



「はじまり」にまつわる七つの物語

SEVEN STORIES ABOUT "THE BEGINNING"

CHAPTER 1: CHABUDAI CONFERENCE - PLUS ONE

(FURUHASHI HIDEYUKI)

TRANSLATION: NARU-KUN / K-PROJECT WORLD

"The old Shiro!"

As he opened the dormitory door, a girl in her underwear jumped up to him.

"H-hi... Ameno-san."

He knew it was a sign of affection, but he still hadn't gotten used to it. Toru waved back hesitantly.

"It's Neko!"

The girl jumped out of the way with the movements of a real cat and ran back into the room.

"Here comes Shiro! The old Shiro!"

The cheerful words were answered by the serious voice of a young man.

"Neko, don't keep calling him that. Respect his personality."

"Kuro is saying something very difficult again... Shiro is Shiro, they're both Shiro!"

"That's not what I mean. Currently, we should call Shiro the "current Shiro", and the "past Shiro" you're talking about is..."

With that, a young man appeared in the doorway. With his long, black hair tied back in a ponytail and his proper movements, he looked like a samurai from a period film.

"Sorry, Hieda Toru. We're still a little confused too."

"No, you can call me whatever is easiest for you, uh... Yatogami-kun."

"It's fine to call me "Kuro". Well, you can call me that whenever you want."

"Yes, someday..."

How many times has this happened already? This awkward exchange repeats itself every time he visits. But it's already familiar to him.

The young man's name is Yatogami Kuro, and like the girl from before, Ameno Miyabi, he lives in a room in the Ashinaka Academy dorm.

The other owner of the room, a young Caucasian man with silver hair, poked his head around the corner.

"It's you, Kuro. It's about time you stopped acting like an outsider. Right, Toru-kun?"

Adolf K. Weissmann. He's a new teacher who will officially take up his position this spring and is currently preparing for his new life with the other two.

Weissmann, Yatogami Kuro, and Ameno Miyabi. These are the three residents gathered in this room. Although they are of different genders and ages:

Ameno Miyabi = "Neko".

Yatogami Kuro = "Kuro".

Weissmann = "Shiro".

They call each other by nicknames, and their close relationship makes them seem like a kind of family.

If that's the case, what position does he hold, being frequently invited to this room and sharing meals and such? Who the hell is he?

Who does "Neko" call "the old Shiro"?

Who does "Kuro" call "Hieda Toru"?

Who does "Shiro" call "Toru-kun"?

If he had to say it, the slightly formal "Hieda Toru" would be the closest thing to shyness. Thinking about it, he doesn't think he's ever been called by his name in a friendly way or recognized as "himself".

In short, he may have been a transparent being without a true identity, both in the past and now.

As he idly pondered this...

"What's up, Hieda Toru? Come in."

Yatogami Kuro called out to him.

"Ah... Excuse me for interrupting."

Coming back to himself, Toru bowed to Kuro again.

"Sorry for inviting me to dinner so many times."

"Well, sorry for calling you to an awkward table so many times, but... actually, I have a favor to ask before dinner today."

Kuro said, frowning.

"This is embarrassing, but... our conversations have become a bit tense. I'd like to hear someone else's opinion."

"Conversation...?"

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Weissmann, Kuro, and Miyabi were sitting at a low round table. With Hieda joining in, the "discussion" resumed.

When he asked what they were talking about, it turned out to be a very trivial matter.

First of all, these three people, almost like a family, only recently started living together. They first met around the time of the "Gakuen Island Incident" late last year and spent a few days together, but then had a gap of about a year before seeing each other again, just before the recent "Paranormal Ability Incident". That was just recently.

After the various incidents were resolved, they started living in this dormitory, but it hadn't even been a month.

Toru had heard about it beforehand. And then...

They were "comrades in arms", so to speak, who had been involved in serious terrorist and disaster-like incidents, and together they had been on the brink of death. Although they shared such a strong bond, as the days passed together, they began to notice several inconsistencies in their daily lives.

They each had different upbringings, but Weissmann and Miyabi, in particular, had no idea how to manage their own living space. Everything was neglected.

So cooking, laundry, cleaning, shopping, taking out the trash, and tidying up... Kuro gave instructions on general household chores, but...

"We came to the conclusion that Kuro should take care of those things himself."

Weissmann scratched his head.

"Hmm, exactly. Kuro should do everything.", Miyabi said.

Kuro remained silent.

"Uh, that's not right."

