



"THE EVE OF A SPECIAL WEDDING"

TRANSLATION: NARU-KUN / K – PROJECT WORLD

CHAPTER 1: KISUIRIN

Sitting in the center of the eight-tatami room of the Amamiya house, a boy and a woman sat in front of a low table, arms crossed, deep in thought.

The boy's name is Yukito Yanagi. He is 15 years old and his calm and fragile features give off an aura of calm that belies his age. His long, narrow eyes looked at the things piled up on the table with a touch of dismay.

"What should we do about this?"

The woman on the other end of the line is Momoko Amamiya. The owner of that house is a beautiful woman in her twenties. She responded quietly, a puzzled expression on her calm face.

"What should we do about this?"

There was a pile of mail piled up on the table.

The Amamiya family is a large landowner in Ninoshima. Of course, there is also a lot of mail addressed to Momoko, the current head of the family. However, an even larger number of recipients are for the other person who lives with them.

"...This is also a bill for Jingi-san."

"The same thing happens here. Oh, this is the name of a store I've never seen before. Is it a new store?"

"You often get free drinks when you go to a restaurant for the first time... That's more surprising to me."

"Jingi-chan is good at reaching people's hearts. I think he has the talent of a deceiver."

"If you drink and eat all you want and don't pay, then you're essentially a scammer, right?"

After examining and sorting through the large amount of mail that had arrived one by one, in the end, 20% were addressed to Momoko, the owner, and the remaining 80% were invoices to Jingi.

Yukito felt a little dizzy. Even at a glance, the amount of money they charged Jingi was more than Yukito, a high school student, had ever imagined. The reason he was worried, wondering how that person would pay for that, was because to Yukito, it was no one else's problem.

Sagawa Jingi is said to be Yukito Yanagi's teacher. Just in case. Although Jingi often says that a teacher's debt is his disciple's debt, Yukito is always involved in his financial problems. He's always been like that, so he'll probably continue to be like that. In other words, these bills were also a warning of trouble that Yukito would get into.

Yukito timidly asked Momoko, who was preparing a letter.

"Um, where is Jingi-san now?"

Momoko put her finger on her chin and looked up at the ceiling as if she thought for a moment.

"Huh? Looks like he didn't come home yesterday. It's warmer now, so I guess he's sleeping outside."

"Like a stray cat..."

Momoko is basically a kind and gentle woman, but she seems to have a laissez-faire approach to duty. No matter where he sleeps or wakes up, no matter how much debt he accumulates, she doesn't particularly blame him. They've known each other for ten years, so maybe that means they have a trusting relationship.

At that moment, he heard the front door open and a young man entered the room.

The person responsible for the invoice is Sagawa Jingi.

His hair reaches the nape of his neck and his eyes fall with a carefree look. Yukito knows that a face that seems to be smiling all the time can mysteriously lower people's guard. However, he was not smiling now and his face was drooping from blood loss.

"Guh. I'm home."

Just by hearing the lackluster voice, Yukito was convinced that he had a hangover. Feeling sorry for himself for having to do such a thing, he approached Jingi.

"Are you okay, Jingi-san...?"

"Oh, Yukito. Bring me some water. Or some alcohol..."

"Are you still going to drink?!"

Yukito unexpectedly lunged at him and Jingi held his head in an exaggerated manner.

"Don't shout, are you trying to open your master's head? Yes, yes... I asked for some water or alcohol..."

At that moment, Jingi staggered up and headed to his room on the second floor.

"No, that guy..."

Yukito murmured a fact with a sigh, something he must have understood many times before. It is said that there is a lower level, but Jingi's level of failure is literally the bottom.

When he returned to the living room, Momoko was placing a jug of water and a cup on a tray. She must have been listening to the conversation they had just had and she handed the tray to Yukito with a smile on her face.

"Yes, this. Take it with you."

"...Yes, well, yes."

Yukito received the tray. It was weighing because there was a pile of invoices next to the jug and cup.

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"Hmm."

That was the first thing Jingi squeezed out after waking up.

There was a tray next to his pillow that wasn't there before he went to bed. On top of that is a cup, a jug of water, and a stack of invoices addressed to Jingi. Jingi grabbed one of them and grumbled.

"Yukito, you did something very disgusting. No, wait, is it Momoko-san who did this?"

