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**火海坂猫**  
illustration:春日歩

# 彼と人喰の日常<sup>4</sup>

Ordinary days with a Man-Eater....

pretty girl with black hair "Chloé"

Kareto  
Hitokuino  
Nichijo

# 「私、十夜君が好き」

もつとも十夜が望んで、

もつとも十夜が望まないその言葉を。

くらくらと頭が揺れる。

叫んで、わめいて、

この場から逃げ出してしまいたい。

だけどそんな真似ができるわけもない……

だって立夏がそこにいる。

その一言に全ての感情を詰め込んで、

後は期待に揺れる面持ちでじつと十夜を見ているから。



その瞬間に世界は、その笑顔。

「なにかな  
お姉ちゃん。」





にいつと、

唇をつり上げて

黒衣は尋ねる。

「主はわしを信じることができるのか？」

## Prologue: His Unknown Old Tale

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It was a wide room. A wide flat ordinary room without any furniture. In the corner there was a step built high like a stage, divided by a cloth hanging from the roof. On the other side it reflected a human shadow, although the figure couldn't be distinguished but one could perceive that it was peering down from the stage above, fixated on a man wearing old Japanese clothes. Next to him was a girl with long black hair, casting her head down in similar posture.



「Did you call?」

While prostrating, he asked the figure beyond the partition.

「Yes」

From the opposite a voice returned. A young female voice.

「You can raise your head」

「.....Acknowledged」

Standing up from the prostrating posture, the man looked straight with his face while in seiza posture. Although it was said by the figure in the opposite but it wasn't like he could see through it, and he didn't have the intention either.

「Black Dog, you too」

She ordered the long black hair woman who was still facing down.

「.....」

「.....Comply」

The man ordered her who was not moving

「Acknowledged」

Finally with that the woman raised her face.

「Fun, so you don't follow anyone's order but your master?」

「.....please forgive her」

「Good, that's the proof of obedience by the contract」

As if saying don't mind it, the figure beyond the partition waved her hand.

「There is no problem right?」

「Yes」

He nodded.

「Other than not harming human there's no other restriction added, but right now there's no problem. Although she seems to go out of town often but it seems to be only usual sightseeing.」

「Fumu, so she does freely」

「By the contract」

As if being afraid the man answered.

「It's not like I blame you. If we could suppress that with this amount of freedom then it's worth the price」

As if saying don't mind it she laughed.....although he couldn't that smile.

「Black Dog, the life inside human, is it fun?」

「.....」

The black hair woman didn't answer, and continuously staring at the figure beyond the partition.

「Hey」

「Don't look at me without even confirming it.....Is it since it's not the master's order, right here she wouldn't perform a single art」

「That's not.....」

「It's fun」

As if it was troublesome the woman answered.

「Are you fine with it?」



Where were those words being directed to?

「.....Please forgive her」

「Good」

The girl answered just like before.

「No matter who it is, there's always someone who he likes and dislikes. From the beginning for this talk I had no intention of letting her hear it.....you can step back」

「.....」

There was no answer, however the woman left the place in accordance to the order.

「She's a self-interest one」

「.....I'm very sorry」

「Good」

For the third time she said as if she was smiling

「.....And then, what is your order for today」

Having collected himself, the man asked.

「Aa, the true is」

After a small pause the girl answered.

「I'm thinking of, destroying the demons」

「.....」

The man didn't respond. It wasn't because he did not understand. Because he did that he couldn't fathom the girl's true intention.

「Do you want, my opinions?」

After pondering for a while, finally as if squeezing the words out of his mouth the man answered.

「No」

The girl shook her head.

「I understand what you want to say, so I'll explain everything」

Bachin, the girl snapped her fingers. After that the partition obstructing between the two suddenly lost its support and fell down from the roof.

「!？」

Instantly the man prostrated himself. Meeting directly with superior was discourteous behavior.

「I don't mind, lift your face.」

The girl ordered the man. Already the existence of the partition obstructing them was no more.

「But」

「I don't mind」

Once more the girl said. Going against it anymore than this would be considered discourteous.

「.....Acknowledge」

As if having resolved himself the man raised his body, he looked at her.

A smiled, as she was there.

Dark, smiled as if smiling at everything.

「From this moment I'll talk with you」

While still floating the smile she said.

「Everything about me」

## Chapter 1: His and the Childhood Friend's Each Happiness

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Having the contract with Kuroe his body became healthy, not having sleep for many days and he still didn't feel tired, that had to be an advantage right. That meant that he could do some extra works, and that was time saving efficiency.

But there was also the feeling of there was unnecessary time right. Because if one could get tired and sleep one would get a little better, since this was something that continued always. With just a mood continuing he couldn't sleep, his consciousness was always clear as if he could always think, such a thing could be called torture.

「Then, it's already 10 o'clock, master」

「.....yeah」

The clock was pointing at 10 o'clock in the morning.

「Comparatively after your vigorous declaration a considerable time had passed right?」

「.....I know」

Since the declaration of erasing Rikka's memories at dawn break, a few hours had already passed. In that period Tooya had always been sitting inside his room.

「Can't you just sneak in when she was sleeping?」

「Anyhow if it were erasing memories I think it wouldn't change.」

「I hate it you know」

She didn't want to do actions like making a sudden visit when they were asleep. Even though who just said if putting to words the result would be the same, but because it was somewhat having the feeling of cowardice.

「Even though you give all the decision making to me before」

「.....That's correct」

「Master had grown up」

「Is that a good thing?」

「Who knows」

As if poking fun at him, both her hands waved.

「Then, what to do master. As expected if it was this moment Rikka had wakened up and also finished her breakfast right. I think there wouldn't be a problem if we pay a visit?」

「Let's go」

Answered he stood up.

「.....after Rikka, we must also go to Mashiro, right?」

「That's right. Making her forget Aoi is also for her sake.」

「.....」

Aoi had no longer existed in this world. How Tanaka would deal with it Tooya didn't know but for Mashiro who was close with her, surely for her to not receive a shock, it wouldn't happen. Much less, since she was Mashiro's sole friend in class.

「Then, up till which point master plans to erase?」

「Up till which point you said.....?」

「Mashiro's memory. As a matter of course the memory concerning Aoi would be erased, then what about the memory outside of it.....Erasing the memory about hanging out with Rikka up till now, or erasing all the memory concerning master?」

「That.....」

If we're talking about reasoning, it would be to erase it all. Even if he erased his existence from Rikka, it would be strange if Mashiro was left alone herself. If deeming his own existence was dangerous then there would be no other choices.

However, if it was done then what would become of Mashiro. Even if Mashiro, who was isolated in class, would have no one to talk to.....because the only friend she had in class, Aoi, had been killed by Tooya. If Tooya disappeared she would be in solitude.

「There's also another thing to think about」

Reading Tooya's thoughts, Kuroe said.

「On the contrary it's because master is spending time with her so that Mashiro is isolated, it's the other way of thinking. Surely if master accompanied her then the isolation would be softened right? However there's the possibility that she relied on master and lost the will power to run alone. The group that happily extended a direct hand to Mashiro had been reduced, so may not be impossible that she could make friends again in class」

The origin of her bullying was because bad luck piled up, there was no problem with Mashiro herself. Or rather he thought that Mashiro's character was liked by people. Because she gave off the feeling that when things

became difficult soon if you continued working hard then the effort would bear fruit.

「Moreover we also have no reason we have to settle these current affairs」  
Completely removing all the source of trouble surrounding Mashiro, and creating a class environment that accepts Mashiro. It would be a simple matter if using Kuroe's power. With that Mashiro could separate from people like Tooya and could spend time normally.....Rather, why up till now he didn't come up with that. Even though if it was thinking for Mashiro's sake, it would be the best option.

That time when Tooya rescued Mashiro, she was at a thirst for a talking partner.

「Are you indirectly condemning that I'm not normal?」

「.....Normal people would not answer the voice in other's head」

He heaved a sigh.

「Well, what we will do is decided on master's liking 」

「I know that already」

In the end nothing could be done if Tooya didn't decide it.

「If so then before worrying about things that happens after you have to finish things ahead.....Certainly not because you hate finishing things ahead that you were worrying about things afterwards right?」

As he was still standing up, Tooya still hadn't taken a step.

「.....I know that already」

This time as if spitting out a breath, Tooya repeated.



Rikka's house was close to Tooya's. Because getting out of the house and if getting on the road, it wouldn't take 30 seconds to arrive to her house.

Crossing the space of the wall and if walked a little more there would be a space which was the entrance.

「Won't you call them?」

「You don't have to tell me I'm calling them now」

Really he was only hesitating for around 10 second.

Pinpon

A mechanical, familiar sound reverberated.

「Yes, who is it?」

From the intercom he could heard a familiar voice. It was the voice of Rikka's mother. Although for an instance he thought that it should be the time she went to work, but when he thought about it very very hard, today was Sunday. It seemed it was the summer break's fault that his sense of day had become mostly improper.

「A, it's Kamisaki Tooya though」

「Ara Tooya-kun.....Wait a bit」



After the voice was cut off he could hear the sound of her rushing. He thought that it was getting closer and making a sound the front door was opened. Appeared out of it was a face he remembered. Although she had the outward looks liked Rikka but she was a little taller, however if comparing to Rikka her figure was somewhat thicker. Certainly wrinkles were standing out somewhat but on the site of age she still looked rather young.

「Good morning」

「Ee, good morning. It's almost been a long time since I saw Tooya-kun」

「Eeto, you're right.....」

Since he became estranged with Rikka it was inevitable that the chance meeting with Oba-san face to face would decrease. Lately when he had been spending time with Rikka, because originally she was a busy working person, the timing to see each other hadn't matched.

「By the way you have some business with Rikka?」

「Ah, yes」

「As expected. But sorry, that girl just went out」

「Eh」

With a strange answer for an instance he was at a loss for word.

「Since early morning she went out with her friend.....Ah, the friend is of course a girl so it's fine, you don't need to worry right?」

「Worry you said.....」

「Because she's your girl friend so you're worry right?」

「!？」

In front of the clearly flustered Tooya, Rikka's mother floated a broad smile.

「Just before you went on a vacation to the beach together right? If you properly take responsibility then as the guardian I don't mind what you're doing?」

「No nono, since there weren't just two people went on the vacation but everybody did」

「In other words my daughter isn't your favorite to win?」

「That's not it.....Please forgive me」

Even if he made more of a great fuss than this, it would only throwing unnecessary fuel to the fire.

「Ara Tooya-kun had considerably grown up」

「.....I'm used to it」

Being Kuroe's master.

「Womanizing?」

「That's wrong」

Tooya remembered she was this kind of character, he heaved a sigh.

「Ahaha, that's a joke. Because I know Tooya-kun isn't that kind of boy.....Then, you said you have business with Rikka? Want me to relay the message to her?」

「No, I'll get in touch with her myself.」

「Ara is that so」

「With that please excuse us」

「If it's Sunday mostly I'll be here so come again」

Being sent off with a bright smile Tooya left Rikka's house behind. Immediately going back home and returned to his room it wouldn't be five minutes.

「.....Then」

At that moment finally Tooya opened his mouth.

「Why were you hiding yourself」

「That person was troublesome right?」

Without a shred of shyness Kuroe answered. Together they went out, together they headed to Rikka's house, but the time dealing with Rikka's mother her figure was not there. Although since Rikka's mother came out to receive him some time had passed, but he realized that if he's thinking about it there was no response from the other party, so since the start she wasn't here right.

「In other words you know Rikka's mother would come out from the start?」

In other words she knew Rikka wasn't here.

「Umu」

She nodded.

「.....Why don't you tell me that since the beginning?」

「Because you didn't ask」

Kuroe's answer was brief.

「Moreover it's not like I gasped the fact that Rikka had gone out. I only noticed her going out after only I had peeked inside.....That moment was after Master had pressed the chime」

「.....」

Is that true, or is that a lie.

「Fine, whatever」

Knowing Kuroe was that kind of servant so it would be bad if he didn't confirm it.

「Did you heave a sigh of relief?」

「.....About what」

「If I don't say it out you wouldn't understand, my master isn't that foolish however?」

「.....」

As ever she said something stupidly difficult.

「.....I did」

Saying a single word Tooya opened his mouth.

「Un?」

As if she didn't hear it she urged him.

「I heaved a sigh of relief hearing Rikka wasn't here.....Is that bad」

「No, it's good to be honest」

She smiled.

「With that even though speaking of courage or something it was something unsightly in the end」

She shrugged off her shoulders.

「So, what will you do?」

「Call her」

As expected with that, about things such as asking again Kuroe didn't do anything. Although heaving a sigh of relief was true but he didn't plan on stopping what he was doing. Meeting with Rikka and erasing her memories. For that sake he had to contact Rikka directly and got her to agree with the promise of meeting each other.

「This is truly my master」

「Be quiet」

With his eyes showing her not to talk anymore, he took the cell phone out with his hand. Rikka's number floated on, he pressed the call button and right after that he could hear the call sound.

「.....」

The call sound continued.

「.....She doesn't answer」

Just like that he was connected to the answering service, Tooya cut the power.

「.....」

It was good that Rikka wasn't home. It wasn't strange that she went out with friend. Although Tooya was isolated in class but Rikka was normally having a lot of friend. It was nothing weird that she went out with friend in the midst of break.

「It didn't connect?」

「.....Yeah」

Not answering the call was not something strange right. Although mostly they would notice it, there would be some times where one wouldn't notice right. If being in a crowd and not noticing the incoming call sound ringing it would not be mysterious.

It wasn't strange, it wasn't strange but.....Two things piled up together and a strange uneasiness spread in his chest.

「Kuroe」

「What is it?」

「Can you use clairvoyance to look for Rikka?」

「Impossible」

Immediately the answer was returned.

「I told you that my clairvoyance isn't that convenient right? For instance if it were about an exact place then I could use it, anyways it isn't suited to search for things that I don't know where it is」

「.....Then what is it good for」

「It's suited for scouting and monitoring right?」

「.....Ah, yeah」

「Then, why suddenly you want to look for Rikka?」

Inclining her neck she asked.

「No, because I couldn't contact her.....」

「Is that strange?」

「.....Such thing」

Wasn't something unbelievable.

「I understand that both time your decisions had been dampened and you became a discouraged figure, but you're worrying too much」

「.....」

「Since it will remain in the incoming call history, it would be fine if you just wait for her」

Kuroe's idea was a sound argument.

「I, guess so」

That would be for the best. Because it must be a coincidence that there were two things piled up.

Tooya floated on an expression of agreeing, Kuroe laughed at it.

「Well, if saying that means master wants to look into Rikka's private life then I'll have to obey such order」

「.....Am I a stalker or something」

「I think that was a statement closed to it」

Tooya breathed a sigh and pressed his forehead with his hand.

「Fine, until Rikka returns I'll sleep」

「Fumu, is that so」

「If the cell phone rings wake me up」

Telling that to Kuroe, Tooya collapsed on the bed.

Mysteriously sleep came immediately.



「Master」

Faintly he heard a voice inside his mind.

「Master」

Repeatedly calling

Inside his mind which was not functioning, he could understand that something was calling him

「Master」

Again it repeated.

How troublesome, he thought. Even though he wanted to sleep more.

「If you don't wake up I'll kiss you?」

Instantly his consciousness awakened.

「.....Even though you were being so stubborn why did you wake up because of that?」

「Your face is close」

Her face was in front of his eyes.

「First of all let go of me」

「That hurts my feeling.....」

With a dejected expression Kuroe's face got further. After Tooya confirmed it he slowly raised his body.

「So then, what business is it?」



「.....Certainly I think that's very mean, master」

Having a sulking face Kuroe raised the cell phone.

「If it rings then wake me up, master entrusted it to me right」

Like a child Kuroe threw the cell phone at Tooya.

「.....My bad」

As expected Tooya had also felt bad and lightly apologized, then he opened the cell phone. Apparently it seemed a mail had arrived.

「It's from Rikka」

The sender's name was Rikka. After Kuroe looked at it, however as if saying "hey, look at this", she shrugged her shoulders.

「What's written in it?」

「I'm opening it right now」

Operating the cell phone he opened the mail.

【Sorry I didn't notice your incoming call. However there was neither recorded message nor mail, so I wonder was it urgent business or not? Moreover if you don't mind I have some business with Tooya-kun, so can we meet in the nearby park at 6 o'clock?】

The mail's words ended at that.

「The park huh.....」

From the perspective of the other party there was a business with him, that would mean a godsend. Talking about the park it would be a little

troublesome but if it were Kuroe's power then there wouldn't be any problem with eye witness right. Because of Rikka's conversation content the possibility of erasing her memory could be postponed was..... No, that would be running away. Since it would be troublesome if it became a problem so if it's only hearing i would be hearing and with Kuroe's power whatever it was it could be done, that was all. There was no obstacle in erasing Rikka's memories.

「I wonder about that」

Kuroe laughed.

「.....Don't suddenly read people's mind」

「Too late for that now」

Certainly it was too late but.

「Then, what do you want to say」

「No, if it's fine for master I too don't mind」

「.....」

As ever with a suggestive speech she dodged the question.

「Looking at me with those kind of eyes.....don't make me say something so boorish」

「Then don't say anything from the start」

「I can't do that」

She laughed.

「Because that would be the same as snatching away my life entertainment  
」

「If you went too far I'll use my order you bastard」

「That would be troublesome」

She shrugged her shoulders

「.....Haa」

Heaving a big sigh, with a fleeting glance he looked at the clock. When he was sleeping two hours had passed. Operating on his cell phone he sent a confirming mail to Rikka.

And after that four hours after.....It would be a goodbye with Rikka.



The summer day is long. Even though it was 6 o'clock the sun had yet to set, and the little park was illuminated by the sunlight. However, the figure of people were gone, in the park with no one in it, Rikka sit on its bench alone. The sunlight was still far from being called twilight, but even so her cheeks were dyed a little red.

「Ah, Tooya-kun」

Noticing him Rikka stood up.

「.....Was I late」

「Nope, you're just on time」

The park's clock was pointing at exactly six o'clock.....Going anymore sooner than this, Tooya didn't have the courage to. Since surely Rikka would

come even sooner than him..... Because surely she had come here a dozen of minutes faster, and had been continuously waiting for this time right.

「Thank you for coming here」

「.....Yeah」

The moment he came here and saw her expression, Tooya surely confirmed something would be bound to happen from now.....And that something Rikka had also noticed. If it were something he could do then he would've run away from that place. If it were now he could still make it.....Even so his leg couldn't move.

「You know, I, always had something I wanted to tell Tooya-kun」

I don't want to hear it, Tooya thought. Only the hated hunch was spreading out. Because he understood what Rikka was transmitting.....I don't want to know, his heart was in pain.

「Always, always ne, since the very beginning I had a feeling.....But because I didn't have enough courage, so always I couldn't say it」

Wrong, he wanted to say that. Having not enough courage was Tooya's side.

「However finally I had the courage to say it.....Therefore, I'll say it ne」

As if putting into her solution, "kyu" Rikka tightened her lips.

「.....!？」

There was still a way to stop her. Shout at her right now immediately, his reasons were appealing. Praying silently in your heart was also fine. With only that sure that ill-natured servant would carry out the order.

But even so why Tooya's lips didn't move, his thought was chaotic and didn't have a clear image.

「Ano ne」

And then, Rikka opened her mouth and said.

「I, like Tooya-kun」

Tooya's most expected,  
most undesired, those words.

His head was waving dizzily. He wanted to shout, scream, and run away from that place.

However he couldn't just do such action.....Since Rikka was standing there. Because those few words were packed with all of her emotion, after that with a face shaking with expectations she was staring at Tooya.

Refuse her, his reasoning were telling him. That was what he had always wished for.

「I, am.....」

What he was trying to say, the words didn't continue more than that.

「I'll be waiting for your answer, ne」

Couldn't continue like that Rikka announced, and turned her body around. Since Rikka wasn't so stout hearted to keep waiting for Tooya's answer. Tooya's silence was urging on her anxiety, making her frightened of wishing for an immediate answer.

However, there was a feeling of relief.

「A.....」

Chasing after her, and speaking up from behind her, still nothing he could do, Tooya stood stock still dumbfounded. Time flowed until the twilight was wrapped in darkness .....even though it would be fine to keep standing stock still.

「Neglecting play is lonely you know」

An atmosphere ruining voice could be heard.

「.....」

「Even if you make that face. It was a fact I was neglected」

「.....」

「In the end there was no signal at all」

She laughed.

「Hey master」

The following words even Tooya could easily predict.

「You won't erase Rikka's memories?」

「!」

Although he could predict it, but it was not like he could stop being shaken.

「I, am.....」

The same answer like the love confession, the words couldn't come out more than that.

Erase it, he understood the answer should be that. Although having been shaken from the unexpected confession, he should have given the order for

Kuroe to once again erase it.....He, knew that. Even so why such words didn't come out.

“Yeah, I'm truly the worst” Tooya thought.

He had determined to kill people .....But he was so easily shaken by that.



「Then, what would master do now?」

Returning to his room, for the time being after calming down Kuroe opened her mouth.

「.....」

「Why you always keep silent」

In between the time going back from the park Tooya didn't open his mouth.

「Although I don't mind you pondering alone but, if the problem is beyond your power you should talk to others and find a way right?」

「.....Depends on the other party」

Finally he opened his mouth.

「Moreover this is.....」

「Surely the problem came from Master yourself」

In the end what was it that Tooya wanted to do ..... if it's about following what other people tells you to, Tooya would live a more decent life

「But you need an excuse right?」

「An excuse?」

「Umu, even though master has come up with the answer you couldn't choose it right? If so then let me create an excuse so that master could think it's fine to choose」

「.....」

Kuroe's words were right. Tooya too understood what was right ..... But it was only that Tooya' feelings couldn't approve of choosing. That would be the worst, so Tooya also knew. Even though he knew, it was not enough for him to take a step forward..... I see, mayhap an excuse is necessary.

「Then, what kind of excuse are you planning on giving me?」

「Umu, it's simple」

She laughed

「Have sex with me right now」

「.....A?」

She said something extremely dangerous .....Tooya right now wasn't in the mental state that could turn aside a joke.

「Just you know it's not a joke」

Even so Kuroe was smiling. For an instance the thought of seriously order her to go die flash through his head, but Tooya slowly swallowed the feeling and stopped it.



「More or less, let's hear the reason」

「Umu」

She nodded.

「Master couldn't choose was because you want to accept Rikka's love confession, such is the feeling you're having right?」

「.....yeah」

There was no meaning in denying it. Without it there was no need to be wavered.

「If that's the case then instead if accepting me then you could make the choice right」

「.....」

It wasn't like he didn't understand what she was trying to say.....But understanding and having consent to accept her were all different things.

「Ridiculous!」

「Is that so?」

Kuroe tilted her neck

「Then master, let me ask something on the contrary」

「What is it」

「If supposedly master had been able to decide to erase Rikka's memories.....Actually could master continuously maintain that state?」

「That.....what do you mean」

「It's still that same meaning」

She laughed

「If returning her memories then at any moment you could accept her love confession.....At such state could master keep his patience?」

「!？」

「Although I said it was an excuse, but at the same time it's also a reason to restrain such emotion. Though I didn't say for the sake of forgetting to drown in lust but, in this occasion it is effective right. Although it couldn't be said to be everything but since it could shoulder a part of the love affair's feeling」

「.....」

Tooya couldn't deny it. Although he couldn't accept everything but.....what Kuroe pointed out was something Tooya couldn't ignore. Supposing even if he found some reason to erase her memories, if there was not a very strong reason, it couldn't be sure that Tooya wouldn't be assaulted by the temptation to open the Pandora's box. If being able to easily win against this temptation then Tooya wouldn't be in trouble right now right.

「Then, what will master do?」

While asking, Kuroe acted flirtatiously as if provoking.

「For now there's not only that choice」

For the present state.

「That's boring」

「But well, I've calmed down」

No matter what happened Kuroe wouldn't waver. Thanks to that Tooya too had become calm.

「.....it's not that I don't thank you for that」

「In the end master is just being dere!？」

「I'm not being dere」

Truly she didn't waver

「.....Haa」

He took a sigh

「First of all let's think」

Tooya announced.

「What you said is reasonable. Even if I found a suitable reason to erase Rikka's memories the temptation of wanting to return it would definitely remain.....Therefore, let's find an answer I could consent with」

「Well, that's good but」

Kuroe shrugged her shoulders.

「There's time to think.....Since in summer break we wouldn't face Rikka right. In themeantime let's just calmly think about it」

「Fumu, not seeing Rikka huh?」

「It's obvious right」

If meeting with Rikka surely Tooya wouldn't be able to keep calm. Because Rikka, until Tooya gave his answer it would be awkward to meet face to face right.

「But is that good」

With a half believed voice Kuroe muttered.



But unchangingly, reality in some sense was not kind to Tooya.

「I have come over」

With a whole smiling face Rikka announced.

