!]

[.....Ah ah, I see.]

That bastard, I am the only one that knows nothing?

[Is it true, what Mashiro said?]

Aoi looked at Tooya.

[.....It's real.]

There was no other choice other than this.

[You, what did you actually instilled in Mashiro.]

The class for today was over, and now was after school time. Tooya, as usual, walked out of the classroom and confirmed that nobody was around and spoke. Because he immediately rushed out after school ends, so the flow of people in the corridor was still sparse.

[What's with you ne, said that out all of a sudden.]

[When did I act lovey dovey with you at home before?]

[Uh huh.]

Kuroe looked away as she understood what Tooya said.

[Even though I told her not to tell master.]

[You, so you think you can just simply said it as long as it's not exposed?]

[Yeah.]

[Don't just nod and agree.....]

Tooya felt discouraged.

[In the end, what is your intention to instill that kind of things to Mashiro.]

[Because she came to ask me, so I answered her questions.]

Kuroe said it casually.

[Because she asked.....]

[How we actually interact, how we spent our time at home, and so on.....after all, Mashiro is a girl that reached that age, so naturally she will be interested a love affair between a boy and a girl.]

[.....And so you answered her that way?]

[Yeah.]

Kuroe nodded.

[Master and I are in engagement, it's natural for us to act lovely-dovey at home right? If we will only act lovely at places where others cannot see, then it can be explained why we are acting cold to each other at school.]

[.....It sounds like a setting you've made without my permission.]

[To muddle through our relationship is with most troubling thing to do.....didn't master does not deny this because you know it too?]

[.....Yeah.]

The person that made him unable deny it.....it was unnecessary to deny her anymore.

[Then everything's fine right?]

[.....Well, even if you say that.]

His reasoning can understand that this solution was better. But he disgusted it mentally deep into his heart.

[Master is still as cold as always ne.]

Kuroe shrugged.

[That is because you have done many unnecessary things that made me hate you.....eh.]

Tooya suddenly stopped. There seemed to be some commotion at the corridor..... nearby the stairs. There were some people gathered there.

[It seems like something happened.]

The atmosphere over there did not seem bright.

[It seems that someone fell down.]

[Eh.....?]

Tooya could not help but stare at Kuroe because he heard something unbelievable. With Kuroe's hearing, it was not strange for her to be able to hear the conversation from here which had quite a distance.

[Because many people are talking at the same time so it's a bit troublesome to make it clear.....it seems like someone fell down from the stairs and was injured. She seems to be a first year student.]

[First year.....is it.....]

The scene of Mashiro's hand with bandage emerges in Tooya's mind.

[Wait wait.....three people? They said three people were fell down. Seems like they fell together while walking side by side. But not sure if it's because one person fell and pulled the others along.]

[That means not the two?]

If it was two people then he can consider the possibility of Mashiro being with Aoi, but three people then he couldn't think of that.

[Most of the reasons they said are just speculations, so there's not much credibility in them. But it seems they are not being pushed by someone.]

[Can't you get the names of those three people?]

[Looks like there are some onlookers over there.....why don't we just go check it out?]

[.....Do their injuries look serious?]

[It's not to the extent of needing to call an ambulance. Just a slight swelling, it seems they have been sent to the infirmary.]

[Is that so.....then can you confirm it?]

[You want to use clairvoyance?]

Kuroe said like she felt troublesome.

[I am very concerned about it.]

[Then you just send a mail.]

[Okay.....this is an order.]

[Yare yare, you only order me for the sake of convenience, such a mean master ne.]

Kuroe shrugged and closed her eyes. Although Tooya did know the details, but he guessed her vision switched into the infirmary.

[Well, it's not the two of Mashiro after all.]

Kuroe kept her eyes closed.

[I see.]

Tooya took a breather.

[But their faces look familiar.....hugh.]

Kuroe said it like she remembered something.

[They looks like the remaining three of the five people that surrounded Mashiro before.]

[Eh?]

[I am sure of that ne.]

Kuroe asserted and opened her eyes.

[Maybe it was karma, for them to meet the same tribulation.]

[.....]

Tooya did not answer. The sense of easiness when he heard that Mashiro did not get hurt is gone. Is it just a mere coincidence for them to meet the misfortune.....and there were also someone said it was karma like what Kuroe stated.

[It's just a coincidence.]

Kuroe said.

[Although to think everything that happened do not matter to yourself will be a problem, but the thinking of opposite is also a problem ne. If you feel that everything happened have something to do with yourself, it will only make you feel doubtful all the time.]

[And in the end I will be the enemy of the entire world?]

[Although what you say is an extreme theory.]

Although it was different from what Tanaka said, but he would also face the result of mental collapse.

[It's just an accident from what we saw right now.....but the timing is a bit too good, ne.]

[Timing?]

[Didn't we talked about karma just now?]

Kuroe repeated the word, karma. It was something Tooya still have memory of. He remembered that Aoi also said something the same during lunch break.

[How did you know that?]

Obviously she was not at the scene just then.

[Why do you think I won't know it?]

Kuroe asked instead.

[.....haa.]

Tooya sighed.

[Well forget about it.....what you are trying to say is, one of the three of them are the person that tripped Aoi?]

[The possibilities are very high ne.]

If you ask who was the most displeased with Aoi's attitude, then it would be the people that bullied Mashiro. Although Aoi and Mashiro did not make it clear, but the odds were high.

[So Aoi is the one pushed them down.....?]

[At least they were not being pushed by anyone. Although it's after school time, but there's still a lot of people at that time, it is very difficult to push them down in secret.]

[Is that so.....]

It was impossible for her to that according to common sense.....if he considered the common sense.

[Therefore, it was just an accident for now.]

Then, Kuroe smiled. She denied it while trying to emphasize her agreement at the same time.

[.....By the way, I haven't heard your answer yet.]

[Yes?]

[What do you think about Aoi?]

[I remember I answered it before.]

[You are just trying to hit around the bushes at that time.]

He did not know Kuroe's opinion at all.

[It's fine to just say you hate or like her, I want to hear what you think.]

[Hmm.]

Kuroe put her finger on her chin like she was thinking.

[A spoiled child, ne.]

[.....Is that your impression on Aoi?]

[It's totally just my own impression. She will just totally rely on someone who she can, kind of like that.]

[Although she doesn't like such a useless child at all.....]

But maybe that was why she acted very friendly with everyone.

[There are many kinds of spoiled people in this world. As for that child, she will just do whatever she can on her own without permission, if she is continue being spoiled then of course she won't become the useless person that master thought of.]

[Is that so.....]

A monster that was deeply interested in mankind and did not mind to make a contract that had disadvantage to her own. Her opinion should not be wrong.

[So you hate Aoi?]

[Is it necessary for master to stick to this?]

[It's a reference for your further comments.....this is an order, answer it honestly.]

[It seems I don't have any credibility at all ne.]

Kuroe shrugged.

[If I must choose, then it will be hate.]

[Why?]

[She looks like someone I knew before.....and it's the type I hate.]

[.....Are you sure it's not just simply anger?]

[Well, you are not wrong too.]

Kuroe replied indifferently.

[But it's my freedom to think whatever I want right?]

[Although what you say is correct.....]

There was no way for him to simply accept it.

Thus, Tooya thought he couldn't be careless.

Aoi lived alone in a room in a small apartment. Although the room was not vast, but it was enough for one person to live. And the apartment was not some ancient building so the room was decorated well. The furniture were not completed because she just moved in. But there were television, bookshelves, wardrobes as well as a small table. There was nothing seemed colourful in this room, it seemed too monotone as a girl's room.

[Well, that feels good.]

However, Aoi seemed not really care about it and lied on a soft cushion while mumbling on her own.

[Although I didn't expect all three of them to fall together.....it's so mean. Dragging her friends down so that she can be saved. And it was not only one but two people.]

It was so mean, although she thought of that, but her expression was saying that she couldn't accept it.

[Well, they deserved it too since they did something bad to Mashiro before this.....ah, I know. I won't do it next time.]

Aoi's expression eased off after being warned by somebody.

[It will surely be doubted.....eh, it's fine right? Yeah, since there's no big problem even if being doubted. And they are the one at fault, senpai should be able to accept.....because he----]

Ding dong

The conversation was interrupted by the doorbell. Who is it? Aoi thought. It was not even a week since she moved into here. Mashiro and Tooya did not know her address yet, and the others that knew her were not around.....so it was probably some salesman. Maybe they came here to advertise their newspaper after knowing there was a new tenant.

[.....So annoying.]

She really wanted to ignore it. Since the television was not turned on, it seemed she can just ignore it.

Ding dong

However, the doorbell was still ringing.

Ding dong

It still continued.

[So annoying.....ah,I got it. I am coming.]

Aoi stood up and walked to the entrance while answered impatiently.

[Here I am, so what you want?]

Aoi unlocked and opened the door.

[Eh.....!?!]

She was surprised by the person standing over there.

[Yo.]

Inaba Akane was standing at the outside with an expressionless look.

[Big sister.....]

[You should be more careful since you living on your own. You should confirm the visitor from the peephole first.]

Then, Akane looked at his sister again.

[Or, you are living with someone?]

[.....I live alone.]

[Is that so, I seem to hear that you are talking to someone just now.]

[I think I am on a call just now.]

[I see.]

They just stand there after answering.

[.....]

[.....]

Still standing.

[Come in.....it's not good to talk while standing.]

[Ah ah.]

Akane nodded and entered the room. And so they sit opposite to each other on the small table.

[So, why did you come here?]

[Do I need a reason to meet my younger sister?]

[.....]

[That should be my line.....why did you come here?]

Akane stared at Aoi.

[Why.....because I transferred school.]

Aoi answered as if to hide something.

[Is there no other reason for you to transfer at this timing?]

It was impossible to not have one according to common sense.

[Say it, your reason.]

[It sounds like you are interrogating.....that's not how you treat your younger sister.]

Aoi emerged a lonely expression.

[You are always like this since before. Always trying to avoid me at home.....not gentle at all.]

[.....Probably.]

Akane did not deny.

[But now is not the time to say that, I am here to listen your intention.]

Akane remained staring at Aoi.

[.....It's a mission.]

Aoi whispered.

[Mission?]

[That's right, a mission that handed down to our shrine from ancient times, I came to this town in order to complete it.]

[.....That two people?]

[Which two?]

Aoi asked like trying to act innocent.

[I thought our family mission is to protect that thing.]

Akane stopped asking and continued.

[That was just one of them.....you shouldn't know since you left the home before finished the training. Our mission is to protect that thing and also resolve the disaster that happened.]

[.....Seems like it.]

Akane showed that she was convinced.

[The intuition that you're best at.....that means you can trust me right now?]

[When it comes to our family mission, ne.]

Akane emphasized it.

[I think that it's strange to send only you for such an important mission. As far as I can tell, our father should do this by himself.]

[I came here for observation first.]

[Although it's been two months since the seal was undone?]

[We were late when we found it.]

[Do you think that kind of lies works on me?]

Akane still stared at Aoi.

[I will be more than enough, he allowed it after my persuasion.]

Aoi replied Akane's stare directly.

[Persuade, huh.]

[Yeah, father is surprisingly straightforward as long as you talk nicely with him.]

[If so, then I won't be running away from home.]

Akane pulled out her handgun and pointed at Aoi before she could even respond. She did it naturally.

[What's with that hard object.]

Aoi asked.

[This is also a persuade.....although it is a form other than language.]

Aoi remained looking at Akane like she couldn't see the gun that was pointing right in front of her.

[It seems that you don't know there's another way of convincing other than negotiation.]

[What you do right now is not convincing but threatening right?]

[We are negotiating. But I will just pull the trigger if I can't get the answer I want.]

[Although you won't do that.]

Aoi smiled innocently just like a child.

[Because you will never shoot me.]

[Although I am not a gentle elder sister like what you said?]

[Yeah, even so I can affirm that you will never shoot me.]

Aoi said like she got advice from somebody.



[.....Tsk.]

Akane clicked her tongue and removed the muzzle from Aoi.

[If you can shoot me right now, then you had done it long ago, or so I say.]

[.....That is because of some bastard over there.]

Akane glared at Aoi----glared deeply.

[What is your intention?]

[Like I said, it's for the mission.]

Aoi replied.

[And the details of the mission?]

[I won't tell you who ran away from home.]

[Tell me.]

[.....So you still look at me that way huh.]

Aoi showed a lonely expression to Akane who was staring at her.

[.....Just say it.]

[If you want to know, you can just call father.]

Aoi answered.

[Tsk.]

Akane clicked her tongue.

[.....That two people are under control of the order of black magic. If you simply take any action then we will also have countermeasures.]

Akane stood up after leaving this sentence.

[I am going back.]

She walked to the entrance.

[Okay, goodbye big sister.]

Akane walked out of Aoi's room without even looking back.

[My elder sister has not changed at all.]

Aoi said after Akane left the room.

[Well, to be honest, I was really shocked when she pointed the gun at me. Of course I believe in what you said.....but I still felt terrified and lonely when being pointed. She always acts hostile towards me since last time, but I do not hate her.]

Aoi showed a lonely expression.

[.....Yeah, I know. It will be solved as long as our purpose is fulfilled. That's why I received the spell from father and came here on my own, and I have no intention of giving up.....yeah, I believe you.]

Aoi smiled after being encouraged.

[But my elder sister already knew it, if I don't act quickly.....well, yeah. Although it's better if we are more intimate, but I will still do it before the vacation. That way that person will be more easier reminded of ordinary days.]

[That.....welcome.]

Tanaka showed a confused expression which is very rare. It was not a problem that she entered the room rudely. Since she would just break into the room if he locked it so he just handed the key to her, and basically the

room was not locked when he was here. It was also usual for her not to greet and just lie onto the sofa.....except her expression.

Very depressed. This phrase suited Akane's expression very well right now. From the view of Tanaka, Akane seemed being crushed down by someone.

[Today's work is over, so I thought you went home.....]

As far as Tanaka knew, Akane left the order of black magic three hours ago. Then she directly came to Tanaka's room after doing something outside.

[What happened?]

It was a sure thing that something happened.

[I went to meet.....my sister.]

[Today?]

He told her the address the day before yesterday, so Tanaka did not feel surprised.

[There seems to be nothing good based on your expression.]

[.....Ah.]

Akane nodded.

[Can I know what happened?]

Tanaka did not know very well about Akane's affair. Although he would gather the intelligence of others without hesitation if necessary, but he was not a person who would inquire about the personal lives of his colleagues if not necessary. Although Akane brought many trouble to him all this time.....but he would be already be avoiding her if he hated her. Tanaka still had the tolerance of listening to her trouble.

[Tanaka, do you have brothers?]

[I have a younger brother.]

[.....Can you kill him?]

[If it's absolutely necessary.]

Tanaka answered without hesitation.....in general, he should at least hesitated since it was his brother. However, if things developed to that extent, he would do it like he said without feeling hesitation nor regret in it.

[I see.....I can't do it.]

It was already her limit to put her finger on the trigger.....she did not even open the insurance bolt.

[.....Sorry, I don't know what you want to say.]

Tanaka showed a confused expression.

[It doesn't sounds like just a quarrel between sisters.....what you did after meeting with your sister?]

[Had a conversation, took out the gun and came back without a shot.]

[.....At this moment, let's forget about you taking the gun out without permission.]

Of course it was prohibited.

[Wanting to kill your sister just because of a quarrel, even you are not impulsive to that extent. Are you convinced that there's any reason causes you have to kill her?]

[.....]

Akane did not answer.

[Didn't you come here to talk about this?]

[.....]

[So you want me to investigate on my own without any explanation huh.]

It was better to say that this was the purpose of Akane coming here.

Because she couldn't say it, so she came here and tried to make Tanaka to investigate it.

[.....No, can you wait for awhile.]

Akane spoke.

[Just wait a little longer, I don't have enough resolve right now.....a little longer.]

Akane was trying to rely on Tanaka.

[That means your sister will do something soon?]

[.....]

[In order to contain her when the time comes, I will interpret it that way. The conversation can't go on if you have not any response.]

Did she want to say it.....it seemed not. It was confirmed that Akane knew something. He needed information from Akane in order to know what happened. Since Tanaka did not know anything at all, it was the most efficient to ask the informed people.

[I will be able to do it at that time.]

[So fast?]

[Because I've been there.]

[.....Is it.]

Tanaka felt relaxed.

[Like I said before, there's no reason for the order of black to act right now. And I don't have the habit of invading the privacy of my colleagues unnecessarily.]

[.....It will be a great help.]

Akane stood up after a short thank.

[Going back now?]

[Going to have some drink before going back.]

[Is that so.]

Although Akane did not made it clear, but Tanaka could still understand to this extent.

Chapter 3: His Childhood Friend's Return

Because of Kuroe, a lot of things in Tooya's life changed variously. Things which were for sure couldn't be changed as if had been contaminated into something else.....But there were still things that didn't change.

Morning would always come if the night ended. As expected it was a thing that couldn't be changed.

「That's why, it's time to wake up.」

「.....what chu meanwhy.」

Monyo monyo, Kuroe got up but I didn't know if her eyes were awake or not. It could be said as usual she seemed weak in the morning, with a vague look she rubbed her eyes.

「I go out now, so change your clothes. 」

「.....alright.」

Tooya had already changed clothes. Although before this he will change after waking up Kuroe, but lately he did so when Kuroe was sleeping..... As he was getting used to waking up so it was a trouble.

「Morning.」

「Umu、 morning」

He returned to his room after got the sign of finished changing and Kuroe was already fully awake.

「So today is school day as well.」

「.....of course? 」

Even Kuroe had changed into her uniform.