"Well, I don't think it's right. But Kuro is better at everything, and it's as if he's saying, 'It's faster to do it than to explain it.'"

For every task, like cooking and laundry, Weissmann opined, "Kuro would do it better.", and Miyabi nodded, saying, "Exactly.", so Kuro ended up doing all the housework for the three of them.

"No, that's... the tyranny of the majority vote."

"Sure, that's how it is for the moment. For now, we'll just trust Kuro and learn as we go."

"You're so careless.", Kuro said with a sour face.

"You guys are going to leave this unresolved again."

"Well, I can't say it's not true. Hahaha.", Weissmann said.

"Hmm, exactly like that.", Miyabi said.

Here the conversation stalled again. The dense atmosphere seemed to overwhelm him as well.

Finally,

"Hey, Kuro. What would Ichigen-sama say in a situation like this? Why don't you ask?"

Weissmann suddenly intervened.

"Eh, Ichigen... ah."

Toru had heard that name before. Miwa Ichigen, Kuro's teacher and adoptive father. Although he has passed away, Kuro respects him deeply and often remembers his late teacher's words and uses them as a guide for his actions. It seems to be a kind of routine that encourages Kuro, who tends to stagnate due to his seriousness, to take the next step.

"All right. If you keep bringing it up like this, Ichigen-sama won't be able to rest in peace."

Kuro shook his head.

"I decided on my own to join you. It's my will, but it should also be yours. I won't tolerate you acting like it's none of your business."

"Ah..."

Toru understood the true nature of the subtle discomfort he had felt during the conversation.

Slowly, he raised his hand and asked for permission to speak.

"Uh... Don't you mind doing the housework?"

"Eh?"

With Kuro's attention, Toru continued.

"Just like you, you want everyone to value a dignified life. That's what you're trying to say, right?"

"Mmm..."

Kuro tilted his head slightly and finally murmured.

"Well, I guess that's how it is."

"Ah, that's right. Both Kuro and we confused "I will, I won't" with "I think, I don't think". I see, we have to phrase it properly."

Weissmann straightened up and turned to Kuro.

"Kuro, thank you for always making us delicious food. And for keeping our room and clothes clean. Come on, Neko, you should thank him properly."

"Huh? Mmm..."

Miyabi tilted her head when Weissmann prodded her. She probably thought, "He's giving me something difficult again.". After thinking about it for a while, she murmured.

"The food is... delicious."

"...Okay."

Kuro stood up.

"You can't do it all at once. First, you need to be mindful of your daily behavior and have a grateful heart. Then, little by little, you'll get used to it."

With that, he headed into the kitchen.

"Oh, are you preparing dinner?", Weissmann asked.

"Dinner!" Miyabi said.

"Uh... can I help you with anything?"

Toru tried to get up from his seat.

"No, the guests can sit and chat."

And with that, Kuro stood up and began working alone.

He must have made the preparations. He quickly grilled the fish, served the rice and miso soup, sliced the pickles, and finished serving dinner in no time. With the skill of a professional chef, it certainly seemed like it would be better to leave everything to him than to an amateur.

"Thank you, Toru.", Weissmann said softly.

"With us, it's as if we're passing the problem on to Kuro."

"So you needed an ally for Kuro-kun..."

"It's good to have someone who's an ally, someone understanding, or someone who gives a fair assessment."

"Sure, I try to be fair, but..."

Kuro, holding a plate of grilled fish in both hands, interrupted the conversation.

"However, when it comes to family, I sometimes lose my composure. Hieda Toru, your opinion is valuable."

Kuro bowed to Toru.

"I'd appreciate it if you'd continue watching over us."

"I see. That's my role... I suppose."

A transparent being who is nothing but air wherever he is; that's how he considered himself, but perhaps that's not all bad.

An ethereal spectator who slips into the middle of this makeshift "family". Above all, he feels that therein lies his position, or rather, the meaning of his presence.

"Well, now that we're all convinced, let's eat."

"Ah... yes."

"Okay!"

"Let's have dinner!"

The three and one clasped hands.

"Itadakimasu."

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"Since we've become quite friendly, I'd like to discuss Hieda Toru's nickname after this meal. Of course, the decision is his, but first we should share our opinions."

While chewing on his grilled fish, Kuro said this.

"Meow, meow? Another complicated thing..."

Neko pouted.

"Well, everyone, you can call me whatever you want..."

"Come on, Toru-kun."

Weissmann gave a wry smile to the confused Toru.

"Kuro wants to decide important things together."