



## **GROUND ZERO: FRAGMENTS**

### **CHAPTER 3: CHILDREN**

#### **TRANSLATION: NARU-KUN / K-PROJECT WORLD**

The first time they went out in a high school uniform was not at the entrance ceremony but at their parents' funeral.

Siblings Minato Hayato and Akito attended the funeral ceremony held at the "Scepter 4" camp in the second half of March when the cherry blossoms were about to begin to crumble.

"Draw your swords. Ready, Battou!"

It was Gen Shiotsu, a person familiar to Hayato and Akito, who issued such an order. While listening to the voice of Shiotsu as the deputy boss of "Scepter 4", who was the uncle of a serious and caring relative, with a mysterious feeling, the two of them looked at the coffin in the grieving family's seat prepared in the front.

The faces of Hayato and Akito's parents, Minato Hayato and Akio's bodies were beautiful, but their bodies were covered with white cloth and could not be seen. They knew that they were wounded from the battle with "Purgatory", and wanted to see how their parents fought and died, just looking at the footprints, but Shiotsu's face, begging for "Don't look", looked pained, so the two walked away in silence.

During the ceremony, neither Hayato nor Akito shed tears. It wasn't a good idea to stubbornly cry after that, so they put their shoulders together and bid their parents farewell in silence while sharing a light body temperature.

When it was over, Hayato and Akito asked Shiotsu for an audience with the "Blue King" Habari Jin. The two decided it before attending the event.

Shiotsu had a complicated look on his face, but he didn't refuse the request of the two. Shiotsu knew that they longed for Habari, so he may have wanted to repay the poor children who lost their parents, or perhaps he thought that if there was any grudge against Habari who had carried out an operation that would kill their parents, they should tell him. Shiotsu was one of those people.

Guided by Shiotsu, they entered the main building of the tunsho. The members who crossed stopped when they saw the brothers and gave them their condolences.

When they entered the command office, they saw Habari Jin standing by the window and looking outside.

"Habari. Akio and Minato's children."

Shiotsu called, Habari looked directly at Hayato and Akito as he walked away from the window.

Habari's eyes, which had no sadness, no anger, no regret, and only saw the essence of what was in front of him from the front, made them somewhat flirtatious. When they got there, his eyes were clearly different from the eyes of the members who were directed at them, and the eyes were like a clear sky that was not suitable for children whose parents were killed.

However, Hayato and Akito thought that these were the eyes of the person whose parents believed and entrusted their lives.

"Make us members of the Blue clan."

They didn't plan it, but Hayato's and Akito's voices overlapped beautifully.

Habari looked at them with a faint smile, but Shiotsu, who brought them, averted his eyes.

"What are they saying?!"

"In the test, we were also diagnosed as having different aptitudes. We have qualifications and aptitudes."

"I think I have enough motivation to become a member. I will fight with the will of my parents. I will defeat the enemy that killed my parents."

"You're still kid!"

"I am not a child."

The voices of the two overlapped again.

Shiotsu seemed to have been swallowed for a moment, but he immediately made his facial expression pronounced and he glared at them stubbornly.

"No. I have a duty to protect them, Akio's forgotten memory, and a responsibility as the underboss. As their guardian, I can't let them go to their deaths, and as the underboss of "Scepter 4", I can't let some children get away with it, joining the team."

Shiotsu stood up and said that in front of Hayato and Akito. The two defended themselves strongly, but there was no sign that Shiotsu was going to change his mind.

Habari silently looked at the children and the deputy chief who stood in front of him and began to argue with his pale eyes.

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The matter of becoming members of the Blue clan flowed due to Shiotsu's fierce opposition, but the Minato brothers' whereabouts were moved to the member's dormitory in the "Scepter 4" tunsho.

Because Akio and Hayatoshi's parents died early, Shirahane's arrow stayed in Shiotsu as a relative to take care of the Minato brothers. Although, Shiotsu is a distant relative. However, Akio grew up in the neighborhood as brother and sister, and Minato and his wife also worked together, so the relationship ran deeper than blood connection. Shiotsu was also willing to do his best as the twins' guardian.

But, the story is different when it comes to acting as a parent.

Shiotsu is a single man, a lieutenant in a life-threatening organization. The battle with "Purgatory" was intensifying and it was difficult for the twins to leave the government building and live together.

Shiotsu, who was thinking about what to do, even thought about getting married for a moment, but...

"It's rude to get married to take care of ourselves, Gen-san."

"Even if we don't do that, we can still do our thing, Gen-san."

He got the very correct opinion from the twins and immediately returned calmly.

"If you find it difficult to live outside, why don't you let your children live here?"

It was a good idea to say it.

"In the dorm, if you go to the cafeteria, you'll get proper food. It's hard to live."

Zenjo was a man like a great wild child suddenly picked up by Habari. For Zenjo, the "Scepter 4" camp can be a place where a civilized life is guaranteed.

"It would be bad for emotional education."

Zenjo made a neat face at Shiotsu's words as he rubbed his eyebrows. He maybe he didn't understand what was wrong with emotional education there, or maybe he didn't understand what emotional education was like in the first place.