The amount written on the invoice is quite alarming. Jingi turned his head as he drank water directly from the jug.

"Wow, have I been drinking so much this month...? Have I been fooled?"

Of course, they weren't fooling him; He was just getting invoices from when he lost a drinking match or stayed up all night drinking, but Jingi didn't remember any of that.

The amount won't go down just because he stares at it. Moving the bill with his fingers, Jingi lay down on the spot.

Bright spring sunlight streamed in through the half-open window.

Jingi stared for a while, eyes half-lidded.

There aren't that many options. Either he returns or he works. If things go wrong, there will no longer be a restaurant on Ayaka Island that will allow him to drink for a fee.

So he has no choice but to work.

Work. It is the most detestable word in this world. Life is short, so what's wrong with living as you please? It's not your fault that you can't be happy, it's the world's fault. He wants something like basic income to arrive soon and then drink as much as he wants with that money.

While he was feeling depressed, Jingi played with random ideas and made great progress.

His fist hit the desk.

The recoil caused something to fall off the desk and hit Jingi directly in the face.

"Oh?!"

Jingi lay in agony for a moment on the futon, staring at the falling object with teary eyes. It's a paulownia box, the size of a tissue box. It fell on his side, the lid opened and some of the contents spilled out.

"Ah..."

Groaning awkwardly, Jingi scratched his cheek and picked up the paulownia box.

It was a container for Jingi's "important things". A plastic model he spent all night building, a shiny chrome, a coin with a geometric pattern engraved on it, an old key with five rings connected to it, a tattered notebook. Things that were important to him as a child and that still remain today. It's full of important things.

One of them shone white in the sunlight.

It is an oval-shaped gem the size of an egg.

"What is this?"

Jingi picked up the jewel and turned his head. Did he have something like that? The fact that it was in the "important stuff" compartment means it had to be important. But he doesn't remember how important it was. Jingi picked it up and stared at it.

The pure white jewel seemed to radiate his own brilliance. Every time he looks at it from a slightly different angle, countless colors change and a rainbow of colored lights runs across its surface. Like the ocean, snow, cherry blossoms and forests, it is a mystical beauty that seems to contain all the beauty of nature in one universe.

He thought within him.

(It looks like it will sell well.)

Then he looked at the pile of invoices. First of all, he needed money. If he doesn't pay the bill at the restaurant he goes to, he won't have alcohol to drink. That is much more important than the true identity of that gem.

"Okay, let's go!"

Grabbing the shining jewel, Jingi shouted excitedly. It must be important, but just because he can't remember it doesn't mean it was that important, he thought to himself as he stormed out of the room.

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Yukito Yanagi is a "pulse connection".

To be more precise, it is like an apprenticeship.

Yukito himself understands that "pulse connection" is a technique, or a person wielding it, that "connects" life energy called "Ki" to create phenomena that transcend the laws of

physics. There was probably a more complex and deeper principle behind this, but his teacher, Sagawa Jingi, never said a word or a half about such difficult matters.

"Well, if you keep trying, you'll eventually be able to do it, right?"

There's a good reason why Yukito follows those instructions every day. Even before arriving on Ayaka Island and living in Tokyo, he had been able to use mysterious powers.

The word "use" may not be correct. When Yukito's emotions run high, his power spirals out of control. He lost control due to his anger and sadness and hurt many people. As a result, people disappeared from Yukito's environment and Yukito himself began to feel afraid of interacting with people.

(Once you are connected, you will be able to control that power.)

Upon hearing that, Yukito decided to become a connection. Yukito, who has always had a serious personality, has never missed training every day since then.

That's why Yukito continued his training today on the bank of the Ninoshima River until sunset.

"The path of humanity, of the earth and of the sky. Water, which benefits all things and does not fight, takes care of the ills of all people."

When he says a spell, an image of the technique comes to mind. By pouring into it the enormous energy "life force" that flows from the depths of the earth, it speaks as royal power. Just as he can feel the heat of the sun on his skin even when he has his eyes closed, Yukito perceives that power as a tingling "sensation".

Grasp that "sense" with your "sensory" hands, refine it and assemble it. For Yukito, Jingi was a process like that.

The water rising from the river turned into a ball, a ring, and a tube, just as Yukito had imagined.