「It's not like I have anything to say but.....I think it wouldn't be bad to let me have a longer sleep once in a while.」

「It's fine to sleep to your heart content on weekend.」

「Doesn't it sounds fun to continue sleeping even though where there's school? 」

Sounded terribly like a useless man's dialogue.

「It's fine if you do what you want.....because it's not like you're obligated to attend class.」

In fact Kuroe was like to do things on a whim.

「Forget it.」

Looking bored as she shrugged her shoulders.

「It's good that you are feeling troubled occasionally.」

「Is that what a person just told me his troubles recently should say? 」

「.....just that I was only a little bothered about yesterday's stuffs.」

「About the three living people falling off the stairs? 」

「.....Yeah」

As usual the detestable way of talking.

「I wonder if I should investigate properly」

「Investigate properly? 」

「Don't you see, the reason for the fall or something.....」

「If master wishes to I could investigate it.」

Kuroe was extremely uninterested.

「.....It doesn't bother you? 」

「Absolutely not」

Not at all.

「Since there are many other interesting things.....well、 after all you just need to give the order if you want me to investigate.」

「.....」

Being told to that extend made him hesitate to give the order.

「Anyways Master's main concern is whether Aoi was involved or not right? Anyway why don't you try to meet and check on her situation.」

「.....Well、 that's true but」

“Right” Tooya said worriedly, Kuroe muttered softly.

「If master still have any time to check on the situation、 that is」



Then in an unexpected, but very common morning.

「Ah、 good morning Tooya-kun 」

Leaving the house, a familiar greeting could be heard coming to his ears..... whose voice, which he didn't suppose to hear in a while, could be known without looking.

That was why, he could not understand it.

He feels bewildered and afraid to look over there, but the desire to confirm it was much stronger. To Tooya who could not expect and prepared for it, he couldn't stop his desire.

「Why..... ? 」

Rikka was looking over here. In front of the house waving while smiling.....As if she was waiting for Tooya to go out.

An impossible scene.

A scene that will never happen.

After all, this was a scene Tooya didn't want to happen at all.

He completely couldn't understand the scene before his eyes..... He looked at Kuroe seeking an answer. But Kuroe didn't say anything as she only shook her head..... while sneering pleasantly. Did she really not knowing what was happening, or it was the opposite, Tooya couldn't come to a conclusion.

『It's fine to just ignore her ? 』

Being told that he suddenly came back. A curious look was floating on Rikka face because there was no reaction from Tooya. If Tooya remains dumfounded would raise more doubts.

「Good、 Good morning Rikka」

Fearfully approaching, he let out his voice.

「Un」

She smiled and nodded..... Just only that, Tooya felt that any doubts came to mind had become unimportant.

「Kuroe-chan too good morning」

「Yes、 good morning」

Rikka greeted Kuroe, and Kuroe also responded. Rikka was supposed to be forgotten everything about Kuroe.....he thought so.

「So、 shall we go」

「Ah、 ok」

He nodded and started walking. As usual.....no, it was like since Tooya encountered Kuroe, he does not need to avoid or be caution of something. Three people, Rikka with a smile, Kuroe with a cat's smile floating on their faces while walking side by side.

What Tooya hoped for, the scene he hoped for which was lost was here.

It was a sweet dream..... a very sweet dream.

「Rikka」

「What？」

He felt no worried in that question. Just how much Rikka did remember、 she knew until which extend. She remembering about Tooya and Kuroe was certain.....Since she was walking with Tooya without any question, it was definitely passed the time point of the three people that bullied Tooya went missing.....Then, what about things after that？

「Umm.....」

Right now, a smile was showing on Rikka's face. If so, then I guessed she didn't remember about that. That which caused Rikka's smile to be clouded..... the thing about her father. The reason why Tooya decided to partway with Rikka, is because sin he committed.

「What is it？」

With a pure and innocent smile, Rikka asked again.

「No, nothing at all」

He didn't ask. He couldn't ask. Did she forget about it, or did she remember but didn't show on the surface..... Either way he couldn't ask her right away.

The smile on her face right now, Tooya didn't wish for it to be clouded.



「The weather today is also good」

「Ah、 um、 you're right」

Tooya answered while desperately grasping his wandering thoughts. Even though he was walking on the usual school street, his legs feel limp and didn't want to move forward. And yet he was very concerned about walking properly so that Rikka wouldn't notice, he feels really tired.

『You're too restless』

Kuroe's voice resounded, but Tooya couldn't hear it. To this Kuroe "yare yare" and shrugged her shoulders. Whether she was being worried or not, Kuroe walked silently behind the two.



「But it's sooo hot」

「Ah、 um、 kinda hot」

And the weather was good

「Tooya-kun, what happened ? 」

「Eh、 why ? 」

「Since a while ago there's nothing but vague reply you know」

「Nothing at all.....」

「Umu」

With a nod Rikka turned to look back.

「Kuroe-san, what happened?」

「Nothing in particular」

Kuroe answered, smiling.

「Surely he only feels uneasy being charmed by Rikka 」

「W,what are you saying all of a sudden Kuroe-san!?!」

Rikka blushed and frantically waving her hands.

「It's easy to tell looking from behind you know」

「Because, look, aren't you two seeing my face everyday.....」

While saying such things, she was throwing gazes of expectation at Tooya. If it was the before, surely he would say something and ignore her expectation..... However, Tooya right now was feeling unease like Kuroe said, furthermore her reason was quite accurate.

「Eh, no, that's.....」

He couldn't answer properly, his face was also red. Rikka also understood the meaning of this.

「Is, is that so」

Her cheek was further blushed with her hands joined in front of her chest. But she couldn't say anything after that, only peeking at Tooya with blushing cheek sometimes.....apparently Rikka couldn't go anymore than this.

『Just like junior high school student at their puberty ne』

A shocking voice resounded, but Tooya decided to ignore it. He was also blushing just like Rikka, walking in a straight line without being able to look at each other in the eyes. But they both couldn't be helped but being conscious of each other, it was easy to tell from behind.

「.....at least, it would be best to notice what she has said everyday 」

Tooya seemed to realize something was wrong here. This unexpected situation, causes the part of which Tooya strongly protected in his heart collapsed right away. Tooya's confusion had been replaced completely by another thing.....Kuroe only applauded.

「Well, we are going to return to reality ne.」

Murmuring with a small voice that couldn't be heard, she sneered.

This gap was definitely very big.



Arriving at school, even entering classroom Rikka wasn't changed. As she was having conversation with people in class as usual, she also paid attention to Tooya. Right from the start he didn't have much conversation with his classmates that's why he was not being recognized doesn't make any difference to the others in the class. While being puzzled, Rikka faced others like usual, as if she didn't have any contact with Tooya. Her classmate apparently had no doubts at all.

And so lesson started, at last Tooya had some time to think calmly. The teacher's words came in from the right and came out from the left, he was desperately thinking about the current situation. But no matter how much he thought only one question came to mind.

Why?

That question filled his entire head. Confused with the rising fear.....nothing else could come to mind.

『Yare yare』

His mind was calmed down by Kuroe's resounded voice.

『Even if you think alone would only be more confusing right.....I really wish my master will rely on this loyal servant at times like this』

Although Tooya couldn't see she was worried about him at all..... She was looking at Tooya with a smile on her face. Looking at that face the thought that she was the cause came to his mind.

『I didn't do such things』

Was that really true, he asked.

『It's true.....First of all, I can't do this without master's permission wasn't it?』

Tooya thought, there were many restrictions for Kuroe. Those restrictions placed on her were absolute. Even she herself can't break it.....but other than that she could. Kuroe didn't have restrictions on doing things Tooya didn't told.

And the orders given to Kuroe included not to kill any human, do not leave his side without permission..... Do not unseal Rikka's memory, memory of what Tooya never said before. Normally when she noticed something that one shouldn't do, Kuroe would do it..... and feeling joyfully in it too.

『Master.....how much are you don't trust in me.』

Instead of that, tell me what I can trust in you. Tooya thought.

『There's nothing for me to profit in doing what is opposite to master's will by putting back Rikka's memories. Instead in this way, wouldn't it only provoke master's antipathy?』

She was looking over here with full interest though.

『I can't be helped.....Since it's interesting. Exactly because such change in master's emotions could be fun that I accepted this unfair contract.』

Because for the sake of seeing my reaction you unlocked the seal, Tooya thought this might be possible.

『Supposedly if I want to, I'll do it at a better timing.』

Calmly Kuroe answered back.

『If you're still skeptical about me to that extend, you could order me to answer honestly right.』

An unhappy voice came transmitted.

Answer honestly.

Tooya ordered without hesitation. For Tooya to give the order through telepathy is the first time but there shouldn't be a problem right.

『.....It's better if you at least hesitated ne.』

That sounded a little lonely.

So?

Tooya inquired.

『I didn't do it.』

The answer didn't change.....Well, he knew that but. Although Tooya didn't trust Kuroe much, but he understood that this was not her doing. And yet because she was Kuroe that he could pointlessly inquired, but it was best not to tell.

But, in that case why..... did it unsealed naturally.

『No.』

Kuroe answered.

『Certainly after many years the spell's effect would weaken. However the spell placed on Rikka was not long ago, each time I look at her face I was certain the spell did not weaken. But there is no doubt that the spell suddenly vanished without being weakened.....First 』

Kuroe continued further.

『Because if it is merely lifting the spell away then Rikka's behavior was strange. If originally, she would be really concerned about what master did up to yesterday, and confused what happened.....Why until then she forgets about master, and the likes. However, Rikka's behavior wasn't like that at all. Just like she spent yesterday together with master very normally. 』

Of course Tooya also had that question. Although he also thought about the possibility of Rikka didn't notice of her memory was disorder..... As far as one could see, Rikka seemed to be aware of the current situation correctly. If it is just lifting the spell away, such thing was impossible.

『In other words, someone lifted the spell, then at the same time applied a new spell as not to born contradiction in her mind.』

If that was the case then this is not a mere coincidence, he couldn't think of anything else.....If that being the case, then the question moved to who did it. Unlocked the spell Kuroe cast, furthermore to not react contradiction cast a new spell..... Normal human couldn't do this.

In the first place, Kuroe cast spell was not that simple to unlock, right?

『In this age, there should not be anyone who could easily unlock that spell. Well, that spell was not something I good at too ne.』

Kuroe said that she only good at spells and skills that cause harm to human. Apparently, spells other than that which she used were referred and learnt from the ancient exorcists and created something almost the same.....However, even if excluding that Kuroe's power was supposed to be powerful. From what Kuroe said, the exorcist's strength these days were declined greatly compared to old times, therefore her spell supposed to be more than enough.

『I don't think the bunch from Order of the Black Magic can unlock it.....well, maybe they have someone powerful in there but we don't know that ne.』

However, supposing if there was such a powerful person from Order of the Black Magic who did this, they couldn't gain anything. They admitted that they have no chance to win Kuroe face to face, then there was no reason for them to do such thing to provoke Tooya's wrath.

『If so, only one person seems to be the culprit ne.』

Tooya use elimination to argue with Kuroe. He knew that it was not The Order of the Black Magic, however he didn't know what Kuroe said was right or not..... It doesn't matter whether she could do it or not. Because Tooya can figure out the reason why she will do this.

『Does Master know enough about that girl to that extend?』

Tooya couldn't answer that.

His answer didn't come out at all.



Ignoring Tooya's trouble, class progressed peacefully. And the lunch break comes.

「Tooya-kun、Kuroe-san、let's eat together？」

Rikki didn't show any signs of confusion, she as usual came to Tooya and invited him to eat lunch together.

「Ah, ok.....」

Tooya couldn't refuse that, naturally by the flow of events his legs were heading toward outside of classroom..... just like exactly one month ago, the trio headed toward the rooftop.

「Since today is hot, I tried using soumen to make bento.」

「Hee」

What to do now?

While not making Rikka to notice his unnatural behavior, Tooya's thoughts were going round and round. Rikka got her memories back for unknown reason, moreover, she didn't feel any uncomfortable with that. Because of that, like exactly one month ago they were heading toward the rooftop.

However, the situation was different in Tooya's perspective. Because Rikka is a stranger to Mashiro and Aoi..... how should he explain this well enough. He couldn't explain why up till now he didn't bring his close childhood friend Rikka over there before, and the sudden appear of two people who were very familiar with Tooya, Rikka would think it was strange right.

『You don't have to worry about it I think ne.』

Kuroe voice resounded.

『The people in class also doesn't think it's strange right.』

That Tooya also noticed. They accepted that Rikka came in contact with Tooya normally as like that was something naturally. As for people in class to not have strange feeling regarding the contact between Rikka and Tooya, he didn't think it was the effect of the spell Kuroe casted.

『Umu, that's because it was not the spell same as the one I casted one Rikka to completely unable to recognise master's existence ne.』

Therefore same as Rikka's memory, someone casted the spell on people in class too.

『If so, then Mashiro and Aoi would be affected by the spell too don't you think.』

Very likely that's the case.

『Well, but there's a possibility they are just acting.』

Who are the one acting, Kuroe didn't say.

「Ah, senpai. You're late.」

From above a voice came. Towards the top of the stairs, in front of the rooftop entrance stood Aoi and Mashiro looking down at them.

「Because I can't enter without senpai so won't you come sooner.」

Aoi said in a sulking way.

「Eto, sorry.」

He apologized for the time being.

「Ah, Kuroe-senpai, Rikka-senpai. Good day.」

「Un, Good day.」

「Ee, Good day.」

Rikka and Kuroe answered and replied Aoi's greeting.....Rikka too.

「Mashiro-chan good day too.」

「Yes, good day Rikka-senpai.」

Rikka looked at Mashiro's eyes and smiled, Mashiro smiled back in return.

『Look, like what I had said right?』

Kuroe's prediction was true.

But, whether this was good or not, as for Tooya he didn't know.



There was a word that three girls could make up a long conversation. If so, then how noisy do you think the conversation would be if you gather four girls.....well, as for one of them was a quite suspicious.

「Uwaa, Rikka's senpai bento is soumen!？」

「Yes, the soup is put in the water bottle.」

「So you can use soumen to make bento.」

Rikka and Aoi and Mashiro were chatting like knowing each other before. Regarding Aoi, she apparently knew Rikka shortly after she transferred to here. As for Mashiro, although he was not so sure, but it must be around the same time when Tooya knew her.

「Do you want to have a try?」

「Eh, is that fine?.」

「I'm also interest in it.」

「I wonder if I can have some.」

「Un, since there's a lot.」

Rikka treated each of them some soumen.....then her gaze was directed toward Tooya.

「C'mon Tooya-kun, have some too.」

「Ah, un.」

Receiving the container from Rikka, picked up soumen with chopsticks. The soup was kept cold in the water bottle, this cool taste in the summer was really very comfortable.

「Delicious.」

「Great that you like it.」

Rikka smiled sweetly.....Tooya was fascinated by that smile. What he was supposed to have thrown away was once again here. Tooya's heart had been shaken up helplessly.

「Ah, Tooya's senpai face is red.」

「Wha!?!」

Aoi's joyful face made Tooya jumped in surprised.

「That's no good senpai. You have Kuroe-senpai as fiancée, you can't cheat on her.」

Right, she said while tilted her neck and looked at Kuroe.

「That's right, I'll be jealous if you do that.」

Kuroe grinned.

「Is, is this the triangle relationship!?!」

Mashiro was embarrassed, however as if expecting something she was blushing while looking at the trio.

「Mou, you carry your joke too far, Aoi-chan.....Kuroe-san too」

Rikka puffed her cheeks

「Tooya-kun and Kuroe-san are only relatives, the thing about fiancée is only for the sake of convenience, Mashiro-chan also knows about this right?」

Rikka stared at her.

「Eeto, yes.....」

In an awkward manner Mashiro smiled bitterly.

「Aoi-chan too」

「Ahaha, sorry」

「Kuroe-san too」

「I got a little caught up in the moment.」

「Tooya-kun too」

「Eh?」

Why did that gaze of condemnwas directed at him?

「Because Tooya-kun didn't deny it immediately causes Aoi-chan got on with the flow」

「Eeto.....sorry.」

He apologized without further thought. Although when Kuroe made up this setting at that time Rikka did went rage..... but now it may become jealousy? He thought that as Rikka's pouted cheeks looked lovely, he felt warmth in his heart.

What the heck are you thinking?

His reason calmed down his feelings by giving a warning. He felt a chill. Right at this moment, Tooya had forgotten the situation he was in right now.

『Yare yare』

In a mocking way Kuroe's voice resounded.

『I and master's engagement relationship is only for convenience, how surprising that Mashiro and Aoi knew right』

That's right. This matter other than Tooya and Kuroe only Rikka knew. However Rikka presumed the other two had already known and talked about it. Not only they knew each other, apparently they also exchanged information about the current status to some extent.

『Master can't seem to calm down, how about let me confirm that?』

It's rare for you to say that.....what are you scheming?

『You really don't trust me ne』

He imagined her shrugging her shoulder.

「By the way」

Kuroe opened her mouth.

「We still haven't decided where to go for the vacation.」

Let alone Rikka, even Aoi didn't hear about this. No, maybe Mashiro had talked about this with Aoi, at least it was not when the four of them are together.

「The thing about going to the beach?」

Rikka said.

「Didn't Mashiro said she'll be looking for the place?」

Aoi said.

「Un, I'm already found one.」

Mashiro said.

The trio's words were not contradicted. Just like the fiancée relationship with Kuroe, it's like the topic of vacation had already been discussed by five of them. At this point the situation of Mashiro in class had probably be known by Rikka.....Really, it was just like she has been with Tooya all this time.