"But isn't there a reason for what you say, Zenjo? The dorm has everything you need for your life, and Akio's children will take care of it. It's good to have a lot of eyes to watch. I think it is. Even if the deputy director doesn't just carry them on his back, all the members can take care of them."

It was Azuma Sohei from the Chainsaw Squat Sawing Unit who said that.

Chainsaw Squad, a special unit formed by Habari to kill Kagutsu Genji, the "Red King". Although all members of the unit are projectiles with non-standard power and individuality, each one engages like a gear through thoughtful cooperation, becoming a huge, vicious chainsaw and mowing down the enemy. This Azuma, Zenjo and the now deceased Akio, mother of twins, were also members of the chainsaw team.

Azuma also had something to think about Akio's death. Even in an environment where you are inevitably used to the death of your partner, the pain does not go away. In particular, it is humanity that made him feel that he couldn't leave him alone when he heard that they had left behind two growing children. It seemed that Azuma, let alone Zenjo, did not question whether this place was a suitable environment to raise children in good health.

However, Shiotsu couldn't think of any further measures, and when he asked people about his intentions, both Hayato and Akito wanted to live in the "Scepter 4" camp without hesitation, so a dorm room was reassigned to the two of them.

"If you have any problems, tell me right away. It doesn't matter if it's about life, school, or anything trivial."

The two of them honestly nodded to Shiotsu's words, but Shiotsu never consulted them.

Hayato and Akito woke up in the dorm, ate in the dining room, and went to the tunsho high school.

The children were between Akio, a famous member who was a small but ridiculous teacher as a child, and Hayato, who was a person with common sense and was soft on everyone. The twins were loved and well-liked by many members.

The twins also seemed to like the other members more than Shiotsu, who had known them since childhood. They wanted to hear about their work from the off-duty members, and said they wanted to learn swordsmanship, so they brandished a bamboo sword at the tunsho dojo and had a caring member train them.

When they saw the members returning covered in blood after being dispatched, they were not scared and worked handing out water and medicine and helping with first aid. Although Shiotsu told them, "You don't have to do that.", they said, "We want to." and "I owe you."

If he witnessed such a healthy and honest appearance of a 12-year-old boy, it would make sense to be tied down. Among them, Azuma was particularly careful in caring for the twins, perhaps because they felt a sense of responsibility for the twins who lived in the tunsho.

"Oraora! Hayato, the driving is shallow! Akito, the armpits are open!"

The care was mainly in the dojo. Shiotsu often watched Azuma "play" sword training to Hayato and Akito.

Azuma, a user of twin swords. The bamboo swords he held in both hands wielded Hayato and Akito desperately at the same time. He thought he was dealing with Hayato with his right hand and Akito with his left hand, so he swung his sword to guide the two people's movements and allowed them to switch their standing positions, this time with Akito with his right hand and Hayato with his left hand, taking the other part. They both have habits that usually appear when attacking from the right and when attacking from the left, so the bad habits are corrected by hitting them with words and a bamboo sword.

Azuma passively spun for a moment and continued to catch Hayato and Akito's bamboo swords, but when the two were out of breath, they spun to counter and strike. He made a nice noise and hit two hands in a row.

Hayato and Akito groaned slightly and dropped the bamboo sword.

Unlike the members, the twins, who couldn't protect themselves due to their incompetence, wore kendo armor, but they still seemed to feel severe numbness and pain from their beaten hands and couldn't pick up the bamboo sword right away.

"Enough rest!"

"Yes!"

Although their faces were distorted with pain, the twins responded cheerfully.

Shiotsu, who stopped at the entrance of the dojo and was observing the situation, noticed that Hayato had noticed his presence.

"Vice-Commander."

Shiotsu wiggled his eyebrows to the point that the voice he called didn't notice.

Recently, the twins no longer called Shiotsu "Gen-san" like they used to. They call him "Vice-Commander" because of the title in "Scepter 4". It seemed to be proof that they hadn't given up on being members of "Scepter 4", and Shiotsu felt awkward every time he was called that.

"Azuma. Don't hurt them."

Shiotsu frowned and the twins yelled before Azuma answered.

"We ask for strict training."

"He wanted to be stronger, so I told him not to adjust."

"Even if you say that, of course I'm adjusting it."

Azuma said that with a straight face, Hayato and Akito puffed out their cheeks and fell silent.

"Hayaaki, please rehydrate."

Azuma called them and gave instructions by the nickname of the two. The twins left the dojo saying "Yes." with puffy cheeks.

"It's okay to get along and take care of them, but don't forget that Hayato and Akito are still twelve years old."

Azuma listened to Shiotsu's words, murmuring with a sigh, as he twirled the bamboo swords he held in both hands around his hands.

"Is age that important?"

"It's important. Even if they look a bit older, they are immature in mind and body."

"But Hayaaki is smart and they have enough sword qualities. If they want to be a member of the clan, they should."

Shiotsu got a headache when he told him that he should let them do what he didn't want them to do.