「You came.....」

Yeah, I don't get it. Early rising, waking up Kuroe, eating breakfast, doing lots of thinking, and got no conclusion, suitably time went by.....Then, there was a knock on the door, as he thought was that mother he opened the door, Rikka was standing there. Tooya still haven't changed out of his sleepwear, Kuroe was for the second time curled into a ball and sleeping.

「I'm.....I'm getting change so wait a bit」

「Ok」

He closed the door in front of Rikka who nodded.

「Eeto.....」

With this some time was bought. In this gap think, think, think.....For now what should be done was not thinking about why suddenly Rikka was here.

「First of all.....」

He moved his eyesight toward the living thing that was sleeping curling up. There was no time to spare, she had to be woke as soon as possible.....Moreover he mustn't let Rikka who was waiting on the other side of the door notice.

「Wake up」

He let out his voice, however if she woke up with just that he wouldn't go through much hardship every times.

「.....Wake up, it's an order」

With no other way Tooya said.

「Mu」

The effect was immediate, Kuroe instantly opened her eyes.

「Master, that's boorish」

「I also feel bad so please wake up right now for me」

「Mu.....Why is Rikka also here?」

Apparently without even listening to explanation Kuroe had understood the situation.

「I also want to ask that.....Maybe, mother made her come up here」

Since today was break day she should be downstairs.

「Fumu, a hunch of carnage」

「Don't say stupid things and do something for me」

Because if Rikka had entered the room just like this it could really be so.....In Tooya's room Kuroe's personal items were scattered around. Aside from the blanket on the bed, the uniforms were normally hanging on

the wall. Most of the personal clothes and underwear were in the closet, but some part of it was also outside.

「First of all even if we hide everything in the closet.....the problem is you」

It was not really a problem for Tooya to just hide her, but if Rikka wanted to meet her than he'd be in trouble.

「Well, that treatment wouldn't go to the heart of matter at this late hour.....This should do it」

Quickly after she said Kuroe's figure disappeared. Lately he had been used to seeing it, invisibility magic

「With this I'll switch with Rikka to go outside, and after that comeback, then there would be no problem right」

「Good, let's go with that」

There was no other way.

「Before that won't master change」

「A, I forgot」

Tooya was still in his sleepwear

「Then I'll change.....I said」

He felt a sight on him. Even though her figure couldn't be seen Kuroe was still here.

「Aren't you going to quickly change?」

「.....」

If it were always then he would drive her out but today he couldn't do such thing

「Your eyes, close it」

「Acknowledged」

Her voice seemed cheerful.

Can't trust her at all.



「Tooya-kun, what's the meaning of this?」

Rikka's condemning eyes were piercing Tooya. Without needing to confirm that face expression was angry, and it wouldn't end simply. If talking about Kuroe which was the cause of it, was playing a feigned ignorant face, sitting down and examining the situation quietly.

「Eeto, Rikka」

What should be done, for now just open the mouth.....If talking about the result, without being noticed Kuroe successfully got out of the room. And then after knocking she returned to Tooya's room. That was fine. It was fine until that.....had he not completely forgotten that Kuroe was still in her sleep wear.

Thinking about it, it was bad to erase Kuroe's figure before Tooya got change. If so, surely that thing would be noticed, even so.....As the

result, Tooya was forced into a seiza by Rikka whom was surprised at Kuroe's state.

「What?」

With a dangerous face Rikka asked.

「What business you have today.....」

「That has nothing to do with right now」

Although it was obvious, the topic wasn't changed.

「Right now the problem is why Kuroe-san is in such a state」

「.....」

Normally she would be in even more casual clothing, to be frank she would be in nude, so that was much better, but he couldn't say it. Basically Kuroe slept in nude. No matter how many time he said she would not fix it, and if Tooya gave order she would show extreme hatred so Tooya had to back down. But as expected other than that time if she was still in nude it would be troublesome. His parents were at the influence of Kuroe's magic so they didn't notice, but the scene of his mother making breakfast for Kuroe, whom was naked, without saying anything, he hated it a lot. In conclusion, they made a promise that as Kuroe woke up she had to wear some simple sleepwear but.....after eating breakfast, Kuroe once again went to sleep like that. Although he thought it was better than being nude, but the end was as you can see.

By the way, about being nude in a cutter shirt Kuroe had said.





「Man would be touched emotionally like this right?」

That was, what she said.....Even though he couldn't deny it.

「No, but Rikka」

「What?」

「It's not like I forced her into that state.....」

「As long as you're not forcing her you can go ogling her as much as you like?」

In order words, in order words.....No, he had noticed however.

Apparently Rikka was jealous. She couldn't forgive Tooya for seeing Kuroe in that state.

「Nee, Rikka. Why don't we leave it at that?」

Kuroe cut into the conversation.

「Because it's hot I'm always in such state, so it's my bad」

「.....But」

She couldn't agree, but being told so by the culprit Rikka couldn't condemn any stronger than that.....Tooya took a sigh of relief. Seemed with this the incident would end smoothly.

「Moreover ne」

She continued while smiling.....Tooya had forgotten that Kuroe wasn't so kind to let it end at that.

「I don't really mind if being seen by Tooya」

「Wha.....!?!」

The heck is she starting to say?

「Because you're, relative?」

「Mine and Tooya's blood are thin enough to get married you know?」

More like not related by blood at all.....No, although by other meaning they couldn't get married normally.

「Kuroe-san」

Changing her posture, directly Rikka confronted Kuroe

「Whaat?」

While still feigning innocence like always, but with a sense of imitation from somewhere Kuroe asked.

「The setting of finance.....That's, a lie right?」

「Yeah」

She nodded, however she continued her words.

「Because you see, there's no guarantee I and Tooya wouldn't be in that relationship」

Fufu, she smiled.

「He, hey Kuroe.....」

「Tooya-kun please be quiet for a bit!」

「.....Yes ma'am」

With that strong verbal argument Tooya couldn't say anything at all.

「Kuroe-san」

「What is it?」

「Do you, like Tooya?」

「Yeah」

She showed a nod.

「I also like Tooya-kun」

Clearly, Rikka declared.

「Is that so, then we are rival ne」

Saying that Kuroe showed a smile.

「.....For my part, I have gone out with Tooya-kun longer」

「Ara, perhaps that was a diversion?」

Kuroe showed a gesture as if being puzzled, immediately after floating a smile on her face again.

「But talking about distance my part is shorter you know? If I thought of wanting to do it, I could creep into Tooya's bedroom or something like that」

「!？」

Rikka floated on a surprised face, suddenly closed her lips tight and with full vigor she looked at Tooya.

「Tooya-kun」

「Eh, what?」

Before that face expression which hid a strong determination, Tooya flinched.

「I'll live in this house too」

「Ha?」

「I'll live here!」

「Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee」

It was not that simple, to just move over.



「So the result is she would be coming everyday」

「Whose fault do you think it is」

Since that, Tooya used around 3 hours of labor to persuade Rikka. Staying in Tooya's house, or even more in Tooya's room, no matter how much he said Rikka didn't back down.....somehow at the start of the persuasion Kuroe dared to drop more fuel into the fire

「Although somehow it was good that I could persuade her」

If he couldn't do it he had no idea how things would turn out. Ultimately she gave consent to the promise of locking the door so that Kuroe couldn't easily enter the room.....However after that Rikka and Kuroe had always been checking on each other. It had always been like that until dinner preparation, which Rikka had no other choice but to return home.

「.....then, tell me again why Rikka came to my house」

Even though he thought that until summer break was over they wouldn't meet face to face.

「Such thing is obvious right」

Kuroe said

「Because she likes master」

「.....I know that」

Since he was confessed to.....and before he was confessed to he had knew.

「Because she likes you so for the sake of getting a favorable answer for the confession she came to appeal right」

「.....Is that so」

That's right. However the doubt he felt was, Rikka herself whom Tooya knew wasn't that assertive right. Because Tooya thought that Rikka would meekly waiting for the confession's answer

「If in love one could change, or so they say.....Well, although that was only being in love itself. Who knows, once confessed, many things could become unbounded」

「.....」

Supposedly if Tooya didn't carry any burden, who knows maybe he could easily thought of this change. However if looking at Tooya right now that was the main cause which snatched away his calm.....It was much more troublesome that he couldn't disagree with it.

Moreover, the problem wasn't Rikka alone.

「You, what are you planning」

「What am planning?」

「You know it, why did you do things like inciting Rikka」

It wasn't just oil, Kuroe poured gasoline into it.

「That is」

Loosening her lips which always twitched upward, Kuroe's face became serious

「Because I love master too」

While she said it upfront, her cheeks were dyed red.

「Rikka's confession made me impatient.....Therefore, I have to keep her in check like that. The reason for that and everything was because I yearn for master」

「If I could honestly believe those words of yours, I think I could live a much more happy life」

「Fumu, as expected that won't do huh」

That red cheek instantly drew back.

「Although I thought that was pretty skillful acting」

「You should slowly consider about your own nature you know」

Don't you know you're the boy crying to the wolf?

「Well actually, only half of it was joking」

「You mean the remaining half is the seemingly honest way of talking right」

「Umu」

Kuroe nodded.

「Although master was trying to come up with a question to separate from Rikka, but I think that answer has no meaning to me」

「.....」

「If feeling Rikka up close couldn't make you come up with an answer, then as for the temptation afterwards you probably wouldn't be able to bear it?」

「.....Therefore you incited her?」

「Umu, furthermore」

She laughed.

「The used to be passive Rikka had become assertive.....After great trouble I was able to enjoy the triangle love, even so you don't intend to go on with it?」

「Not even half of it, aren't you being serious for only one third of it」

Though, it wasn't like he trusted her.

「No no I was being serious you know. If before my charm master fell then everything will be solved right?」

「There's no way such thing would happen so stop clinging onto it」

While he pulled away Kuroe who was drawing closer Tooya took a big sigh.

「Why are we doing this rom-com anyways」

Up till now the situation he was put into and the current state were too detached.....even though the piled up problems were overall not settled.

The thing, which should be parted, was in front of his eyes

The thing he thought he must not wish for was in front of his eyes

The thing he had always wished for was in front of his eyes.

It would be fine if I could grasp it, a voice murmured

「That, won't you suddenly become serious」



As if being bored Kuroe narrowed her eyes.

「.....Be quiet」

This was Tooya's current state. No matter how much it seemed like a rom-com, if turning it over then an extremely black darkness would be spreading.

「Didn't I say that too would be depending on master?」

As if to inform a child with a bad memory Kuroe said.

「I know」

Just the same, he returned the answer.

Daily life with Rikka was very happy and sweet. No matter how many times he was determined, at that moment only it was almost overturned.....And then the glimpse at the future that he caught, even that too almost exceeded what made Tooya's heart shake.

Because it was happiness.

Happiness.

Happiness.

Happiness.

Very happy .....Tooya was.

「.....I know that already」

Speaking that out Tooya remembered. To deny that happiness the executed killing intent was only a few days ago. He also remembered the face distorted in despair. Seeing that face his heart ached ..... But, to conceal that emotion would be piercing Tooya's own ego. Tooya had denied that he had to carry only such resolution.

To Tooya's happiness.

To Rikka wished for happiness.

Tooya had denied it with killing intent.

「I understood, I've decided.」

「No no, you don't understand a thing」

And then this itself Kuroe denied.

「About what?」

「Nothing, but it's fine to be happy right?」

「Wha!?!」

By that unexpected word Tooya unconsciously shook.

「Because master has the right to choose.....You have the choice to give up everything and choose your own happiness right. Rather even though the thing you had always wished for is right in front of your eyes then I see no reasons for self-control」

「There's.....no such thing right」

「Why is it?」

「Thinking about for what reason I killed Aoi!」

That was for the sake of avoiding the choices.

「If I chose that..... then for what reason Aoi had to die for」

「Isn't that thing obvious」

Calmly Kuroe answered

「Because master killed her, she died」

「Such thing.....!」

「You get it? It seems like you don't get it」

Kuroe shook her neck.

「For what reason Aoi died for, saying so is definitely the proof. No matter how many times you say it Aoi didn't die, she was killed by master. Therefore the one putting meaning on her death was master who killed her, not Aoi. As for Aoi herself was unreasonably killed by master.....do you plan to force your own resolution on that Aoi?」

That means because he killed Aoi, so he must do so.

「Although I think that would be the worst. Because she was killed due to master's own selfish reason, and then she was forced on the reason "I don't want to do it". If doing that to a deceased wouldn't it be unreasonable.....Well, although on the other hand it was getting one's just deserts」

「.....」

Tooya couldn't talk back to it. Truly perhaps it was so. Tooya had killed Aoi. Exactly because he had that responsibility he thought that he must open his own mouth to defend it .....however, he couldn't deny the feeling floated up at the time he gave the reason.

Truly, didn't he think that it was Aoi's fault that he had to choose? If Aoi didn't do such behavior he wouldn't have to kill her .....And it wasn't by that fault that his own choice was narrowed down.

Forcing reasons on the killed one was nothing more than being arrogant.

「I.....」

If so .....if I did that then what should I do. You meant if I had self conscious about it, then I could calmly reverse that previous remark and accept Rikka's love confession?

「Everything, according to master's wish」

Kuroe whispered. Every time Kuroe only whispered, and the choice was all up to Tooya. Whatever Tooya chose Kuroe would only happily accept .....for example even if that choice was erring.

That was, the limit of Tooya's will.

## Chapter 2: He and the Man-Eater and the Old Ghost

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「Good morning, Tooya-kun」

「.....Good morning」

Today too without change Rikka showed up. After the confession mostly she showed up before noon, lately she was doing something like coming to make lunch too.....It was fine and all but every time she came she went directly to Tooya's own room, which he wished for her stop. If only at least she sent a mail so that he could change beforehand.

「Good morning Rikka」

「Un, good morning Kuroe-san」

Kuroe showed up, with a friendly smile they both exchanged greetings.

「Then, since I'll be changing」

In the hallway the figures of two people confronting each other while floating a smile were obstructing the door. Things had become like this since Rikka came, Kuroe slept in a different room which was prepared before.....He made an order. Whenever Rikka came it was a chore to move her personal item every time, and since Rikka would be suspicious the moment she saw Kuroe's room without traces of people living there, they did that, but..... apparently it was not interesting to Kuroe. Was that the fault, because he could feel something chilling coming from the figures of two people smiling broadly.

「.....Haa」

He heaved a sigh. No good. As expected this was no good. Whenever he met Rikka his thought would go to her. Despite this was not the place for such trivial thoughts. From outside the room he could hear Rikka's advice

regarding Kuroe's sleep-wear.....Was it because in the end nothing changed. Well, if noticing the visitor first of all let's change, Tooya also had the same thought.

「Then, what do you come here for, Rikka?」

After finished changing clothes, he invited the two people into the room. In the meantime it seemed Kuroe was made to change out her sleep wear, she was floating a displeasure expression.....Although Rikka was feigning ignorance.

「I came to make lunch for Tooya-kun」

「.....I'm grateful for that, but」

Rikka's food was delicious.....But, if eating Rikka's self-made lunch again, something from Tooya would loosen. And he would become as close as unable to help but dream about the future. Even though he always had self-conscious that he was not qualified for such thing.

「Um, isn't doing such thing everyday troublesome?」

「Completely not」

Rikka shook her neck.

「Because making food for Tooya-kun is fun」

She smiled broadly.

「Moreover if I became Tooya-kun's girlfriend then it's better to be good at cooking right? And I think if I could show off that it would be great」

Boldly she said such words.

「That is, well.....」

The favorability of people who had been able to do it was high.

「Right? Aunt also complimented me that I would become a good housewife」

「.....Since when you heard that from mom」

「Before this when I visited I chatted a lot with her .....She said it would be troublesome when no one was awake, so she gave me a spare key?」

「.....」

Since when

「Although she gave me permission that it was fine to come as a housewife after high school graduation.」

「.....what is she doing giving permission when the person concerned wasn't there」

The mother of this house was.

「Does Tooya-kun hate it?」

She inclined her neck a little, looking at Tooya. Seemingly that little worried expression was helplessly cute.

「That, that is.....」

It wasn't like he hated it.

『I'm really like a thin air』

Sullenly a voice resounded in his mind.

『Since once there was the third person here so I want you to not make the atmosphere of two people .....it's hard to interrupt』

Instead Tooya would be grateful if she had interrupted, even so.

『I don't know』

She sulked about something.

「E, ee-to.....But you see, there's a lot of difficulties with marriage and the likes.」

「I can bear with it if it were with Tooya-kun?」

「No, but.....」

「Moreover, no doubt Tooya-kun would not assault me like my father right?」

「Eh.....」

The meaning of those words, for a moment he couldn't understand.

「Furthermore whatever happens Tooya would do something for me, you proved it to me right」

As if always unchanging, she smiled.

「Rikka.....?」





What was she saying, Tooya didn't want to understand.

「Did I, say something weird?」

She leaned her neck.

「Otou-san and Aoi-chan too, for my sake you killed them right?」

「!？」

This time the words couldn't come out from his throat anymore.

Rikka was smiling broadly.

Smiling as if feeling happy.

The expression didn't change too much from normal .....Tooya couldn't understand Rikka who was standing in front of his eyes.

「Are you.....really, Rikka?」

「Of course?」

She inclined her neck.

「Why did you ask such thing?」

Such like it was something mysterious. Couldn't help it Tooya directed his eyesight at Kuroe .....Kuroe shook her neck as if enjoying it. She couldn't help it but enjoy this strange current situation right. At that truly enjoying it expression Tooya unconsciously had anger raise up but.....instead thanks to that his thought moved normally.

「Kuroe」

「What is it」

She answered with her true voice. With only that Tooya had guessed it. In front of Rikka right now, there was no need for Kuroe to feign friendliness. ....he had guessed that meaning.

「Is that, Rikka?」

「At least the body」

「.....and the heart?」

「From the base it could be seen as Rikka but.....there's probably no doubt that there're something strange」

Kuroe took a look. While they were having this kind of talk in front of her eyes she was smiling broadly.

「.....What's the cause?」

「You have no idea, do you?」

「.....」

I do

「Aoi, right.....?」

「That's right」

She nodded. There was no other existing clue.

「Originally I erased Rikka's memories, then the one returned it was Aoi. However Rikka up till this point didn't have her memories in conflict, she didn't remember about her father either.....Perhaps it's not wrong that before Aoi had adjusted with her magic. First of all we left it alone, but we don't know whether that magic's influence is taking effect right now or not」

「.....Can you break it?」

「Now then」

「.....Is an order necessary」

「Even if you give me an order I can only do what I can」

Because that was to the bitter end nothing but forcing her to act.

「Because that girl also excellently used a very skillful magic, so I can't promise anything. If it were about killing each other then there's nothing on a par with me, but since this field couldn't be said to be my strong point.....Well, even if keeping that in mind if it were this age it should be enough for a passing point.」

The exorcist in the current reality, who could use magic which rivals Kuroe, was not existed. That was because the caster had declined compared to Kuroe's time.

「Thinking about it how Aoi could use the magic on that level, that's also a question though」

Even if she were taught in her home, then it would be weird for Akane to not have the appropriate techniques.

「Such thing for now is fine」

Somewhat being irritated Tooya said.

「Can you break it?」

「I wouldn't say it's impossible」

Kuroe shrugged her shoulders.

「It's impossible」

Suddenly Rikka opened her mouth.

「It's impossible for you」

She laughed

「Wha.....!」

Wrong. The uncomfortable feeling he felt just now was completely wrong. Although resembling it but it was a different thing.....In the end it felt like it became something else.

In that way, Rikka didn't smile.

Biriririririri

Suddenly it was the ringtone of his cell phone. The sound could be heard from Rikka. As she took out the cell phone with skillful movement, she clicked the call button and started talking. That state and the one just now were unchanging, it was still Rikka .....Let's calm down, Tooya thought. Although his head was in a mess and his emotion refused to think.....right now calmness was necessary.

「Un, got it Aoi-chan」

The words came out of Rikka's mouth, once again snatched away Tooya's calm.

「A, oi.....?」

「It's from Aoi-chan you know?」

Saying it like it was nature, she held out the cell phone to Tooya.

「She said to change the hearer」

「.....」

He looked at the normal cell phone like a completely strange object. He thought from the bottom of his heart that he didn't want to receive it. Don't do anything more chaotic than this.....However, it was not possible to not accept it. As he desperately holding down his shaking hand, slowly he received the cell phone.

「It's Tooya, though.....」

「A, Tooya-senpai」

The familiar voice resounded in his ear.

「It's been a long time」

Terribly the voice could clearly be heard.

「H, ow.....」

His voice was trembling. She died.....even though he killed her. Even so why could he hear her voice coming from the other side. The thing he had seen at that time was an illusion, or rather right now was an illusion? He felt like the place he was standing shook.

「The truth is I have a very important business with Tooya-senpai. Since I'm close I'll head to you right now.」

「Eh.....!?!」

Did she not care about his reaction, one-sidedly she informed and hanged up. Tooya didn't understand a thing and did nothing but being dumbfounded.....That phone call just now was real right? The common sense inside Tooya was whispering with all its might that it was just a daydream.

「It's real」

Kuroe's voice was like shattering that.

Real

Real

Real

The thing he heard just now, the thing in front of his eyes, everything was real.

His hand which held the cell phone was trembling.

Kuroe was laughing as if it was interesting.

Rikka was smiling broadly as if nothing happened.

This was real, if possible Tooya didn't want to accept it.



「Good afternoon, Tooya-senpai」

Without any incident Aoi showed up. After the door bell rang, as he opened the door Aoi was standing there. That figure was undoubtedly Aoi, the face that was smiling in front of the front door was certainly the same in his memories.

Before this moment Tooya had thought of other possibility. When he calmed down and thought, what he heard on the phone was only the voice. If it were only the voice then this age it was possible to recreate, by magic or by something it could be recreate right.....He had thought so

「What happened?」

At Tooya, whom looked at her face with a dumbfounded face, Aoi asked with curiosity. In order to escape from that eyesight Tooya looked at Kuroe who was beside him.....There still remained a faint possibility. If there was the magic to erase the body, it would not be strange to have the magic to change the body.

『It seems she isn't using transformation magic』

The calmly resounded voice of Kuroe denied it. Then with plastic surgery, Tooya furthermore floated more deduction to deny reality.

「Master」

With her voice coming out Kuroe said.

「That is not deduction, that's escapism」

That indication was the undeniable truth.

「About talking shall we do it in senpai's room?」

While still standing in the entrance Aoi said. She didn't get shook from the two's talk.

「You're right」

Furthermore Kuroe nodded.

「Is master fine with it too?」



「.....I get it」

Tooya couldn't do anything but nodded.



「A, Aoi-chan」

As she entered the room Rikka noticed Aoi. Then Aoi answered with a broad smile.

「Good afternoon Rikka-senpai. I'm going to have a talk with Tooya-senpai so please stay quiet for a bit」

「Un, I got it」

Obediently nodded Rikka shut her mouth.

「.....」

「Something wrong?」

Aoi directed her face at Tooya who was watching that conversation without saying anything.

「.....What have you done to Rikka?」

「Me and Rikka-senpai get along very well you know」

She smiled like she is very enjoying it.

「Did you enjoy the romcom with Rikka-senpai?」

「!」

He glared. Reflectively he wanted to bash her, but he held it down with all his might.

「Unexpectedly you're calm.....Well, I don't wish to be killed twice so this is fine though」

The feeling of haughty after those words immediately became chilling.

「Then.....as expected」

「Don't suddenly make an apologetic face.....Don't tell me you're thinking of forgiving me if I thought I was in the wrong?」

「!？」

「I'm no doubt the Aoi that you killed you know?」

「.....should it be fine to stop the charade here」

Suddenly Kuroe's voice interrupted.

「Charade.....?」

Looking at Kuroe. She was making a face of extremely bored.

「I can't bear looking at poor acting」

「That's a terrible way of speaking」

Aoi looked at Kuroe.

「My hobby is watching human right? Even if you could easily trick master you can't trick me.....You are not Aoi」

Clearly she declared.

「Now then, I'm saying who are you」

No matter where and how he looked, he couldn't see anything but Aoi.

「.....Tch, as expected I can't trick you huh」

Suddenly, that atmosphere changed. The same feeling like something that he had felt from Rikka just before. The thing that looked like Aoi up till this point became something that didn't look like Aoi. In the end was it someone else, they were speaking through her mouth.

「Then, who's the owner?」

「You don't know?」

As if funny she inclined her neck.

「.....」

Kuroe didn't answer that.

「Well, if I put it like this I wonder if you understand.....It's been a while, black dog」

「!」

Unusually, Kuroe floated an expression of being taken surprised.

「.....I see, are you the lord」

Immediately she returned to her fed-up expression.

「If it's the lord then well, surely it's not hard for you to do it」

「As expected you understand things fast」

Aoi nodded in satisfaction.