"Hmm...!"

Sweat formed on Yukito's forehead. When he uses that technique, he has the illusion that he is using a part of his brain that he has never used before. "You'll get used to it quickly." Jingi said, but at least at this stage, Yukito didn't seem to be able to continue using the technique without expending all of his energy.

That's why he couldn't help but lose concentration when he heard a sudden voice.

"Hey, Yukito!"

The tube-shaped water that had been growing for a while broke up and was attracted by gravity. It fell into the river and returned to the stream.

"Chatarou. You shouldn't bother Yukito-kun."

"Oh, too bad. I didn't think you were training..."

Yukito couldn't help but smile as the two got closer while driving a river boat.

The boy with slightly curly hair and round glasses is Chatarou Fukuwake.

The boy with light pigmented hair and cool features is Amano Yako.

They are apprentices who work at the Kaizumi Shrine in Minoshima and the first friends of the same age that he made on the island.

"No, it's okay. I was just thinking about taking a break."

"Really? I wish I was... Hey!"

Sinking his pole into the flow of the river, Chatarou skillfully brought the boat to the shore. Ninoshima is an island of streams and canals. Although not as common as cars, islanders often use boats as a means of transportation.

"Are you still doing the basics? Yukito, you're so talented you should try something more advanced."

"Ahaha...thanks. But I still want to solidify the basics."

"That's right, Chatarou. Yukito-kun has his own rhythm."

The two sat next to Yukito. Yukito felt a sense of joy at that. After spending many years in solitude, Yukito still doesn't quite know how to interact with his friends. Looking at the flowing river, Yukito tentatively began to talk about the technique.

"I usually do this in my garden pond, but Chatarou-kun told me that sometimes it's good to change the environment, so I'm trying it out."

"Oh, that's right! This is harder, isn't it?"

"Yes. Some techniques that work well in a pond may not work in a river. Why?"

"Hm? I wonder why?"

Chatarou crossed his arms and bowed his head. Yako shook his head in shock.

"What are you going to do with something like that? You're probably a senpai."

"Then you can explain it to me. You're good at that kind of thing, Yako."

"Ah, totally..."

Sighing, Yako reached out and touched the water flowing in the river.

"We, the pulse connectors, create techniques using the energy of the "life line" or "vitality." It resides in all things, including wind, earth, water and fire, but also It's something that changes."

"Oh, that's right. I'm sure Kurama-sensei said something like that too."

"To wander means to flow and circulate. Rivers always flow, but ponds are not like that. Basically, they are stagnant in one place. A flowing river contains more vitality than a stagnant pond, so it is difficult to treat. It takes a certain level of ability to handle a large amount of vital energy."

"Mmm." Chatarou nodded.

"That's it. Do you understand, Yukito?"

"Wait! Please don't steal others' credit later!"

"W-what? You just said exactly what Kurama-sensei taught you, right?"

"I'm better than you, who completely forgot about that!"

"Hahaha..."

Yukito couldn't help but smile bitterly as Yako and Chatarou began to argue as usual. These two are disciples of Kurama Haruaki, one of the best connections on Ayaka Island, but they are very competitive and always argue about who is better.

"In other words, flowing water is more difficult to manage than stagnant water."

"Yes. The stronger the flow of the river, the more difficult it is to handle. Once you get used to the flow here, it might be a good idea to try it in a mountain stream deep in the mountains. Afterwards..."

After saying that, he bowed his head slightly. He looks like he's not sure if it's okay to say something. Still, Yukito mustered up the courage to ask.

"Is there anything else?"

"Well... if you're used to mountain streams, it might be a good idea to try pouring water out of nowhere."

Yukito blinked.

"Um... can you do something like that? Oh, like the other day when I grew a peach tree in Minoshima?"

What suddenly came to mind was about ten days ago, when he first became friends with the two of them.

To test his own strength, Yukito, at the behest of the two, used a technique to accelerate the growth of a peach tree. However, it grew much faster and larger than they expected. When the peach tree involved Chatarou and Yako, Yukito felt unmistakable fear. The power image of him hurting someone again made him unable to move.

It was his teacher who helped him do that.

It was only for a moment that Yukito thought that way. Yako pointed out, shaking his head.