「Can you let us know the place you looked up now?」

「Yes, since it can be displayed on my phone.」

「Then, let's decide it now.」

「Un, I also it's better to do it now.」

As Aoi approved, Rikka and others started talking about where to go during vacation. They looked so happy, so friendly, who would have thought up till yesterday they were complete strangers.

「.....」

While looking at them, Tooya's perspective of the world felt shaken.

Which was the real thing?

His own memories, or the scene in front of his eyes. In this situation he can't be helped but think there's something wrong with his memories and the scene in front of his eyes are actually the real one.

『That is just what master wants to think so.』

In a sarcastic way Kuroe's voice resounded in his head.

『Escape from reality is no good.』

Said with a sneer.

That sneering tone as if didn't let Tooya escape.

「..... Shut up」

Tooya muttered with a groan.



And then time went by without anything happens, classes were over and Tooya was on his way home. Naturally beside him was Rikka's figure. Of course Kuroe was there, but maybe she was worried, she walked a step behind of them.

「It's almost summer break.」

「Aa.....un」

Answering Rikka who said in a cheerful tone, Tooya couldn't hide his bewilderment.

「We talked about it at lunch break but.....vacation, I'm sooo looking forward to it.」

「Is that so」

「.....Tooya-kun doesn't looking forward to it?」

「---I do」

「Un, that's great」

A friendly grinned showed on her face.

「This summer break I get to go out with Tooya-kun, it's been awhile」

「Is that so?」

「Yes」

She nodded.

「It sure has been awhile.....」

He was forcefully taken to the amusement park not long ago, but he couldn't think of events that was more longer ago although he tried to recall. Tooya had kept a distance from Rikka, and they can't travel all these time due to Rikka's family circumstances.

「This is the first time we go to the beach right.」

「Probably so.」

He remember going to the pool a few time, but he didn't have memories about the sea.

「.....I think I never had any family vacation before.」

Tooya's father was a busy man with little time to spare. It was not like his father didn't care about his family, just that Tooya didn't have any memories going on family trip.

「That so. When I was a child father took me on a trip to the beach.」

「Heh」

「Seawater was salty and I was very tired but it was extremely fun.」

She didn't notice Tooya's trembling, a nostalgic look floated on her face.

「We even played cutting watermelon at that time. My younger brother was little so he didn't understand the rule well, he didn't search for the watermelon but headed toward my father's voice instead and my father was so surprised.」

「That was, fun.」

Tooya tried his best to stop his body from trembling.

「This trip too, let's bring watermelon and we all play watermelon cutting.」

「That's right, that would be fun.」

While answering he thought. How Rikka see her father in her heart. Her memories did remain.....But up till where?

Right now, what did she think about her father being missing?

『It's better to stop』

Like holding back his urge to question, Kuroe's voice resounded.

『Although I don't know how Rikka feels inside but.....giving contradiction casually could possibly hurt her mind. 』

The words that were about to come out stopped at his throat. For Tooya to question something that could possibly bring harm to Rikka, he couldn't do it.

「Why won't it be summer break any sooner.」

Rikka grumbled. That expression looked as if it were innocent like a child, pure expectation was the only thing in her face. Just looking at that face, he thought what's in the future would only be warming.

Although he knew that is impossible to happen.



When he arrived at his home of course he would part with Rikka.....Time for dream was over. What left was the man eater monster and the one claimed himself the worst master. From ancient times to the present, because of the existence of the sun, the existence called the shadow would be formed.

To Tooya, keeping the current state would be the best.....He was really the worst.

「What should I do.....」

He murmured a groan. If he could he wanted to hide in the futon and sleep till the morning, then wait fo tomorrow and go to school.....that was escapism. So that he can once again look at Rikka face, forgetting all the trouble, it was such a disgusting motive.

「Master are really the worst.」

「.....I know.」

He stared and answered Kuroe who was looking and grining.....Grinning. Thinking of wanting to make her flinch a little, what a shallow thought.

「.....Haa.」

He sighed.

「Kuroe, what should I do?」

「Even if you asked me.....I will only say ---- what does master want to do ne?」

What he wanted to do, wasn't the answer was obvious.....clearly obvious. However Tooya's reason absolutely didn't allow it. Could not allow it.

What should he do.....he already knew the answer.

「Rikka's memories, if we don't erase it.....」

Because that was the best decision he could make..... It was a natural thinking to apply the spell once again if it was dispelled.

「I would not recommend doing that」

However Kuroe disapproved.

「Why is it.....」

The voice he inquired was so weak that surprised himself.

「If the spell was removed by somebody, then there is a possibility that it would do it again. If he unlocked the spell with some ulterior motive, he could unlock it once again even if I apply it again.」

「.....」

「If so then how many times do we need to put the spell back on Rikka.....Master doesn't wish for that, right?」

In addition Aoi and Mashiro and classmates too. Putting a spell on Rikka means they have to put it on them to avoid contradiction. Each and every one repeatedly would be a great labor.

「Actually, isn't that a chance?」

Unlocking Rikka's spell meaning that the one applied a new spell on Rikka will come out. This would be a chance to catch the culprit.

「So it wouldn't have any problem to use Rikka as the bait, would it?」

She sneered.

「.....Rejected.」

Tooya had no choice but to answer so.

「Then, what do you want to do.」

「.....Try to contact Tanaka-san and see.」

「To throw it at Tanaka?」

「I won't do such that.」

Because it was something regarding Rikka. Anyway he wanted to check with the Order of Black Magic first, wasn't it important to ask opinions for different point of view, he thought.

「Well, master can do what master likes.」

「That was my intention from the beginning.」

Tanaka's phone number appeared on his self phone as he clicked the call button.

「This is Tanaka.」

After several beep Tanaka's voice could be heard.

「Eetou, good evening.....Kamisaki here.」

「Yes, good evening. How unusual for you to call me.」

It's true that this was the first time Tooya called Tanaka. Basically all the calls before came from the opposite, and to Tooya it was nothing pleasant so he frowned whenever Tanaka's name was displayed. And before this he experienced being shot, therefore Tooya was not very good at dealing with Tanaka.

「I want to consult with you for a bit.....」

「Is it about Kuroe-san?」

「.....maybe.」

He couldn't think of anything else but that.

「I understand, please tell me what happened.」

Tanaka asked. After making a little preparation, Tooya opened his mouth.

「Rikka's memories returned.」

「.....」

There was a pause for reply. For Tanaka, I guessed that speech was beyond expectation.

「You mean Kurumi Rikka-san has remembered about you?」

「.....Yes」

Tanaka knew the matter between Rikka and Tooya.

「Can you please tell me in details.」

He requested Tooya to explain the current situation. Rikka's memories suddenly came back in the morning. There was no contradiction happened in her memory. The surrounding people that came to contact also didn't have uncomfortable feeling.

「It was not done by The Order of Black Magic right?」

After finished his explanation, Tooya wanted to check.

「Of course. The Order of Black Magic didn't have any profit by doing so.....Well, I admit that from our stand originally we would correct this thing.」

Order of Black Magic's works was protecting people from various demon. Some of that work included helping ordinary people regain their memories being stolen by demons.....However The Order of Black Magic had declared they won't in this case and both sides approved this. The Order of Black Magic didn't intend to throw away the contract they made with him after trying so hard.

「I trust you」

「Thank you very much.」

Although Tanaka was not so happy.

「Then what does Kamisaki-san have in mind.」

「That is.....」

He couldn't say there was nothing.....if speaking of was there, there was.

「For example, someone who just transferred here and had contact with you, further more I think she's a candidate who likely could lift the spell.」

「If you know then please don't ask me intentionally.....in the first place how do you know?」

「As we are from the Order of Black Magic, if there were people around you we need to have some investigation in it. I should be amazed that from your point of view you can't realise this.」

Tanaka calmly answered.

「Inaba Aoi, don't you think she has more than enough evidence to be a suspect?」

「.....」

Tooya kept silent

「Don't need to take her sister into consideration.」

Such thing Tanaka clearly informed Tooya.

「.....We don't have anything as proof.」

「But she is suspicious. Transferring school at this time is very strange, and on first day she came in contact with you two. Since she is Akane-san's little sister, there is a high possibility she could unlock the spell casted on Rikka-san.....Based on Akane-san we can see that her little sister should have also received some techniques back in their home's Shinto. 」

Tooya couldn't refuse even one of Tanaka's words.

If he was asked whether it was suspicious or not.....He couldn't answer it was not suspicious.

「But I don't understand the reason.」

「The reason is obvious already.」

「.....」

「Is there anything else?」

No.

「Kuroe is the target?」

「There is no reason to get involved with you other than that right」

Once Kuroe was eliminated, Tooya is just a normal human we can see everywhere.

「But, I don't think it is related to Rikka's memories returning.」

「I think her action was to cause you to be waver.」

That itself is more than worth for her to do so, Tanaka said.

「Or it could be thought of as a demonstrative action. If she can remove the spell casted on Rikka-san without being noticed by you.....in the same way she could easily steal away Rikka's life, and so on.」

「!？」

Tooya didn't thought of that idea before. Demonstration action for next threat. Surely when he wouldn't notice, the opponent would once again come in contact with the defenseless Rikka.....If he were told the next time she will kill Rikka, this credibility is very high.

Kill, Rikka?

Such that word alone was enough to make his eyes felt darkened. He didn't crush his handphone in hand was likely the result of his maximum self control.

「Kamisaki-san.....」

「Gu」

Surprise by Tanaka's voice, Tooya came back to his sense.

「If that's the case, what should I do?」

In a way to hide over his emotion that gushed up a moment ago, Tooya asked.

「Please think that by yourself.」

And a cold answer was given.

「Eeto.....」

「Of course, we are also investigating it. Because we cannot ignore the other party interfering with you.....However the problem of your childhood friend is due to your problem. From our standpoint, the current situation is actually the correct state.」

That was a sound argument. There was no way they would say something like once again erase her memories.

「And the problem of Inaba Aoi,I won't say we will stand by and do nothing about her. As you said, she was suspicious but there is no evidence..... However I will give you permission.」

「.....Permission?」

「Permission」

Tanaks said.

「If Inaba Aoi was the culprit and took any concrete action. Eat her, the Order of the Black Magic will approve your decision.」

For an instance, Tooya couldn't understand the meaning of those words.

「What are you saying?」

「It means as it is. If the time comes, there is no reason you need to resitate because of the Order of the Black Magic. Report after you have done it is also OK.」

「.....」

Immediately his head felt cold. Permission to kill someone. He had only experienced it the other day. However this time it was someone he was acquainted with. The other person's face, the other's voice came to mind... and then he saw that person being dyed into red in a real vision.

「The one who hold Kuroe-san's collar and leash is you, for us that is something worth to be glad of.」

「.....You overestimate me.」

Or was it actually despise.

「At least you are far better than the people that has intention to plunder, this is true. Knowing what person you are, we also formed a contract. The Order of Black Magic also doesn't want to change you to another person.」

Therefore he gave permission before hand.

When the time came, Tooya didn't have to hesitate because of the Order of Black Magic.

「She is Inaba-san's little sister right?」

「I will keep this matter confidential to her. Although I don't know what will happen afterwards, but at least I'll arrange so that she couldn't lay a hand on you..... She's not really stupid to that extent I guess.」

After that, Tanaka continued.

「At the end this is just insurance. Ultimately, it's fine to remain eat her even if there's another choice depends on the situation.....Please think it as an insurance for the choices you can make. 」

Not always necessary to choose to eat that person, Tanaka said.....I can choose other way, Tooya thought. Obviously if there was no option at first, there was no way to talk about choices.

「The important thing is, Kamisaki-san doesn't lose of being Kuroe-san master. Because you have a reason to use this power, you have to maintain this state right? 」

「That.....I know. 」

He killed just for the sake of that.

「If I know anything about the investigation on Akane-san's little sister I'll contact you.....Is this the end of the talk? 」

「.....Yes. 」

Tooya also didn't want to talk anymore.

「Then..... 」

「Ah, I forgot one thing. 」

When he was about to hang up, Tanaka's words stopped him.

「What is it? 」

「You're going to go on a vacation right? 」

「Eetou, yes..... 」

The complete change of topic made Tooya felt exhausted. He talked about this before in the car with Tanaka.

「The official approval has been given.Please give the planned days and place you'll be stayingone week before the scheduled vacation day . More or less we'll be monitoring without being seen, please understand.」

「.....I got it 」

He answered.

「Then, have a nice trip. 」

Finally after hearing that, the phone hanged up.

「Have a nice trip.....huh 」

One of the person who would go together, is the one he just said a moment ago it was fine to kill.

What was so nice about the trip? Tooya couldn't understand.



「.....fuu 」

After hanging up the phone Tanaka spit out a breath. His facial expression was unusually grim.....Rather than saying he was being depressed, it would be more fitting to say he was troubled.

「I'll be resented by Akane-san right?」

As said, he didn't break the promise with Akane. Even though he told her he won't take any action for now, it was the other side that came contacting him.....if he must say for sure, the promise with Akane does not include the insurance he told Tooya, Tanaka thought. The promise with Akane was a promise to investigate against Inaba Aoi, not her being alive or not.....well, that reason wouldn't pass for Akane right.

However at the same time, Tanaka couldn't care about something like that.

「Well, let's finish what I can do.」

In a very high chance, this insurance would become true, Tanaka thought. It was different with Tooya, earlier Tanaka had some information from Akane. That's why when he heard this from Tooya, he was certain this must be the work of Inaba Aoi. Therefore, he issued a permission referred to as the insurance. Even though he didn't know Tooya would make the insurance choice, but the time for Tooya to be forced to make that decision will certainly come, Tanaka thought.

However, the current situation is still not that terrible. Although he thought the possibility for it to occur was high, but now it's still a possibility.....If it came to that it would be good to collect some information first. Tanaka grabbed his self phone and clicked on Akane's number. He pushed the call button, after a few rings, a voice entered his ear.

「Your sister has took action」

As he told that, in return a tongue clicking sound could be heard.....He heard sound of snatching something, then sounds of violent footstep and door being opened and closed.

「I'm going to your place!!」

It was a voice like yelling, Tanaka smiled bitterly while grimacing.

Apparently, it would likely get busier.



The morning news was as usual, reporting some disasters happened all over the world..... He felt that was because his ears picked up only the bad news. Bright news went past without entering the heart, only dark news remained in his ears.

「What a gloomy face.」

「.....Such a terrible mouth you have」

While he bit into his breakfast bread, Tooya stared back at Kuroe. With a face as if having to swallow a bitter bug Kuroe looked back to him.

「With such a face the breakfast before your eyes would become bad you know.」

「.....It can't be helped」

Putting down the bitten bread on the plate Tooya muttered. Right now he couldn't taste much of anything.

「You can't feel bright after hearing such thing right」

「Umu, can't I?」

「Definitely impossible.」

Telling that it was fine to eat someone he was acquainted of, his mood couldn't become bright.

「.....What kind of face should I use to meet Aoi.」

「It would be best if you meet her normally.」

As if looking at something silly, Kuroe looked at Tooya.

「If master take a strange attitude suddenly, the other party would find it strange right.」

「.....That I know」

This talk was only knew by Tooya, Aoi didn't know.

「Furthermore, master」

「.....what is it?」

「Tanaka had said before hand to the end this is just insurance.....for when that time really does come. It's not like he told you to kill her, I think it seems you are way too conscious of it?」

She smirked.

「Your thought went to the direction in which you will surely choose the insurance, was because master thought of the possibility of it happened, wasn't it?」

「That is.....」

No word of denial came out.He weren't able to say he wasvery sure.....However in the same way he also couldn't deny it.

「It doesn't matter what master likes to think of.....However if you don't even know what you are thinking then it's a problem. In what situation we have to make the insurance choice, master should think about it carefully.」

「.....」

He bit his lip.

「Then, it's time to clean up or we'll be late for school.....are you going?」

「.....yeah」

To Tooya right now, not going to school wasn't one of the options.

「You shouldn't make others wait for you.」

「.....I know.」

Answered, he picked up the half eaten bread.

Today also, Rikka was waiting outside.



Lunch break came, at the same time he got a message from Mashiro. He immediately checked the content, Tooya frowned immediately..... What was written there wasn't something good to know. However he couldn't ignore the content, and action was urgently needed.

「Rikka」

「Yes, what is it?」

She asked a question in return. On her hands was the bento as she was all ready to go to the rooftop.

「Sorry but, can you eat with your friend in class..... there's something I had to do. Also Mashiro and other couldn't come」

「Heh, is that so?」

「Un, sorry」

He apologized, then moved his line of sight toward Kuroe who is sitting next to him. Although she looks like being serious on the surface but on her face, as if she felt something amusing, her lips curved up a little.

「.....Kuroe also have to stay」

「I got it」

On the surface she meekly nodded.

『How unkind of you』

A dissatisfied voice instead resounded. Honestly speaking it didn't matter to bring Kuroe along, Tooya thought. Because bringing her this way could ease up a lot of trouble. However why he brought only Kuroe with him, he didn't thought of the reason yet. If he got asked intentionally, Tooya had to tell the details of his errand.

『Such thing you could leave to my spell right ? 』

Kuroe said while she understood that. Definitely because he didn't want do that, he chose not to bring Kuroe with him.

『Well, it can't be helped..... I'll endure the desire to see with my naked eyes』

Did that meant she would look over here by a different way..... Well, do as you like. As long as she don't whisper strange nonsense to his ears.

『What I am whispering nonsense, master is so mean.』

With the image of her shrugging her shoulder. If so then how about I say it as the devil's whisper.

「Then, I'm going」

「Un」

After Rikka turned and nodded, Tooya quick-footedly walk out of class.



「Tooya senpai ! 」

Rendezvoused at the front door, Mashiro spotted him and raise her hand. That face which was always smiling, has become sad and gloomy.