「It's been a long time, Emperor」

As if to return the favor, Kuroe called out that name.

「Emperor.....?」



Only Tooya couldn't keep up, he looked alternately at Kuroe and the existence she called Emperor.

「How about you self introduce yourself」

「You're right」

The emperor nodded and looked at Tooya.

「Nice to meet you.....Well, although it's not exactly the first time meeting but this is the first time we exchange words directly」

She said something Tooya couldn't understand.

「Well, you'll gradually understand」

She laughed.

「Anyways nice to meet you, I am emperor. In the era before that mysterious thing over there was sealed, I was the one who ruled this country when I was still alive」

「The era before Kuroe was seal.....?」

Even if they suddenly said such thing, Tooya's thought couldn't easily accept it. "What are they suddenly starting to say" Tooya's common sense inside him didn't understand.

「Perhaps it's hard to accept but it's the truth. I am the emperor whom the original master of Kuroe served, the person who was responsible for sealing Kuroe still remained in this era. Moreover I left my intention in the form of residual thought until this era and was possessing Aoi.....After that, I took over this body and we arrived here」

「Eh」

Even though being told so much detail in one go he was still at a loss. The emperor at that time, and the one whom Kuroe's original master served, and the person responsible for sealing Kuroe who still remained, with her own will she left her residual thought and was possessing Aoi.....possessing Aoi?

「You are, possessing Aoi?」

「That's right」

She gave her consent.

「That was..... since when?」

「It was since she was 5 years old」

That, in other words

「Yeah, to avoid misunderstanding let me correct it first」

Anticipating Tooya's thought the emperor said.

「Although I said possessing it wasn't like Aoi wasn't aware of it. Even after possessing her Aoi's consciousness was still her own, and I couldn't interfere with her movement either.....the thing I could do was only around whispering inside her head」

「.....that means?」

「You're wondering whether or not that action was mine, right? The answer is no. Those were certainly Aoi's own action according to her thought」

However, continuing the emperor laughed.

「Although for it to become like that, it's the result of my guidance」

「!?」

「Because since the time I was possessing her when she was very young I had always provided her advice like an guardian spirit. Occasionally in substitute to her sister I had also heard her trouble and complaints.....Because Aoi had never doubted my words. Because I made her trust me」

Regarding Aoi, Kuroe's point of view was not wrong. After all she had become reliant on someone and being raised indulgently. If trying to re-think, the relevant points were also there. In the middle of the talk she was mumbling grumbling like consulting with someone.....that had to be talking with the emperor inside herself.

「Then, in the end everything is your plan, correct?」

「Everything I do in the end is only giving advice you know? Following or doubting those advices are all Aoi's will. Although for that sake I had piled up a lot of trust」

It was for the sake of the final betrayal in the last moment.

「I'm very grateful to you, you know」

Suddenly she said that.

「Thanks to you driving Aoi to the corner, the calm judgment from her had been snatched away.....Thanks to that I could seize the initiative of this body」

「!？」

This bastard, Tooya thought. In other words everything was this one's fault.

Tooya met Kuroe by chance too.

Aoi ran into those actions too.

Everything was the fault of the girl in front of his eyes.

If that one didn't exist.....Tooya would.

『Is that so?』

One sentence. That one sentence resounded in his heart. Suddenly he got the feeling that the black thing swelling up was going away. Biting his lips, Tooya held down all of those impulses. Surely the roots of everything might be because of the emperor. However that main cause had nothing to do with Tooya's actions. When picking up the gun dropped on the road, then killing someone with it, could the responsibility go to the one who had dropped the gun.....No one would think so. Naturally it couldn't be said there was no responsibility, but the result the worst one was the one who had used it right. Therefore, Tooya had no rights to push the responsibility on the emperor.

About killing Rikka's father too,

About trying to kill Aoi too,

And the situation right now too,

Everything was the result of Tooya's wishes and choices.

「Hee, you chose an extremely fine master ne, black dog」



As if being impressed the emperor said.

「I sure did, right?」

Proudly Kuroe answered.

「But you know, that would be inconvenience for me right」

The emperor shrugged her shoulders and looked at Rikka.

「You also think so right, Rikka」

「Yes」

In the end for Tooya she sounded just like a machine chattering. The feelings didn't included in the voice at all.

「You, what have you done to Rikka?」

More than being angry, Tooya was being impatient.

「Nothing for now」

She laughed.

「If it were the training then it's only a mere one month. Until this point for Aoi to apply a complicated magic it would still be on hard level. She did as she was told, and because everything happened according to my words I didn't notice it you know」

Rikka's memories returned, at that time the magic had already been cast.

「Then, about this adjustment it's just recently」

「Don't tell me that means.....」

「Right, the day Rikka confessed to you」

「!?」

Even though he had semi-anticipated it, shock still echoed in his chest.

「From where, until where.....」

「You're asking something very hard to answer ne」

「.....Answer me」

「Oh oh, how scary」

Exaggeratedly she shrugged her shoulders.

「If classifying it generally, everything has become according to my direction  
」

「.....」

He bit his lip.

「But it's not like I bent Rikka's feeling. It's not wrong that she likes you, showing positive approach was not wrong either.....If putting it in a bland way of talking, I only gave her a little push in the back you know」

「.....If putting it in a not bland way of talking?」

「In that way then it would be I bent her.」

She said without hesitation.

「Are you dissatisfied?」

「Are you thinking that I am not?」

「I think her existence right now would be convenient for you though?」

「How!」

「She knows what you have done, and yet she still forgives you and directs affection toward you too, right?」

She laughed as if enjoying it.

「That's what you wished for right?」

「.....That's wrong」

「How weak」

That indication was unavoidably correct. The words of objection were to the degree of only hearable, smaller and weaker than before.

「I won't deny it.....But that's wrong. Surely that might be what I had wished for. However that was at least not in such way」

The kouhai who adored herself was killed, there was the feeling she could still laugh.

Even though subjected to a terrible day by her father whom she couldn't hate, when that father was killed, there was the feeling she could still laugh.

.....Rikka is not that kind of human.

「Fuun」

As if having great interest in that Tooya the emperor looked at him.

「But you know, that and what you have done, what's so different about it?」

「What I have done?」

「You made her forget her father and yourself, even so she could stay smiling right?」

After killing Rikka's father it was Tooya's conclusion as the final course of events.

「Name whatever part of it that's the same for me」

「Well, the direction is surely different ne」

The emperor admitted.

「But distorting Rikka's existent, this point doesn't change at all」

「Wha.....」

「The existents of you and her father hold a large proportion in her human life you know. To make memories about you in her vanish and to make her smile normally are rather a strange thing, I wonder if you think so?」

The human's life is a pile of memories. And for the personality it's greatly influenced by these memories. Regardless whether these memories are good or bad, if making sudden and large hole in them the influence would naturally come out right.

「Even so for her to be able to stay smiling, it's a distortion which should not be right」

「.....!?!」

Reflectively Tooya looked at Kuroe. Kuroe didn't say anything. Without smiling, she was having a clear expression.....However with just that expression, Tooya understood that the emperor's words were true.

「Nee, Tooya-kun」

The emperor mercilessly pressed the attack.

「The Rikka over there right now, how different is she from the Rikka you erased her memories?」

「.....」

He couldn't say it was different.

But it was the same, distorted.

「Well, for me whatever is fine though」

Suddenly and lightly, the emperor said so.

「Wha.....」

「Is it the same, is it different, it's fine to me either way.....Honestly if you come to hate it, it doesn't matter about something like the similar points of the distortion. It was only a meager of ill will from me just now.」

She cackled.

「Naa, Tooya-kun」

「You.....」

Ignoring Tooya's reaction the emperor continued.

「Would you help me destroy this country a little bit?」



「Akane-san」

Hanging up the cell phone, he called out to the one lying face down on the sofa.

「.....What is it」

Irritated Akane lifted her face.

「There's contact from the supervisor」

「!？」

She jumped up on her feet.

「As expected it seems we have gotten contact with Kamisaki-san」

「Is it true?」

「As I was told she had no intention of hiding」

「Tch, she's looking down on us」

At the angry Akane, however Tanaka didn't change his expression.

「In the first place even our magic is no match for Aoi-san.....Because of that Éminence grise ne. It can't be helped that we are looked down upon right」

「Tch」

「Rather I want us to be looked down on ne. Because when dealing with higher rank opponent I want to attack at the gap of negligence .....with full force ne」

「Fun, don't say such cheap thing」

「That's a warning to you, you know. Sincerely please refrain from selfish actions」

「.....」

“Yare yare” Tanak scratched his head.

「That's the best method to save your sister」

「.....Tch, I know」



「Destroy this country.....?」

In a sense it seemed that was the craziest content he have heard today. It was the sentence used a lot in tales and the likes of it but it was not heard in real life.....No, he had the feeling he had heard it before though.

「Un, that's right. A quick end is fine, long suffering is also fine.....Personally I'm fond of the latter way」

「.....」

Such disgusting taste he had never heard of.

「Then?」

「What then.....」

Although he understood it was meant to urge him, he couldn't feel the answer's meaning.

「Will you help me destroy it?」

「You can't just ask me to help with that right」

He didn't say he couldn't do it. If using Kuroe's power then perhaps it wouldn't be impossible. As much as Kuroe's power, it was far beyond this modern era.

「To begin with why do you suddenly ask me to help with such thing」

「Aa, that's simple you know」

The emperor answered.

「Because my aim is to plunge this country into chaos」

Lightly, she said such thing.

「Leaving Kuroe behind too, and possessed Aoi too, everything is for this sake」

「.....Even so you think I'll cooperate?」

Although Tooya had been self-aware that he was the worst, but he didn't had any destructive thought. Even though having Kuroe and this power he had never thought about what to do with this country. Exactly because in order to live a tranquil life, he had tied a cooperative relationship with the order of black magic.

「Then, Rikka will remain like that for eternity」

「Wha!?!」

The emperor lightly shuffled a joker.

「If you don't listen to what I say Rikka will remain like that.....Staying weird just as you judged」

「You!」

「Although this is saying in advance but my magic is far beyond Kuroe. Know that other than me it's impossible to undo the magic」

「.....」

He looked at Kuroe.

「Vexingly I can't deny it」

「!」

Kuroe had been saying since before that other than harming human it was not her strong point. Therefore she could not be blamed.



「Then, what will you do?」

Something like what to do was already decided.

「Kuroe!」

He called the name. He also transmitted the order in his mind.

「Acknowledge」

Instantly darkness wrapped the emperor. If the other side took Rikka as hostage then his side just needed to take the emperor herself hostage. First of all let's capture her, about the method of making her listen to the demand against her wills would be thought of later. The moment the pitch black darkness wrapped her, the figure of the emperor couldn't be seen.

「Well, this goes according to expectation」

The emperor's voice could be heard.....From behind Tooya.

「!？」

Confused he turned around, the figure of the emperor unchangingly was sitting there. Just now she took that attack and still had an unthinkable calm expression while looking at him with a broad smile.

「.....」

Wordlessly Kuroe glared at the emperor, once again the darkness floated around the emperor.

「It's futile」

However the emperor didn't change her expression.

「I told you that about magical power I'm beyond her, didn't I? Although I don't have the power to kill the black dog.....but if it were just running away it wouldn't be anything difficult」

Actually just like what she had showed right now. "Continuing it would only like a game of cat and mouse", the emperor declared.

「Is it truly so, it's also interesting to make sure」

Kuroe was not so naïve to lightly believe it. And as for Tooya, he wasn't a fool to accept the opponent's words without condition either. Therefore Tooya didn't restrain Kuroe.

「Yare yare, no other way. Continuing this cat and mouse chase is a waste of time.....Let's give you a little threat again」

As if being troubled the emperor muttered.

「What now, it won't matter as long as she didn't die. However to make Tooya-kun suffer.」

And then she smiled.

「Rikka」

She called the named

「Yes」

The answer was like a machine.

「Do it」

「Yes」

Answered, Rikka stood up. After standing up she walked straight to Tooya's study desk, picking up the ball pen on the desk with her right hand she swung it overhead, strongly toward her left hand.....

「Kuroe!」

While Tooya cursed himself for the slow reaction he shouted. However Kuroe immediately responded and the darkness wrapped Rikka. The place Rikka was standing had completely been wrapped by darkness, inside it the ball pen only with a clang dropped out and tumbled.

「You!」

Faster than confirming it Tooya went to punch the emperor. If it were an average human they would be beaten without time to react.....With a squashing sound blood would spatter right. However just like haze the emperor's figure disappeared, instead a hole was opened on the wall and cracks were spreading.

「Oh, oh scary」

With a calm tone of voice, changing her position once again the emperor came to sight.

「Speaking about it with Kuroe's influence you had become very strong ne.....Honestly if I took that I would die you know.」

「.....I plan on killing you」

It wasn't past tense.

「Hee」

As if having great interest the emperor narrowed her eyes

「Kill me? With this body?」

She laughed.

「You plan on killing Aoi for the second time」

「!？」

In one go the bloodlust went pale.

「Well, although Aoi was used by me but for it to happen the primary cause was also her. I wonder whether it was possible for you to hold a grudge about it and kill me together with Aoi」

As if giving consent she nodded, she spread her arms like accepting it.

「Look, it's your hateful body of Aoi. This time I won't avoid so you can hit to your heart content」

「Guu」

In order to hold down his anger Tooya gritted his teeth. He didn't hate Aoi, it was the emperor talking using Aoi body in front of his eyes. As the matter of knowing all that and still hit Aoi out of anger, Tooya wasn't shameless to that degree. He thought that Aoi was foolish, and she didn't regret her choice either.....but with only just that Tooya wasn't a heartless person to the degree of thinking about killing her.

「Oya, you're not going to hit.....Then what should I do」

With a glance she looked at the darkness wrapping Rikka.

「Surely in that state even if I gave the order she couldn't move one bit, right？」

「.....If so then what？」

「Then I won't do anything？」

Simply she said.

「It's only that what I used to thrust at you will change a bit ne. As long as you don't accept my demand Rikka would remain like that, and I don't know what would happen to my order once she comes out from that darkness」

「If she didn't come out from it you can't do anything either」

Tooya added.

「Certainly for Kuroe right now perhaps she couldn't return Rikka to normal.....But if given her time might be she would find a way to return her」

「I see, pretty not bad judgment」

As long as Rikka was wrapped in darkness, that time could be taken as long as it needed.

「Good, then for now it's fine for Rikka to remain like that.」

「Eh」

Easily throwing away the trump card with that statement, Tooya looked at the emperor in surprise.

「It's fine to take as much time as you like to spend effort in returning Rikka.....It'll be a futile effort. In that time should I destroy the next important thing to you」

「.....Next?」

「That's right, next. Certainly the most important thing to you is Rikka, if for that sake perhaps you could sacrifice everything though.....Then, you can't just throw away everything right?」

Since even though he had determined but to that point Tooya hadn't looked at that far.

「I remember you don't have any friends.....But your parents are important right? Can you also abandon Mashiro? I wonder Akane's or Tanaka's or the likes' deaths would give you shock or not?」

Uninterestedly she asked, and smiled.

「If you said you don't care about everyone's death, then I'll immediately kill them and think of the next method」

「.....」

Tooya gritted his teeth almost breaking his back teeth. Speaking about seething with anger this would be it right. He wanted to kill the being in front of his eyes right now. But he didn't want to have sacrifices because of that thing.....Above all else her figure of managing an easy escape came to his mind.

「Then, what will you do? I'm wondering if you could listen to my request?」

Mercilessly the emperor demands the answer.

「.....」

Think, think, think. While pressing down the whirling anger in his mind Tooya thought.

The emperor's demand is the destruction of this country.

If he refused it then Rikka would remain like that, moreover all of Tooya's acquaintances would be killed as she said.

Both options were no joke. If doing as the emperor's demand, destroying this country, although he didn't know about the degree of level of the picture she was pointing at, but at any rate it was no doubt a large number of lives would be snatched away. Tooya was by no means someone who would accept such demand calmly.

However if refusing that demand Rikka would remain like that, and Tooya's acquaintances would die. Supposing if the demand weighed on a scale between the former and the latter then perhaps for Rikka's sake Tooya would throw everything else. Certainly he would be troubled by regret but even so Tooya would choose Rikka.....However this case was different. Even if he abandoned the acquaintances Rikka would still remain like that, in that case Tooya couldn't choose the option of abandoning his acquaintances.

「Still not yet?」

「!」

He wouldn't accept the emperor's demand, but he couldn't refuse either. No matter how long he thought Tooya couldn't come out with an answer for those options.....Then finally after struggling he arrived at the option of accepting the emperor's demand. Toward the option of sacrificing this country for Rikka's sake.

『Calm down master』

As usual, the sarcastic voice resounded. "I'm being calm" Tooya shouted in his heart. Since he was being calm he had thought in composure, and had understood this helpless situation.

『No, you're not being calm. If you were being calm you would not think about ending this interesting choice at this place.....I'm saying that if you thought about it there might be a third choice though』

If there were that choice then at least I would love to cling on it. However the time to think about that choice for Tooya right now.....Suddenly, the heat that was covering Tooya cooled down. Time. Time. Time. What made me so impatient. The current situation overwhelmingly favored the emperor. The proof of that was the emperor was waiting for Tooya's answer with a calm expression.

The emperor had pinned down Tooya's vital points thoroughly.

Exactly because this calmness was there.....Therefore there was room for negotiation.

「.....Time」

「N?」

「Won't you give me time to think?」

Time. Time. Time. For the options which no matter how much he thought the answer wouldn't come out, to do it in such a short time in the first place was a mistake.

「Fuun, time nee」

As if to appraise the emperor looked at Tooya. Next she glanced at Kuroe.

「Although that's something difficult, which way is better I wonder」

Looking like thinking she put her hand on her chin.



「Well, forget it. It would be troublesome if you became desperate due to impatient need .....Given time might be you'll calmly despair for me need. Slowly getting to self aware of your own helpless situation is also not bad」

「.....」

「Therefore I'll accept this demand」

「But however I can't give you a lot of time right?」

Then Tooya thought. How long could he draw out the time.

「.....The middle of this month」

「Fumu」

「Within this month I'll give you the answer」

「If so then ending it here isn't bad either」

“Un un” the emperor nodded.

「Then when the moon changes at the same time you'll give me the answer.....Is that fine?」

「.....Aa」

Tooya nodded.

「Then shall we end it at here today.....see ya」

Quickly, the emperor opened the door and went away.

「Well, excellent」

Until that presence had completely disappeared Kuroe opened her mouth.

「.....Where does that come from」

Rikka and his acquaintances were taken hostage and an unreasonable demand had thrust him. For the time being there was no way to flatly refuse it and overturn the current situation.

「For now we could buy some time right?」

Seriously for now, however.

「It would be great if in that time we could think of a way to smash that lunatic conceit's nose」

「.....You look like you enjoy it」

「Umu」

She nodded.

「The truth is I enjoy it」

Truly enjoying it Kuroe laughed.



At a place a little distanced from Tooya's house suddenly the emperor stopped her feet. Around there was no figure of human.....Too empty. The current time was yet a little past noon, even so the signs of people including those in the lining up residences all could not be felt.....It was as if her own surrounding had been isolated into a different space.

「Yare yare, how troublesome ne」

She lament.

「If you plan on attacking then promptly come out won't you」

「.....then don't mind if I do」

Just like to face off Tanaka revealed the figures. Next to him was Akane. Not only that as if to surround the emperor the order of black magic's staffs also appeared. Tanaka was empty handed. Akane was wearing a spirit sword seen the other day, the staffs were all being armed with small arms.

「You're sufficiently motivated to put up a human-clearing-barrier ne.....Moreover is this binding magic style? Moreover overlapping it with spreading out the troops, what a scrupulous thing」

「Yes, each staff carries an amulet and surround you in a systematic deployment.....Although if it were a normal person it wouldn't be strange that the intensity would stop their organs.」

The emperor didn't change her expression one bit.

「Doing that in this era I have to praise you very good」

「Thank you very much」

Tanaka lightly lowered his head.

「If possible after praising I wish you would associate with our talk」

「Well, fine to me」

Pompously the emperor agreed.

「Then.....」

「Hey, you there!」 (Note: she uses てめえっ!)

As if cannot completely bear it anymore Akane opened her mouth.

「What is it onee-chan?」

Saying so the emperor smiled broadly.

「!」

As she was reflectively about to shout, Akane held back with all her strength.

「.....Give my sister's body back」

From the bitten lip blood was oozing out.

「If I say I don't want to?」

「Even if it's against your will I'll forcefully take it back」

「I don't want to」

As if mocking the emperor answered. Akane put her hand on the sword hanging at her waist. Even seeing it the emperor didn't change her expression. She didn't do anything but breaking into a smile.

「Please wait」

As if to settle both sides Tanaka stepped in.

「I didn't come here to just argue with you at all」

「Hee」

Seemingly in great interest she looked at Tanaka. Tanaka returned to stare at her and continued the story.

「In this way if we could understand each other then we could discuss. According to your demand, might be we could come out with a conclusion that satisfies both side」

「Fumu fumu, certainly there might be that possibility ne」

The emperor also nodded.

「But that girl over there, could she agree I wonder?」

Akane wasn't looking like removing her hand from the sword.

「Akane-san」

As if to admonish that Akane, Tanaka called out.

「After all your real intention isn't to harm your sister's body right. Therefore please restore the weapon to its place.」

「.....Tch」

Smacking her lips, Akane slowly removed her hand from the sword.

「With this, is everything alright?」

「Aa」

「Then first of let's introduce ourselves. I am the exorcist belong to the order of the black magic Tanaka」

「Un, I know」

「Then may I ask for your name?」

「It's emperor」

She answered.

「Emperor, you said?」

「Aa, I am the emperor of the old era. Although I have a name but I got used to this way of calling」

「.....Acknowledged.」

Tanaka nodded.

「Then emperor, could you please tell me about your intention?」

「Very well」

Nodded, the emperor laughed.

「My intention is.....plunging this country into chaos」

「!？」

「Then, let's discuss about our common grounds」

While grinning, the emperor looked at Tanaka and other whose expression was distorted.

「The proposal from me would be you guys not interfere and I'll overlook the order of black magic. It's fine if you try your best to restore this country after I messed it up as much as you could」

「Don't joke with me」

Akane shouted.

「Of course we would not accept such a demand!」

「Oya, what a pity」

Shrugging her shoulders, the emperor looked at Tanaka.

「I wonder if you have the same opinion?」

「I'm also on the same side as her, protecting the people of this country」

Tanaka didn't break his calm expression.....however the air he was putting on had changed.

「Isn't it fine to protect」

The emperor laughed.

「The remaining people of this country」

「Seems any discussion more than this would not reach any agreement」

Tanaka raised his hand straight up. The staffs all at once fixed the muzzles at the emperor.

「Well, if you want to do it I won't stop you.」

Even seeing it the emperor didn't break her calm posture.

「The one who would die is the countryman you should protect though」

「.....What does that mean?」

The hand that was about to lower stopped.

「That same meaning you know」

「If possible please tell in detail」

「I remember you said that the discussion was over」

She chuckled.

「Please tell details」

「Well, it's fine」

Looking like enjoying it the emperor nodded.

「Do you know about humanoid things?」

「I know. Because occasionally I carry it when controlling the shaman」

Humanoid was literally the thing that imitated human, and was used for various tasks. It was used for the sake of avoiding calamity, or used for the sake of taking people out of calamity. Common to both sides the humanoid was selected for the target.

「Does the effect of the humanoid differ greatly depending on how well it is made.....For example just by using the material closest to human the different would be extreme you know」

「What about that?」

「For example if using human as the humanoid, don't you think it'll become a substitute literally?」

「.....!」

As expected Tanaka couldn't put his words together immediately.

「How dare you.....」

Akane too had guessed it and changed her complexion.

「Exactly. I put the spell on the suitable human making them my humanoid and prepared them as my substitute. That means any damage that had been done to me will go to that side」

In other words, if killing the emperor the human whom she put the spell on as substitute would die.

「Such imitation.....」

「I can do it you know? Because actually I felt relieved that thanks to it this body wasn't killed by the black dog ne」

The body of Aoi, which was eaten by Kuroe still didn't die but was safe, was the proof of this. At that time, in substitute with Aoi's body a different human was eaten by Kuroe.....Thanks to perfectly wrapping in the darkness she had tricked Kuroe's eyes and easily ran away.



「The one that died instead of Aoi was one of the human in class who meddled with us. Since they had become a missing person so it's fine to check yourself」

Although that technique of course had to be done without Aoi knowing it, but for the emperor who had earned Aoi's trust, it had to be easy to trick her and make her use those magic.

「I see, then that's why Tooya-san was convinced that Aoi-san had died right?」

「Just as you said」

At Tanaka's consented appearance, the emperor nodded as if satisfied.

「Now then, how many people in substitute for me?」

As if a simple quiz the emperor said. However what was wagered here was human's life. Even if checking who knows how much sacrifices would be made.