"That's not true. We just grew existing peach seeds, we didn't create a tree from scratch. You wouldn't be able to do something like that unless you were Kurama-sensei."

"I-Is that so? But Chatarou-kun can control the wind..."

"Wind is the flow of air, and air is something that is there. I have also planted a spark in my fire-breathing bamboo. It is the ability to pour a large amount of life force into a place where there is nothing and create something. That's a pretty high-level technique."

"Eh..."

Yukito was impressed. Kurama had taught him something, but if he put it into words again, it seemed like he could solidify the image of the technique. Yukito suddenly thought that this is the role a teacher is supposed to play, and he felt the respect he had just begun to feel for Jingi begin to wither once again.

At that, Chatarou asked nonchalantly.

"If you're with Jingi, you can do it, right? After all, that guy is very good at making connections. Although he is annoying."

"Well, maybe Jingi-san can do it. It's annoying though. Yukito-kun, why don't you try it once?"

As the two talked, Yukito frowned in confusion and explained what had happened in the morning.

"Hmm. It doesn't seem like that's the case now. Yesterday too."

As he kept repeating about the large amount of invoices that had been stuffed into the mailbox, and about the misfortune that Jingi kept coming home in that state in the morning, he began to wonder why he was studying with him.

"I thought I knew he was a bit weird as a person, but when he shows me that side of him so many times, I start thinking about all kinds of things..."

Yako and Chatarou looked at Yukito.

"Eh? W-what happened?"

Yukito asked, sensing something unusual in his behavior. The two looked at each other and then back at Yukito. They looked at him as if they were uncomfortable, as if they pitied him.

"I see, Yukito-kun."

"It's hard to say, but..."

The two then shared their testimony as witnesses.

Thirty minutes later.

Yukito was in front of the "Usagi" izakaya.

Ninoshima is a rural area, but there are some bars. "Usagi" was one of those shops. Those who fish or work in the fields during the day go to the bars at night to relieve the fatigue of work, and then some people hang out until morning.

The person who is like the incarnation of Yakara is Sagawa Jingi.

And now, in front of Yukito's eyes, Jingi was showing his true potential.

Specifically, he was drinking in "Usagi" excessively.

"Wahahahahaha, Jingi has lost! Look, Ikkiikkaiikki!"

"Damn! I'll definitely win one next time!"

The twenty guests burst out laughing. Jingi stared at them and put a boot-sized glass in his mouth and tilted it all the way. His throat began to growl and the beer was dwindling little by little. All the guests applaud, proclaiming their cause. When he finally let the last drop go down his throat, Jingi raised his fist, grabbing the empty glass.

"Ai-uin!"

The tavern shook with laughter. Mindless applause arose from the drunken crowd, saying, "Okay, okay!" Like a champion returning triumphant, Jingi raised his arms and received the cheers.

It was really a party. The same vision, or even worse, that Chatarou and Yako had testified they saw on their way was unfolding before their eyes.

Yukito's gaze, looking at him, was cold and frozen. For the first time, 15-year-old Yukito realized that humans can be very despicable beings.

At that moment, Jingi noticed Yukito.

"Oh, it's Yukito! Come on, come here!"

His glaring eyes as he hit the table showed that he was completely drunk.

He turned around and closed the door of the tavern, then returned to the Amamiya residence and helped with dinner. Such temptation arose in Yukito's heart. No, actually, it wasn't a temptation at all, it was a very legitimate and rational choice... but still, Yukito didn't do it. Yukito's interpersonal skills were not strong enough to isolate people.

"Oh, Yukito-chan, it's good to see you! Why don't you sit here?", "Okay, come out, Yukito-kun, come on.", "Eh, what? Who?", "Is it?", "Ah, Yanagi-san's son. Wow, that's so nostalgic!", "Thank you."

Yukito pushed his way through the screaming drunk crowd. What came to mind is a scene from an adventure movie he once saw. An expedition that goes into the jungle and meets the locals. The locals, decked out in brightly colored feathers, shiny fur, and human bones, enthusiastically bang their spears and stomp the ground, but the explorers have no idea whether they are angry or happy.

When he finally arrived at Jingi, he kicked out the customer who was next to him.

"Hey, get out of here! Yukito-sama is on his way! He's that big hermit's son! You should sit on the toilet seat or something!"