「So, where is Aoi?」

He immediately run up to her and asked.

「Like I told you in the message, when lunch break started she has taken away by that three people....」

The message Mashiro sent, it said the 3 people group that bullied Mashiro before had taken Aoi away. He had heard about Aoi's quarrel with those 3, but they have been staying quiet after the incident of falling down the stairs.....but, apparently recently she meddled in their affairs and became the target once again.

「Aoi-chan smiled and said it'd be alright....but I'm worry.」

「It'll be alright.」

To encourage her he said.

「Aoi won't be easily done in, since I'll go there too.」

「Tooya-senpai.....」

「That's why no need to worry and wait here.....Ah, right.」

Tooya took out from his pocket a key and handed it over to Rikka.

「This is..... ?」

「Rooftop's key. After I settle it I'll bring Aoi there, Mashiro wait us over there.」

「.....I got it」

「Then, I'll be going.」

To encourage Mashiro who was nodded, Tooya smiled and went outside from the front door.



Apparently Aoi was brought to the place Tooya first met Mashiro, behind the school building. The same play wasn't really skillful he thought, but there was no place as fitting. After he checked there's no anyone saw him, Tooya headed towards the location with deep sprint.....Although he has forgotten that his leg strength is beyond human if he put all his might in.

In no time, finally he reached the back of school, he heard girl's crying voice. Also he could hear groaning voice atop each other.

「!？」

Confused he rushed over the place of the voice.

「A-re、 Tooya-senpai ?」

In perfectly good health condition, Aoi looked at Tooya.

「Aoi.....」

Tooya was at a loss for word. Aoi was in perfectly good health.....However the female students around her didn't seem to be so, two laying down scattered, the remaining one was being pressed down by Aoi, her face distort in pain.

「Wait a bit, let me dislocate her right arm out and it'll be done.」

As she said a dull sound resounded, a scream came up as if to block it.

「There, done」

Saying that satisfyingly Aoi stood up. However the pressed down female student didn't stand up. Both her hands and feet were still stretched out on the ground, only sobbing and certain body part distorted in pain.

「What business does senpai have ? 」

「What business.....」

Aoi asked as if nothing happened, Tooya was at a loss of word for a moment.

「Ah、 perhaps you come to help me ? 」

「.....Well」

Even though this was not needed.

「I heard from Mashiro you were taken away」

「I told her it'll be alright, Mashiro's really a worrywart.」

She laughed as if didn't know what to do.

「My was taught some martial arts from my home over there. Therefore, normal people, let alone three normal female students wouldn't be my opponent.」

「How can I know that, therefore I gotta be worry」

「Ah, I forgot about that」

As if understood it Aoi nodded her head.

「Then, Aoi」

「What is it?」

「These kids are.....」

「I detached their hands and legs so that they couldn't move only.」

She said like it was nothing.

「Arms and legs.....」

「It's alright you know. There won't be any after effect because I detached them cleanly」

「.....that so」

「Ah, of course I got responsibility to fix them up after.....well」

She approached the female student nearby, she kicked her unmovable arm.....only that as if a shot went through her, the female student screamed in pain loudly.

「They only have to go through pain like that for a while.」

Aoi looked but didn't laugh.....However Tooya believe that it's not his imagination that someone is looking over here with a smile.

「Really、 you all are also idiots」

Suddenly Aoi sit down and looked into one of the female students.

「Even though I'm not really care about you guys, this is what you got when you do things out of whim. If only you guys will think the incident of falling down the stairs as a divine punishment, it would all be good..... you reap what you sowed.」

When she was about to finish, she stood up and looked at Tooya.

「Do you think I over did it ? 」

「.....well, maybe a bit」

「But you don't think all of this is wrong, right ? 」

「.....yeah」

As far as he heard from Aoi's story, she didn't pick a fight with those three people.....If there must be a reason, then surely it's because she become friend with Mashiro, however this was by no means to be blamed. If he considered about Mashiro's condition, those three as Aoi said, it might be said to be reaping what they sowed.

「I'm so glad.」

Aoi relieved a smile.

「Mashiro is waiting on the rooftop.....it's better if we hurry to not let her worry.」

「Yes, you're right. Then I have to hurry and fixthem back.」

Saying that Aoi looked at the three people fallen flat on the ground.

「Really just leaving them as they are now is problematic.....can't be helped but to put them back together.」

Sooner than saying it, Aoi approached the lying female student's body and nimbly put back their joints.....at the same time furthermore she didn't forget to threaten them.

「.....」

Tooya thought what Aoi was doing was reckless. However, Aoi did know her borderline and didn't went too far. No matter how he thought what Aoi had done was still over did it.....however if she could do such things then she could do even crueller things right. Even so, Aoi chose a way that would not have any effect on the surface. Before going back to Mashiro there, choosing to clean up the mess instead of just leave them as they are over here.

『Does master think that was a well considered behavior ? 』

Suddenly Kuroe's voice resounded.....he forgot but, she could see what is happening over here.

『I don't think so』

Then what do you think, Tooya thought.

『She's just doing as she likes.....in a range that she won't cause any trouble.』

Wasn't that considered it was calculated?

『But I can't smell something like that from her ne.』

What an abstract description.

『Well, Master..... it's better to be careful.』

Of what, he asked.

『She's someone that would do what she thinks it's right without hesitation.....you wouldn't know what she would suddenly do right?』

Tooya can't deny that. At least Aoi didn't have a feeling of guilt, because she looked as if she thought what she did is reasonable.....however, what did you mean be careful, Tooya thought.

『You don't understand that?』

Tooya remembered about the phone talk yesterday.....however that insurance Tooya didn't wish for it to be true. Because at least Tooya didn't hold grudge against Aoi, or wanted to be held grudge against.

『I think it's not something that has to be done with hostility』

Sometimes we heard of it, a harm that was done out of good will.

『Well、 it's also good that master think in such way』

Kuroe laughed.

『Either way, you'll understand someday.』

I don't want to understand, Tooya thought

However, that talk felt a bit sad.

Chapter 4: He and the Girl's Vacation

Before they knew it, summer break neared. With the various troubles happening with Rikka and going to school, coupled with having lunch on the rooftop with Aoi and Mashiro, time passed without anything happening, before long the closing ceremony ended and summer break began.

Summer break itself proceeded without a hitch. Without school, the chances to meet with Aoi and Mashiro diminished. Tooya didn't even get to see Rikka's face much.....for some reason she refused to come over to his house.

Of course, during the summer the five of them went out and played together, though there was nothing eventful worth mentioning. Just going out normally, enjoying it normally.

Still, nothing happened and summer break went by, it was soon August.

After this, without any notice, the day of the trip had come. Five people boarding the train carefreely, on a normal railway train, going to their destination.

「Ah, I can see the sea!」

「That's right!」

Both Aoi and Mashiro's voices rang out. Looking out of the shaking train window, it was the endless blue sea. While the sandy beaches could not be seen from this vantage point, other objects like ships dotted the blue background.

「Tooya-kun, the sea, it's the sea」

Sitting next to Tooya, Rikka grasped his shoulder excitedly.

「Un, it's the sea.」

Answering her, Tooya also looked out. The weather outside was clear, the sun-illuminated sea strongly gave off a summer-like feeling.....surely seeing this scene would make one excited right?

「The sea is really beautiful.」

Looking out at the same time, Kuroe said.

「This is your first time at the sea, Kuroe-san?」

「When I was younger I came here many times.」

In the past, she said. Rikka must have recalled some old memories.

「However I didn't get to go into the sea.」

「Is that so.」

「Yes, therefore I'm really looking forward to it.」

Rikka gave Tooyaa beaming smile. Although, the thing she was looking forward to the most was definitely the hot springs. When she was younger she didn't get into the sea mainly because she had to take a bath right afterwards.....but now she is looking forward to it as it is no longer an issue for her.

『You hath gotten the gist of it』

Kuroe's voice resounded. He was not getting any praise for getting that right.

「By the way...Rikka.」

「Un, what is it?」

「That thing you're holding, what is it?」

Ever since they met, Tooya had noticed it. This whole time Rikka was carrying a cloth bag in her arms. Of course, the bag she used for the trip was elsewhere. Tooya wondered why Rikka was carrying this as if it was an important article, despite having a lot of luggage for this trip. Furthermore, it seemed rather heavy...and round too.

「Watermelon」

Rikka's answer was simple.

「Watermelon?」

Without thinking, he repeated her answer like a parrot.

「I'm thinking of playing watermelon splitting with everyone.」

「This is special.....?」

But she did say she wanted to do this.

「Un, because you can't spit the watermelon if it was roughly handled.」

It seems like that was the reason why she was protecting it like she would a baby.

「.....what about the idea of buying it over there?」

「We don't know if they sell it there, even if they did we wouldn't know if they would be sold out, right?」

「.....Right」

Since it was summer, watermelon would definitely be sold everywhere, and while it wouldn't be easily sold out, one couldn't guarantee it. However, Tooya thought to himself, the likelihood for it to be sold out still existed, and Rikka would definitely not overlook such a small possibility.

「And you want to split that watermelon?」

「Un」

She nodded without hesitation. In other words that was a certainty.

「That's nice! Watermelon splitting」

Hearing that Aoi cut in.

「I haven't done watermelon splitting before so I'll be looking forward to it.」

Mashiro continued.

「I'm also looking forward to it.」

Kuroe said.....wait, she's not allowed to participate. She'd surely be able to cut it right, as she would still be able to see even when blindfolded.

『It's a game where we slice up objects?』

Kuroe's question resounded. It was not a slice and dice game, it was a game where a challenger received advice to move about while blindfolded to achieve a goal.....at least that was Tooya's personal opinion.

『Fumu, so it's that kind of game』

She said in a consented tone. Three other merry voices could also be heard.

The fun at the beach would soon begin.



The train arrived on time, just before noon. The group first headed to the Japanese inn they originally booked, guided by the printed map, to finish

checking in. The inn had a countryside feeling to it, with a friendly landlady that gave off good vibes. The best part of the inn was that it was connected to a hot spring facility, that also had a good view of the ocean. It seems like this was the inn's selling point.

Without his knowledge, the room they were assigned to was a 5-man room. One boy living with four girls was definitely not right. Tooya objected to this but was rejected unanimously.....he could not understand why.

Wouldn't opposition to sharing a room as such normally come from the girls? Nonetheless, Tooya was a boy, and being in the same room with four girls would certainly bring about a great deal of trouble.

『You'll get used to it.』

Kuroe said it would not be a problem. Tooya had found a way to pacify Kuroe but the rest were different.....especially Rikka.

Like Kuroe said it was not a problem. Tooya had found a solution for Kuroe's said problem but outside opponents were different.....Rikka was also here.

『As usual, Master's treatment towards me is cruel.』

I didn't hear anything.

「What a nice room」

Arriving in the room, Rikka let out a light gasp. Keeping to our budget, this inn was by no means high class, but the room was very spacious. But because there are five people here it feels rather cramped, though Tooya, though there is certainly enough space for everyone to rest leisurely. The room was clean and neat, and the windows gave way to a beautiful view of the ocean.

「Let's put our luggage here and hurry to the sea.」

「Right!」

Aoi and Mashiro dropped their luggage and quickly began preparing to go.

「Shall we also get ready?」

「Right」

「Yes」

The three upperclassmen also nodded to each other as they placed down their luggage and began preparing to go to the sea. Starting from the left was Aoi, Mashiro, Rikka, Tooya, then Kuroe who said that she would be sleeping in their own position. The futons had not been laid out yet but when night came they would be sleeping in that order.

「Say, Rikka.」

Tooya opened his mouth as a thought came to his mind. It was not from staring at Rikka's luggage but rather because he could not find a specific object.

「What is it, Tooya-kun?」

Rikka looked at him.

「Nothing much, it's just that we have to cut the watermelon today」

「Un, because tomorrow it'd become bad」

「Did you bring the pole to split it?」

Something like a bat of sorts.

「.....Rikka?」

There was no answer.

「Ahahaha...」

That was her answer.

「Let go ask the landlady to see if there's anything we can use.」

In the worst case we could just go to the community centre to search for a bat.

「Eto, sorry」

「No problem」

That was what Rikka was like.

「Senpais really give off the feeling of being childhood friends」

「.....however I don't think there was anything like that.」

「Is that so?」

Aoi didn't give up.

「You two are very well matched.」

She smiled pleasantly.

「St-stop Aoi-chan! We don't have that kind of relationship!」

「Not yet~」

「Geez!」

Tooya caught the occasional glimpse of Rikka's eyes looking at him, as she was pulling on the teasing Aoi's cheeks.....she clearly denied it that time. However, Tooya was not able to be certain of her true thoughts.

「Preparations are done. It's time to go」

As if to dodge the question, he opened his mouth.

However, the words of denial just wouldn't come out.



Food was only served at the inn during dinnertime, so the group asked the landlady for culinary advice, before grabbing a light lunch and heading out to the ocean.

「.....they're slow」

Tooya's skin was slowly getting tanned under the heat of the sun while waiting for the rest. Changing rooms aside, the time taken was really something else. For a guy, changing was very quick and so Tooya finished almost immediately. However, he now had to wait for the girls.....thinking to himself, girls shouldn't take that long to change, right? It was just putting on an extra piece of cloth after all.

『Master doesn't understand a girl's heart.』

Suddenly her voice resounded. Did you ignore me until you done changing clothes, he asked, and an affirmative answer came back.

『We're almost there.』

Telepathy was just sounds resounding in one's head, so there was no direction to the voice.

「Tooya-senpai, sorry for making you wait!」

Waving her hands, Aoi came running up to him.

「Aoi-chan, it's dangerous when running!」

Mashiro followed up trying to stop her.

「Those two are in high spirits.」

「You're right.」

Rikka, while holding the watermelon, was walking leisurely with Kuroe behind her.

「Tooya-kun, I made you wait.」

「Ah」

Tooya nodded to the smiling Rikka.

「Ah, you rented a parasol.」

「Well, because I had a lot of free time waiting for you guys.」

He went to the beach house and borrowed it first.

「Senpai, it's empty there.」

「Ah, you're right. Then let's move over there.」

The place Aoi pointed her finger at was pretty wide and empty. At the peak of Summer it was lucky to find a place on the beach that wasn't crowded. If there was space then we could leisurely play watermelon splitting.

The five of them moved over, and Tooya placed the beach parasol on the ground. Then everyone put down their hand luggage in the shade.

「Then shall we play watermelon splitting first? Or go swimming first?」

Finished preparing, Tooya asked everyone.

「Senpai, not yet, we have to do that thing first.」

「.....That thing?」

Having secured the place, set up the parasol and made the base. The things you have to do when going to the beach, which has got to be swimming, and watermelon splitting, which Rikka proposed, wasn't it?

「Ah, it was warming up right?」

That was important. It had to do with life and death.

「Wrong!」

Someone pointed out bluntly.

「Girls are wearing swimsuits and assembled right in front of you.....there's only one thing for a boy to do first.」

Saying that Aoi lined up the three girls and also stood in the line herself.



おおかみ

「Then, rate our swimsuits!」

「Eh?」

「Young girls wearing swimsuits in front of you and you don't have anything to say? You're too insensitive.」

「.....」

It was just as she said. Rikka was giving a pleading look, she did not seem to want to deny Aoi's words and looked at Tooya with a red face. Mashiro next to her was the same. Kuroe was.....the same as always, "this looks like fun".

「Go on.」

She urged.

「Eto.....yes.」

There was no choice but to acquiesce. Because Tooya was a boy, to see female friends in swimsuits, it wasn't like he was not excited.....However being a boy in the middle of four girls, he couldn't get excited openly. Was it better to say that he was a gentleman, or at least he had to think about it that way.....Regrettably, his thought went into a weird place.

「Start from me first!」

Having been told that, he turned to look at Aoi. She wore a blue bikini swimsuit. It seemed like she had a lot of confidence, for her clothes hid little skin and she boldly showed herself off. Overall she had a slim figure but she stood out where it was best.....specifically speaking at her bust area.

Perhaps she had the biggest bust out of the four.

「Oh.....aren't you wearing a cute one」

「Yes」

She said so happily

「Then next is Mashiro」

「Please, please take care of me」

「U, un」

Although he didn't know what to take care of, he looked at Mashiro.

Mashiro's swimsuit was also the same as Aoi, divided between the top and bottom but the designed exposure was far less. The upper part was a white tank top, and below was a pair of dark shorts. She was really different from Aoi, whether it was because of her embarrassment or not, her face was a little red and she was putting both her hands in front of her belly. Comparing to Aoi's her chest was smaller but with a smaller build it was emphasized.

「I, I think it's cute」

「Eto.....thank you very much」

She shyly smiled.

「Then, next is Kuroe-senpai」

「I'm nervous」

She smiled broadly. Honestly Kuroe was the one having the most fun..... well, she was loaded with tsukkomi. Up until now, Tooya didn't understand what he had ignored.....The other three people should not have thought of any other questions right?

「How is it?」

「It's a school swimsuit」

Other than that, he had nothing to say. In front of her chest wrote a big word “Ookami(wolf)” in hiragana on a white cloth that was stitched in. Tooya remembered when they went to get her swimsuit Kuroe told him that it was fine not to follow her if he liked it.

『How is it?』

Kuroe's voice resounded in his head..... Or rather, where did you go and what did you buy? I carefully handed you money beforehand but you definitely didn't buy it from a normal swimsuit store.

『Stores that sell manga and figurines are found in high quantity』

That is not a swimsuit store..... You went to buy a swimsuit, why did you go to such a store?

『It was rather expensive, master wouldn't like it』

Of course it would be expensive.