「Akane-san」

Ignoring that emperor Tanaka turned his eye to Akane.

「Is her word true?」

From the emperor's expression true or false couldn't be read.....No, nothing could be read but the true. Exactly that was why so he sought the confirmation from Akane's intuition.

「.....Sorry」

「Is that so」

However this intuition was unstable. She couldn't choose the time for it to work.

「Then it can't be helped.」

He murmured, from his breast pocket he pulled out a pistol, fired. With action too natural as if flowing.....At the place no one could respond. No, only one surely purposely didn't react. On that forehead for an instance a black hole was drilled in.....then immediately disappeared.

「.....Tanaka!」

As if being snapped Akane knocked Tanaka flying. Furthermore she grabbed the collar of the fallen Tanka and lifted up, drew closer on his face.

「Why did you shoot!?!」

「There is a need to make sure」

Did she cut her lips, from the tip blood was oozing out. However Tanaka didn't distort his expression one bit.

「This is why you damn.....」

「Akane-san」

Uncaring Tanaka asked.

「Was there a large amount? Is it less?」

「.....!」

Akane couldn't answer.....Instead her expression quickly became pale. With only that Tanaka knew the answer to his own question. And at the same time Akane too knew what he understood. Before this moment Akane hadn't curse the instability of her own intuition.

「You.....!?!」

「Excuse me」

Tanaka sunk his own fist into Akane's belly. Akane let out an anguish groan and loosened her strength. Taking that chance Tanaka pulled and peeled off Akane from himself. Unable to take the fall safely Akane collapsed to the ground.

「If there's substitute.....I'll kill you until there's none left」

Quickly he raised his right hand.

「Not a bad judgment ne」

As if being impressed the emperor nodded.

「But it's troublesome if I misunderstood that if making sacrifices you could kill me.....I'll teach you even if you did it right from the front you couldn't kill me」

「.....」

Tanaka didn't answer that, quickly he waved his right hand down.

「Wai.....!」

Having finally stood up Akane was about to shout as if to restrain them..... Ear splitting multiple explosion sounds resounded in the place.

「Wha.....!?!」

All at once, the small arms that the staffs were grasping exploded. In that way the plain fragments scattered and sunk into the staffs' bodies, voice of anguish overlapped and resounded. Fortunately there was no death, but seriously wounded ones could be seen in no small number.

「It's not bad to make up for the difference in magic with modern arms. Since if comparing the destructive physical power then an idiot would be able

to use it right.....But well, as you see. Something like making it accidentally discharge could be easily done」

「.....」

Tanaka posed the pistol right on the spot,

「Don't move」

With that few words he was completely unable to move. Seeing that Akane unsheathed the blade..... However with only it any movement beyond that she couldn't take. The image of stabbing the sword was floating. However about executing it her body couldn't move.

「You are so half-hearted nee」

Looking at Akane like that the emperor said.

「Even though you haven't resolved yourself to kill your sister's body what did you come here for? If you couldn't cut the enemy then only bringing a sword has no meaning right.....Or are you seriously thinking that some kind of miracle which would kill me alone and save your sister would occur?」

「.....Tch」

「You used your naïve head very well ne」

She laughed.

「In this world no miracle would occur. I knew that the most you know. The event of this world which must occur will occur, and which mustn't occur won't occur」

Therefore, the emperor continued.

「You are unable to save your sister, and unable to save this country, everything is because of your lack of ability」

「.....Damn you」

「If you couldn't accept it then maybe praying for a miracle would be a good soul sanitary ne」

Sneering, the emperor turned her back at Akane.

「.....Wait!」

「What is it?」

Without turning back the emperor asked.

「.....Why won't you kill us」

Although wounded but there was no death. Although Tanaka couldn't move ,Akane was pretty much had nothing done to her.

「Because it's not necessary. You have understood fully about the difference in our real strength, and because the way of unskillful killing would flare up revenge and what not, which is troublesome ne. It's not like crushing your organization would be a problem but doing something a little showy might influence his choice ne」

「He.....you said」

「It has nothing to do with you, you know」

Not in the mood to talk she acted coldly.

「Ah, but.....there won't be next time. If next time you come to attack me then without omission I'll kill everyone. Try not to forget that ne」

Leaving those words the emperor left.....like not trying to do anything she walked extremely normally.

「Are you alright?」

Was it because the emperor left the spell was broken, apparently Tanaka had become able to move.

「.....You saw it right, she didn't do any damn thing to me」

「Yeah, so you're fine」

Tanaka also nodded.

「However the staffs don't look fine, first shall we call for help」

Operating on the cell phone Tanaka entered the contact from somewhere.

「.....What now?」

About what, there was no need to say.

「We're helpless now」

Tanka shrugged his shoulders.

「After confrontation I understand the opponent is not someone poor cheap tricks or the like could do. It seems the difference from real strength is like ant and elephant.....Moreover does she have humanoid magic. If the higher ups knew this without fail they would direct us to hold back our hand right」

Exactly because of that Tanaka waged on it.

「We just leave her like that?」

「We can't do that」

There was no way to leave it like that.

「If so then.....What to do?」

「You also understand that right」

That which couldn't speak was Akane's stubbornness right.

「Honestly speaking seems that only the likes of Kuroe-san could oppose that emperor. We had been given such a dangerous warning, first of all let's go ask for their cooperation」

「.....I ain't opposed to that」

「Is that so」

“Then”, Tanaka operated on the cell phone. Putting in the phone number and clicked the call button, immediate after the other side picked up.

「Moshi moshi, is that Kamisaki-san?」

To check that whether the other side was Tooya or not Tanaka asked the usual line. Then after many words exchanged, Tanaka ended the call.

「.....」

“How is it”, Akane didn't ask. Therefore Tanaka opened his mouth.

「We got the acceptance of cooperation」

However that expression didn't show.

「Although somehow I don't understand the main point, if felt like he was not making himself clear. It didn't seem like he was lying but there wasn't the impression that he had told everything」

「.....Can we trust him」

「There's nothing we can do but that」

Tanaka shrugged his shoulders.

「If they teamed up with the emperor there's nothing we can do at all」

Seriously.....However it was reality that they couldn't strongly deny those words.

「Yare yare, it has become something troublesome」

Tanaka heaved a big sigh.



「Is it Tanaka?」

「Yeah」

Answered Tooya put down the phone.

「What kind of talk was it?」

「.....You heard it right」

「Before you had given the order to not eave dropping on phone call right?」

「.....」

He remembered he had said so.

「They said they fought with the emperor」

「Is it a decisive defeat?」

「Seems so」



That wasn't something surprising. She used magic beyond Kuroe, as the emperor who could escape from Kuroe's shadow, the human of the order of black magic couldn't win against.

「Then they asked for the cooperation in exterminating the emperor?」

「Yeah」

He was entrusted like that.

「Did you agree?」

「I did」

He had no reason not to.

「Then, until which point did you talk?」

「I told them we had met the emperor, after that I was asked about our intention, around that」

「You didn't tell them the talk about that one demand?」

「.....I can't just tell them that right」

Because at the worst case, there was the possibility of accepting the demand.

「I think at any rate Tanaka had guessed something.....Probably he couldn't do anything. If we matched a suitable story with the order of the black magic and left it there it would be fine」

「I know that」

Telling everything to the order of the black magic and cooperating, there was no merit for Tooya. Moreover Akane.....If the details about how Aoi was

taken over by the emperor were known instead she would become hostile to Tooya right.

「No matter which way the worst case we would become enemies」

If accepting the emperor's demand that would be so.

「Naa, Kuroe」

「What is it?」

「With your power can you destroy this country?」

「Umu, it's a possibility」

Even without showing any behavior like thinking she nodded.

「It would be troublesome if I were told to kill until exhausted all the people in this country leaving no one, but if it were about depriving the appearance of a country I could easily do it」

「The emperor, which way do you think she chooses?」

「If expressing my own opinion it would be close to the first one right」

「.....」

For that opinion Tooya also had the same idea.

「However I didn't even feel that she wishes for it clearly. Although she demanded master to destroy this country but she explained her target was chaos. Chaos, right? There is no specific range or anything. If judging with that one's standard for this country to be in chaos, I don't know if she would be satisfied before this country is ruined.....But」

「But?」

「Putting it in the other way there's the possibility she wouldn't be satisfied even if going beyond that degree.....Since I think in the end it would depend on her mood. The point that we do until she is satisfied, perhaps even the person herself wouldn't know」

The finale of accepting her demand, who knew how much fallen would there be. It was the same as the temper of a kid. To what extend would she act violently until her own temper quiet down, even the person herself wouldn't know. However the only thing could be read from the words "chaos" was that she wished to do something flashy.

「.....Why until that point」

Tooya completely couldn't sympathize.

「Naa, Kuroe」

「What is it?」

「Why does the emperor hate this country to that degree?」

「Fumu」

Kuroe showed gestures like thinking.

「In the first place, what kind of person was the emperor?」

Having spent time in the same era, then if it was Kuroe she had to know something right.

「I don't know」

However Kuroe shook her head.

「Honest story, I too only had countable times of direct audience with her, I don't know nothing more than the degree I heard from the rumor passing in the capital and from the master at that time.....Much less I couldn't say

anything but let's ask the person herself the reason why she hates this country to the point she left her residual thoughts.」

「.....It's fine to the understandable extent」

「Fumu, although it's not like it matters」

Closing one eye she glanced at Tooya.

「Knowing that what will master do. For example let's assume you heard the details leading to why the emperor did that which was a pitiful tragedy.....Then will master sympathize with the emperor? In that case you would have no other choices than accepting the emperor's demand?」

「.....Of course I would not accept it」

No matter what was the reason, what the emperor had done was over crossing Tooya's permission.

「If so then would it be no loss with just asking?」

For example even if there was no sympathy.....No, surely he would sympathize right. However above it Tooya probably would not forgive the emperor. If so then asking alone would be like excessively cornering one's mental.

「.....It's necessary right?」

「Fumu?」

「Unless knowing the enemy, we couldn't set up countermeasures」

「You also have the option of leaving everything to me right?」

If he gave that order, surely Kuroe would think of a countermeasure toward the emperor in her own way.

「I'm not irresponsible to that degree」

He couldn't become irresponsible.

「Well, if you said so」

If he could do that then surely Tooya had been living happily.

「However as I've said just before what I know isn't that many right.」

「That's fine」

「Umu」

Kuroe nodded.

「Then first of all she was someone of imperial. I think about this master also knew but emperor is literally emperor. Around the time I was serving the original master she was governing this country in those days」

「Was she a tyrant?」

「No, she was called a wise ruler」

Tooya felt surprised at that. He completely couldn't feel that impression from the feeling of the talk.

「There was rumor she was an intelligent politician whom understood the citizen. In reality she was adored by the citizen too, the relationship with nobles were also favorable. From her position as the emperor the capital rapidly flourished」

「.....Did she do something like filling her own pocket from behind?」

「At least there was no one who was dissatisfied with the emperor in those day. Supposing even if such a thing happened if she filled her pocket to the degree no one was dissatisfied she wouldn't be called a tyrant.....In the

first place the emperor at that time was literally the most powerful person. Filling her pocket or whatever, even saying the whole country was her own is not an exaggeration」

The level of political power compared with this era was different.

「.....Even so there was no one opposing her?」

「Although she was very good in the head at the same time she was the master of divinity, therefore she excelled at foreseeing. She had never made even one wrong political move, so she would forestall and crush the rebel members」

「Speaking of it before you said there was an acquaintance whose forte was fortune telling.....」

「Umu, it's about that one」

Kuroe nodded.

「She was a very impressive person huh」

「She was the opponent whom had exorcised and put me under control with zero sacrifice you know?」

「.....I see」

Although the master who made the contract with Kuroe at that time was an exorcist, but the one who order this exorcist to exterminate Kuroe was the emperor. In the era the exorcist's magic was at its prime, the mysterious giant wolf was wielding its power. While being unharmed, to add it to their own faction was nothing of ordinary.

「You had met her directly right?」

「Although not that much.....furthermore even though saying meeting it was across a boundary so we didn't meet face to face directly. From the atmosphere and voice I understood it was a girl but the visage itself I hadn't seen」

「If it were you, you could see it right」

「I was prohibited to look you know」

It was the era where you had to have suitable qualification to meet the emperor directly. For the master at that time to order Kuroe that was also nothing strange.

「Well, but you had spoken to her right?」

「Umu」

「The impression was?」

「Over familiar. The moment she met me she had been called me black dog.....I am the mysterious giant wolf, not a dog though」

Speaking of that he recalled the emperor called Kuroe liked that.

「To make it worse even though seeing through everything with her view from up high, her tone was a sassy one」

「.....」

That's because she was actually a human standing on top so there's no helping it ..... disliking people similar to oneself. Such words came to Tooya's mind.

「Did you hate her?」

「Umu」

Broadly and clearly Kuroe nodded.

「She made me feel like vomiting」

「.....Yeah, that so」

However he didn't feel something ill intent in those words. Somehow or the other, he thought that Kuroe in her own way had become fond of the emperor hadn't she.

「No」

Kuroe denied.

「.....Yeah, that so」

One more time Tooya repeated.

「Well however though, I have no plan to belittle the valuation of her just because I hate her. She was, to the limit of my knowledge, an excellent politician, also wasn't someone who broadly showed ill intent to that extent」

「Was there something that happened that changed her?」

「I think so」

「Something like a big event」

Something caused a big influence in her sentiment.

「There was nothing easy to understand」

Kuroe denied.

「However if talking about change there's something that comes to mind.....Although I only understood that she had changed around this time, but the reason that connected to it I didn't know.」

「What is that?」



「The subjugation of mysterious beings all at once 」

The words he had heard before. The reason there was no mysterious being left in modern era.

「Is that, strange?」

Kuroe had said before mysterious beings were only bringing harms to human. Talking with human, having interest in human, existence like Kuroe among the mysterious being was surely an unique existence. At that time the mysterious beings existed extremely normally, and were threatening human's safety, therefore it came to mind that subjugation was not something strange.

「There was nothing wrong with the subjugation itself. However it should be carried out slowly, to carry it out rapidly was not something good」

「.....Why is that?」

If the harm of mysterious being disappeared then the faster way would be better right.

「In that time the mysterious being overflowed the world so the power of the exorcist was being needed. In other words that means the exorcist existed a lot more than today, and had a lot more power than today」

Power, it was also fine to say it as authority in other word.

「And the exorcist existed for the sake of exterminating mysterious being.....Thereupon if the mysterious being suddenly disappeared then what would happen?」

「Ah」

The exorcists would lose their existing values all at once. It would give birth to a large amount of unemployed people, therefore if it was the existents which had authorities the management would also be hard.

「Moreover there was the feeling the citizen believed in the governor, and the complaints were suppressed by the easiest way to understand which was they were being protected. It could be said at that time there was no war so the existent of mysterious being was outright foreign enemy. To begin with that one was yearned for by the citizen so that should be the one of the primary cause.」

Losing merit, creating problem. Certainly the mysterious being was harmful but in this case to subjugate them all at once would be in the direction of too much demerit.

「For human the mysterious being was the existence which should be destroyed. However that was not in one go, it should be carried out slowly to try to suppress that influence」

Because it was the existence that gave harm so he couldn't say that it was by no mean humane, but for the sake of not creating bigger damage that would be the best.

「And there was no way that one didn't understood that either」

「Even so she executed it」

「Umu, in addition with dreadful execution. Up until now the mysterious being that brought trouble to the citizen had its existence extinguished in a blink of an eye. I was also recruited in the subjugation, however they made use of all the battle strength not wasting even one percent and did not leave even one small fry」

To be able to execute that much, putting it the other way around it could be done at any time. And they didn't do it up till now, so he understood the point at the issue from the topic Kuroe brought up. Even so she purposely executed it because.....

「Everything for this sake, huh.....」

「It's just like that」

Sealing Kuroe, leaving her in this land. With the mysterious being subjugated the exorcists lost their power and declined, and in this era they didn't have the power to oppose Kuroe. Such a mysterious being's existent like Kuroe suited the emperor's intention of wanting to plunge this country into chaos.

「.....Say, about that demon sword too」

「The emperor must have left it」

Surely there have to be a mysterious being left in this land. While trying to show that the subjugation carried out had extinguished all mysterious being, she left a necessary amount for her own plan. If it were the most powerful and best leader emperor then that would be something easy.

「However, these are the methods not the cause」

「Umu」

In the end he had to ask the person herself the reason right. What he had understood was something about the important war potential of the mysterious being which would be used for the emperor's intention..... It could be said to be good news in a way. The war potential which was Kuroe wouldn't be easily discarded by the emperor. With that reason he could sell Kuroe's existent highly in the negotiation with the emperor.

「But, the problem is.....」

「Because there are hostages」

「.....」

Right, she was holding Rikka and other hostage. Barely he had secured their lives but it was only so. The emperor was bending Rikka's personality, and made her follow order unconditionally. For the situational it was the same as suddenly got a check.

「For now, there are time」

Tooya could calm down his impatient heart somehow.

「Therefore first of all let's settle the problem at the present」

「Fumu?」

「It had already been night.....If Rikka hadn't returned home her family would feel suspicious right」

Usually the daughter who didn't go play at night didn't return home or didn't contact either surely they would be worried.

「Then shall we release her?」

Currently Rikka was being wrapped by Kuroe's shadow.

「.....Do you think it'll be fine?」

「Does master think it'll be fine?」

「.....」

Repeating like a parrot, the answer for the question which returned was not there. The emperor didn't falter one bit in manipulating Rikka into self-mutilation. Although Rikka was the hostage regarding Tooya, but apparently she was thinking that it was fine as long as she lived. If only she lived there

would be value in her being hostage, to punish her to the verge of death trying to make Tooya accept the demand, that possibility was high.

「Don't make the current situation worse than right now」

Exactly because Kuroe had secured Rikka, the emperor couldn't use Rikka to threaten Tooya anymore than this. If he released her he would give that chance again.

「For now I probably won't do anything but deceiving Rikka's family with my magic」

「Ah.....I, guess so」

Tooya also thought nothing should be done but it. However the confirming words were sluggish.

「I would only make it as staying in a friend's house though, it's not like some alternation that would affect her personality right?」

「.....I know」

「If so then it's fine」

As if enjoying her lips bent.

「.....Naa, Kuroe」

「What is it?」

「What I have done is.....」

Hesitating, even so Kuroe continued.

「Was it different to what the emperor has done?」

Since the moment being pointed that out by the emperor it was like a thorn piercing Tooya's chest. Rikka had the memories of Tooya and her own father

erased. Occupying a large proportion inside Rikka, these two people were erased from Rikka's memories, even so she still could smile, wasn't that strange, the emperor had said.

「What does master think?」

Once again Kuroe returned the question.

「.....That is」

「Although it's fine to answer as you wish」

She laughed.

「But it wouldn't have any meaning right?」

「.....」

Rikka right now was clearly being distorted. Rikka wasn't the character who would be able to smile even though her own father was killed, and her own kouhai was killed ..... then, what was Rikka before this. Wasn't Rikka distorted when Tooya and her father were completely erased from her memory. To what extent Rikka was bluntly treated, she would not lose affection for her father. Forgetting the existent of that father, Rikka who had her memories changed as to not make contradiction was.....As expected she was being distorted right.

「Aa, that's right」

Suddenly as if she recalled something Kuroe opened her mouth

「Although together with that it's another story」

「.....What is it」

「Supposing if you found a way to kill the emperor would master kill her?」

She asked such thing.

「I'll kill her」

Tooya though if he could do that then how fun would it be.

「Fumu, including the possessed Aoi?」

「!？」

As if being taken aback Tooya opened his eyes wide.

「Don't tell me are you perhaps forgetting about it?」

「That is.....」

He wasn't supposed to be forgetting.....however all and all he didn't being aware of such thing.

「Then, what will you do?」

「.....If there were no other way」

Inside Tooya the importance of Rikka and Aoi were different.....However the answer was if there were other option he would choose from them. Moreover Tooya would search for other way as much as possible right. That option wouldn't include regret, because he had sympathized with Aoi's current situation which she was put in.

「There's a lot to think about」

Kuroe laughed looking like enjoying it.

Truly, the things he had to think about were a lot.





「!？」

Unconsciously Tooya opened his eyes wide. At zero distance their eyes met.

「.....!？」

His voice couldn't come out. Those eyes narrowed enjoying looking at the simply shaking Tooya .....Suddenly they moved away.

「The second time I successfully did it」

She said satisfyingly.

「.....」

Still shaking Tooya dumbfounded put his hand on his lips. The bewitching feeling was still remaining.

「.....Kuroe!」

「What is it?」

「What have you done!」



「I snatched master's lips and put my tongue in」

「Bu!？」

Kuroe had no intention of hiding it.

「By the way if you didn't wake up with that I planned to advance it further」

She sneered.

「.....You」

「Since you woke up it's fine right?」

She didn't feel guilty.

「Rather I think you're in the wrong for not waking up, therefore I have to do that」

「.....」

Tooya couldn't even deny it. If looking at the time it was already before noon. Normally Tooya would had already woke up and wakened Kuroe.....

This was the opposite of the usual case.

「I know, it's fine already」

Heaving a sigh Tooya pulled himself together.

「Then why did you specially wake me up」

「Because your cell phone was ringing.」

She pointed towards beside Tooya's pillow. Right now the cell phone is lying there with the sound already stopped.

「.....Incoming call」

The people that would call Tooya's cell phone were limited. Despite having a bad hunch halfway through, Tooya opened his cell phone to confirm the caller.

Incoming call: Aoi

Not differ to his expectation the name was there.

「Won't you call back? 」

「.....」

Even though it was registered as Aoi but the caller was actually the emperor. He still couldn't find the clue for the strategy to deal with that problem. It appeared to be undesirable to get in touch with the emperor once more in this situation.

「However there could be a possibility of a disadvantage though」

「.....」

Although there was some truth, he wanted to ignore it sentimentally.

Biriririririri.

However reality was harsh, for the second time the incoming call was announced.

「.....Moshi moshi」

Couldn't help it, Tooya pressed the call button.

「Good morning Tooya-kun」

That voice was unmistakable Aoi's voice, and the evil intent coming out was the emperor's.

「.....If it's about the answer I still haven't got yet」

「It's not like I intended to quicken the time limit you know.....although I have no plan of extending it either ne」

He could see the other side smiling.

「Then why did you call」

「I'm thinking of asking you out to play ne」

「.....Ha?」

In the end he couldn't understand the meaning.

「Won't you go out with everyone?」

「.....」

With his empty left hand Tooya lightly pressed his forehead. The one calling on the other side was sane or not.....No, I know she isn't sane, however.

「It's not like I want to play you know?」

「If so then what's your intention」

「Mashiro called asking me out to play, something like won't everybody go playing ne」

According to that invitation she directly got in contact, so said the emperor.

「Since it's an invitation from close friend I can't decline ne」

「.....」

Mashiro's close friend was Aoi, not the emperor. There was no reason for the emperor to pretend as Aoi according to that invitation. Because she deliberately accept the talk which would be fine if she simply declined, this would be to shaken up Tooya right.

「Since I made a promise with Mashiro to ask you three out instead, so properly take Rikka with you too you know?」

「!」

Without his consent the talk continued to advance.....moreover.

「You know about Rikka's state right」

「Wouldn't it be fine to just release her」

Simply she said.

「Whose fault do you think that I can't release her」

「Is it my fault?」

「Of course it is」

As always that irritating way of speak.

「I won't do anything to Rikka anymore though?」

「.....You think I trust you?」

「There is no need to if you don't do anything strange」

Since I had done enough of threatening ne, she bragged.

「Well, it's not like I forced you, you know? If you want to keep Rikka as the example of cherishment then keep on doing it.....However if you think about hating it, then it would be necessary for a negotiation, don't you think so?」

「.....」

“Giriri”, Tooya gritted his back teeth.

「I don't care either way you know.....If you don't come out then I'll go and have fun with Mashiro only ne」

「!？」

「I've said it from the beginning right.....I was invited by Mashiro」

In other words, if he declined this invitation they would be going out with only the two people Mashiro and the emperor. And as for the emperor Mashiro wasn't an important hostage as Rikka.....He couldn't say there was no possibility she wouldn't be killed off as a threat to Tooya.

「Emperor.....」

「I didn't say I would do something you know」

Certainly she didn't say she would do something.

「However I didn't say I wouldn't do anything ne」

She laughed enjoying it.

「If I go.....it's fine isn't it」

As if groaning the acceptant words came out of his mouth.

「Un, that's fine」

It was a satisfied voice.

「When we decided the details we'll contact you」

The call was cut off at that.

「.....Dammit」

Spitting that out Tooya threw the cell phone.

「A decisive defeat huh」

Kuroe “yare yare” shrugged her shoulders. It was the feeling of being made to strongly recognizing the current situation a new. Even though the other side had many cards regarding this side to play, this side had nothing in return. And yet the emperor also pressed the threat to the compromising level when this side couldn't make up his mind.