"Sorry, sorry..."

Yukito felt humiliated and bowed his head. As he sat in the seat of the person who had moved while he was laughing, he finally started to get angry.

"What are you doing?! How much have you been drinking?!"

"Huh? What the hell? Are you hanging around because you weren't invited? No, you can't drink alcohol until you're eighteen."

"You're 20 years old! No, that's not it! How are you going to drink even more when you have so many invoices piling up?!"

The tavern fell silent.

However, the next moment, laughter broke out. Here and there, there were people laughing while holding their bellies, people clapping and shouting "Say more!", and people making toasts for some reason. Yukito looked around as if he was looking at something stupid.

Jingi said too, his shoulders shaking with laughter.

"Uh, hehehehe... You're a bit annoying, Yukito. You're a really slow guy. How much longer are you going to be talking about that?"

"H-how much? It was yesterday, right?"

"Yesterday's me and today's me are different! I'm a different person! Hey!"

With that, Jingi took something out of his pocket and slammed it on the table.

It was a wad of bills.

Yukito felt a shock as if he had been struck by lightning. A wad of bills. He had no pension, he was neck-deep in invoices, debt and alcohol, and he should have had no connection with that.

"A bunch of bills! I already returned all those pieces of paper you threw in my room because you didn't like them! But I still have this left, so I guess I'll just have to swallow it. Right? Hey, everyone!"

The drunks shook their fists and cheered. The sounds of "Okay, great job!" and "We're done!" They probably mean that all the expenses of that banquet are being paid by Jingi.

However, Yukito couldn't be cheerful. he asked with a trembling voice.

"Where did you get so much money? No way..."

"Oh? No, idiot, what are you thinking? As expected, I don't commit crimes either!"

He can't trust it at all. If a penniless person became rich in one day, the first thing you should suspect is that he committed a serious crime.

As if he sensed Yukito's doubts, Jingi lowered his tone and patted Yukito on the shoulder.

"Don't worry, this money was earned properly. Well, I don't know, but there was a strange jewel in my room. When I sold it to an antique dealer in Ichinoshima, he was surprised! He bought it for me, enough money to pay the debts and live for a while! Hahahahaha, I'm lucky after all!"

"A jewel?"

Yukito's suspicions were still not clear. It was hard to believe that Jingi owned such an expensive jewel. If that were true, it wouldn't be surprising if he disappeared from the world with the drinking money a long time ago.

"Are you okay? Selling such an expensive jewel. It's a big deal, right?"

"It's okay. But I showed it to Momoko-san just in case, but she said she didn't remember it. In that case, it's mine, and what I do with it is up to me. Am I wrong?"

It was no different.

There was no difference, but he wasn't convinced either. He couldn't believe that such luck had come to Jingi.

While Yukito was thinking, Jingi patted him on the back.

"Don't take it so seriously, you're so worried! If you have money, you should spend it! Look, you should drink too! Master, give him sake that even minors can drink!"

"Hm, got it!"

An angry voice came from the kitchen where the big wheel was working. The tavern shook with laughter again. Jingi was also laughing out loud.

As he watched that, he felt a wave of fatigue wash over him.

"Ah? What's wrong, Yukito?"

Jingi asked Yukito curiously as he stood up from his seat. Yukito looked at Jingi with cold eyes.

"I'm going home. It's almost time for dinner."

"You should have dinner here. It's my pleasure, isn't it?"

"Momoko-san will be in trouble if I skip dinner without contacting her. Please come home early."

And Yukito once again made his way through the jungle of drunk people and headed towards the exit of the izakaya. He pushed aside the frenzy that was swirling behind him and heaved a sigh.

"...Well, I guess that's good."

If the debt disappears, it's probably a good thing. He himself won't get into trouble anymore. Even though he was his teacher, why did Yukito have to worry about Jingi's debt?

The more he thought about it, the more ridiculous it became.

But...

As expected, it was meaningless.

Or rather, he had a bad feeling about something. What exactly is the mysterious gem that Jingi sold? Why was there something so precious lying in Jingi's room? He guessed it was because he didn't know it that he was feeling anxious.

(I'm sure it's just my imagination.)

While he said that to himself, Yukito started on his way home.

Probably because he was deep in his thought, he did not notice that the murmur of the river had ceased.