「Then tell me, how is it?」

「Well, un.....it suits you doesn't it」

There were a few uneven spots. Kuroe had a great figure but her chest was small.....it wasn't like she was completely flat but they were even smaller than Mashiro's.

『.....How shocking』

Reading people thoughts at your own convenience and then feeling down and troubled.

「Then, last is Rikka senpai」

「Un.....eto, Tooya-kun」

「Ah...un」

His throat felt as if it was parched.

「How, how is it?」

Her face was red, but she shook off her embarrassment and looked at Tooya. It was a thin, flower pattern one piece. Although it was a swimsuit of a familiar design, even in plain clothes, it suited her as well. It could be considered childish if you thought about her age, but for the small Rikka it was perfect.

「It fits you perfectly」

「Is-is that so.....thank you」

Rikka's looked down with her face becoming even redder.

「Eto, that's done then.」

He looked at Aoi.

「Tooya-senpai, you only say it's cute and it fits.」

He was given an amazed look.

「.....Because I'm not used to doing it」

Really.

「If you don't study a woman's heart more, you can't have it you know?」

「.....I'll work hard」

However, he couldn't think of any helpful place for it.



After completing what Aoi had asked Tooya to do, the group decided to start splitting the watermelon. As for leaving the watermelon sitting under the hot sun..... well, it was not cold in the first place as Rikka was hugging it.

「First, let's decide the order」

The watermelon was put down, and a blindfold and bat were borrowed from the inn.....now, there was only the decision of who to go when to be made.

「Do the ones who want to play want to start first?」

「That would be troublesome...how about decide by luck of the draw?」

Aoi suggested. It seemed like there were no opposing opinions. They took out paper and pen from the luggage to make the lottery. Then all the members wrote their names followed by a number.

1. Tooya
2. Mashiro
3. Rikka
4. Aoi
5. Kuroe

And so the draws were made. Kuroe being placed last gave Tooya some relief. Even if Kuroe closed her eyes, splitting the watermelon would be easy

for her. While there was no rule saying you could not split the watermelon on the first try, there would be no fun to it that way.

『I can somewhat read the atmosphere』

A dissatisfied voice resounded in his head.....My bad.

「Then senpai, please go ahead」

「Ah」

He received the bat from Aoi.

「I'm putting on the blindfold」

Mashiro then tied the blindfold from behind Tooya. Was she worried about cheating? She tied it really tightly.....Tooya felt oppressed. He never planned to cheat from the start as he couldn't see, moreover, he could not open his eyes either.

「Then Tooya-kun, please stand there and spin around 10 times」

「Got it」

Spinning spinning around on the spot.....10 times.

「.....A-re?」

Subconsciously, he muttered. He didn't feel dizzy at all. His sense of direction didn't go awry. Some way or the other, he felt he knew the direction of the watermelon. Did his semi-circular canals become stronger, or was it his entire body? It seemed like Tooya had to act and read the atmosphere.

「Senpai, you can't start if you don't move」

A voice pressed him to step forward.

「Senpai, to the right!」

「Senpai! Straightforward!」

「Tooya-kun, just keep going forward like that!」

It was not just Aoi, but Mashiro and Rikka were being way too honest.....it wouldn't be fun if it ended too quickly, but those two didn't seem to be aware of it. They gave clear advice for Tooya to split the watermelon. He was really thankful for that but Tooya still wanted them to have fun too. He thought it would be fine to carefully follow their instructions before finally missing.

『Turn 3 degrees to the right, go straight for seven and a half steps』

A voice that completely couldn't read the mood resounded in his head.

「Anyway, to the right!」

「Keep going straight!」

「Go straight!」

For now, let's just go with Aoi's directions.

『You're off. Turn 15 degrees to the left.』

No, not that, I don't need such accurate information.

『Why not?』

Just now, didn't you say to read the atmosphere, Tooya asked.

『I did read it』

Where.

『Both Rikka and Mashiro wish for master to cut the watermelon.』

It might be so, but Tooya wanted everyone to have fun splitting watermelon.

『I believe it would be better for master to split the watermelon yourself and not associate it with a bad feeling.』

Associate it with a bad feeling? What are you saying, I don't get it.

『Oh well, if it's master's wish then it's fine to just miss it』

Her voice stopped. Just like he originally intended, Tooya followed the instructions given by the voices properly.

Whoosh.

For now, Tooya struck at an empty spot. To confirm it he took off the blindfold, and saw that the bat struck sand.

「How unfortunate!」

Happily, Aoi ran up to him. Apparently, she wanted him to miss, so she was happy when everything went according to plan. Tooya retrieved the bat and took off the blindfold and passed them to Aoi.

「Mou, Tooya-kun didn't listen to my instructions at all」

Turning back, he was greeted by the dissatisfied face of Rikka..... If he had obeyed he would have cut it so it couldn't be helped.

「Next is Mashiro. Here」

Aoi handed over the bat to Mashiro.

「Then, I'll tie the blindfold」

「Ah, yes」

Kuroe went around Mashiro.

「Then spin in a circle 10 times」

「Understood」

Having put on the blindfold, Mashiro started spinning around.

「This is.....pretty hard」

Finished spinning, Mashiro unsteadily walked out.....The result was both good and bad. As usual, Aoi was spouting nonsense, Rikka gave proper advice, Kuroe giving both accurate and inaccurate directions, while Tooya gave somewhat correct directions and Mashiro followed all of it.

「How unfortunate.」

As the result,Mashiro moved to a place near the watermelon where there was nothing and swung down the bat

「Then next is Rikka-senpai」

「Un」

She received the bat.

「Then, this time I'll tie it」

「Un, please」

Tooya took the blindfold and went behind Rikka.....Why was his heart beating so fast. The situation of blindfolding a girl in swimsuit would be quite suspicious if looking at it calmly

「It's a little loose?」

「Ah, sorry」

He apologized while strongly tightening the blindfold.....it was hard to put in strength.

「Then spin around 10 times」

Declaring so herself, Rikka spun around 10 times.

「Aah.....dizzy」

She muttered as she took a wrong step.

Crash!

Only taking one step, Rikka brilliantly fell down, her face head first into the sand.

「.....I give up!」

While still lying flat down, Rikka declared. Tooya ran up and helped Rikka up. As her face was full of sand, he could not sit by ildy.....fortunately, her blindfold prevented sand from getting into her eyes. Taking off the blindfold, Rikka turned to Tooya and gave a wry smile.

「I fell down」

「How was the person who suggested playing this game unable to even make it one step?」

He looked at her with an amazed face.

「Ahahaha」

Well, it was fine if the person herself was happy.

「Then, next is my turn!」

Full of motivation Aoi grasped the bat.

「Then, I'll tie it」

Rikka tied the blindfold.

「Here I go!」

Aoi turned at one place and spun 10 times.....then she took one step towards the right of the watermelon.

「Aoi-chan, a little to the left!」

「Un, the left! Ah you went a bit too much!」

「Wrong, more to the right!」

Rikka and Mashiro both gave proper instructions while Tooya tried to give wrong ones. Wondering which of the three's instruction she heard, Aoi staggered slowly towards the watermelon.

『.....She doesn't hear any of them』

Kuroe's voice resounded.

『She doesn't hear our instructions, from the looks of it she's following a different set of instructions』

Tooya did not understand Kuroe's words. Following the instructions of someone besides the four others, how would she be receiving it? Is she wearing wireless earphones? No way she would commit such acts just for the sake of splitting a watermelon?

「Just keep going straight like that Aoi-chan!」

「Un, 2 steps left!」

While Tooya was still thinking, Aoi had closed in on the watermelon, and stopped moving. Standing in front of the watermelon, she swung down with perfect timing.

Splat

The bat swung down and in one hit crushed the watermelon, while red meat splattered all around.

『Doesn't that remind you of something?』

Kuroe's voice resounded.....with those words, he recalled an unpleasant memory. The round object that had been smashed and the red liquid splattering all around.....there was only one scene Tooya could think of, it gave him a really bitter feeling doing so.

「.....don't remind me of unpleasant memories」

He unconsciously muttered.

『Fumu』

A thinking voice boomed.

『The amount of awareness master possesses is insufficient after all.』

「.....?」

「I did it!」

As he was having this conversation, Aoi, who had split the watermelon took off her blindfold and let out a shout of joy. Mashiro and Rikka rushed over and praised Aoi.

「Then, shall we join them?」

「Yes」

Still not knowing Kuroe's motives, he decided to join the rest.



Everyone ate the watermelon split by Aoi, before going swimming in the sea. When the sun had begun to set, they gathered around the parasol before deciding to do their own things. Perhaps she was being overly confident, but

Aoi declared that she would be doing some long-distance swimming. Mashiro took out a borrowed swimming float and lazily handed it out with her. Kuroe was just strolling around before asking Tooya for permission to go diving beneath the waves.....he could not see anyone at all.

「Is Tooya-kun taking a little break?」

Suddenly, Rikka's voice could be heard.

「Aa, un」

Tooya didn't go anywhere and just sat under the shade of the parasol.

「I left earlier to take a rest.....mainly to take care of the luggage. After all, someone who is tired can just come back and rest while looking after the luggage.」

「Is that so」

「What about Rikka?」

「I'm also taking a little break. I think before swimming, I should drink some water first」

Holding a water bottle in her hands, she came and sat next to Tooya. It seems like they went shopping just now with Aoi and the others.

「That watermelon was good」

「That's right」

It wasn't cold, and due to being chopped up by a bat, it was also unevenly split.....but even so it was still delicious, giving a sweet and fruity taste. The previous event of being reminded by Kuroe about unpleasant memories had been completely forgotten.

「That was a good watermelon, it was very sweet, right?」

「Un, it was a rare vacation so I decided to splurge on treating us well.」

Ehehe, she smiled. Watermelons were just like other goods, the more expensive ones usually had a higher quality.

「The money for the watermelon, how about I share the cost with you?」

Because she said it was a treat, she must have paid a reasonable price for it.

「No, no need」

She surprisingly declined and looked at Tooya.

「But I ate it, and I had fun」

「It's okay, I bought it because I wanted to」

Rikka didn't yield.

「But you see..... you still have to pay for lodging expenses and the likes」

Despite her family not being a high class one, she still chose to pay for everything. The total cost wasn't high but a high school student would definitely feel the pain having to fork out the cash for it all.

「If that's the case isn't Tooya-kun also the same?」

「I'm fine though」

He had received remuneration from the order of black magic. It was an ample sum of money but Tooya didn't feel like spending it, so it would be fine for it to be of use to Rikka.

「I'm fine too. From the start I was going to use the money I saved up, when I talked about the trip, my mother gave me the money. Therefore I have a lot of pocket money to use you know」

「Oh I see」

「Un, lately the pocket money I received has also increased so there's no loss at all」

「Hee, is it because your grade went up?」

There was the recent final exam.

「Not that」

But Rikka shook her head.

「The living expenses suddenly decreased. Compared to before it was now much easier so my mother was happy. And thus my pocket money also went up.」

「!？」

Naturally, Tooya knew the reason.....he knew. The reason why the living expenses decreased. It was simply because the number of people who needed living expenses decreased. And it was definitely humans who consumed more than every other race.

「Is Rikka.....happy?」

「Huh」

「Well, your pocket money went up and all」

「.....?」

Rikka tilted her head.

「Happy?」

Simply put, there was no reason for her not to be happy. It was impossible for her mother not to be, if her life had been easier it was even more impossible right?

「Is, that so.....」

Tooya understood that the answer he hoped for in the past could not be attained. Rikka didn't know anything, and the reason for her to be happy was another thing.

「Nee, I.....should I be happy? Or, should I be sad, which is better?」

Remembering the conversation he had last time, he did not know what kind of face to make.

However, the Rikka now didn't remember anything.

「Tooya-kun, what is it?」

「No, it's nothing」

A light smile floated up to avoid the question.....though he could not completely dodge it. Because it was a question that came from inside his heart.

「.....Nee, Rikka」

Unable to bear it he opened his mouth.

「Un, what is it?」

After all, there is no excuse for what he had done in the past.

「If, if.....」

「Un」

「What would you do.....what would you do if I destroyed everything that you cherished?」



But he himself wondered why he had asked that question.....there was no meaning to ask Rikka this question now, and there was no value to knowing the answer. In the first place, asking this question out of the blue would be suspicious in itself.

「I have to hear the reason first and think about it」

However, Rikka immediately answered back.

「Because, if there's no reason, Tooya-kun would not do such thing」

She said so and smiled.

「.....Even if I've already damaged that precious thing?」

「Un」

She nodded without hesitation.

「I'd definitely be sad, but I believe in Tooya-kun」

「.....」

「Because at that time, if I were kept away from those people, I'd be lonely but.....that was for the sake of not getting me involved right?」

Tooya wondered why she made such an apologetic face.....Rikka didn't commit any mistakes at all. Targeting Rikka first, then pushing her away.....this was all Tooya's responsibility, and Tooya had made that choice.

「I told you to tell me the reason. Why did you do such a thing」

And after all that.....Tooya had understood.

「Rikka is a good natured girl」

Trying to control himself, a self-deprecating voice came out.

Forcibly lifting the end of his lips, he laughed as if he was just joking.

「It seems like the same thing one would say before deceiving me」

「.....in that sense aren't you stupid」

Rikka puffed up her cheeks.

「.....only because Tooya-kun is the enemy」

Rikka murmured softly.

「It should be time for the rest to come back」

Those words, Tooya pretended as if he didn't hear any of it.

「I guess not yet」

「Is Rikka fine with not going swimming?」

「Yes, I'm going to rest a little more」

「Is that so」

The one she trusted was also her worst opponent.



「I'm a little tired..... since it's been so long since I swam that much」

On a rocky islet located far from the sandy beach. Aoi was lying down and looking up at the sky. Below her was all rugged rock but she didn't care much for it being rather tired. In the middle of her swim she separated from Mashiro and her figure was not around here.

「That's right, without proper rest, going back would be dangerous.」

Figures of people walking on the sandy beach had become so small they could not clearly be seen. Today the waves were comparatively gentle but swimming in the sea would nonetheless exhaust a lot of stamina.

「Ah, right. Thanks for your instructions during the watermelon splitting. I owe it to you that I could perfectly cut it.....eh, isn't that cunning? But you're also a part of me so that's no problem.」

Ahaha, she laughed.

「.....Right. It seems very fun. As expected. I also think the two of them staying together is a good thing. I wonder if this vacation was a good chance.」

She gave a happy expression. The things she did were for the sake of others, and because of that such satisfaction appeared on her face.

「That's right, because once this vacation is over.....yes, I'll do it. That one would definitely be happy with everyone.」



Before the sky got dark, the group returned to the inn. The first thing they did when they returned was rest, followed by dinner when it was time for it, in the mess hall. The abundance of seafood had for dinner received praises from everyone.

「.....Fuu」

Tooya let out a big breath of satisfaction. After dinner, it was naturally time to enter the bath, as hot water would help to refresh a tired body. The group

split up into girls and boys, and headed to their respective bathing areas. Going to the baths alone certainly gave a lonely feeling, but being able to settle down by oneself wasn't so bad either.....after all, if Tooya was surrounded by girls all day he would feel tired.

「This feeling is not bad at all」

By luck there were no other customers around apart from Tooya, or did everyone go to the open aired bath instead? This inn had both a large public bath and an open aired bath but both of them were heated. Men and women were supposed to rotate between baths as per a time schedule, and right now was the time for men to be in the public baths, though wouldn't that mean that this inn had mostly women staying in it? Or was it just a coincidence?

While thinking such things he leisurely sunk his body in the hot water. After all, unlike Kuroe, Tooya didn't hate the bath. Leaving one with a good feeling, it would be strange if one didn't want to stay in it for a long time.

「After the rotation, maybe I'll head over to the open air bath」

He also thought of it.

「Seeing the ocean at night wouldn't be so bad」

「Umu, definitely isn't bad.」

「That's for sure.」

「The light of the lighthouse is a good accent to the darkness of the night.」

「Hee.」

Thinking about it, a lighthouse at night seems to be quite a beautiful sight, but rather, it might not actually be a good addition.

「.....By the way, why are you here?」

「Lately, master is surprisingly calm.」

Before he knew it, Kuroe was next to him and said boringly.

「.....If you want me to scream then I can even do it right now.」

How do you put it, he got used to it, or was it due to the good feeling brought about by the hot spring? It could also be that because Kuroe was soaking in the water, that she did not expose herself much either.

「Then?」

「The three have already left」

「Well, it's about time anyways」

Tooya had gone to the baths a little later than the four girls so not much time had passed for him, but considering when the girls went it then it would be another case entirely. Taking into consideration how prolonged exposure to the hot water could cause dizziness, there was no reason to force yourself to stay in it for an extended period of time.

「So, I said I remained because I did not stay enough. 」

「It would seem like it.」

For Kuroe, staying for only 20 to 30 minutes would not enough to satisfy her.

「And a rare opportunity had presented itself with master being here, so that's why I'm enjoying the public baths.」

「That's true」

A typical way of thinking for Kuroe.

「What would you do if someone come in?」

Trying to give a common tsukkomi.

「No one would come in here for a while, you know」

Kuroe said calmly.....it seemslike she did something.

「Putting it that way, did you trouble the inn with something like.....」

「It's a hard to come by vacation, don't be so serious」

「.....Haa」

Well, since it didn't involve life or death situation it was fine but.

「Then, are you satisfied?」

At the wanted hot spring.

「Umu, very satisfied」

She smiled naturally.

「How should I put it, it's not about the heat transmitting to your skin. Seems like the ingredient in the hot water is also good for the body, the skin became smooth so Rikka and the other feel delighted.」

Althought Tooya didn't care much but as expected this area was important to girls.