「.....For my desire can you monitor Mashiro?」

「Although I can, but I think there s no meaning.....If she wanted to show her hand she should have don't it already」

「.....Like what she did to Rikka」

「That's right」

As prior, before they noticed.

「But, the emperor said what she would aim next right?」

「Exactly because she did」

「.....?」

Wasn't able to read that intention Tooya looked at Kuroe.

「The emperor said she would aim at the next target because we had secured Rikka」

「.....Aa」

The emperor couldn't inflict direct harm .....however, the harm which she was already inflicting was not directly and was easily pulled out.



「The emperor couldn't do anything to Rikka anymore.....At the least we secured Rikka's life」

「But, we have only that」

Even though securing her life, but her will and personality were still distorted.

「However this alone is important」

「.....How so」

「Supposing the emperor killed Mashiro and master's parent, what will you do?」

Suddenly she asked such thing.

「.....」

Imagining it, the black things were coming out overflowing, Tooya also understood that.

「I won't forgive her, I think」

「Umu」

Kuroe nodded.

「In that case, you will leave Rikka's things behind.....Because first of all you will be thinking of killing the emperor, won't you?」

「That is.....」

Might be, he couldn't deny it. In reality he had only secured Rikka's life, even if he killed the emperor Rikka's life would be the only thing he wouldn't lose.....If that was the case there was the possibility of killing the emperor out of grudge. And since the possibility of getting the life of the distorted Rikka back wasn't nonexistent.

「She also knows about this you know」

Because even though she threatened she hadn't made a move right, so said Kuroe.

「Is that so」

For a little, he felt that his mood brightened.....However at the same time there was things to think about. The reason the emperor didn't do anything other than threatening Mashiro group, was because he had gotten a hold of Rikka. Things like "it'd be fine to keep her life", Tooya couldn't think like that, and the emperor knew it very well.

Unless the emperor made a move on Tooya's acquaintance, certainly Rikka would continue to be the biggest weak point for Tooya.

「.....Why did thing become like that」

Unconsciously it came out of his mouth.

「It's because master is half baked right」

「.....Half baked?」

Even being told so, he couldn't immediately get it.

「That's right」

However Kuroe confidently nodded.

「To begin with what is master's objective?」

She asked that foundation.

「Making Rikka.....happy」

「Umu」

She nodded, then asked.

「That is to what degree of level?」

「What degree.....」

「You will remove all obstacle to her happiness, won't you?」

「Yeah」

「That also naturally includes protecting Rikka right?」

「Of course it is」

「Fumu」

If so, Kuroe continued.

「When Rikka dies to traffic accident」

「Wha」

「Being stabbed by random attacker and dies」

Indifferently she announced.

「What are you.....」

「With master's protection standard, the possibility that could occur」

「!？」

Forcefully, it resounded like a heavy impact.

「What are you being surprised at?」

Kuroe looked at Tooya in that state.

「If you don't stick to her around the clock and let her freely act, wouldn't it be strange if those possibilities didn't occur right?」

Since misfortune could happen to anyone.

「But, that is.....」

「Because you can't do it to that degree I call you half baked」

「.....」

「If you ordered me with one word it'd be possible. While you shamelessly said Rikka was your everything then why you shirk off from that? Did you avoid those action because it would look like a stalker? Even though master had done much more terrible action」

「.....」

Tooya couldn't object anything.

「Supposing if master ordered, even for Aoi or the emperor there wouldn't be any gap for them to take advantage right」

If he sensed it before hand, he might have been able to protect her.

「While saying in order to not getting involved anymore you erased her memories about you, and yet you plan to protect her in half baked resolve.....such thing is just like saying “this is my weak point, please come snatch it”」

And splendidly Rikka had been snatched away as the hostage.

「.....」

While wishing for Rikka's happiness.....Tooya's action in the end was nothing but pushing Rikka to the opposite direction.

「Before whining first let's think about it」

Kuroe said that to Tooya who was like that.

「Everything, anything and everything from the start」

「.....I got it」

At Kuroe's words, Tooya deeply nodded.



「Ah, Tooya-senpai!」

Having already showed up at the appointed place, Mashiro was standing there. Although at the public square before the station people were walking around as usual, immediately she noticed them and waved her hands.....next to her was the figure of the emperor. As she met with their eyes she bent her lips looking enjoyable. Furthermore even though frowning Tooya walked up to the two.

「Good afternoon」

「Yes, good afternoon」

Broadly smiling Mashiro returned the greetings.

「Good afternoon, Tooya-senpai」

The emperor too showed an Aoi like smile and looked at Tooya, and then toward his side next.

「Good afternoon Kuroe-senpai and Rikka-senpai too」

「Yeah, good afternoon」

Feigning friendliness Kuroe answered.

「Un, good afternoon」

Rikka too returned the greeting with a smile.

『You properly took her with you ne』

Suddenly the emperor's voice echoed in his ear. When he moved his eyesight he saw that the emperor didn't even look at him. Was she using some kind of magic, it seemed only Tooya could hear it.

「At any rate you knew right」

“At any rate you can hear me right”, Tooya returned in a low voice. Before releasing Rikka from the darkness first of all he had to think about what to do with these days being inconsistent from the beginning.....However when Rikka was released she acted as if nothing had happened from the start. Even though being separated there must be some kind of connection to the emperor.

「I won't deny it」

「.....no matter what you plan to do it's useless」

Although she wasn't warped in darkness anymore, Rikka was still under the influence of Kuroe's darkness. From the appearance it couldn't be told but if Kuroe prayed silently then immediately the darkness would secure Rikka.

「I have no intent to do it either you know」

A clear voice resounded.

「.....」

“I want to hit her”, he thought from his heart.

「Tooya-kun, what are you doing being absent minded?」

Suddenly it was Rikka's voice. Unconsciously Tooya's body startled with a jump.

「What happened?」

Curiously she peered into Tooya's face.

「N, no.....it's nothing」

While answering he took a glance at the emperor, and she was sneering enjoyably. This too was her handy work, even though blood rushed to his head, he couldn't let it show in his front either.

「Now then, about time shall we go?」

Having settled down Mashiro proposed.....If he tried to very seriously think about it in this place the normal person was only Mashiro alone, suddenly Tooya thought. Tooya, Kuroe, the emperor were needless to say and Rikka too was being distorted by the emperor. Even though in the past she had been manipulated by the demon sword, Mashiro didn't know it.....He thought that if possible he wanted to try not to get involve anymore than this.

「.....If it's thinking then anyone could do it huh」

As if self-deprecation he muttered.

「Look now, Tooya-kun let's go!」

Suddenly Rikka took and pulled Tooya's arm. And then just like that she intertwined her own arm and walked out.

「Wai, Rikka.....」

Being pulled like that Tooya too walked out.

「Wa, Rikka-senpai is so bold」

As if being surprised Mashiro looked at the two.

「I won't be defeated with that though」

Kuroe was being carried away as always took the other hand.

「Muu」

Then Rikka floated a sullen expression, while Kuroe were smiling broadly.

「I, I have a hunch of a love triangle.....!」

Mashiro had an excited face and stared at three of them.

The scene that had happened sometimes ago, more than that it was a little noisy.

「Two blessings at once ne」

The hated voice resounded.

If he could enjoy it like that without knowing anything, it would have been great.



Since that they had met before noon first of all it would be going to eat lunch. After that was properly walking around in front of the station to look for shops.....And as they were doing that they found a biggish game center, so they entered it.

「Hee, inside it has this kind of atmosphere」

Looking as if having great interest Mashiro looked around the store interior. Hearing her talk it seemed Mashiro hadn't entered places like this much.



Although Tooya too had come here many times in the old days, these past few years he couldn't remember entering it. Although he didn't have much interest, however not having that kind of mood was much bigger.

「I imagined it was the gathering spot for delinquent」

「Well, although that kind of shop exist」

Was this shop intended for families? Inside it prohibited smoking and the shop was also bright. Was it also because the game machines were arranged with spaces between, there was a sense of wide spaciousness. If she was having the image of dark gloomy and stink of tobacco then might be it was surprising for her.

「Nothing but big game machines ne」

「You're right」

Kuroe and Rikka curiously stared at the lining up game machines. Different from the past right now game machines that used big frame were a lot. The traditional wrestling games were also placed, but standing out were the card game or rhythm game.

「First of all what should we do. There doesn't seem to be any game we all could play ne」

Pretending to be Aoi the emperor opened her mouth.....Seeing that Tooya helplessly remembered the creepy feeling. It was the feeling which he couldn't think of this current situation as nothing but doing a farce. Because Mashiro was here it couldn't be helped, however he felt like he was trying to do something useless.

「Then shall we split out suitably?」

Therefore Tooya proposed.

「We each have different interest right, and it would be inefficient moving as a group」

「You're right」

Mashiro too had the same idea.

「Are you also fine with this, Aoi-chan?」

「I don't really mind」

The eyesight went to Rikka.

「Un, I'm also fine with it」

Rikka too nodded.

「Of course I don't mind either」

Kuroe had the same thought too.

「Then, for now let's split up as you like」

With that as they were going to act separately, he would be able to talk with the emperor.....Although Tooya thought in that manner.

「Then, Tooya-kun, shall we go?」

「Eh?」

His arm was grabbed by Rikka.

「I want to see things over there」

「Eh, no.....」

「C'mon, let's go」

As Tooya was being pulled away just like that, the emperor waved her small hand at him.



And with that it became free activity. Although Tooya was thinking that he wanted to use that gap to talk with the emperor however having no choice he was caught by Rikka. Rikka right now was being distorted by the emperor. But to simply shaking off that hand, for Tooya it was surely not possible.

「Tooya-kun, what will we play?」

「E, eetto.....」

Suddenly being brought up that topic he was at a loss. Originally he didn't play game much, in the first place because there was nothing to do particularly he didn't set foot in here. When he tried to look around many game machines entered his eyes, but none of which made him want to try it out.

「What about Rikka?」

At a loss for the answer he returned a question.

「I want to try that」

His eyesight was drawn to the front, and the crane games were lining up. Inside it various type of stuff dolls were tightly packed and lined up as the prizes.

「Speaking of which I remember you collect stuffed dolls right」

「Un」

Was she being happy that he remembered, smiling broadly she nodded.

「.....」

“However”, Tooya thought. He didn’t speak out, but Tooya recalled that Rikka was collecting dolls was the substitute for being unable to keep a pet. Although Rikka right did now knew that reason, but what about Rikka before.....Having the memories of her father erased, what would she think when she saw the dolls in her own room.

「I don’t have anything from this place so I want many things」

Rikka’s voice made him return to his sense.....It was useless thinking about that thing right now.

「.....It shouldn’t go that easy though」

Having collected himself he returned the words.

「Ah, this would be fine」

Saying so, the one Rikka stopped her feet at was the case in which there was stuffed cat doll at around 30 centimeters.

「Although dog is cute but as expected cat is also cute」

「Well yeah」

Sure enough he didn’t know would it be fine to call this a cat though. That thing which was fully deformed, although couldn’t be called human doll but it had the feeling of walking on two legs. Its hand were holding something like weapon, some kind of game character it seemed.

「Then I’ll try it」

「Yeah」

「I'll do it」

「Un」

「.....」

However Rikka didn't move at all. The reason could be easily understood if following his eyesight.

「.....You have to separate from my arm.」

From the moment she pulled and took him here Rikka was still intertwining their arms.....If it keeps being like that it would be hard to operate the crane right.

「.....Un」

Reluctantly Rikka released the intertwined arm.

「Yoshi! Here I go」

After she said as if having collected herself, Rikka took out from small coins from her purse. As she inserted it the operating button lit up. With the first button she moved it to the corner, with the second button to the right making aim at the target.

「I'm aiming for that one」

Inside the piled up dolls, Rikka decided her target would be the only one stood out as it was rolling. Moved the crane to the corner, moved it to the right, took the position above it, after was letting the crane automatically open and aim at the doll.

「Ah.....」

However, heartlessly the crane didn't accomplish the task. Did it slip too much to the right, it only lifted the doll's foot and smoothly grasped the air

and returned to its home position.....The sight of opening the crane over the hole looked terribly empty.

「Uh—.....」

Looking frustrated Rikka stared at the doll.

「Well as expected the first step didn't go smoothly」

「You're absolutely right.....Un, let me try again」

Nodded Rikka once again took out another coin.....This was the abridgment.

「Ah—、 Uh—、 it's completely useless.....」

After that, although she had thrown in around two thousand yen, Rikka couldn't acquire the doll at all. There was one time she had it picked up but, heartlessly the crane dropped the doll half way.



「Eetto, will you still continue?」

「.....」

Although she stared at the doll with troubling looks, it seemed her heart was being broken down. From the start she had said she wanted many things but, at this rate she should be giving up right.....Argh, whatever. Being showed that face Tooya couldn't bare it.

「Got it, I'll get it for you」

「Eh!？」

As if being surprised Rikka looked at Tooya.

「But this is, very hard you know?」

Even though she said that her pupils were overflowing with hope.

「Well, probably it'll be fine」

Although usually he was being oblivious, but with Kuroe's influence Tooya's physical ability had become high spec. He also understood the sliding of the crane, he could move it with certainty as planned.....Although there was nothing guaranteed he would get it but he should be able to manage somehow.

「I'll properly take it for you」

「Un!」

Seeing Rikka nodded happily, his heart became light.

.....Even though he knew that it shouldn't be allowed.





Speaking about the result it didn't go smoothly. What worked better in this kind of game was to judge which doll could be picked up rather than to move the crane precisely. Therefore it would be best to say it was wrong to stick to taking that doll. Even so if planning to take it by force intentionally, then one had to move the target doll to the position which it could be taken. For example, even if following the shortest process itself it would still cost money.....well, even so.

「Tooya-kun, thank you」

If being able to see that smiling it was a small price to pay, Tooya thought.

「You're welcome」

「Un」

Looking truly happy she hugged the doll tightly.

「Ehehe, I'll treasure this doll」

「.....Well, if we both put it together and buy it, it would be a cheaper way to use money though」

「Mu—, then it won't have any meaning you know」

She inflated her cheeks.

「Because it's a present from Tooya-kun I'll treasure it」

「.....Is that so」

Honestly she was happy, so he thought.

「As expected Tooya-kun is reliable」

「Eh」

Suddenly being looked at by trusted eyes, however Tooya was shaken. In Tooya's heart he couldn't have the same thought as the emotion being directed at him.....In Tooya memories, there was no such thing as being directed by such trustworthiness by Rikka.

「When I want to be saved you will come to save me」

「.....When you want, to be saved?」

「The time with my father too, I was so happy」

「!？」

Wrong. Seeing Rikka smiled shyly Tooya felt nausea. At that time he didn't remember Rikka ever wanted help.....Even when he tried to remember it was not asking for his help either. It was not for her oppressed self, but to save her own father, that was Rikka's wish. Because no matter how much she was tormented Rikka couldn't hate her father.....exactly because of that, the moment her father disappeared Rikka was having that expression.

Tooya didn't save Rikka at all.....therefore, this was wrong.

「What is it Tooya-kun.....you look pale.」

「.....It's nothing」

Worriedly peering at him, that expression was unmistakably Rikka's, however he was helplessly made to recognize again that this was something different. Rikka at that time had strength and weakness, the Rikka in front of his eyes had nothing of the same.....simply it was just like a helplessly sweet dream, it was only showing Tooya that.

「Hey, Tooya-kun」

「Un?」

As he asked in return, “Gyu” Rikka hugged the doll tightly and dyed her cheek.

「The answer for the confession.....I’m waiting for it」

Said so, looking embarrassed Rikka averted her eyes. If he didn’t have this mood, if he didn’t know anything, Tooya would surely have his face boil to the degree it could cook an egg.....it couldn’t be helped but made him think of a romantic way to answer right.

「Un」

However Tooya right now could only make a small nod. Because Tooya knew. He knew Rikka right now was different. Rikka who was here right now was not the Rikka Tooya knew, she was the Rikka being distorted to the convenience of the emperor.....simply towards the figure Tooya wished for but at the same time did not wish for.

「.....The answer, I can’t tell you」

He lightly whispered not letting Rikka hear it.

What he thought was right, for that answer.



「You’re having a pretty bitter face ne」

With seemingly curious face the emperor looked at Tooya.

「You had spent fun time with Rikka alone right?」

“It’s strange ne”, although she inclined her head, the corner of her lips were bent up, that Tooya didn’t miss.....He had used to such sarcasm from Kuroe. But then Kuroe didn’t show opened ill intent to that degree though.

『Of course isn’t it.....it’s because I love master 』

“Fufun”, as if puffing with pride Kuroe’s voice echoed from his mind.....People without bad intention could also be bad, he wanted to tell her that.

「Oya, a secret talk?」

「.....Can you hear it」

「It’s just a guess」

That reeks of lies, he thought. Perhaps he could intercept telepath from Kuroe and the emperor.

「But talking about chatting then you also want to do it with me ne.....since you made sure there are only two of us right?」

He left Mashiro and Rikka to Kuroe, Tooya asked the emperor to the bench in the corner inside the shop. Incidentally, was it because he wished for no obstruction, around them there was no human figure. Although the fact that he was able to sandwich his voice was because Kuroe was also looking over here.....He was grateful to that method at this place.

『Finally master understood my value huh』

Don’t get carry away, although he thought.

「Then?」

The emperor urged.

「I want to hear the reason」

「Fumu, of what?」

「For what sake you dare do this thing」

He glared at the emperor with clear hatred.

「What's this what's this, you look really angry.....Did you perhaps didn't enjoy the time alone with Rikka that much? I think right now she is in the state just like in your dream though ne」

「Not simply a dream this is a nightmare」

What she thought to be a happy dream was too much of ill-natured.

「If you're dissatisfied I could change her you know?」

Cure, it was not but change, said the emperor.

「You」

「If you hated it too then you should accept my demand」

The emperor said.

「If you do that everything will be clean, because I can make it just like you imagine it ne」

Saying so she sneered. She ran her mouth about Rikka as if she was a thing. Since by doing so, it became poison that pierced Tooya as it was.....Not even hiding it the emperor threw an ill intent at him.

Ill intent. Those were ill intents. Since the first meeting the emperor had no plan to hide her ill intent. As if oozing out she scattered ill intent at him.

「With such thing you were able to trick Aoi huh」

「Because I was being patient ne」

These ill intents, they weren't showed in just pieces.

「To reach my goal it was necessary to gain Aoi's trust.....even so for me too she was someone who I hesitate to throw ill intent at」

「.....and yet in the end you betrayed her and stole her body」

「Because it's necessary it couldn't be helped.」

The emperor shrugged her shoulder.

「When everything is over and I'm satisfied I'll return her body you know」

It didn't sound like she was saying a lie.....However whether he could consent with that or not was a different problem. With different meaning Tooya couldn't trust the emperor.

「How much must we do until you are satisfied?」

Tooya wasn't asking that. The words about destroying too, the words of about bring chaos too, those were vague. How far did she think of reaching, only the girl herself knew.

「Well, how much ne」

“I don't know”, as if saying that the emperor inclined her head.....then she said.

「Probably, nowhere is enough」

「!」

Even though her tone was light, Tooya felt a chill ran down his spine. There was no hesitation inside the emperor. There was no standard to stop at.....He understood it.

「What is.....your target?」

With shaking tone Tooya asked.

「Un? I want to plunge this country into chaos?」

“What are you saying at this late hour”, the emperor looked at Tooya.

「Not that.....what’s your intent that you want to plunge this country into chaos, I want to hear it」

Although Kuroe had said it was unnecessary, even so Tooya wanted to know the reason.....the reason he had been directed by ill intent up till now.

「Such a thing, because I hate it you know」

「.....Hate?」

「Yeah, hate」

With that single word it felt as if a curse to Tooya.

「Because I hate I hate, so it can’t be helped that I want to plunge this country to chaos」

「Why to that degree.....」

Was it because she hated.

「Because it gave me despair you know」

The emperor answered.

「Therefore I hate the future」

「.....Future?」

It was not, this country.

「That’s right, the thing I truly hate was this future」

Clearly she said.

「Wait, a bit」

If that were true then there was something he had to confirm

「The future you said you hated is the era you mean?」

「The future is the future」

It was not something that could be limited to era, so said the emperor.....Tooya felt that his vision shook violently. Since, this story was too outrageous.

「Then」

「It's a coincidence you know」

Understanding Tooya's intention, the emperor said.

「Coincidentally the suitable yorishiro appeared in this era, and there upon Kuroe awakened」

It wasn't her intention to scatter ill intent especially somewhere, as long as it was the future it was fine anyways.

「It was just bad luck ne」

Said so the emperor sneered.

「.....!」

Helplessly it seemed unreasonable. As that ill intent was genuine, the remained calamity was genuine, everything she was doing was full of ill intent, even so she said that anyone would be fine.....If that was where the future was named. Then that was in the end just a distraction, wasn't it? For the damaged side it would be nothing but unreasonable.....To make it worse the emperor understood that. As she understood that she still dared to sneer "just bad luck ne."



「Well, leaving it at that」

Furthermore the emperor plainly changed the topic.

「What will you do after this I wonder?」

「.....After this?」

Without even hiding his insecure tone of voice Tooya asked back.

「After we done playing and broke up.....what will you do with Rikka afterward?」

「!」

For an instance Tooya forgot about the resentment towards the emperor.

「Will you once again put her in Kuroe's darkness and put her away like some keepsake?」

「That is.....」

If possible he didn't want to. However Rikka right now was being distorted by the emperor.....While that being true it wasn't like he could disregard it. Although just like right now he had the method of releasing her while having Kuroe's darkness lied dormant, but when she was out of sight releasing her would be unsafe.

「You don't want to do it right?」

「.....that's of course」

However he couldn't, as long as the emperor still existed.

「If so then let's make a contract」

Suddenly the emperor proposed like that

「Con, tract?」

As for Tooya that wasn't something sounded good.

「I'm not going to make any big promises without being vigilant you know」

「.....Contract about what?」

If it was only hearing it then he'd simply do that.

「About I won't make a move on Rikka from now on」

「From now on, you said?」

「Un, from now on」

That meant in other words she had no intention of returning what she had done.....However she would be unable to give her order to hurt herself like before. If doing that there wouldn't be any problem releasing Rikka like this.

However there was no contract that benefited one side alone.

「What's your demand?」

「You will have to keep the promise」

「.....?」

「On the settled date you will directly give me the answer」

「.....」

Even when he was explained in detail Tooya still couldn't understand the meaning.....that conclusion of a deal was of equivalent value with that Tooya own?

「You are a pretty generous person ne」

As if making fun of him she sneered.

「What does that mean」

「Doesn't it mean just like that?」

“Don't you even understand when I said that”, she made an irritated face.

『Master』

A fed up voice echoed. “When I thought you were being quiet all these time now you too?”

『That equivalent with not letting master run away though』

「.....」

Equivalent with not letting me run away? From what? The answer?

『Just as you said』

「Such thing from the beginning.....」

「Perhaps you intended to run away though」

The emperor interrupted.

「That's what we're talking about here right? For Tooya-kun he had a mysteriously bad personality ne.....When you decide to refuse my demand do you have the confidence you will not come to that idea?」

「That is.....」

When being told like that it might happen as she said. As he decided to refuse the emperor's demand, then it would be fine if he came up with a countermeasure against the emperor.....But if he couldn't? Without any countermeasure and he decided to absolutely won't follow the emperor, then would Tooya obediently come to the emperor to report?

「.....That's impossible」

It would be foolish. No matter how he thought it would be wise to conceal his figure without saying anything.

「The contract is to make sure you won't do that」

To make sure no matter what answer he chose certainly Tooya would have to come to the emperor's place.

「Not just verbal promise but a magical promise.....Once we closed the deal no one could defy it. You surely understand the effect if you let the black dog see it right?」

Although holding power enough to threaten a country, when bind by the contract Kuroe couldn't do anything but kill herself when ordered to.

「.....I can't trust you」

Magic or contract was all Tooya's eccentric knowledge. Even if there was that kind of work he couldn't notice it.

「You could let the black dog check it. Because I'll use simple contract ceremony that itself the black dog could understand ne」

「.....」

Even so whether he could trust her was doubtful.

「It's fine if you don't like it though. Certainly for Tooya-kun it's not that much of a beneficial contract.....Because it'll be fine to just put Rikka away like a thing again ne」

「!」

Unchangingly, she used that disgusting manner of speech.

「.....Deal」

「N?」

「I said the contract is a deal!」

He couldn't help but shouted.

「That helps me ne」

“Kusukusu” the emperor sneered.

「.....In return could you tell me one thing」

「Un?」

「If I refused your demand what do you plan to do?」

The contract had sealed the escape route for Tooya.....If saying it on the contrary, the emperor understood that there was the possibility of Tooya refusing. If so then inevitably she had to think about the case when that happened right.

「You think I will obediently tell you that?」

Telling her action in the case Tooya refused would be telling him what he should do as countermeasure.....As expected it wouldn't go easy just like that, as Tooya gave up.

「But well, I'll tell you one thing」

However unexpectedly the emperor consented.

「What , I'll just go piss off some guy accompanied by a powerful mysterious being with all my heart.....To the level of he wouldn't mind any collateral damage in order to kill me ne. After that if I continued to run then this country will be plunged to chaos as I like.....Well, because it's extremely bothersome it'll be the lowest priority method ne」

「.....」

She dared to say plunging to chaos.

「With this the question ends?」

「.....yeah」

Although in the end it was all useless.....She didn't say it like a joke which was very troublesome.

「Now then, about time we unite with everyone.....the contract would be after we parted with Mashiro ne」

This one certainly must not be let loose.

## Chapter 4: Her Utmost and His Utmost

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「Hey, Tanaka.」

「.....What is it?」

It seemed the same as always inside Tanaka's private room. Tanaka was sitting at his own desk, while Akane was rudely lying on the reception sofa.

That alone was normal, but the biggest difference was that no liveliness could be felt from Akane at all.

「Do we have any intel?」

「No, nothing in particular.」

Even though they were being threatened, they still continue to closely monitor the Emperor. If they didn't interfere with the Emperor, then perhaps she wouldn't feel like doing anything to them. So for now, observing her won't cause any harm..... That meant that they were being looked down upon. Tanaka himself didn't have the mood to deny this thought either.

「It seems that the Emperor is spending time at Aoi's home as always. And the only time she goes out is to go buy food and.....to meet up with his group, that seems so right?」

「What's the situation?」

「It seems she continues to act as Aoi-san.」

The Emperor didn't make a move at all, not even one bit. She didn't even leave her house other than that one time she got in touch with Tooya's group.....Although there was the possibility that she deceived the people observing her.

「What about them?」

「Nothing special from them either.....」

There were not any eye-catching moves. Although they accepted the mission, there were no signs of it being carried out... On the contrary, Emperor seems to often go out with Tooya and his group. Although we kept an eye on both of them. They seem to only act normally.

「Neither of them made any obvious moves?」

「Yeah.」

He nodded.

「In other words, there should be a secret agreement between both of them  
」

Tanaka presumed that Tooya have left something unsaid. Although, if possible, he would have wanted to investigate it, but that would mean he would be caught with a warning.....And perhaps it would be hard to draw the matter out from Tooya's side. If Tooya felt like talking, he would have said from the beginning outright.

「What do you think of it?」

「A non-aggression pact, but it doesn't seem to be it. Because it wouldn't be the reason the Emperor didn't make a move.」

「Seems like it.」

If they signed a deal like that, it wouldn't be strange for the Emperor to make some kind of move.

「Although there's the possibility that she is deceiving us while making her move.」

That was the extent of the power that the Emperor had.



「It's impossible.」

He affirmed.

「Is that so?」

It seems that Akane has been guided to the right answer.

「If it becomes like that, then naturally it makes you think that they made a pact with a deadline, right?」

「For example?」

「The emperor gives Kamisaki-san a demand, then she waits for the answer, something along those lines」

「.....Seems fitting.」

「Is that so?」

Since she has never fully trusted on that matter, she wasn't surprised.

「What's the content?」

「It's about the emperor's objective.」

However, the story was a headache

「Although there is one problem. The Emperor can't lose to us, but, identically, Kuroe-san can't lose to the Emperor.....With that said, there is no way Kamisaki-san will not refuse the demand.」

「Is it the risk of refusal?」

「Yeah, perhaps Kamisaki-san couldn't give an immediate answer was because the emperor had posed a risk to him. The emperor then gave Kamisaki-san the time to think and a limited non-aggression pact was born.

」

With that, things seem to make sense.

「Is it about Kurumi Rikka?」

「It seems so,」

Tanaka nodded.

「Because she is Kamisaki-san's biggest weakness.」

「.....Tch.」

She clicked her tongue a little.

「Although, in my own opinion, I think the guard was insufficient.....When they didn't notice that Rikka-san's memories were returned. In that case there is the possibility that something had been done.」

「.....」

Akane had heard about it from Tanaka about what Aoi did, and what Tooya had done to Aoi,

「.....Is there nothing we can do?」

「Seems so.」

Tanaka shook his head.

「What we can do right now is to make preparations for that moment.....But well, I don't know how much meaning this preparation has.」

The Order of Black Magic didn't have the power to oppose Kuroe, and against the Emperor,.

「Hey, Tanaka.」

「What is it?」

「We are the organization that protects the people of this country, aren't we?」

「Yeah.」

He nodded. Tanaka would calmly kill people if it were necessary. In order to save the lives of many, he would sacrifice the little. There was no doubt that his ideals would save people's lives.

「I am... the ally of justice, right?」

「Yes, you are.」

Tanaka understood reality. He knew he couldn't save everyone.....For that reason he chose to save the many. However, Akane was different. She chose to save everything. It was not a prank from a kid who didn't know of reality, because she chose after fixing her eyes on the same reality as Tanaka, Tanaka didn't deny it either.

「If so, then why couldn't I do anything?」

That voice was more frail than the usual.....However it was by no means broken.

「During the time with Aoi, and even now.....why can't I do anything?」

「It's because you don't have the power.」

Tanaka answered without a bit of mercy exactly because of that. At that answer, Akane bit her lips. At her own powerlessness .....At the inability to carry out her righteousness.

「Shit.」

She bit her lips, and stood up. It wasn't in order to disprove it, but in order to simply run away from this place.

「.....Akane-san.」

At the back of who was about to leave the room, Tanaka called out.

「What?」

「You are wrong.」

「Huh?」

She turned back, and saw Tanaka with a calm expression as always.

「Furthermore, for you to be sulking without realizing is .....right, it's unpleasant.」

「.....Haa?」

Akane, who doesn't understand the meaning, let out a dubious voice. Despite being unpleasant, Tanaka's expression didn't change one bit.

「Why aren't you doing anything」

「That's because.....」

「Not having power is not an excuse you know.」

「Huh?」

She didn't understand more and more of what he meant.

「No. You.....You just answered that right?」

「Yes, and that is?」

He asked in return as if it was natural.

「Because you have no power, you couldn't do anything, and that is a fact.  
」

「If that's the case...」

「But even so that's not the reason you won't do anything!」

At that point finally Tanaka's calm expression crumbled.

「You are an ally of justice, right?」

As if trying to provoke her, he smiled.

「If so then you have to make the impossible possible, and create miracles!  
」

“Even so”, Tanaka continued his words.

「You said you can't do anything so you're sulking.」

「.....」

As if to oppose, Akane gritted her back teeth.

「If I had power, I'd.....!」

「You know, I'm saying that you're being wrong about that.」

As if saying “yare yare”, Tanaka shrugged his shoulders.

「Is it not justice if you don't have power?」

「That is.....」

「Are you upholding justice just to show off your power?」

「.....'course, not」

It was to save people. To save the ones who couldn't be saved. It wasn't to just to show off how great we are

「If so, it should not be a situation where you could choose your methods, right」

「Isn't that.....your responsibility」

「No.」

Tanaka shook his head.

「It's the contrary. I chose my own method.....Because right now, I chose not to do anything. What you could see from not taking a move, in the end, the result wouldn't go beyond making a move.」

As for why there was nothing for Tanaka to show just like Akane. Logically, he only chose choices which allow him to save the many. Furthermore, everything was in Tanaka's professional duty's range of acceptance.

「However, you are different. In order to achieve the ideal you seek, do you even have any time to spare making yourself look good? Or perhaps .....Even when you could achieve your ideals, is there any meaning when you yourself is unsightly?」

For example, something like “how they saved the pitiful demon sword possessed girl by cooperating with the mysterious being” which should be avoided to begin with.

「Don't mess around with me!」

Akane shouted.

「That is obviously not possible!」

「Is that so?」

As usual, Tanaka poured out his thoughts in a cool manner

「Then don't sulk and think about it, about what you could do from now on」

The talk was only to that extend, having said so Tanaka stopped talking

「.....Tch.」

As Akanae clicked her tongue, once again she moved her body to face the door

「.....Thank you.」

Tanaka didn't respond. And just like that Akane exited the room.



「How troublesome this is」

In Aoi's apartment's room the lone Emperor muttered a few words. There wasn't much in the room, maybe it's because Aoi never visited the city for a very long time already . Although there is a TV, the power switch is off so there is not even any sound at all. When the Emperor does not have anything in particular to do, she wouldn't find anything special to do.....and she isn't that kind of being .

However, it was different right now. Her line of sight now faces the entrance.

The bell rang. Furthermore, there shouldn't be any visitor at this hour despite being very late already

「I'm opening it.」

The door was already opened when she noticed the voice.

「How careless.」

Akane appeared in front of Emperor after opening the door. She was in the usual military camouflage outfit, and on her waist was the spirit sword.

「There is no need for precaution.」

The emperor showed her sneer.

「Is that so?」

Akane silently drew the spirit sword.

「Oh? Do you feel like doing it」

「Why would I come to see you for reasons otherwise?」

「I thought you weren't the kind to let other people become sacrifice though.  
」

「.....Just like you said.」

“Tch”, as she clicked her tongue. That body was Aoi's, and if the humanoid magic was working, then it would mean she could kill people.

「But first, I want to talk.」

「Then why are you drawing out your sword?」

「Because I plan to cut you down based on how this talk ends.」

「Talk about being absurd.」

「Not up to your damn degree.」

「That's true.」

Looking amused, the emperor laughed.

「I more or less planned to give you a warning but.....Well, if it's only talking I'll hear you out.」



「That would help.」

While still wearing shoes, Akane entered the room.

「When entering people's houses, you have to take off your shoes. You were taught that, weren't you?」

「My shoes are specially made. It can become a weapon.」

「Oh, how scary.」

Unnaturally, she ducked her head.

「Then, what is it that you want to discuss?」

「Release Aoi and Rikka.」

Akane directly told emperor without beating around the bush

「That means you have heard that I'm not only taking hostage of Aoi but even Rikka?」

「Am I wrong?」

「You're not wrong.」

Meekly the Emperor admitted.

「Then what are you planning to do? Surround me but dare not to make a move, Make an enemy out of me at the same time as you frighteningly lower your head to befriend me?」

「If I made you release Rikka then there won't be an increase of enemies.」

「If you exclude the part which it is impossible.」

「You don't feel like accepting it?」

「You think I will?」

While sneering the emperor asked.

「Well, practically speaking, other methods also exist, you know? However if I took hostage, I could even make Tooya-kun suffer as well right?」

「.....What a personification of malice from a mysterious being. 」

「Perfectly fitting phrase. Just as you said.」

The Emperor said as if she is impressed

「I am the residual thoughts which were intentionally left by the emperor at that time. I remember at this age you call it a ghost? To leave residual thought, a strong mind is necessary. I believe you also know what kind of thought I left behind at that time? I am the ill intent that was cut off from the emperor at that time」

「.....You're no different than the monsters.」

「You're right, those are the being that materialized ill intent toward humans too.」

「In other words, it's gonna be effective if I cut even a bastard like you with this sword ?」

Just like when they rescued Mashiro who was possessed by the demon sword.

「You're not wrong.」

Because this sword could exorcise things that could harm humans..

「But you're not forgetting that it will cut normally right?」

Being cut physically, that would still occur.....Because of that it has been a life threatening danger when rescuing the deeply possessed Mashiro.

「Yet will such a miracle like that happen again?」

「Miracles will happen.」

Akane answered without hesitation

「My intuition is telling me that if I cut you no one would die?」

「Yeah. speaking of which, you have that thing don't you?」

The emperor murmured as if she recalled something

「However, even if you cut me down, no that's wrong, aren't you mistaking something when you cut me down 」

「.....」

「Even if you came to cut me down but you couldn't kill me, then your intuition wasn't wrong」

「.....It's not outside of my expectations.」

It was also not impossible.

「Because it's unclear, so you're harboring hope instead huh.....How envious.」

In an instance, the expression disappeared from the emperor's face.

「If so, then let me smash that faint hope of yours.」

And then she sneered, full of ill intent.

「.....!」

Instantly, as if being flipped, Akane moved.....She rushed with one step, drawing back the tip of the sword from below, and she cut up as if she was scooping. That action didn't even last a second.

The emperor shouldn't have time to react, and at that figure Akane surely cut down.

「Unfortunately for you, it's an illusion.」

However, without any blood splashing, the emperor's figure disappeared into the mist. Quickly, Akane scanned the room but that figure couldn't be seen anywhere.....However Akane didn't tremble. Did she exit the room? No. Front. Right. Left. Behind.....Instantly the places which had been encircled by her thought were crushed.

「!」

Ready, leap, stab

「Uh-oh.」

A surprised voice spoke out of nowhere. However, there was nothing to feel.

「Are you thoroughly scanning one by one with your intuition?」

「.....」

Once again Akane prepared her posture to stab.....Considering every possibility. Recalling all the coordinates in this room, and if the intuition wouldn't come up, then she would start again from the beginning

「So I couldn't lead you by the nose with invisibility huh.....then, I quit.

」

「!」

Suddenly the emperor's figure appeared. However, Akane didn't tremble, and she focused her aim. She bent her waist a little, putting power in her leg, and she released it.

「Kneel.」

And with that, the Emperor ordered with one word.

「.....!?!」

Before that sword reached the Emperor, Akane fell down due to losing her balance. Unable to recover from the fall her upper half body was pressed to the floor.....and she nearly let go of her sword.

「Guu...!」

She couldn't stand up. Her body became heavy as lead, and the arm she planned to use to support herself couldn't move. On the contrary, her body was continuously being pressed against the floor.

「Sh-shit.....what, have you done...!」

「Don't you know? It's magic to make the opponent's body heavy.」

Looking gleeful, the emperor explained.

「If I raised the strength of the effect, it could crush the opponent with their own weight.....Well, before that, the internal organs will become sappy though.」

「Ku.....」

Even Akane was a person of the Order of Black Magic. She had also cracked down on an illegal witch doctor, and she knew the magic very well.....However, even if she didn't hear about such kind of magic, she still wouldn't know how to release it.

「Now, what should I do?」

The emperor stared at Akane.

「Even though I had clearly warned you, you still came here.....you don't have any problem about me killing you right ?」

「.....」

Akane didn't answer, using the strength of her whole body she glared at the emperor.

「I don't want you to glare at me though, you also fully understand this outcome right?.....Or don't tell me these words just now wasn't your real intention?」

「Tch!」

Although weak, she clicked her tongue.

「Doing nothing at all..... it just doesn't match my nature!」

「I see.」

She nodded as if giving consent, and with a click, she snapped her fingers.

「.....What do you plan to do?」

The weight from Akane's body disappeared.

「I don't plan on killing you.」

「What did you say?」

Looking as if she was being made fun of, Akane glared.....And with that the emperor shrugged her shoulders.

「I also play favoritism at least towards my own descendant you know.」

「Wha!?!」

Unconsciously, she raised her voice.

「Possessing items and different people needs affinity..... and the most fitting yorishiro would be the blood related ones, don't you think? Well, even so, that was not necessarily certain though.」

If that was correct, then was the Emperor's affinity with Akane bad?.....In return she possessed her little sister. Furthermore,it seems that the emperor made use of her own descendant in order to exist here.

「I want to.....kill you.」

She stood up, and, strongly, she grasped the sword.

「It's futile」

Mercilessly the Emperor concluded.

「You're right.」

Akane meekly nodded.

「It's impossible, for me.」

And then she put the sword back in the scabbard.

「Oh? So that's how it's going to be.」

The emperor watched attentively as that was outside of her expectation. Although surely she thought that Akane would once again jump at her throat.

「Are you perhaps going back?」

「.....Let me do that.」

Akane turned her back towards the emperor.

「I will definitely save Aoi, and I won't let you plunge this country to chaos.」

It certainly sounded like nothing but a sore loser to the emperor.

However Akane would do the best of her ability.



「Was it fine to bind that kind of contract?」

「.....You didn't object to it either anyway.」

After parting ways with Mashiro, Tooya bounds the contract with the emperor in Kuroe's presence. Although he had ordered Kuroe to be careful, nothing out of the ordinary happened, and the contract has been bound.....so it seemed. Although according to Kuroe, the effect of the contract was working properly, Tooya still felt some anxiety because he couldn't see it. For now, Rikka had returned home, but just to be safe, Kuroe's shadow was still lurking around her.

「It's one hundred percent a trap.」

She dared to say after such a long time since the contract was binded.

「.....As expected.Was there something inserted in the contract?」

「No, I think the contract is legitimate.」

Kuroe shook her head.

「Then, what do you mean?」

「To put it correctly, you will be unable to run away from a trap.」

「.....You mean, a trap will be set that at the time when I will give an answer?」

「Yes.」

Kuroe nodded.In order for Tooya to not run away, the emperor made him bind the contract. And then when Tooya would answer “no”, she would have



set the trap.....Even though he understood that, Tooya still had to go to the Emperor's place in accordance with the contract.

「Although she said that she had no power to kill me, with enough time and the right location, it would be different.....And we can agree that there is the possibility that she has knowledge of a powerful spell that I have yet to know.」

「You mean, she would set up a barrier or magic square beforehand?」

「Well, something like that.」

She nodded.

「Then wouldn't it be fine if we don't give the answer in said place? Wouldn't it be fine anywhere as long as you give the answer?」

That was simple thinking, however.

「The Master has to give the answer directly, right?」

The key point being “directly”.

「Not through a phone, nor via a letter, but directly spoken. Furthermore, before the promised deadline is ascertained, it is impossible to do things like giving her the answer.」

「Ah.」

Apparently it wasn't beyond simple thinking at all.

「Setting up a trap at the promised time and waiting at that place.....With that said, master is forced to barge into the middle of that trap. Although it would be fine if the contract gave the punishment to us by default, yet since the contract's content forces you to do such things.」

Regardless, Tooya consciously or unconsciously still had to go to that place.

「In other words?」

「You also have to think about the countermeasure for the trap when you refuse.」

「.....」

Again, the conditions which made him unable to refuse increased.

「.....Since I'm asking you, at least give me your opinion.」

「I've said it before, but let's not refuse.」

「That is.....yeah.」

Tooya couldn't always lock Rikka up.

「Because master is easy to read.....they could easily take advantage of you.」

「.....」

He couldn't deny it.

Biririririri.

Suddenly his cell phone rang.

「It's an unknown number.....」

The number was unregistered yet they knew his number, and that number had never called him before.....there was only one who met those conditions.

After being a little hesitant, Tooya answered the call.

「Hello?, it's Kamisaki.」

「.....It's me.」

No different than his expectation, that voice belonged to Akane. The last time they met was right after their first meeting with Aoi, and after that.....After killing Aoi and the emperor taking control of the body, they hadn't met since then till right now.

「I want to meet you directly for a chat.....would you mind if I go right now?」

He hesitated for a moment before giving his answer.

「I don't mind.」

He replied.

「And Kuroe is.....」

「It's fine with her there, I'm ending the call.」

And like she said, she ends the call.

「Was that Akane?」

「.....She said she's coming.」

The voice was clear. A voice that pressed and killed emotion, then hid it in the corner of her heart.

「I wonder what's the reason for?」

「.....There's no way that I would know.」

Even Tooya wouldn't know what is Akane's intention of showing up at such timing. Tanaka said that Akane knew about Tooya's plan to kill Aoi .....

And on top of that, it might be that they held down Tooya's emotion to give priority to the emperor.

However, if that's the case, then there would be no reason for Akane to show up directly. If they came to investigate about Tooya and the emperor, Tanaka would be more suitable.....if that's the case

「.....It's no use thinking about it right now.」

He'd know if he met her.

Right now, he could only wait.



After around thirty minutes, Akane showed up at Tooya's house. It wasn't normal clothes that he saw before, but it was the military camouflage clothes for working hours. Although she wasn't carrying the stupidly enormous gun like the first time they met, that spirit sword was still firmly hanging on her waist.

「Um.....it's been awhile.」

They sat on the floor facing each other, then Tooya opened his mouth.

「.....Ah.」

Akane was sitting in seiza while facing Tooya, with the sword put aside. The calm figure that entered the hall reminded him of the samurai coming out of the historical play.

Speaking of Kuroe, she was lying on the bed and looking at their situation with an amused look.....However, Akane didn't even take a glance at her. Although if it were the normal Akane, she wouldn't even hide her hostility and glare back.

「So.....what business do you have with me today?」

He had his expectations already even while asking Akane about it . If it were a negotiation for Tooya, then Tanaka should also have come with her. Akane didn't have any affection for Tooya either. Nevertheless, she was in front of Tooya, with an anxious face..... There was only one reason.

He braced himself to be blamed. Tooya didn't know anything about Akane's and Aoi's relationship. However, because they were sisters related by blood.....It wouldn't be easy for Akane to outright forgive Tooya.

Since Akane was an ally of justice, She surely will have to clash against Tooya.....

Because her existence meant that someday, she would deliver retribution onto him.

「I need your help.」

Therefore, Tooya couldn't understand what Akane meant from those words.

「Eh?」

Open mouthed and dumbfounded, he looked at Akane.

In front of Tooya, Akane bowed her head deeply.

「Save her, Aoi.....my little sister.」

She bows even deeper.

「Just like this.」

「Is the “Ally of Justice”-sama asking help from a killer and a man eater?」

Kuroe’s voice inflected with a mocking tone. However, Akane didn’t even tremble.....While still bowing,she patiently waited for Tooya’s answer.

「Wh, why.....?」

For Tooya, he couldn’t understand it.

「Why would you ask for my help in such matters.....!?!」

He was ready to be blamed. Being glared at, being verbally abused, he had planned to naturally accept them. Since he was the worst. He was a killer. He was someone who naturally would be condemned.

But Akane didn’t forgive that.....it was as if saying “running away”.

「Help me.」

Once again she entreated.

「Stop the emperor.」

Continuously.

「Save my sister.」



Continuously she begged.

「Help me.」

It wasn't the sword beside her, those words alone were said with such conviction it is as if it was her only weapon.

「Please.....please raise your head.」

Tooya's voice was half close to petition. Because he didn't want it. Because he didn't want Akane to do it.....However, Akane didn't raise her head.

「Why.....Why!?!」

Once again Tooya shouted the same words.

「I.....I planned to kill Aoi you know?」

And he said it.

「Although in the end she didn't die.....but if Aoi wasn't possessed by the emperor she would be eaten by Kuroe and die! Things like the emperor's guidance had nothing to do with it! It's the result of me trying to kill Aoi! By my ego, I tried to kill Aoi!」

He was ready to be blamed for it. It would be fine if he was condemned. What he wanted to say was that Tooya himself accepted it.

「But even so, why would you seek for my help for such a matter!」

Even for Akane, he was someone who she didn't hate enough.

「Akane-san!」

「.....」



Then Akane slowly raised her head, and looked straight at Tooya.....however on that face, he couldn't see any detest at all. He merely saw strong, strong eyes.

「I am the ally of justice.」

Akane opened her mouth.

「I think I want to become an ally of justice.」

Just like that day,

「Therefore, this is my justice.」

She said without hesitation.

「Even so.....」

「I don't have the power.」

As if to interrupt, Akane continued on with her words.

「I don't have the power to kill that monster.」

Meekly, she admitted.

「I don't have the power to save my sister from the emperor either.」

「I... don't have power.」

However, she spoke as if she wasn't embarrassed.

「However, it's no reason to give up.」

「Because of us?」

Kuroe cut in.

「Yeah, you're right.」

Without hesitation Akane answered back.

「I want to save my sister, I want to erase the bastard that tricked my sister from this world. Things like plunging this country into chaos is outrageous. The thinking of the people died hundreds of years ago has nothing to do with me.」

She spat out those words.

「But, but you know, I don't have the power.....but since I don't have power, I have to give up and bear with it? For the sake of fulfilling my own justice I will do what I can.」

「And yet you beg for us?」

「Yes that's it, that's the only way.....it's the best thing i can do right now.」

In order to get the final desired result, she wouldn't choose her methods anymore. Akane had since thought about it. She came here after giving it a thorough thinking

「It's possible that we might be connected to the emperor though?」

「I asked her.」

Directly from the emperor herself.

「Even so, you think that's for the best?」

「Yes, that is for the best.」

But she was begging the two. Entreated them. Even if they were the opponents who should be detested and avoided, it was of no concern.....If it were for the sake of her objective, Akane wouldn't choose her method anymore.

No matter how much of her surrounding people made fun of her, nor if everyone scorned her like an idiot, in the end, if her objective could be achieved she wouldn't even mind.

「Is that so?」

Looking satisfied, Kuroe nodded. Looking amused. As if saying “this is why humans are interesting.”

「Kamisaki Tooya.」

Once again Akane looked straight at Tooya.