「As it is I might want to stay here forever」

「.....although that's because you would not have blood rush to your head」

Also your skin wouldn't be sodden.

「Then, my master」

「What is it」

「Nothing, it's just seems like master has completely forgot so I think I should give an advice」

「Advice?」

「Umu, because I think about master」

From which mouth did you say just thing?

「Has master thought properly about killing Aoi?」

「!?」

Even though he was soaking in hot water, his spine quickly got chilly.

「Why suddenly

「Did you completely forget it all? Or, because it is impossible so there's no need to think about it and you've put it off at the back of your mind?」

「That.....」

「If seriously thinking about master, you should have been angrier at my harassment.」

Was it about the cutting water melon?

「After spending all those fun time with Rikka, it seems you have forgotten everything right?」

「.....」

Tooya didn't have any words to object it.

「But, it's not decided right now.....Isn't it?」

As if squeezing out words he opened his mouth.

「Umu, you don't need to decide it now」

Kuroe approved meekly.

「Then, master's thought about Rikka is only to that degree?」

「Wha」

「Surely Aoi is Mashiro's friend, Akane younger sister, master's kouhai.....because you knew her you don't want to suspect her? And also don't want to think about killing her either?」

「Such thing.....is only natural!」

「Although you killed Rikka's father?」

「!」

He felt as if washed with cold water.

「If saying about close distance that man would be closer right」

「That man is.....」

「Detested?」

「.....That's right」

「Why?」

「Such thing.....」

He couldn't answer up to that.

「Even if you found such lame excuses, in the end it's master's isn't it? Master's wish to kill that one because he obstructed Rikka's happiness.....If that's the case then isn't this situation fulfilled master's wish?」

「Such thing.....I decided I won't be there」

Such place he would not be, after all because he had decided.

「If that's the case master should quickly settle this situation.」

「.....I know」

To find the one who returned Rikka's memories, then remove him. If not doing that, then there was the possibility of erasing Rikka's memories again would become a game of cat and mouse.

「Then, now who's the most suspicious one?」

「.....Aoi」

That name came out of his mouth as if groaning.

「But, we will kill her just because she is suspicious?」

「I didn't say that」

Kuroe shrugged her shoulders.

「Tanaka had also said it right, that insurance. The talk about killing isn't certain, it's good not to forget that this talk is only giving master choices」

However, Kuroe continued.

「Master also knows that to make the choice itself it's necessary to resolve yourself right ?」

That was why it was an advice. At that time, apparently in order to exclude being cold feet.

「I understand.....I will think about it」

「Umu, if so that's good」

She smiled naturally.

「However isn't the time remain a little short? Supposedly if I was the opponent once this vacation is over, I'd immediately make the next move」

Saying so suddenly Kuroe stood up. Together with splash of water without hiding exposed her naked body. Unthinkingly Tooya averted his eyes.....Saying he had used to it but as expected it was hard look straight at her.



「I still want to enjoy the open air bath, well then」

Grandly like that Kuroe headed to the exit and walked out. As ever that gal just do as she pleased.

「.....Haa」

He sighed. In the end Tooya was only running away.....Rather than that he might be happy. If he could prolong it he would, because Tooya could stay together with Rikka.

「However, nevertheless isn't that just the worst」



Killing someone he didn't know, and killing someone he knew. There was a big difference.

However, in both cases, it was the same human, the same life.

In both cases, the act of killing them didn't change. If that was the case, thinking of committing the act in itself would be strange wouldn't it.....how absurd. Both things were not the same.

Even if one put it nicely, the one who did the killing was still human. Rather than killing someone whom one has not met before, killing someone one knew would always hurt far more.

Of course, there was another outlook. Rather than killing a stranger, killing someone who was close to you would be far easier, at least that would be the case on paper.

In the end, the value of human life would change according to one's view. No matter what other people say, it cannot be used to compare.

To Tooya, Rika's life was more important than anyone else.

To Tooya, the life of people that he didn't know was unimportant.....however, that was not to the degree that he would cut off ties for the sake of his purpose.

To Tooya, Rikka's father's life was important.....however, his accumulated resentment had been pushed to the max, that it lost its importance.

If so, to Tooya, how important was Aoi's life to him?

It seemed important?

It seemed irrelevant?

At the very least, he didn't think it was irrelevant. Mashiro's friend, Akane's little sister and Tooya's kouhai, not to mention Rikka treating her like a close friend.....to kill her solely for the reason that she was acting suspicious, her life wasn't that cheap right?

But he also thought that her life wasn't that important. The time they had met up to the time they started hanging out was not long. If so, he wouldn't use the time they spent together as a standard. Looking from that point of view, the time they hanged out with Aoi was only a few weeks after all.

And this was the most important point.

That life was of a lower value than Rikka's.

Only that point didn't change.

If asked which of those two he would choose.....Tooya would not hesitate.



「.....Yo」

「Welcome back」

Coming back to the room, Akane was greeted by Tanaka who stood up from the desk. Usually Tanaka would sigh upon Akane's visit, but today it was expected.....Though the expression of the person in question was not looking good at all..

「How was it, visiting your family that you haven't seen for a long time?」

「.....It was the worst」

She spat out. These past few days Akane had returned to her parent's home.....after about 5 years or so. The main reason for her visit was to investigate her little sister Aoi. It seemed that this was what Akane had prepared for in her visit here but Tanaka had not heard the full story yet. Akane said she would detail her entire investigation, but her expression only showed a frown, as expected that was the best source of information, adjusting Akane's work schedule to force her into taking a long term of leave.

「How is it going on over there?」

「According to my contact, from their monitoring, there is no particular abnormality. There's no action that stood out, it seems like they're enjoying a very normal vacation.」

「.....Is that so」

She sat down on the sofa with an unchanged expression.

「Then, this time would you let me know the whole story」

Facing her, Tanaka sat down.

「It was the worst.」

Akane got straight to the point.

「Was it because you had a fight with your father?」

「I was greeted relatively normally.....Although I was scolded. Before I realised it, my mother had tears in her eyes. 」

「Isn't that a very good thing?」

「Maybe.」

But even so, she spat out those words harshly.

「That guy was just being a father.」

「?」

He tilted his head. Akane continued speaking.

「Because he was acting like a father.....I wouldn't call his actions erroneous, but rather than being strict he acted like a very normal father who thought about his daughter.」

「Right now I don't understand a word you're saying.」

「Didn't I say it was the worst scenario? Everything disappeared. Various documents likely including the memories about my father in the house.」

「Ha?」

「Incidentally, the family spirit blade that I thought of bringing back home also completely disappeared.....over there everywhere has the same feeling as any normal shrine.」

「.....Wait, let me think though this a bit.」

Trying to take in Akane's words, Tanaka put his hand on his forehead.

「In other words, everything that could have been a clue has been erased, including the memories of your parents?」

「Right.」

「.....Would such a thing be possible?」

「If we're talking about that girl who altered Rikka Kurumi's memories, then it wouldn't be impossible.」

Because a precedent case already existed.

「Then what about dispelling the spell casted on your parents?」

「At least it's impossible for me.....it's also difficult for the people in the house I guess.」

「In order words, you had to rely only on your own memories, didn't you 」

「.....sorry.」

A rare apology came out of Akane's mouth.

「What a waste of time and effort.」

「No, it's good that you had confirmed it.」

Tanaka smiled wryly.

「Seems like your little sister is serious.」

「Who knows.」

Akane let out a light sigh.

「I have a feeling she would think up to that deep」

「Is that true?」

「Yes」

Akane nodded.

「Thinking about that time it would be the case.」



Akane Inaba was born in the house of an old-standing shrine. Her father had was a strict character so Akane rarely saw him smile. When she became aware of her surroundings, she was made to undergo various practices for the sake of succeeding the house's duty. Those were things like bare handed combat, how to use a sword and bow and practicing magical arts.

Why must she do such things, Akane could not understand. Even if it was the house's duty, her father didn't teach her the contents of it. He only said he would teach her when she officially took over the house's duty.

Even so, some way or another she could guess her duties.

「In the back of the main shrine there was a forbidden room. There was something like a door, but the key was not attached and the gap was also sealed. Furthermore, the me at that time also somewhat understood there were layers of sealing spellscast on it.」

「To protect something at that place, would that be your family's mission?」

「I don't know if it was to protect it or to keep people from coming close to it.
」

Akane's repulsion towards her father was birthed at that time. To become a miko.....no, rather than that the training to become a real exorcist wasn't as harsh as that. However, as a kid she thought these magic arts were to protect humans, but when she realized it was not so, her despair was obvious. Her father gave her a strict order not to let outsiders know they practiced magic.....So it was for the sake of not letting the outside know about what they were protecting that they practiced it.

「That seems very cautious.」

「At my home town, when an evil spirit uproar happened our house would only make a formal exorcism rites. If the demon was the real thing then the exorcist would come to deal with it.」

「If that were you, sounds like you would start rebelling right.」

But even so, such rebellion didn't show on Akane's expression. But because her own strength was useful, she'd thought that it should be fine if she went separate paths from her father.

And then when Akane was 10 years old, her little sister was born.....Her name was Aoi.

「She was very cute you know. I also begged my mother to let me take care of her.」

「That's rather hard to imagine-」

「Shut it」

It could be said that it was a very close sibling relationship. Even with the large age gap Aoi always depended on Akane, and Akane always kept Aoi company.....Until when she was 5 years old.

「When she could talk and walk to some extent.....that girl had a very strong curiosity. At that time, when I let my eyes off her she would go somewhere without permission, leaving me at a loss. Because my house shrine was built on a hill leading down to a forest. If you missed your footing at the long stair at the front you could die, so leaving children unwatched is very dangerous.」

Of course, they paid great attention to her. Even so when she came of age her childish curiosity didn't disappear.....That day too when Aoi disappeared from beneath Akane's eyes she had to go find her. However, no matter how much she searched she couldn't find Aoi. After a brief search outside the shrine, she noticed perhaps it was the opposite.

「So I turned my legs and ran to the main shrine. Entering the prohibited room and the forbidden door.....then after I opened it I found my little sister on the other side.」

Then Akane let out a sigh. She criticized Aoi for going so far in, and she questioned Aoi if it was some kind of prank. Aoi said she didn't do anything so for now she released her, Akane told her to go to her mother and decided to check it just in case.

「In the main shrine I prayed to theshintai. That was an old bronze mirror which didn't look like anything special. It was decorated as a form of making a shrine..... First of all, I checked for any changes. So I more or less decided to close off the forbidden room.」

But then at that time, Akane hadn't thought that something had awakened in the forbidden room. That was not a place which you thought of opening and you could open it. Because at least it was not a place where a five year old kid could somehow manage.

「The forbidden place was forbidden.....However, I picked up a broken piece in front of the door. That small piece looked like it belonged to an old comb.」

At the very least Akane hadn't thought why such thing was dropped here. Anyways the door was shut tight, and the spells cast hadn't changed.

However, after that a few minutes later going to look for Aoi again, Akane found that Aoi was holding a comb. The end of it was a little chipped, while holding it Aoi looked like she was talking to herself. Apparently, she was having a fun talk with someone who could not be seen.

「Well, since she was a kid talking to an imaginary friend wasn't anything strange.」

「That's true, because at that time I didn't question it at all.....but, it's another thing for that comb which she was holding. It was a pretty old comb which could break into pieces with a strong grip.」

Furthermore, when she called to Aoi, she quickly hid the comb. At that time Akane had a hunch. Did that comb come from the forbidden room?

「Of course I had no way of confirming it.....however I believed.」

A natural intuition from birth. That gave Akane conviction. However, Akane didn't report to anyone that such an event occurred. She decided not to mention the incident to her parents, not knowing how her father would deal with Aoi.

「Because I was watching Aoi」

In a way that no one noticed, Akane had observed Aoi's change. The first difference was that her monologue increased. At first, she thought it was nothing strange for children, but she seemed to monologue less under watch. It wasn't like she didn't monologue anymore, but it seemed like she only did it when Akane was not looking.....as if someone had given her the idea.

And then she strangely became smarter. Children had to grow up, and her parents felt happy about it but Akane had an uncomfortable feeling. Rather than saying she became smarter, she seemed like she was receiving advice from someone. It might be that she was being too stringent with her observations, but it didn't seem like she did it based on her own opinion.

「Then the comb which your sister was holding you did not investigate it?」

「Apparently she threw it somewhere before I could investigate. It seemed like a good decision because a kid could not hide things well right.....Well, I had investigated the broken piece and it appeared to be only a piece of an old comb. Whatever that had been possessing it, that I didn't know. 」

「Possessed, is it?」

「Yes, I thought whatever that had been possessing that comb had possessed Aoi.」

「Is that true?」

「Yes, there's nothing wrong about it, that thing was possessed.」

Akane said.

「Well, it's not as if I know what it is. The point is that I can confirm with my intuition. Even though I could confirm whether or not whatever came to my mind was correct, I could not completely understand it clearly. After all, the conviction I received was only to the scope of my imagination.」

Even if one got the conviction that a stone would fly and it would surely hit, it could not be predicted that it would come flying in the first place.....Supposedly, if thinking about whether the stone would fly to it or not, then I would receive the conviction.

「Whether my intuition is working or not is uncertain but, but if I'd spent several years with it I could confirm various things.」

「Would it be fine to tell me what have you confirmed about it?」

「.....yeah」

Akane thought about the thing that had been possessing her little sister according to her conjunctures.

Is that a bad thing.....Yes.

Is there a way to save her.....Yes.

Can she do it by herself.....No

If it were father could it be possible.....No

Is it a threat to the world.....Yes

「While the thing is bad enough to affect the world, it turned out that I could not do anything about it.....Though I said that, it's not like there's no way about it.」

「Disregarding the method of saving your little sister, you mean.」

「Yes, we could kill my little sister.」

However Akane couldn't kill her little sister.....Although she couldn't kill it, whatever that was possessing her little sister would become the enemy of the world. With only that in mind, Akane became conflicted, and kept her distance from her little sister.

「You didn't consult your father about such a thing?」

「At first I thought about it.....but suddenly I thought. With that duty-devoted father, how would he react to my little sister's possession. I'm confident that you are just like my father, devoted to duty」

If he could not save my little sister then the conclusion would be to kill her. Therefore, Akane didn't tell her father, moreover she rebelled against him.

「In the end I left home. I couldn't bring myself to kill my little sister.....Also couldn't save her. If I stayed in that house I would be flaunted with the powerlessness that I hate so much.」

「I see, and then you entered the Order of The Black Magic as a result, right?」

「I thought that if I separated from her the resolve to kill her would come up or something but, in the end apparently it was impossible for me.」

Inaba Akane had decided to be an ally of justice. And an ally of justice had to save people.

「One thing, I want to ask, but...」

「What?」

「You said to save your sister but, what about your sister's thoughts? I don't think that she thought she needed to be saved.」

「Yeah」

Akane nodded.

「Aoi think that the thing which is possessing her is some kind of guardian spirit. Of course she wouldn't think it is something evil.」

「That's troublesome, isn't it.」

「Yeah, that's because it was since she was little. That thing was like another parent to her.....I don't know but maybe it's more than that」

Akane believed that it would have turned out that way.

「Have you ever thought about its intention?」

「Even thought that old man said it was the family mission but..... what kind of mission it was I still don't know.」

She did go and investigate but it seemed like it was erased.

「But well, that mission is only an expedient.....No, because things like missions and such exist, isn't it correct to say that we can deduce where it is going.」

「Kamisaki-san.....No, Kuroe-san is it?」

「It seemed like the mission of my house and whatever has a connection to that monster.」

For the sake of that mission there ought to be some sort of sensor. After sensing that Kuroe's seal had been undone, Aoi came and did something for her own purposes. Since before coming here, in that period it had made various preliminary arrangements.

「And then, do you have any method for that?」

「About what?」

「The plan to save your little sister.」

「.....」

Akane was silent.

「.....there's none.」

He stared at her.

「It's not like I never thought about it you know.....But after I went back home, all of my plans went up in the dust.Furthermore, even if I seriously went to kill her, I don't know if I could do it. I also don't know if that thing could catch a family member off guard, and moreover father is a resourceful exorcist. If it had the ability to do father in, I could not imagine what it could not do.」

「You're right.」

Tanaka agreed.

「As for the current situation, it would be hard to act freely. Supposedly if you interfered, we would also be dealt with the same way as you, that's not good at all. As of right now, because your testimony had no concrete evidences, it's hard to mobilize the whole order of black magic. 」

「.....Is it impossible?」

「Looks like it. Because seems like the situation itself hasn't changed.」

Clearly Aoi hadn't done anything yet. There was no evidence about the matter of Rikka's memories having any connection with her.

「I can only wait before making a move?」

「Yes, but I can assure you we'll make a move soon.」

With confidence Tanaka answered.



「Good morning, Tooya-kun.」

「Good morning.....but it's already almost noon.」

Perhaps it was due to the events of yesterday, but when Rikka woke up it was already close to noon. Tooya was up early since he was not tired. Aoi and Mashiro were still sleeping. Even though it had passed midnight she was still having fun, and since Mashiro also followed her, she too couldn't wake up early.

「Are, where is Kuroe-san?」

「She's in the bath.」

Kuroe said she was going to the morning bath, and she still hadn't returned.

「Kuroe-san really likes the bath huh. Yesterday she also came back late.」

「Well...」

Tooya himself entered for about 30 minutes, and Kuroe had come back around 1 hour after that.

「She's also the same at home?」

「Well, she stays in there for about 2 hours.」

「Wow, wouldn't she swell up?」

She laughed heartily.

「Right.」

「.....Tooya-kun, you don't feel so good?」

「Yeah.」

Tooya said, surprising Rikka.

「What are you saying all of a sudden?」

「Somehow, when I look at your face I feel that you're not feeling well.」

Ehehe, she smiled.

「You see, I've been with Tooya-kun for a long time.....Since I've always looked at you. Every time there's something wrong, I can understand, you know.」

She blushed as she said that.

「Ah—, if it's like that then Rikka seems like you only have eyes for me.」

Tooya showed a bitter smile.

「In this vacation, everyone is having fun right? If I looked like I'm not feeling well then it must be because I was little tired from yesterday.」

「Sounds like a lie..」

「There's no such thing.」

He shrugged his shoulders.

「Mu—, if that is the case, do you have a cold or something?」

「No no, I'm still healthy.」

「.....Is that true, let me confirm it.」

Without hesitation Rikka's face approached. She stared at Tooya's face, with her right and left hand she compared and measured the temperatures.

「Hm—, seems like there's no cold.」

「I said so didn't I.....and Rikka.」

「What is it?」

「No, that, too close.」

Rikka's face was at a distance that he could touch with a little movement. Although he was reluctant but at this distance his eyes couldn't help but look at her lips.

「If it is just to check my temperature, being this close is unnecessary.」

「I thought I would take the opportunity to check whether Tooya-kun is lying or not.」

「What lying.....」

「Are you really just tired?」

That was to say, it sure was hard to deceive the long-term childhood friend. At the time when he was dragged against his will to go to the amusement park too, Rikka also had noticed despite his best efforts to hide it.

「It's the truth.」

「Really?」

「Yeah.」

He nodded.

「.....seems like a lie.」

She pouted cutely.

「Ah.」

She noticed.

「No, no, look Rikka.」

「.....What?」

To the unaware Rikka, Tooya pointed his finger to tell her. Rikka looked at that direction.....Gaba, they quickly separated shyly.

「It's fine if you want to continue for longer you know?」

「.....this will be helpful.」

「Y,yyou're wrong, this is!」

Since god knows when, Aoi and Mashiro who had woken were looking at this way, and Rikka was waving her hands in a flustered manner.

「It, it's not like I'm in that kind of relationship with Tooya-kun, we are only childhood friends but it's not like I didn't think about wanting to be more than that but.....Anyway you are wrong!」

「No look, calm down Rikka.」

Tooya pretended not to hear the latter part of it.

「Wouldn't it be nice if Tooya-senpai and Rikka-senpai find a 2 person room right?」

「I said you're wrong!」

「This again~」

To the flushed red and in denial Rikka, Aoi happily smiled at her.

「.....」

Tooya looked at that Aoi.

Was she a normal girl, she didn't appear to be so.



The second day was free time. The ones who wanted to swim went to the sea, the ones who wanted to roam went to roam. Tomorrow they would return, and since they would have to finish checking out before noon, they should spend their time today sparingly.

「In the end, Rikka-senpai didn't come with us.」

「Isn't that because Aoi teased her too much.」

Not feeling like swimming in the sea, Tooya was strolling around the shrine and chose souvenirs at his own discretion. No, well although he wouldn't give things like this to his parents but.....he thought of buying one for Tanaka just in case.

Aoi followed him, Rikka remained at the room to rest a bit more. Mashiro also remained to attend to her, Kuroe hadn't returned from the bath.

「Even though we went to the sea we only swam in the first day, what could it mean.」

「I think people have their own ways of enjoying things.」

Although he said that.

「Then, what's senpai buying?」

A little walk from the inn there was a place where souvenir stores lined up neatly in a row. However, the stores gave a rustic feel which made others wonder if they were still selling or not.

「Well just to be safe, things like steam buns or cake around here.」

Just put the place name on it.

「Safe choice huh.」

「Even if I get something, I'll be in trouble finding storage for it.」

Personally, Tooya thought that it would be best if souvenir was food. It would be another story story would be different if he was asked directly but even buying a local ornament or something like that and bringing it to them, the receiver would be troubled too.....for people to receive something it would be hard to just throw it away.

「But isn't that too soon to decide?」

「Anyhow—, we've planned to return after about 2 hours, let's look around the area properly.」

「Is that so?」

「We can't just leave Rikka alone like that.....Other than souvenirs let's buy some sweet stuffs. With that she would definitely get over her bad mood.」

From the beginning, Tooya didn't have any expectations for this place. Tooya went outside only to take his time collecting himself. But for Aoi to go with him was unexpected and if he refused it would be strange so he agreed.

「You sure know Rikka-senpai well.」

「Because we're childhood friends.」

They both knew each other well.

「You love Rikka-senpai right.」

「Wha!?!」

Suddenly Aoi made an unexpected strip comment.

「Rikka-senpai loves Tooya-senpai too right.....why don't you two go out?
」

Her way of speaking was straightforward. It wasn't like Tooya didn't notice Rikka's liking, the people around her also did.

「Rikka and I are only childhood friends.....we're just like brother and sister.」

「Sounds like a lie.」

Aoi said. Well, Tooya didn't think she would believe him. Even though he had thought of an appropriate response it would be nice if she had believed it.....seems like she didn't plan on taking the bait.

「Is that true?」

「It's true you know.」

She didn't take it.

「.....How about we sit down and talk.」

There was a small tea shop just beyond their sight. Aoi acknowledged and sit down on the bench in front of the shop, ordering tea and dumplings.

「Delicious.」

「Un, it's delicious.」

Eating the dumplings and tea, they gave their impression. If only he could change the topic with that, everything would work out as he desired, but.

「Then, about the topic just now.」

It didn't seem to go his way.

「Is there any reason Tooya-senpai and Rikka-senpai don't go out?」

「There's none.」

「So there is one.」

Aoi seemed like she didn't intend to listen from the start. Completely ignoring his opinions, as if she planned on saying everything she wanted.

「If not so, there is no reason why two people of mutual love can't be connected.」

「I told you.....」

「If that reason were gone you two could stay together.」

With a smug voice she said confidently.

「If that's the case if the reason is gone it would be better right?」

「.....I don't understand whatever you're saying.」

He only answered like that. In Tooya's mind the feeling of doubt about Aoi, was about to be replaced by confirmation.....Aoi also didn't hide anything.

「Aoi.....」

「Killing human, you don't like it right?」

「!？」

Aoi said the definitive words.

「Kuroe-senpai is the mysterious man eater.....Tooya-senpai is her master.」

「.....」

「I know everything you know.」

She said it while smiling. Just like always, he felt no evil intent from her innocent face.

「You.....what is your intention?」

「Don't make such a scary face so suddenly.」

Aoi smiled wryly.

「It's not like I plan on fighting with senpai you know.」

「If so, then what.....」

Is your intention, as if to stop his talk right there, Aoi put her index finger in front of his mouth.

「It is not time yet.」

「Wha-」

「If senpai could enjoy yourself a little more with Rikka-senpai, it would be nice.」

「.....even though you confided with me such a thing?」

「Yeah.」

With that Aoi nodded.

「Or is Tooya-senpai making light of Rikka-senpai?」

「.....Of course there's no such thing.」

That was that, this was this.

「Although it's a bothersome thing for me but.....I want you to keep it in mind. But if I told you everything, Tooya-senpai's consciousness will drift off too much.」

Therefore, Aoi had only mentioned the facts that he knew.

「Aoi, what do you want to do?」

Tooya was in confusion. While revealing the important true without hesitation, she let Tooya be able to enjoy the vacation with Rikka.

「I think that two people in love with each other should come together.」

She smiled cheerfully.

「That way, I would also be happy.」

「.....I said I don't understand.」

Tooya didn't understand what she meant.

「Do you know.....a house not far away.」

She said that as if to end the talk here, Aoi stood up from her seat.



After they bought the steam buns from the tea shop and returned, Rikka's mood had become very much better. Apparently staying in the room had

calmed her down greatly. After eating the steam buns Tooya bought, her good mood had returned completely and the sulking face had gone elsewhere.

「Kuroe-san still hasn't returned.」

It was a good time to talk about lunch, but Kuroe was not in the room. It seems like she didn't return from the bath yet.....How long did she stay in the bath. Well, because it was free time, he couldn't blame her.

「How about calling her?」

「If she had entered the bath I don't think there's any sense in that.」

「No, let's try calling her at least.」

He took out the cell phone and went outside the room.....Although there was no reason to go out of the room but it seemed no one was suspicious about it.

There was nobody in the hallway, but just to make sure Tooya listened to the cell phone. Of course there was no phone call.....Instead it was telepathy. If you could hear me then reply. Of course, Tooya couldn't imitate Kuroe and used telepathy just like her. But he had the belief, because it was Kuroe, somehow she would understand.

『What is it?』

The reply came. Judging from the situation it seemed lucky but talking like that felt a little subtle.....For now he conveyed to her, we're going to eat lunch, comeback here you irresponsible girl.

『Muu is that so.....then I'll come back shortly.』

Readily, Kuroe agreed. Although she didn't think of complaining, feeling somewhat anticlimactic Tooya put down the phone.

「By the way master.」

A raw voice came right behind him.

「Have you resolved your feelings?」

As he turned his head, he found a broad smiling face.

「Why are you here?」

「Didn't you tell me to come back?」

She answered naturally. With that Tooya slightly pressed his forehead, breathed out.....it was the usual stuff so it was useless scolding her. Tooya ignored her laughing eyes.

「Then, my master.」

「.....What is it.」

「Aren't you going to give me your answer to the question?」

「.....」

Still remaining silent, Tooya's line of sight looked at the door, it was right in front of the room.

「If so, then how about we leave it for a little later.」

Saying so, Kuroe moved her eye sights to the door as if to urge Tooya. Tooya also understood her intention. Having no other way Tooya opened the door and put his head inside the room. With that action, the three who were chatting moved their heads to look at him.

「How is it?」

Rikka asked.

「She said after around 30 minutes she'd come back.....In the meantime, I'll go buy drinks for us. By the way, if you want anything just tell me.」

「I still have tea so I'm fine.」

「I'm also fine.」

「Ah, I want one. A sports drink would be nice.」

「Roger.」

With consent, Tooya closed the door.

As he turned his head around, Kuroe's happy face was there.

「Then, let's go.」



「Then, my master. Have you resolved yourself?」

「.....I take it that you've heard everything?」

「Umu」

To the readily she nodded Kuroe, Tooya winced.....Well, as a place to talk, Kuroe had chosen that tea shop, at that point he had guessed half of it. Because not much time had passed since he returned, now accompanied with a different girl, the tea shop owner made a strange face.

「Aoi's intention.....I wonder what it is.」

「Who knows.」

「Saying who knows.....」

By all means that was no good.

「What's master thinking?」

The question was returned by a question.

「.....I don't know.」

Really don't know.

「Although when I was suspicious of her I thought that the ambiguous Kuroe was her target but.....I don't understand what Aoi had revealed.」

Aoi said that it would be nice if Tooya and Rikka had gone out together.....in that way she would also be happy. Tooya didn't understand her meaning, he also couldn't think of anything that could benefit her.

「At least I don't sense any evil intention but.....」

「I told you before right.」

She looked at him as if to admonish him.

「Good intentions may also harm people.」

「That.....I remember.」

「If so I think that it's not something to trouble about.」

Kuroe said.

「From my look of it at least that girl's words are out of sync.」

「Out ofsync?」

「That girl mentioned happiness, then does that happiness apply to master?
」

If Tooya and Rikka wedded.....She decided that they'd be happy.

「.....That's right.」

Tooya acknowledged this reason.

「Kuroe, your words are right.」

「Naturally.」

She smiled broadly.

「I'm not observing humans for a show you know.」

「Yeah.」

Somehow, Kuroe's advice woke Tooya up.....Although she sometimes injected deadly poison into her advice.

「In the end, Aoi and I have different methods.」

「So I can enjoy the show.」

「.....does it seem that funny.」

「Umu」

She nodded. As if she was really pleased.

「Then master.」

「Hm?」

「Have you resolved yourself?」

「.....nope, there's no such thing.」

He answered as if spitting out. It didn't exist. Even though they were different people, Aoi was Tooya's kouhai. Mashiro's friend, Akane's younger sister, Rikka's kouhai. She couldn't be killed off easily so Tooya wouldn't have the resolve to kill her.

「But.....」

He didn't speak beyond that.....But without it definitely Kuroe understood.

He had resolved himself.....from the start he had resolved himself. To Tooya it was something that should take priority over everything else. For that reason he would show that he would sacrifice anything.

「I don't want to step on that landmine.」

She smiled enjoying, Kuroe said.

Pretending as not hearing it, Tooya let out a small sigh.



Since then there was nothing going on, time just passed like that. After coming back with Kuroe they finished lunch, discussed what to do with their free time then everyone strolled around the inn and time went by, before they realised a day had passed.

And then, the next day, after completing the check out without any problem, the five went home.

「It was extremely fun.」

「Yeah, the hot spring was fine too.」

「Kuroe-san always dips in the hot spring. You really like the bath huh.」

They decided to return home before it got dark, so they reached their own homes before 3 o'clock. Even so, they didn't enter each other's houses but Rikka and Kuroe happily chatted about the memories of the vacation. Next to them while leisurely watching, Tooya recalled the time they went to that amusement park, it was also like this.

「Tooya-kun also had fun right?」

「Yeah.」

He nodded and showed his smile.

「The sea was clean, the food was delicious.」

Although he didn't know if he could fool her but, Tooya could only smile. If he was pressed again, he would insist on saying he was tired from the vacation.

「All of the fish was fresh too! That was the first time it had such a taste!」

「Well, where we live is far from the sea」

Because this was inland, it would be weird to have fresh sashimi.

「I want to go again.」

「.....Sure」

He nodded.

「But going to the same place would surely be dull right.....how about this time we go to Hokkaido? Once again, let's invite Aoi-chan and Mashiro-chan too. Kuroe-san also feels like it right?」

「Yes, the five of us again would be nice.」

Nodding, Kuroe smiled broadly at Tooya.....understanding that this smile was judging him Tooya frowned.

「.....Tooya-kun?」

「Ah, un. Hokkaido is it, we could see the winter festival if it were winter break.」

「Winter break huh.....A little far away but I'm looking forward to it.」

「Yeah.」

In the same way as before, he nodded.

Bzzzzztttt.

Suddenly he felt a vibration in his breast pocket, Tooya took out his cell phone. The screen displayed Aoi, after checking it he, confirmed the contents.

「Who is itfrom?」

「From Aoi.....she just reached home.」

He told a lie.

As expected, the next trip was not likely going to happen.

Chapter 5: He and the Transfer Student's Choices = the Thing They Both Wish For

With the moonless sky, the town where the lights went out was covered in darkness. The usually bustling and bright school was the same, if there were no people, the lights also completely went out and a heavy atmosphere was floating around. In such a dark school, jumping over the wall, dashing across the ground, and flying over the school building outer wall, Tooya and Kuroe arrived at the rooftop.

The lightless roof was filled with dark shadows.....However Tooya could see through the human who was standing in the middle of it.

Inaba Aoi. The culprit who called Tooya to this rooftop at night. On the locked place where no one could enter, without breaking her promise, Aoi was standing there.

「A princess carry, I see」

「Even though I said not to do it because I'm embarrassed」

In spite of the honestly unspeakable method of ascending, Aoi didn't mind it at all. Looking beyond this darkness as if it was normal, she turned her eyes sight over here.

「Carrying on my back is probably not romantic right?」

Kuroe sneered.

「I know, I know, now quickly let me down」

「Acknowledged 」

Finally being released, Tooya stepped onto the concrete floor of the rooftop with his own feet.

「For now, would it be fine to hear me out」

He looked at Aoi straightforwardly.

「How much do you know ? 」

「Although I told you so at the time of the vacation, I know everything」

Aoi answered.

「The contract with the Order of the Black Magic, I also investigated the affair with Mashiro.」

「I see」

It truly seemed like she knew everything. From the time she got to know Mashiro, she gave her the charm because she knew about the conclusion of the demon sword incident.

「Then, what about the school transfer ? 」

「Because I decided so」

「About becoming Mashiro's friend too ? 」

「.....I can't say I didn't plan it」

Her expression became a little clouded.

「But, this has nothing to do with being friends with Mashiro」

It didn't feel like those words were a lie.....because of it Tooya bite his lip.

「Getting close to us.....What's your intention ? 」

Tooya asked the most doubtful question.

「My target is Kuroe-senpai」

Aoi answered.

「Kuroe ? 」

「Un. I told you about my old Shinto shrine right? My home shrine had always carried its mission since ancient times, to monitor the sealed calamity inside of Japan」

「.....That calamity is Kuroe ? 」

「Un, and among those there is one big one. When that seal was broken, my house sensed it about 2 months earlier, so I transferred here.」

「That means, Aoi came to terminate Kuroe ? 」

「No no」

Easily Aoi shook her neck.

「To me, the mission of my house is trivial.....to fight the stupidly powerful mysterious opponent, wouldn't that make me look like an idiot.」

「Then, why.....」

「Because I want that power, you know?」

Answering Aoi smiled.

「Hey, Tooya-senpai」

She smiled naturally.

「Kuroe-senpai's contract.....will you hand it over to me please」



「There's contact from the monitoring team. It seems Kamisami-san and Kuroe-san had gone out of the house..... but it seems like their movements were too fast, so the observation was cut off.」

「.....What about Aoi ? 」

「It seems there was no movement but.....there's a possibility that she wasn't there anymore」

「Tch」

Looked irritated at this, Akane clicked her tongue.

「I'll go and confirm directly 」

「Wait a minute please」

Tanaka restrained her from it.

「Didn't we already judge that direct contact would be too dangerous?」

「.....I'll be fine」

「Do you really believe that?」

「Tch」

She clicked her tongue.