「I beg you, help me.」

And then once again, she deeply lowered her head.

「U.....Uu」

He had been shot by a gun.

He had also been pierced by a sword.

However, those words Akane spoke struck Tooya deeply inside more than any of those.



「.....What the heck was that?」

As Akane went back home, Tooya, in his room, opened his mouth as if he was unable to bear it.

「.....Why did she ask me for help with such a matter?」

While Tooya was confused, she pressed down her head. Originally, he was seen as an enemy to Akane. She knew that he had planned to kill Aoi.....Even so, she still asked for Tooya's help. She didn't condemn him, nor did she threaten him, instead she pleaded with him to defeat the emperor and save Aoi.

「About that, the girl had said it already, right?.」

Kuroe opened her mouth to tell him after seeing him at such state

「Since she said that was the best thing she could do.」

「.....That was for the best?」

Tooya muttered, self-deprecatingly.

「Begging to someone like me is for the best?」

The human who proclaimed herself as an ally of justice bowed her head shamelessly before a murderer and a man eater.....and she said the reason was because she had no power. Relying on other people, and the one she asked for help was her enemy, it was a laughable act of shamelessness and unsightliness.

「That girl had judged that it was the best thing she could do.」

She sneered joyfully, and looked at Tooya.

「Is master making fun of it?」

「.....Of course I can't.」

There's no way he would be able to after seeing Akane making that face, hearing that voice. With her complete devotion, Akane begged at Tooya.....there was no way Tooya could laugh at that.

She should have felt humiliated.

She should have felt resentment.

She should have been boiling with anger.

Even so, she showed not one bit of those emotions.

「Then if you despise yourself anymore it would be an insult to that girl's resolve right?」

That would mean she lowered her head to people who aren't worth begging to.

「.....I am.」

Unable to bear it, Tooya gritted his back teeth. He would be happy if he could conclude that he was the worst as always. It can't be helped, because he himself thought he was the worst human, and that's how it is for him.....However, Akane entrusted her wish to him who should have been the worst. He had been entrusted to.

「It's not like I mind if you threw it away?」

Opposite to what Kuroe said earlier.

「It's a request that literally doesn't benefit us. Even if we disregarded it, she couldn't blame us.」

「.....Isn't that different from what you have said just now?」

「I only said that as in this case the master respects that girl's will. Although if you couldn't laugh at that begging as foolish, then self-abasement would be an insult to her.....If not, then she only came here to make a stupidly absurd request, right?」

「The results, depends on how I accept it huh.....」

「Yes.」

Satisfied with Tooya's words, Kuroe nodded.

「Then, will you reject it?」

「.....Of course I won't do such thing.」

「Although she announced repeatedly, that was simply her wish right? There's even no promise of giving compensation for us at all.....On the contrary, if we cleaned up the situation with the emperor, she would once again show hostility toward us, right?」

It was truly a convenient talk. However, Tooya thought it was fine.

「.....Because that person is an ally of justice.」

Evil like Tooya had to be exterminated.

「Master really has a troublesome personality.」

Those words seemed like she was fed up, but in truth her lips twitch upward in amusement.

「Then, what will you do?」

「.....What do you mean what would I do?」

「.....」

This time, Kuroe looked at Tooya as if she was fed up with him.

「Accepting that girl's request would mean to refuse the emperor's demand, right? Not only that, but with the condition of not killing Aoi, and with the possibility of a trap too.」

「.....Yeah.」

It wasn't like he forgot. Although it wasn't like him to forget.

「Then, is there any other way?」

「.....」

He couldn't even answer.

「If nothing comes to mind, then you could just refuse.」

「That is.....」

「Even if you think, think, and think but you couldn't come up with any other method and the settled date comes, will the master refuse the emperor's demand? Although honestly, I can't really say that the possibility is high.....The possibility of directly overcoming the trap set by her, save Aoi unhurt, and burying the emperor isn't zero.」

To pick a fight with a perfectly prepared opponent and leave it to chance.....It seemed like nothing but recklessness, but if he accepted Akane's request, then he had to do it as the final method.

「If we accept the emperor's demand we might be plunging this country in chaos, but Rikka will be released just as master wishes.....After that, no matter what happens to this country, as long as I'm here I can guarantee the safety of Rikka's body.」

Kuroe presented her second option

「If you couldn't find a miraculous way to save everything.....what will master choose?」

「.....」

There was already an answer from the very start. In the end, Tooya would surely choose

Rikka.....However, there were other important things that he couldn't just throw away. It was obvious that he wouldn't come to a conclusion until the very last minute.

「Master is truly greedy.」

“Yare yare.” She shrugged her shoulders.

「It could be said that it's human's nature to wish for more, and to carry things, in which one understands that they couldn't carry at all, on purpose would be on the same level as being greedy, wouldn't it?」

「I'm not like that.....」

「And if that spilled over the things that you hold valuable, then it wouldn't be a laughing matter, would it?」

「.....」

He wanted to deny it, but he couldn't. He certainly wavered at Akane's request.

「Thus,the master should rethink from the start. Things that you plan to carry and things that might spill over.....You better look again at what you treasure the most.」

And then make your decision.

「.....I know.」

Tooya nodded, and he got in contact with Rikka.





“I want to meet up and talk”. Right after contacting her, Rikka agreed immediately. When he asked when it was convenient for her, she said she wouldn't mind any time.....Although it was already late at night, taking advantage of those words, Tooya went to Rikka's room.

「It's been so long since Tooya-kun came to my room.」

「.....You're right.」

Because Rikka's father always had a bad temper, he never once entered Rikka's room.....Even then, he couldn't remember the last time he came here. As they grew older, they became more embarrassed and eventually, they visited each other's room less and lesser.

「There're a lot of stuffed dolls.」

「Cute right?」

She said it happily. Tooya felt that there weren't as many dolls in the room in his memory.....It's expected though since he had not visited here anymore they increased.

「Look, there's also the one Tooya-kun gave me before, see?」

What stood out was a doll placed in the middle of the shelf. It was comparatively new, and even though there were much more valuable dolls nearby .....That much meant that she thought greatly of him.

「.....」

Tooya absentmindedly looked at that doll. That doll felt like Rikka's affection was poured into it. For a moment, he could see an illusion of himself

overlapping the doll.....He surely once wanted to become like that, and was his wish to.

「 ! 」

Suddenly he noticed that Rikka was staring at him. Although she had a smiling face, she was feeling somewhat nervous, her cheeks lightly blushing, and he could see on that expression she was waiting for something .....”Right”, he noticed. She was waiting for the answer to her confession. Thinking about it, the time he wanted to meet up and talk, there were no other possibilities.

「Nee, Rikka.」

However, whatever was assembling on Tooya’s mouth was not the sweet answer of confession.

「Why does Rikka like me?」

Rikka was surprised at Tooya’s words. Her face was as if it was trying to say “I don’t understand why you are asking about that.” .....Because for Rikka it was a natural feeling, it was not something she could freely express with her mouth.

「Won’t you let me hear it?」

Once again, Tooya begged.

「 .....Always, ever since long ago.」

Rikka spoke, with only a few words.

「When I noticed, I had fallen in love with you.」



As if it were such a blissful thing, Rikka smiled.

「It was around the time before we entered middle school when I was aware about it. I was excited about love stories with the people in the class, then I realized this was love.」

「Always.....ever since?」

「No, not that.」

Rikka shook her head.

「Right now, I love Tooya-kun more than ever before.」

Despite her cheeks blushed red, she clearly spoke.

「Why would you.....」

For Tooya, he thought that there was no reason for him to be liked.

「Tooya-kun has always been at my side for me. No matter when, and even if you weren't by my side, thanks to Tooya-kun, I did my best. The reason I never gave up in harsh times was thanks to Tooya-kun's support.」

「Rikka.....」

That certainly was how Rikka truly felt, Tooya thought. It didn't feel like a great lie to Tooya. That was by no means something the Emperor would distort.....Thus, because he understood that he has to ask..

「What harsh times?」

「Eh?」

At Tooya's words, Rikka inclined her head.

「Harsh times for Rikka, what do you mean by that?」

「That is.....」

As she tried to answer, her words were cut off.

「H, uh.....?」

She tilted her head, as if she didn't understand it. There was something she was about to say but, in an instant, those words would disappear. And no matter how much she cocked her head wondering "what was it?", it wouldn't come out

「What was it again?」

Rikka muttered, acting half-dumbfounded.

「If you can't remember, then let it be.」

「Eh?」

「If you can't remember, then it wasn't something important.」

"Yeah, I expected it was like that.", Tooya thought.

「Is, that so.....Then, yeah, let it be.」

Rikka nodded and smiled, as if in agreement.....And with that, it was done. She had said one of the main reasons why she liked Tooya personally by herself

Right now, Rikka was under the spell of the emperor, and knew that Tooya killed her father. If so, then she would know the cause of the events that occurred.....However, Rikka couldn't recognize those painful memories. Even if she tried to remember those painful memories, she couldn't recollect those memories.

Since if she could recollect those memories, she wouldn't smile. She wouldn't be able to smile and say "thanks for killing my father." .....It should have been painful for her, since Rikka didn't hate her father.

「.....Shit.」

He whispered quietly as to not let Rikka hear it. She made such a sloppy job. Because she severed those parts of her memories, inconsistencies started to show.

In the first place, if she changed her perception, then there wouldn't be any of this trouble. If she made it so that Rikka would have hated her father, then there wouldn't be any need for this.

「.....」

However, Tooya thought that If he himself could realize this, then the emperor shouldn't have missed it. Therefore what she had done was intentional.

If so, then why? Perhaps showing him this unconcealed distortion would force him to accept the demand, right? .....What if it weren't the case?

Right now, Rikka's memories were distorted. Undoubtedly distorted.....However, that was only one portion. Although only the talk of Tooya's sin became strange, it seemed everything beyond that was as normal.

The emperor had said that memories had a big impact on one's personality. Maybe because of this, the emperor didn't tinker with her memories. Since only her memories were severed, she would still be here.....Despite the warped Rikka still looks like Rikka.

Yeah, then as expected.....Even if he couldn't see it, there certainly was a big distortion

「Rikka.」

Determined, Tooya opened his mouth.....He has decided on his most precious thing.

「Wh-what is it?」

At Tooya's serious face, she answered with expectation and fright.

「Sorry, please wait for a bit more.」

This was sophistry. It was nothing but to trick her at this place.

「I'll definitely give you the answer.」

Yet that day would certainly never come.



He felt refreshed. His chaotic head felt relaxed, as if he could solve anything right now..... Once he had decided on what to do, his feelings became simpler.

「You have a happy face.」

Seeing Tooya like that, Kuroe smiled broadly.

「Have you decided?」

「Yeah.」

He nodded.

「I'll refuse the emperor's demand. After that, I'll return Rikka back to normal.」

「What about Aoi?」

「I'll save her.」

「How luxurious.」

She sneered.

「Is that so?」

Tooya inclined his head.

「That's because if Aoi wasn't around, Rikka would be lonely, right?」

「That's right.」

「Then I'll save her.」

「Hmm, I see」

Kuroe gestured, as if she was thinking of something.

「It's not especially useless, but we could make her forget about Aoi now, couldn't we?」

「Let's stop thinking like that.」

「Oh?」

「Let's not do things like erasing her memories.」

Tooya declared.

「The emperor's words were true. Memories aren't something you should tamper with actions like erasing them.....However, even if it looks the same, I would think it would be something completely different.」

「Although, I would instead think that if the look wouldn't change, then it doesn't matter if you have the same thought about it..」



「I can't be satisfied with just that.」

Saying so, Tooya smiled broadly.

「I want Rikka to be happy.....The same Rikka, the one who was abused by her father yet didn't harbor any grudges, the one who smiled while crying when her father disappeared. It is by no means that Rikka would smile when her father was killed, and she has not forgotten about it ever since.」

「Isn't that a bit too late?」

「Yeah, it's a bit too late.」

In the end, Tooya was mistaken from the very start.

「With that alone, I have to thank the Emperor.」

「That alone, huh?」

「That alone.」

As if spitting that out, Tooya smiled.

Outside of that, it's the worst.....so I won't tolerate it.」

「How scary.」

Contrary to her words, her lips bent in amusement.

「Do you, however, have a crucial plan for it?」

「Seems none.」

He shook his head.

「If I could come up with something that easily, then I could have enjoyed coming up with something a lot more.」

「Compare to that, your voice is faint though.」

「I became somewhat defiant.」

He said, as if he had a philosophical realization. Having settled with the root of his problems, his feelings of guilt felt much lighter.

「I was being led by the nose by the emperor, but thanks to her I noticed my most precious thing.....She made me realize that I was just a normal human. What I have is just a contract with a malicious mysterious being, I myself have no power whatsoever.」

「You suddenly seem to self-abase yourself a lot.」

「It's true, so it can't be helped.」

「Then what do you plan to do?」

「Think.」

Tooya answered with just a single word.

「Think, think, think.....I said that I had no power if I abandoned my thoughts, that's why I couldn't even wish for anything.」

「What if after all that thinking, you came up with nothing?」

If things had been so simple, then Tooya wouldn't have been in trouble until at this point.

「That would be a last resort. I'll use the power I have.....the power of the malicious mysterious being. I had been asked to somehow save everyone from that Emperor. That's the best thing I can do.」

Just the same as Akane.

「And the last resort is asking for my help.」

「Yeah.」

Without any hesitation, he nodded.

「That's the very end, though.」

Until that point, Tooya would think with all his might. However, because there was Kuroe, he wouldn't have to think as hard.....although whether a good idea would come out or not was a different story.

「It's because master is comparatively simple-minded.」

「.....Shut up.」

Although uncalled for, she dared to read people's minds. According to the contract, the settled date had been decided when he would come up with an answer.....If he left the decision-making all to Kuroe, then at around a few days before the aforementioned day, it should be fine to give her the orders. Yet there was the possibility of being unable to do things, which Kuroe could do in his stead after the time limit.

「The contract huh.....If I accept the demand, then would I have to bind a contract with the emperor?」

「That would seem so.」

Kuroe nodded.

「It would be troublesome if you had a change of heart midway. Although I don't know whether she will release Rikka before or after, but having bound the contract with master, she might force you to execute the plan.」

「.....There's no way she would pay the price first and let us run away.」

「Is that so, then will the emperor keep things like this?」

Unable to save Aoi, unable to obstruct the emperor's movement.....Unable to know how the trap the emperor laid out works.

「Aoi huh.....Speaking of her. why did the emperor tell me to destroy this country?」

「Hmm?」

「If she demanded to transfer Kuroe's contract to someone like Aoi, wouldn't it be more beneficial, right?」

It wouldn't be the same as making use of other people's power, but having the power himself.. Kuroe wasn't like a native power to Tooya but simply a power through contract, therefore if she demanded so, it would be more beneficial to her.

「If it were that way, then perhaps it would be easier for the master to accept the demand? If they were told to let go of such mighty power, anyone would be reluctant. Much less because master has something to protect.....with that said, it's ill intent.」

「Ill intent?」

「According to her, she hates the future, so having the people from this era destroy their own country would be the most laughable situation, right?」

「.....She's the worst.」

She seems to enjoy looking at friendly fire.

「What about something that voids the content of the contract?」

「If it's like my contract, then there's the option of accepting the penalty. However.....The contract that you bound to had a form compelling you

to fulfill the terms. No matter what the content of the contract is. It is absolute.]

「.....Is that so?」

Even in Kuroe's contract case, he could deny the sacrifice, but he couldn't deny the penalty. Since having bound to the contract, to run away from the term was.....Huh? Suddenly Tooya recalled something. The content of the contract with Kuroe. The contract of Aoi with the Emperor.

「Hey, Kuroe.」

「What is it?」

「You know.....」

「Yes, what you're thinking right now is exactly what I forgot .」

「.....Did you seriously forget?」

「Of course.」

She laughed broadly. She couldn't always be trusted.....However.

「Then, you know what happens if I propose the same thing to the emperor?」

Tooya spoke what he had in mind.

「.....Fumu, certainly. If it's that, then everything might go in favor for you.」

「Is that so?」

It was a lively voice.

「However, isn't there a problem?」

Amusely, Kuroe said.

「And yet, it's the most important problem.」

Smilingly, bending her lips up, Kuroe asked.

「Can master trust me?」

## Chapter 5: His and the Ghost's Conclusion + the Man Eater

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And then the promised day came. The place designated in the mail was at the edge of the river which he remembered. The time would be when it takes only a few more days until the end of August. As if making him remember about that old day when he had come here, the moonlight was shining on him. The sound of the flowing river, the ground's surface, the brush wood too, he could see that nothing had changed even a little.

「How nostalgic」

「.....Yeah」

He gazed at the rotten shine beside the road where Kuroe had been sealed at, and in this place they had bound the contract. Picking this spot as the meeting place for him to give the answer, this was sarcasm from the emperor right.

「Yaa」

Did she mirror such thought from Tooya, suddenly the emperor appeared out of nowhere.

「Did I make you wait?」

「.....it's very clear that in any case you are always there right」

「Un, just as you said」

The emperor didn't deny and affirmed.

「I was just being a little cautious. Just to make sure you didn't set up any kind of trap」

「That should be our remark, shouldn't it?」

「Though I won't deny it」

She shrugged her shoulder.

「.....」

Tooya took out his cell phone to confirm the time.....there was still some minutes left.

「There's one thing I want to ask」

「What is it?」

「You only demanded me to destroy this country but you didn't show any definite method to do it. Do you plan to leave everything to me?」

「As if」

The emperor shook her head.

「Anyways because there is a way to plunge this country to chaos immediately, so first of all I planned to do it.」

“First of all is”, it seemed those words were hateful.

「Do you mind telling me?」

「Well, I don't mind」

Easily the emperor gave her consent.

「Under this country there is a giant mysterious being, which the black dog couldn't even be compared with, sleeping ne. I plan to shake it awake」

「.....Giant mysterious being?」

He couldn't imagine a being that exceeded even Kuroe.

「The black dog also understands it right?」



Kuroe directed her eyes.

「The giant catfish huh」

「That's right」

The emperor nodded.

「That thing sleeps in the earth's center collecting power, when it wakes up it will release that power and create an earthquake.....It's an existence which had no longer been called a living being but a harmful system to the human. That power will become bigger as the sleeping period stays longer. Therefore at those time periodically we stimulated it to wake it up in order to suppress the harm though.....at the same time as the subjugation I used a spell that makes it sleep, since then it had slept like that for a few hundred years. You understand what that means right?」

When it woke the amassed power over a few hundred years would be released.....one couldn't imagine how big of an earthquake would happen.

「However though, there is a little troublesome seal applied ne. Although the structure itself is something simple but to lift it needs great power.....Then, it's the black dog's turn. Can you understand now?」

「.....」

He could understand.....Because he could understand unnecessarily his mind became heavy. If he obeyed the emperor's demand then undoubtedly this country would be plunged into chaos. Certainly it wouldn't be as simple as the word calamity.

「Why, do you detest the future to that degree」

「Because I detest it」

「What's the reason for that?」

It was impossible not to ask.

「Probably, because I'm angry」

The emperor sneered.

「.....let me hear it」

「Well, sure though」

She nodded.

「Anyhow the black dog had explained that I used divinity to develop this country right, but I couldn't use divinity at all.....although that thing was being used ne」

「.....?」

What was she suddenly saying, Tooya was feeling suspicious.

「What I can use is ne, not divinity but Future Vision .....Although, this original flesh is of Aoi and since I'm only possessing it so I couldn't use my technique either」

「.....Ha?」

At the sudden words that came out Tooya rounded his eyes.

「It can't be helped that you're surprised, because it's the reality it can't be helped. As I had in the future vision, I used the information from the future to rapidly flourish the country. When a powerful person had information from the future, well, there's nothing they can't do」

That was certainly. To make the future one wanted, and to avoid the future one didn't want, if even further able to understand what would happen then the most powerful person could use their power to easily change the future.

「I see, so that's also the reason why your magic has such high potential.」

As if giving her consent Kuroe muttered.

「That's correct, I could see the future where my magic had developed.....If I could see it then learning it would be simple. Even if that was the future that practically could never occur ne」

Since the emperor had crushed that possibility.

「Then, in that matter the futures are diverse, good thing and bad things happens. I manipulated the country so that good things happen, and manipulated the country so that bad things wouldn't happen.....then, at that time I saw the future where my own country being stolen by another politician and was destroyed」

「.....」

「That is the talk about the future where I had died. Although it's not meaningless to say that since I had died it had nothing to do with me, but for me who had long vision of the future that scene was terribly too close. Therefore in order to avoid that future I planned my next move」

For Tooya he couldn't understand that feeling. However somehow he could relate.....Even when he heard about a slaughter that happens at a faraway country Tooya wouldn't understand the actual feeling right. However if he saw that scene on television he might feel the resentment for the one who had done such terrible things. As for the

emperor even though it was a far future she must have felt it as if it was something close to her.

「My plan succeeded, I avoided the future where my country would be destroyed」

「Then.....」

「Then, a little after I saw the future where my country would be destroyed」  
Just like a game of cat and mouse. Even if the emperor planned her move and avoided that future, a little later that future appeared again. Repeated, repeated, repeated, the emperor said.

「Even so at that time, I couldn't see that future anymore」

However that was not a relief to the emperor.

「To put it correctly, I couldn't see any future more than that. However as it lays beyond my seeing I could easily imagine how my country would be lost」

It was only because of that she couldn't see it. The emperor couldn't have an optimistic view about that future not existing .....Because no matter how much she avoided it that future it is always there.

「Repeated, repeated, and repeatedly I saw my own country became lost」

As many times as she wished to avoid it.

「The burning scenes wouldn't leave my eyes. I knew they lied beyond what I could see. And for me there was no method to avoid it」

Because it couldn't be seen.....Even though it couldn't be seen.

「What I had done was all meaningless. What I was going to do would also become meaningless.....What should I do with this despair? Where

should I vent this frustration? At the future vision that informed me of that?  
Or at my own country that would surely be lost?」

The emperor didn't choose either of those two options.

「Therefore, you detest the future?」

「Yes, I detest that future that gave myself despair」

For that sake she left everything.

「Such a thing.....that's simply venting your anger」

The humans that lived in this country had no sins. Although the ones that had destroyed it might be sinful, but there should be no reason to exert the blame at the people who were born after it. Much less because the future that the emperor detested was vague, therefore this era being chosen was a complete coincidence.

「That's right ne」

The emperor admitted.

「However is it only by chance?」

「.....」

「I am ne, the residual thought of the emperor who detested the future. So to call I am the emperor's hatred you know. I can't help but hate this country, and I can't help but to hate the future that still continued too.....I only have that, other than it there is nothing else. For me right here, the reason why I came to that hate or whatever is meaningless」

「.....」

Tooya didn't answer that.

「.....It's time」

The emperor announced.

「Then, will you let me hear your answer?」

This was because the contract, Tooya couldn't refuse. Regardless of the conclusion of the answer he would be forced to say it. He was simply forced to do just that. Accepting the demand, or refuse the demand.....the answer just needed to be like that.

「I.....won't accept your demand」

「Fuun」

Without even being surprised, the emperor looked at Tooya.

「Well, so it'll be like that」

「.....」

「Well, however because the content of the contract is to only give the answer.....Certainly you had executed it」

“However from now on”, the emperor continued.

「This is outside the scope of the contract」

Instantly, the ground was tinged with light. They were from countless words. Tooya couldn't read the meaning but as those words released light he couldn't move his body. A trap. A barrier or a magic formation, those things came to Tooya's mind.

「I spent time laying out this special barrier. Even the black dog couldn't easily destroy it」

「!」

When he tried to look Kuroe was also in the same state as Tooya, she had stopped moving....."Can you move?" He asked silently in his mind.

『I can't move』

A seemingly carefree voice resounded back.....Well, this much is within the expected category.

「Now then, shall I go kill Rikka then?」

The emperor declared that at Tooya who couldn't move.

「The contract which said I wouldn't lay my hand on Rikka had expired just now ne. Anyhow she is being clad in the black dog's darkness, however if the real body was in that state then I could do whatever to it」

She looked at Tooya, the emperor sneered.

「Then, you should lament the fault of your choice」

「Wait」

Tooya stopped her.

「What is it at this moment, you have refused my demand right?」

「You're being hasty」

As if expressing his frustration Tooya showed his anger.

「Although I refused your demand.....but instead I have a proposal」

「Proposal?」

「That's right」

At the emperor who inclined her head a little, Tooya nodded.

「For me I can't do things like destroying this country.....therefore I refused the demand」

「And?」

「So if you want to plunge this country to chaos you do it yourself」

As if forsaking it Tooya said.

「However for that sake your power is needed?」

「What you need is not my power but Kuroe's power.....I'll hand it over to you」

Clearly Tooya opened his mouth.

「This.....I'm a little surprised」

「However there are conditions」

As if pressing for answer Tooya said.

「Naturally you have to return Rikka to normal, me and Rikka, you shall not make any influence on our surrounding.....If you bind the contract with those terms I'll transfer Kuroe's contract to you」

「Fumu」

That was well, could be said to be the natural demand. If returning Rikka to normal and she died to the earthquake caused by the giant catfish it would come to nothing. If Kuroe was still there it would be possible to evade it, however if he transferred it over then it would be meaningless if he didn't demand those terms.

「But could you be satisfied with that?」

「.....Of course I can't」



As if spitting it out Tooya answered.

「Overlooking you plunging this country into chaos because of your selfish reason, and completely not resenting you for having done what you like to Rikka.....Of course I wouldn't be satisfied.」

“However”, Tooya continued.

「I don't have any strength. What I have is the only the contract with Kuroe, even with her power I couldn't do anything to you at all.....If that's the case, then I could only choose the way to suppress the damage even for a bit right. I don't have the courage to destroy this country. If so then you do everything by yourself and let me live with Rikka」

「.....I see」

At Tooya whom finished speaking in one breath, the emperor looked as if appraising.

「Truly, are you fine with that?」

「I, want to be happy with Rikka.....for example even if this country is destroyed ne」

That wasn't a lie to Tooya's feeling.

「Got it. I'll accept that demand」

The emperor approved.

「Although a little fun will be lost but no way around it. However I'll properly bind the contract with you. My demand is that you transfer the contract with Kuroe to me, your demand it to return Rikka to normal, furthermore the safety of Rikka's and your surrounding .....the time period would be as long as I exist then?」

「.....Yeah」

Tooya approved

「Good, then let's transfer the contract at once」



「It is done」

Without nothing happened the contract was over. The same as before, Tooya who still didn't understand anything left the judgment to Kuroe, she still didn't say anything bound the contract.

「With this you are no longer the Kuroe's master」

「.....」

Without any pain, nor feeling any clear transformation.....However certainly he sensed that what should be there had been lost. That might have been what bound him with Kuroe, or might be that thing didn't exist from the beginning.

However he had nothing connected to Kuroe who was standing there.....That much was certain. If looking up the moon was shining brightly as always. Under this moonlight Tooya and Kuroe bound the contract, and then under the same moonlight they canceled it.

「Black dog, it's an order, come here」

The emperor ordered. Kuroe obeyed, and left Tooya's side.

The positions the two stood on were already different, it was as if to make that known.

「Now then Tooya-kun, do you have any parting words?」

「.....No」

「Is that so, then let's carry out our action」

The emperor looked at Kuroe.

「Let's go」

「Acknowledged....., though I want to say that but before I want you to give me the compensation of the contract?」

Suddenly Kuroe said that.

「.....?」

The emperor had a dubious face.....the month had just end. There should be a great amount of postponement until the compensation was given.

「Are you that hungry?」

「No」

Kuroe shook her head.

「What I said was not this month's payment, but last month. Since the contract has been transferred the one who should pay the duty is my master the emperor, it's you」

「Wha」

That right, the contract had been transferred.....Not refreshed. If so then the duty that followed would naturally being handed over to the new master.

One person per month, has to be sacrificed to Kuroe as the compensation of the contract.

That was the duty.....However if one couldn't pay it?

「Do you perhaps don't know the rule?」

Since the one that sealed Kuroe was no one other than the emperor.

「Unfortunately because I haven't received my compensation last month.....So I have to take my compensation」

And that duty right now, fell on the emperor.

Kuroe would choose one person to eat.

That was the punishment when the compensation wasn't paid.

「Wait」

The emperor opened her mouth.

「That's strange」

The emperor raised an objection.

「Because you had already eaten right? Undoubtedly as the compensation  
」

That time when he decided to kill Aoi, undoubtedly Tooya had ordered Kuroe to eat Aoi as the compensation of the contract. And then as the result Kuroe should have eaten. The one that substituted for the emperor, certainly Kuroe had eaten and swallowed them into her belly.

「That is wrong」

However Kuroe shook her head.

「The one who was sacrificed as the contract was Aoi, not someone else. Just because some other person ended up in my belly doesn't mean you have completed your duty」

For example, even if Kuroe herself forgot about it that thing wouldn't change. The contract precisely reflected reality.

And then thereafter Tooya hadn't given any other sacrifice.....therefore, in reality the one who hadn't paid the compensation for the contract was the emperor as the contract was handed over.

「Wha.....!?!」

「Then, let me nominate」

Kuroe sentenced.

「As the compensation of the contract, I want to eat you」

At the same time as that Kuroe's figure transformed. As if expanding from the inside her figure changed. Bigger, bigger, bigger, disregarding the law of

conservation of mass she continued to change.....And then within a few seconds a giant mysterious being appeared at that place.

「.....!」

Certainly the emperor was thinking of running away.....However what she was trying to do even Tooya didn't know. Because the girl hadn't even moved from the place.

「!?」

However, that expression told that she had just made a blunder.

「Whatever you try to do it'll be useless you know?」

As if being amused by the reason Kuroe explained.

「If my duty is follow the contracted one, then paying the compensation is the contracted one's duty. As the punishment occurred there is no way you could defy it」

Kuroe was compelled by the order, and the emperor too was compelled by the duty.

As the one who was named by Kuroe, the emperor had to be eaten.

「Furthermore, since the one I want to eat is you.....how about coming out of that body」

Following the contract, she couldn't disobey it right. From Aoi body something seemed to be shifted, and suddenly slipped out. As if losing her soul, Aoi's body fell to the ground just like that.

「What a nostalgic appearance」

It was a semi transparent, ghost like appearance. Her look resembled Aoi, however she was somewhat aged and was floating over there. The old-

fashion gorgeous garments that looked like a kimono was certainly what people at that time wore right.

「Because you forcefully made me materialize ne」

「But you can't maintain it long right」

「If it weren't because of it I wouldn't need a yorishiro」

That figure right now looked like it would fade and disappeared.

「But Kuroe」

「What is it?」

「If you killed me who bound the contract with you, you'd also die though?」

Because the contracted one's and Kuroe's life were connected.

However Kuroe sneered at it.

「Unfortunately the one I bind my life with is Aoi's body over there, if I kill you right now there won't be any effect on me.....Because without a real body and possessing a yorishiro your existence that has been handed over the contract created such mysterious form」





「.....I see, so that's how you got me」

Emperor looked at Tooya.

「Everything was calculated by you, perhaps?」

「It was just a coincidence that I noticed. For the contract period to overlap was just good luck」

「Although I thought the words you said that you wanted to be happy together with Rikka was true though ne」

「.....It's my real intention」

It was not close to real acting, certainly he was being serious.

Simply Tooya had always killed that thought .....Saying out loud that he had always been suppressing it was just a talk at the last hour.

「I see, I give up」

As if resigning the emperor shrugged her shoulder.

「You're pretty obedient though」

「Inside my ill intent was raging again and again violently」

「Fumu?」

「However if I showed you my vexing figure it would be foolish right?」

Saying so the emperor sneered.

「Incidentally I'm saying why I won't accept defeat」

「Hou」

With deep interest Kuroe narrowed her eyes.

「You had wonderfully out-witted this residual thought me.....but ne,  
my objective has already come true」

「Fumu, which part does?」

「I already told you I am the residual thought right? And the original me had  
no longer existed in this world」

「I see」

Leaving Kuroe and other mysterious being behind, leaving her own residual  
thought, it seemed at that point the emperor's objective had been completed.  
It was just like Tooya had said, venting her own anger on others, so at the  
point the real person had thrown out her resentment and felt relieved, and  
apparently completed her remaining lifespan.

「Quitting when one's ahead huh」

「Yes it'll be like that ne」

Amusely the emperor sneered. As if returning a blow at the last moment.

「Fine, very well then. Thanks to you I came to this era and enjoy  
it.....I'll yield victory to you for that much」

「How generous」

Until the very end her sarcasm smile didn't crumble, the emperor shrugged  
her shoulders.

「Then farewell」

Announcing so the large wolf ate her. Not even a trace left.



And then one conclusion arrived.

「.....Is it finally over」

The emperor's figure had disappeared, and Kuroe's figure returned to that of a human, only a little time had passed .....Finally Tooya opened his mouth. Things went all too perfect, it made him think of it like whether everything was a dream or not.

「Umu, it's over」

Kuroe directed herself at Tooya, and answered it.

「The case with the emperor is over at this point」

Clearly, she said.

「Is that so」

Furthermore Tooya heaved a sigh of relief.

「However」

Being amused Kuroe looked at that Tooya.

「You trusted me a lot」

「.....The one who asked if I could trust you was you right」

That was the biggest thing which Tooya was requested and also only utmost.

Trusting Kuroe.

Purposely not paying the compensation, and then unconditionally transfer the contract to the emperor. However because Tooya was no longer her master, after this whom she would request for the compensation would be entrusted to Kuroe.

Because she was able to eat the inedible emperor..... on her whim even if she had eaten Tooya, or Rikka, or even someone else was Kuroe's freedom.

And Kuroe would make anyone hesitate in trusting her, she was literally the man eater creature.

Trusting that Kuroe. Tooya couldn't do anything but that, saving Aoi, stopping the emperor, that was the only way.

「You didn't feel anxiety at all?」

「There was none」

However at that Tooya clearly answered.

「Hou」

Looking like that was outside her expectations Kuroe rounded her eyes.

「Because it's like this right?」

That was funny, Tooya said it a little proud.

「She was remnants of the emperor from ancient time, no matter how much she talks like a human in reality it's nothing but a tool to achieve her objective.....On top of that her objective is the world's chaos. And Kuroe is already fed up with such thing right? Being with a person like that Kuroe shouldn't be enjoying it.....because it seemed fun that Kuroe bound that contract with me 」

“Therefore”, Tooya said.

「I believed that in Kuroe」

No matter how much she expressed her man-eater personality, the attachment to enjoyment was the real thing. Kuroe, who had even wagered her own life for that sake, shouldn't be satisfied with someone whom she couldn't enjoy.

「I see」

“Fumu”, she nodded.....As if unable to bear it Kuroe laughed out loud.

「Aa that's right, certainly just as you say.....Kukukukukuku, even I myself had forgotten such simple thing. Dear me, that was something very big, fufufu, I see」

「No.....is it that funny?」

「Certainly it is funny, could I even hold my laughter? Because while I am acting as the observer of a human my true nature has been seen through completely by that human」

「.....」

Although it was quite easy to understand Tooya thought.

「By the way Kuroe」

「What is it?」

「What should I do from now on? The emperor had disappeared and because Kuroe's contract is voided should I bind the contract with you once again?」

「Why do we have to do such thing?」

Kuroe shook her head.

「Eh, because.....」

If he didn't do it Kuroe would.....When he intended to continued Tooya realized.

Kuroe also didn't smile anymore.

「Tooya」

No longer master, she called his name.

「I bound the contract with you because it was necessary to get out from the seal. And then the seal is no longer there」

In this present world she existed with a certain true form.

「B, but to live with people.....」

「The circumstances at that time and right now are different. If it were in this world that has humans filling the great land, even without binding any contract I could still hide among them」

Every month one human disappeared, in this world such thing was not unusual.....furthermore if necessary she could single handedly negotiate with the order of black magic, and with Kuroe's power it would be no problem.

「In other words, there is no merit in binding the contract with you」

Suddenly Tooya felt a chill. Even though he had completed the objective there was no exaltation.

Because, he had forgotten something.....what standing in front of his eyes was the un-chainable human eating monster.

「Will you, eat me?」

「Umu」

Very naturally, Kuroe said. Very naturally, Kuroe nodded.

「Tooya, I will eat you」

Clearly she told.

「Is that.....so」

As he heard those words, unconsciously his mood calmed down. He didn't even feel like running away. Nor he feels like he could run away.....simply the punishment time had come. The human, who used the mysterious being man eater to kill humans as he pleased, was about to be killed by that mysterious being, it would be a perfect fate.

「However」

At that resolve, Kuroe bent her lips up.

「Even though I am the mysterious being but not a demon. More or less I changed my interest, and I'm grateful that you gave me much laughter.....so I won't eat everything」

「What is.....the meaning of that?」

「What now, I said I forgave you for stealing the life of other human instead of the master's. From the time you met with me about three month worth of human's life」

What did she mean by that, for Tooya he couldn't immediately understand it.

「You mean, you'll forgive everything about me.....?」

「That's right」

Kuroe sneered.

「I'll forgive everything, and you could happily live with Rikka」

「Of course I can't do such thing!」

His feeling boiled all at once, Tooya yelled.

「I have decided, to live with you!」



「Hey, master」

「What is it?」

A little before the promised settlement date, Kuroe asked Tooya.

「You said you wouldn't erase Rikka's memories anymore right?」

「Yeah」

He nodded. Since that would make Rikka no longer Rikka.

「Then, what will master do?」

「What do you mean what will I do?」

「You wouldn't erase her memory of her father but even about you right?  
Then what will master do? Accepting the love confession and live happily?」

「.....Such a thing, of course there's no way I could」

If he could do that, he would do it from the start.



「I'll refuse the confession」

「You will turn it down?」

「.....yeah」

He nodded.

「Furthermore if I keep on not answering then certainly there will be a lingering affection that remains.....I myself am not that strong, I know that the best」

If he kept it like that then it'd become a Pandora box.....then at some point Tooya would lose to that temptation right.

「Making everything back to before, refuse Rikka, if that also settled it.....this time exactly I'll disappear in front of Rikka」

「Hou」

「You had said I'm half baked right.....even I myself think so. Because this time there's no room to turn back remaining. Even an accidental death would be fine. If I asked Tanaka to take care of minor details then we could deceive her right」

With that Tooya would no longer appear before Rikka.

「What about me?」

「Originally the setting is that you are entrusted by my relative then it would be fine to just go back right」

「.....Then I would be unable to go to school right」

「I'll think of something for that」

「You absolutely will right?」

To making sure Tooya nodded at Kuroe.

「However master」

「What is it」

「Is it fine?」

「.....I've decided it is」

While saying that, Tooya turned his eyes away.

「If master died then certainly Rikka will receive a shock right?」

「.....Yeah」

Even more than having lost her father.....let's think of it as conceited.

「However though」

Tooya said.

「Rikka is strong」

In the end, the weak one was Tooya only. Even though Rikka endured, and always believed in hope.....as the bystander Tooya was weak and couldn't endure it.

「Therefore I believe in Rikka」

Certainly she would overcome it, and grasp happiness with her own hands.

「How selfish」

Kuroe sneered.

「You had thoroughly thrown her in chaos, and in the end you rely on Rikka  
」

「.....Yeah, that's right」

Without denying it, Tooya nodded.

「I'm the worst right?」

「You're the worst」

They smiled at each other, suddenly Tooya's expression tensed up.

Tooya stared straight at Kuroe.

「The worst me is suited to be the master of a man eater like you」

Therefore, Tooya continued.

「I shall throw away my daily life with Rikka, and live with you」

Those words which he had said some time before, once again Tooya let them out of his mouth.

A different resolve was put in compared to that time.



However, Kuroe denied it.

「Even so, at this last moment you shamelessly tell me you'll do such thing!  
」

「Umu」

She nodded.

「Therefore, you know」

Kuroe sneered.

「My former master, you will forget everything and spend time with Rikka. You shall forget about killing her father, from now onward you shall never know of that.....Your sin shall not be forgiven nor judged for eternity」

「Such a thing isn't what I want!」

「That's right」

Kuroe had the same idea.

「However what you wished for shall not arrive anywhere.....And then even forgetting about this and spend your time, how much fun shall you show me」

「.....Kuroe」

「While I shall sneer at that state of yours I'll make you show it to me」

She sneered enjoying, and sentenced.

「Tooya, that suits you the most」

「!」

No longer anymore than that, Tooya didn't say anything. He gritted strong enough to crush his back teeth, simply he glared strongly at Kuroe.

Always since that time, since the beginning Tooya had detested Kuroe.

And then at that face Kuroe looked at while being truly amused.

Looking satisfied, her lips bent.

「Then, farewell」

And so Kuroe ate.



「Yare yare, just when I try to come as quickly as I could when I was called out.....」

At between the river terrace being lighted by the moonlight, standing over there with an air of composure was Kuroe and.....at her side were the figures of collapsed Tooya and Aoi. Without announcing anything he was called out through a phone call, and he couldn't even judge what the circumstances that happened were which led to this result.

「What is this current status? I think I need some explanation however」

「Of course」

While answering, Kuroe directed her eyes at Tanaka's side.

「I didn't call for you right?」

「Am I unwelcome」

Glaringly Akane looked at Kuroe.

「Well, though I don't mind」

Faintly she sneered.

「There's also the talk that involves your sister」

「.....」

「You don't need to glare, she is only sleeping」

She moved her eyes at the fallen Aoi.

「It's the same as what you wish」

「.....That's so」

That harsh look was loosened a little.

「Then, I wish you could explain what happened here」

At that, without a moment delay Tanaka returned to the talk.

「Umu, sure thing」

And then Kuroe said. What Tooya hadn't report to the order of black magic.....and what happened at this place, and Tooya's memories that she ate which they had to keep a secret.

「In other words, it's correct to say that the emperor had completely disappeared ne?」

「Umu, because this time I undoubtedly ate her」

Being bound by the contract she couldn't do any cheap trick.

「And then you are released from the contract, and Tooya-san's memories are lost」

「That's right」

「.....You called me out means there's room for negotiation?」

「There is」

Kuroe nodded.

「For example something like making a contract with me」

「No such thing」

Clearly she denied.

「I don't mind if you do just like what you had done till now. If you prepare one person per month for me to eat I'll behave obediently. Furthermore if I feel like it, it's not like I won't listen to your request.....there should still be other mysterious beings that the emperor left」

「The aforementioned giant cat fish ne.....certainly it seems to be a lot on the order of black magic's shoulder. Furthermore there's also the possibility of the case like the demon sword」

「No matter how I think about it that's what the emperor had left. Although it's not to her liking but it might be intended to be lively .....Thinking about the demon sword for example it was hailed by my awakening, from now onward it might happen here and there」

「Your power is needed huh.....although as you have lost the collar it'll be pretty hard to deal with you like we have done till this point」

「Since I think if it's you I can surely leave it to you right?」

「.....I'll work hard」

“Fuu”, heaving a sigh Tanaka moved his eyes to the collapsed Tooya.

「Although his memories had been eaten by you, will there be any problem with him.....」

「You don't think of stealing away my joy right?」

「Of course not」

Immediately he nodded.

「However.....」

Tanaka's eyes went to the side of him.

「Yeah, on this occasion since I ate Aoi's memories, she won't remember anything either, you know?」

「.....Is that so」

“Yare yare”, Tanaka shrugged his shoulders and looked at Akane.

「Just as she said」

「.....」

Without saying anything Akane moved her eyes at Kuroe.....then turned her back.

「Tch.....thank you」

She clicked her tongue, after that she muttered lightly.

「However someday, I'll kill you」

「My my how scary」

Looking amused Kuroe sneered. At that once again the sound of tongue clicking resounded.

「.....From now onward it's me alone with these two huh」

Tanaka heaved a sigh.

And then the night continued to advance.



## Epilogue: Daily Life With a Man-Eater

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The morning sun was brilliantly shining down, there was the sound of bird chipping and the sound of people walking down the street.

Such a casual daily life, as two people were walking.

「Today is also a clear day ne, Tooya-kun」

Looking up at the sky happily, Rikka said.

「N—, you're right」

At that with an absentminded tone, Tooya answered.

「Mou, somehow Tooya-kun is always like this lately」

「.....Is that so?」

「You're always like this since the start of the new semester.....are you lacking sleep?」

「No, it's not like that but」

Unable to explain it himself Tooya inclined his head.

「Somehow there is this uncomfortable feeling.....although I have the feeling summer vacation was over before I could say “a”」

「Isn't it sluggishness after days off?」

「You can put it as is but.....however my memories before the break are also blurry」

「Tooya-kun, are you being stupid?」

「Rikka, you run your mouth as you please huh」

「Is that so」

Ahaha, she laughed.

「Furthermore.....」

「Senpa—i!」

An interrupting voice resounded. When they looked over there Mashiro was widely waving her hand at Tooya. At her side Aoi was standing, although her hand wasn't waving she was looking with friendly eyes.

「The memories of meeting those girls are also vague too」

While waving his hand at them, Tooya continued to open his mouth.

「We went on a vacation together right?」

「No, I remember that but」

「As Aoi-chan transferred and became friend with Mashiro, she had been introduced to us you know」

「I know」

「Coincidentally Mashiro-chan was saved from bullying by Tooya-kun ne」

「.....although that's right」

「What do you have problem with?」

「.....seems like none」

Even so as if unable to have consent Tooya tilted his head.

「Nee, Tooya-kun」

At that Tooya, Rikka said.

「Tooya-kun right now, is not happy?」

「.....I'm happy」

「Then, it's fine isn't it?」

「Is that so」

「It sure is」

Clearly she nodded, Rikka took Tooya's hand.

「Then let's come to them, and go to school together」

And then the four of them noisily went together.

「They look happy ne」

Gazing at that scene from far away, Tanaka opened his mouth.

「That's right」

And gazing at it at the same time, Kuroe had the same thought.

「However Kamisaki-san is feeling uncomfortable, is that fine?」

「Because I ate the memories of three month, so there's inconsistency. More or less there's nothing we can do about the inconsistency being born .....however well there's nothing that affect his personality. Because mostly he has become like this before he met me」

「What if someone takes advantage of it and return his memories?」

「There's no chance」

She declared

「Tooya's memories aren't sealed, I ate them. You can't return something that has already ceased to exist right?」

「I see」

He nodded. And as if realizing something Tanaka asked.

「I have one doubt though」

「What is it?」

「If saying from the talk just now you could completely erase memories right」

「That's right」

「But why Rikka's memories weren't erased but were sealed?」

If there was no such thing, then Aoi couldn't return Rikka's memories right.

「What now, although at that time Tooya ordered me to erase Rikka's memories.....he didn't order me to completely erase it. For example even with sealing her memories, at those time it would certainly count as erasing memories right?」

Therefore it wasn't going against the order.

「I see, then you intentionally chose that way right?」

「Because that way is more interesting」

Broadly her lips bent up.

「.....I'll keep in my mind to be clear of the intention when asking you something」

「That would be wise」

Kekeke, she sneered.

「Then, about time I go」

「To where?」

「To over there」

At the front of her pointed finger, were the figures of four people walking happily.

「.....Eeto, aren't we just sightseeing?」

「I didn't say like we have to see from afar」

「.....Certainly」

Kuroe didn't even say another word.

「Furthermore I have something I want to assert」

「Something you want to, assert?」

「Look, since Tooya had bind the contract with me I had always lived in the same room with him however.....in the end that one hadn't truly yield to me right?」

「Well, you're right.....」

Although Tooya had wavered, but in the end at the root his thought had always gone to Rikka.

「In my own way I thought about the reason.....I thought it must be the meeting place was bad. Perhaps if he met me without knowing that I'm a mysterious being, surely that one should fall in love with me badly」

She smiled, amusingly.

「Because I'm also a maiden, and I'm stubborn too. Since to make it consistence with Tooya's happy memories I had also erase Rikka's confession.....It shouldn't be impossible to force myself in there」

「.....Although I think by no means but is everything for the sake of this?」

「Who knows」

Kuroe didn't answer, she only smiled deeply.

「Then, here I go」

「.....please to your heart's content」

Tanaka heaved a sigh, and turned his body.



Even after coming together with everyone Tooya was still absentmindedly thinking. Although he couldn't explain what it was, but something should have happened.....That thing he could recall but somehow he felt very lonely.

「A-re, what with that person?」

At Rikka's voice he returned to himself. As if blocking their path someone was standing there. It was the same uniform with Tooya's group, the age should be the same right, long black hair.....she was having a very graceful expression. Frankly speaking she was extremely beautiful, and why was she looking straight at Tooya.

「Greetings, I am Ookami Kuroe」

Before he could open his mouth the girl had given her name. Although it was old-fashioned talk, but unconsciously Tooya didn't feel uncomfortable.

「E, to.....」

Nonetheless, suddenly being given a name Tooya surely couldn't understand the girl's objective. At that state of Tooya the girl bent her lips upward .....Tooya eyes were stolen by that expression.

「Things are you know, I love you at first sight」

When he noticed, the girl was in front of his eyes.

「Eh」

Without even a moment to be shaken by those words and behavior he felt something on his lips .....The face that he saw right next to his was colored with a smile as if a kid had successfully pulled a prank.

「Take care of me from now on」

She removed her lips from the dumbfounded Tooya, and she said.

As if taking advantage of the situation, Rikka's group started to make an uproar.

“Kya kya”, including Tooya the noisy sound resounded on the route to school.

And then in the end, a conspicuous laughter of a girl resounded.





It seemed the daily with a man-eater still continued for a bit more.