「Even if the worst has happened you're still right」

「Thank you for your estimation but you overestimate me」

Tanaka shrugged his shoulders.

「I am the older sister」

「That's right」

「If I don't go, what should I do?」

「What could you do if you went?」

Tanaka questioned. Akane couldn't kill Aoi.....On the contrary, there was a high possibility of the tables being turned on her. The hope of being able to persuade her was also thin.

「I'll think up something somehow」

Not listening further, Akane went out of the room.

「.....Fuu」

Tanaka exhaled.

「Because she isn't in her own house, the chances of an encounter would be low right? I hope your mysterious intuition wouldn't work.」



「Kuroe's contract.....transfer to you?」

「Un」

Aoi nodded.

「Do you understand the meaning of what you're saying?」

「Of course. There will be nothing I can't do」

Aoi said glitteringly. As if by having that she would have everything.

「And, you must kill people you know?」

「The contract's compensation right.....It's not like I think it's fine, but...」

Tilted her head she looked at Tooya.

「Killing the death sentence convicts right? It's not like I think that it wouldn't matter if it was people who were planned to die but...」

It was as if there was no sense of guilt or anything at all.

「Ah, but I also don't think about wanting to commit a big massacre or anything. Kuroe-senpai's power is exceptionalKnowing that, it would not be strange to think of wanting to grasp it right? 」

To point out that was as if the same as before with Kuroe.

「But do you think it would be so simple that I'll hand over this power? 」

「I think so」

Naturally she said.

「Because the contract between Tooya-senpai and Kuroe-senpai was nothing but a heavy burden right? You don't plan on using this power as you please, and killing humans is difficult right? 」

And then Aoi said it.

「And foremost, if Kuroe-senpai was here you and Rikka-senpai couldn't be together.」

「.....」

Tooya bit his lips.

「You were the one who returned Rikka's memories? 」

「Un, that's right」

On this too, she nodded.

「You had fun spending time with Rikka-senpai right? She seemed important to you. The one who was necessary to senpai is Rikka-senpai.....not Kuroe-senpai right?」

For the sake of making Tooya remember such a thing, she undid Rikka's sealed memories.

「If I were handed the contract, I would not drag Rikka-senpai into this thing.....Don't worry and just be together with Rikka-senpai」

She said that as if it was the right thing.

「Therefore senpai, please hand over the contract to me」

Without answering, he had understood. In the end, Aoi didn't understand a thing even though she had investigated about Tooya..... because she didn't understand the most important thing. She only looked at the surface, not looking beyond that.

And so, she said irrelevant things.

「I... killed Rikka's father」

「I know.....But I think it was natural as revenge. That guy tormented his own family so I think it's normal if he died. Certainly, if he was no longer there, Rikka-senpai would be happy」

Aoi said that as evidence.

「Right now, Rikka-senpai is smiling happily」

「.....Aa」

Tooya had forgotten that he once lost the idea of what to do with that.

「If... I said that I hated it, what would you do? 」

「Hated it.....the contract transfer ? 」

Blankly. As if she didn't expect that such a thing could happen.

「Please wait a bit.....」

As if to think Aoi turned her sight away.

「Threat ? But, that is.....Ah, un. Then let's do it」

She mumbled.

「I decided.」

Aoi looked at Tooya.

「If you don't transfer the contract to me I'll tell everything to Rikka-senpai. Kuroe-senpai's true identity, the contract, and everything Tooya-senpai had done too」

Thinking about it, Aoi gave the worst answer.

「But, if you transfer the contract right now everything will stay as it is.....Though Kuroe senpai would no longer stay around, and Tooya-senpai with Rikka-senpai could be together」

But she misunderstood, thinking that this was the best answer.

「If you do it, everyone will be happy」

Aoi would have the power, Tooya and Rikka could be together.....surely in Aoi's eyes, that was displayed as happiness.

「Aoi」

With the coldest tone, Tooya called that name.

「I don't plan on transferring the contract with Kuroe to you」

「Eh, but」

「To me Kuroe power is necessary」

He announced clearly.

「I made Rikka most wanted wish of happiness which never again to appear lose.....therefore I must make her happy」

「Then.....」

「What you said was not my wish of happiness for Rikka」

Tooya's wish was for Rikka to obtain happiness in a world without him.

「For the sake of eliminating every obstacle, I can't let go of Kuroe power」

With cold eyes, he looked at Aoi.

「But if so, I'll tell Rikka-senpai everything? The fact that senpai killed her father too」

「.....That would be the worst」

Truly.

「Therefore,」

「Therefore, in one way or another, I have to deal with you.」

「Eh」

With surprised eyes Aoi looked at Tooya. But as if she was convinced immediately, she opened her mouth.

「Perhaps you think you could erase my memories like how you did with Rikka-senpai, but if I could unlock Rikka-senpai's sealed memories, I could just cast the same spell on myself, you know?」

On that, Tooya looked at Kuroe. Kuroe shrugged her shoulders and answered.

「I've said it before, but other than harming human magic, I am not a skilled person. I can't do stronger magic than that.」

Exactly the same as Aoi's words.....Tooya returned his turned his eyes back at Aoi.

「Then, I have no other way but to kill you」

As if giving up, he announced.

「Eh?」

As if not understand the meaning of it, Aoi looked at Tooya.

「I'm saying I have no other way but to kill you」

He repeated.

「That can't be.....」

She mumbled in a dazed, as if she hadn't thought of such a possibility.....Tooya thought that was funny. Did she really think everything would go smoothly according to her plans? She also thought that she wouldn't be in danger.

「Then, d-does senpai hate me ? 」

「I don't hate you」

Honestly Tooya answered.

「Rather than that, I think I have a good feeling about you as my kouhai..... therefore on whether to kill you or not, I decided not to kill you」

「If, if so.....」

「But, if I refuse you'll tell everything to Rikka right? 」

When she didn't respond, Tooya continued.

「My goodness.....to me that is the worst. Only Rikka alone, she must not know that I killed her father」

Because that would be the worst.

「If she hates me for it that would be fine. If Rikka wants to judge me, then I'll accept any judgment」

Because Tooya knew.

To Rikka, what Tooya had done was the worst.

Tooya would never forget that face which laughed as if crying

「But, surely she would not do it.」

As saying that it was the worst, Tooya continued.

He continued, saying the things that Aoi surely didn't know.

「Because... because if you told her everything, Rikka would surely forgive me」

「Eh? 」

Aoi looked at Tooya as if she didn't understand the meaning of those words.

「She would forgive all of it, then surely she would blame herself.....that would be the worst right?」

If Rikka blamed Tooya, that would be fine, but Tooya knew- he understood Rikka more than anyone else. It was exactly because of that that he would understand Rikka reaction.

Even though he was the one in the wrong, even though he was the one who did as he pleased. Even though he was a bad father, she didn't hate him. But even in killing him, Rikka would forgive Tooya. And then after that she would blame herself. That would be the result on her of Tooya committing a sin..

However, this would not be the end of it- in reality, it would be even worse.

「And yet.....If I were forgiven I would be delighted. Forgiven by Rikka, I would be pleased that I was released from the crime I committed.....I would think of wanting to be delighted, to be happy. Pushing all the sins on Rikka while I myself would wish for happiness」

If it was so, surely Tooya would no longer care about how he acted. He would not hesitate to use Kuroe's power. Killing Tanaka, killing Akane, destroying the order of the black magic.....he would wipe out all who knew about the circumstances. And then, once again, he would snatch away Rikka memories. With an innocent face he would remain close to her.

It would not be for Rikka's happiness.....It would be for his own happiness.

That would be the worst.

It was the worst, hopeless, sweetest dream.

Therefore Tooya could not forgive.

He could not forgive the opponent trying to create that possibility.

「If it was something else, I could have forgiven you. For instance, if you said something like you'd come to kill me, too」

Tooya thought that in that case, Aoi would be right. Then, he would fight back in a way he couldn't be killed and finish it with making her give up..... however, this was different. This was the only thing Tooya would absolutely never compromise on.

「You shouldn't have made such bad threat. If you had given that up, then I wouldn't have reached such a conclusion」

It could've been settled in a way without killing, but Aoi herself had made that disappear.

「Rather than that, I want you to think. Why did I think that I didn't want to kill you?」

If only she thought about that, then she wouldn't have behaved in such a reckless way.

「Because, that was.....」

Flustered, Aoi eyes wandered around, as if by doing that, the answer she wanted would just come to her. It seemed that the answer didn't come, however, and her gaze went back to Tooya.

「You said you knew everything, right? Then you would also understand that I would sacrifice anyone for my wish, right? In the end you, only saw what you wanted to see.」

For Aoi, it would have seemed like she was creating the ideal future, where Tooya, Rikka, and everyone else became happy. In a way, it could be said that Aoi wanting to snatch Kuroe's contract from Tooya was a done with good intentions.

Even so this was different from Tooya wish for happiness, just like his wish was also different from Rikka's wish for happiness. For Tooya, this was just a nuisance. It was troubling with her pushing her goodwill on him which was different from what he wanted.

If it was just that, though, Tooya wouldn't have had any intention of killing Aoi.

However, Aoi touched on something forbidden. She had created a possibility that might interfere with what Tooya wanted most. That was what Tooya could not forgive.

「I will kill you.」

For the second time it came out from his mouth.



「I, I'm sorr.....」

Aoi had no way of understanding.

Because this apology had no meaning to Tooya.

「Kuroe」

Calling that name, he gave the order.

「This is the price of our contract, eat her」

「Acknowledged」

Looking at Aoi, Kuroe smiled and nodded. While doing so, her form was changing. Her body quickly grew bigger, bulging, disregarding the law of conservation of mass as her form changed.....In no more than a few seconds, a mysterious gigantic wolf was suddenly where she was.

「Hi!？」

Frightened, Aoi took a step back and her figure disappeared.

「Concealment huh.....Well even if she used it, that was nothing strange.」

She curved her lips up, smiling.

「I won't let you escape」

Together with those words the darkness inside the rooftop started squirming. And then there was one place that to Tooya, with his unobstructed eyes, was painted in pitch black.

「Quite a wonderful concealment. Unfortunately, as long as it's related to harming humans, I won't lose to anyone」

Kuroe spoke to the black lump shaped like a human.

「Now then, let me enjoy the price of the contract.」

She opened the mouth with a row of sharp fangs.



Within the unseeing darkness, Aoi was shivering in fear. Even though everything was supposed to work out and everything was going well so far... She didn't understand how things ended this way . In reality, in front of her eyes was imminent death.

「I don't want to die」

Inside the darkness she groaned..... However this voice didn't reach the outside.

「Save me」

But it could reach this heart.

There's one way.

A voice resounded. Aoi immediately clung to it.

「Save me ! 」

Frantically, she begged.

But unless you give me everything, it wouldn't work.

The voice asked calmly.

The trusting voice that she had used to hearing.

Do you want to leave everything to me?

But that answer was not even supposed to be negative.



In one mouthful, the figure disappeared. That body constrained in darkness had been eaten together by Kuroe in one mouthful, crunched, and, after chewing it to her heart's content, swallowed.

「Thanks for the food」

She said as if she was satisfied and her form swiftly changed back. In a blink of an eye, the giant wolf's figure had disappeared and was back to that of a doll Suddenly, she looked at Tooya way.

「I have received the prize for the contract. I will ask you the same way next month」

「.....Aa」

Tooya nodded to the smiling Kuroe.

「But master had made a generous decision」

「.....What is it」

「I thought that you would say eat it but, I never thought you would say the price. Surely this month I hadn't received the price, it was a good judgment that life was not wasted」

She said as if it was very fun.

「.....Shut up, idiot」

As if groaning, Tooya only said so.

Epilogue: He and the Circumstances of Each Person + Who

There was no one in the apartment. She had half guessed it but, inside Akane she could not hide that she was feeling relieved. As Tanaka who had said Yeah but there was nothing you could do, Akane understood it the most.

「!？」

However, Akane noticed when she went out of the apartment. The figure of her little sister who was half running toward here.

「Aoi!」

Unconsciously she yelled. The legs running to here had stopped.

「You startled me, a bit」

Looking at Akane's figure Aoi said.

「I thought no way I was noticed letting them go aheadBut, it seems I was wrong 」

「.....Aoi? 」

That speed and conduct, that expression, Akane had an uncomfortable feeling

「Yes」

Then she said

「Nice to, meet you? 」

No that's not right, she murmured.

「Even though this is the first time I speak to you directly but, I know you」

「You are.....」

Akane's understanding finally caught up.

「What.....are you ? 」

「The thing that was possessing your little sister」

It said.

「Thanks to being cornered by the two, finally I could come to the surface」

It smiled satisfied.

「.....Please answer the questions」

「Since I don't feel like answering.」

Naturally it smiled. Including evil intents.

「Answer」

She took out the gun, pressed at it.

「If you don't answer I'll shoot」

「If so your sister will die together with me, so go ahead」

It smiled.

「Ku」

She bit her back teeth, frustratingly stared at it.

「If you could fire here it would be a story of could you do it since a long time ago」

「.....Shit」

To no avail Akane threw the gun to the ground.

「Wouldn't it break ? 」

「.....Silent」

Even so the only thing Akane could do was nothing but glaring at it.

「I came back to take the luggage but, if it this part only I have to give it up」

It turned away.

「ku, wait」

「What?」

It looked over its shoulder.

「Would you leave me alone?」

「It seems you have nothing you have to do right」

Seemed like there was nothing worth it.

「But, because you look pitiful I'll teach you only one thing」

It said.

「My purpose, is to continue what I did in the olden time.....Because it seemed like thing didn't go as smoothly so I had to do various thing」

So troublesome, it bragged, seemingly enjoying itself.

「Then goodbye」

「Wai.....!?!」

Quicker than she could call it to stop, that figure had disappeared into the darkness.

In an instant, without leaving a trace.



「Yare yare.....If it was a vain attempt it would be nice to contact me once but」

In his own room Tanaka was sitting on his desk waiting for the contact from Akane. Waiting itself was a long feeling of wasting time.

Biiriririririri

The initially unchanged voice had finally vibrated with the incoming sound. With relief he took it out but the name displayed was not the one Tanaka was hoping for.

「This is Tanaka」

「I'm sorry for calling at such a late time, this is Kamisaki.」

He heard a voice that contained some kind of darkness.....Tanaka had guessed half of it.

「Because I'm still awake please don't mind it, do you have anything to tell me? 」

「.....As the price of the contract I killed Aoi」

「Is that so」

The content was an ounce different than his guess.

「Since we're both tired, it would be fine to tell me the detail at later day.....for today please just take it easy and rest」

「.....understood」

「Yes, then」

He turned off the phone.

「Now then, in a sense does this mean that my time was saved.....although for me that's not a good feeling」

He breathed out.

「Now then, how do I explain this to Akane-san」

He murmured.

Biriririiririri.

The cell phone once again noticed him of incoming call. In a sense it was a good thing in between, this time the name displayed was Akane.

「This is Tanaka」

「.....」

There was no answer.

「Akane-san?」

「.....I met Aoi」

With gloomy voice Akane answered.

「What.....?」

「But even so it was not Aoi. The thing that was possessing Aoi had taken over the controlfor the details I'll tell you directly」

「No, a-no, Akane-san?」

Even though he wanted to ask more but the phone call was cut.

「.....」

Once again he organized the contents of the continuous phone calls that had come in a row.

「This time, what is happening」



Dawn came, and the town was wrapped in light. Even if there was something that had happened over there once the night is over the morning would come. Thing that had been wrapped in darkness was also visible in the light.....But, only that thing. There was nothing changed.

「Morning, huh」

From the gap of the curtain the light and Tooya narrowed his eyes. On the opposite side of the world that helplessly became lightened up, if being shined on itself would likely disappear.....how absurd. Even if harboring such sentiment reality would not change.

「.....Fuu」

He breathed out.

「You're awake right」

He looked at the half-asleep Kuroe.

「.....have you noticed」

Looking as if bored Kuroe raised herself from the futon.

「No, well I was only trying to say it but.....」

Somehow.

「Fumu, master also has a sharp intuition」

She said as if being impressed.

「.....the reason you were feigning asleep?」

「Even though master didn't sleep the servant like me could not do such disrespect behavior like sleeping ?」

「Before this didn't you sleep to your heart's content though?」

Soundly.

「Answer honestly」

「I was observing master」

She smiled naturally.

「You were in an extremely calm state, like that」

「.....」

「That is to say even though just mere few hours ago you killed Aoi」

Didn't feel nauseous, didn't cry and shed tears. Rather than that you only calmly sat there, only looking at the window.

「Truly you have gotten used to it?」

「.....Of course not」

For the sake of his selfish wish he killed the one he knew.....there was no way he would be calm. Even though he didn't feel regret about doing it,

he still had the feeling of guilt. If looking straight at that point, surely the world would begin to turn round and round like it was a gloomy thing.

But, for Tooya right now to worry about that was not the utmost thing.

「Simply put, I am truly the worst」

Tooya answered.

「There is a bigger problem than that, and it is more painful for me. Because I have to put Aoi's thing aside」

「Fumu?」

「I killed Aoi.....If so, there will be things you have to do right?」

Because for the sake of granting Tooya's wish he killed Aoi, then Tooya had to accomplish his duty.

Because the reason he didn't have to do this had disappeared.....because it had disappeared.

「Even more than killing Aoi, doing this is more painful for me」

As if self-mockery, Tooy laughed.

「Hey, I'm the worst right」

「Umu, you're the worst」

Kuroe smiled enjoying this.

At this Tooya tightened his lips, as if resolving himself he opened his mouth.

「Rikka memories, once again delete it」

The time for dream, was over.