"Enough. I'll say it again, they're still kids."

"Skill as a clan member has nothing to do with age. Hayaaki also had great aptitude for different skills, even if they weren't as good as Akio-san, right?"

"It's not a matter of ability. I'm saying we can't allow children with poor judgment of themselves to enter the world of life and death."

"I wonder if you can say that."

The tone was benign, just asking a pure question, but Shiotsu was speechless for a moment.

"Other than that, I don't want to see them on the front lines right away because they've been made a member of the clan. Right now I'm practicing with Hayaaki, but teaching a child a sword is completely different from teaching a child with different abilities a sword. If you put them in the commander's facility, they will definitely be stronger. They may not be as outstanding as Akio-san, but they are warlike and have high concentration, and they also have Hayatoshi-san qualities, so they are smart. You should teach them and train them to handle their different abilities and give them a job when they grow up with a good feeling. You're in trouble because you don't have enough, right?"

In the fierce battle with "Purgatory", the number of members of "Scepter 4" decreases every day. As Azuma said, "Scepter 4" was suffering from a shortage of members. If he does a small number of missions, the death rate of members will naturally increase.

Currently, the defense forces and the police are recruiting a large number of personnel with different skills and are struggling to make up for the shortage.

When he saw Shiotsu silently with a bitter face, Azuma thought that he had said too much, and changed the tone of his voice with a laugh.

"Well, Hayaaki's guardian is Vice Commander Shiotsu, so I'm not going to say anything."

He saw Hayato and Akito return to the dojo.

Azuma raised his hand slightly and welcomed them, saying to Shiotsu in a low voice.

"Once I asked them if they wouldn't join the kendo club at school and they said, "The swords you learn at school can't cut people"."

Shiotsu was amazed, but there was no time to return his words, and Azuma called out to Hayato and Akito, who came running in and said, "Okay, then break is over!".

As he watched the two holding the bamboo sword again, Shiotsu remembered the conversation with Hayatoshi when he talked about the twins' birthday presents.

Shortly before Mr. and Mrs. Minato were killed. he hears the twins said, "I want a sword for my birthday.". Shiotsu said that he couldn't give them a saber, but he could send them a small knife as a souvenir, but Hayatoshi shook his head gently. He refused to give the children a knife and said that the pen would be mightier than the sword and would send a fountain pen.

"I hope they are prepared to harm others a bit later."

Remembering Hayatoshi's calm but determined voice, Shiotsu looked down in suffocating humor.

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Hayato and Akito went to school earnestly for the day, and when class was over, they flew back and went on to live a life wielding a bamboo sword in the dojo. When the members were training at the dojo, they would join the corner and when no one was there, they would practice together. In many cases, Azuma and other members of the group came to teach the sword.

Since the beginning of high school, they did not feel like making friends at school, engaging in club activities, playing games after school, etc. His parents were killed by a human like beast. The life that a normal child had disappeared from Hayato and Akito's eyes.

They just studied hard during class, and the grades always stayed up. It was also because Shiotsu didn't seem to neglect their studies when holding a sword. The two of them never gave up on being members of "Scepter 4".



It was raining a lot that night.

Hayato and Akito wore raincoats and smoothly escaped from the room at midnight and left the dorm. The light footsteps were drowned out by the pouring rain.

The main building was packed with night shift members and several windows were lit, but the west building they were aiming at was dark. Hayato and Akito entered the building, took off their raincoats and rolled them up so as not to wet the floor.

Shining a flashlight on their feet, they aimed at the room at the end of the first floor.

The purpose of the two was the material of the case where their parents died.

The case materials were classified and could not be shown even to the grieving family of the line-of-duty deaths. But Hayato and Akito wanted to know the details of how their parents died and what kind of person killed them.

After living in the "Scepter 4" tunsho for about two months, they have been able to understand what is in the place and when there are people. The two of them went down the corridor of the barracks at midnight to see the materials.

They opened the door where the handwritten "Materials Room" sign was. The key was stolen from the general affairs section during the day.

They didn't turn on the light in the room, they shined a flashlight on the file shelf. It wasn't hard to find what they were looking for in the chronologically arranged files.

A tape with the words "March 1999 Kaume Detention Center Suppression Operation" was taped to the back cover of the plastic file that was removed from the shelf. Hayato and Akito sat down near the ground and opened the file. In the dark, they looked at the letters that emerged with the flashlight.

— For the purpose of subduing the "Red King" Kagutsu Genji, they hurriedly entered the ruins of the Kagutsu detention branch in the Fengze district, which belongs to the "Purgatory". Zenjo Goki, Akio Minato, Sohei Azuma, Bado Ryoichiro, Chidjiwa Gaku, Daiba Sadamitsu are the leaders of the "Chainsaw Squat Sawing Unit", and the first, second and third platoon of the Mobility Division were introduced.

From what they read in the report, it seemed that the operation went smoothly in the early stages. The situation changed when they reached the depths of the detention center and entered a large-scale battle in a hall-like place made by taking out walls from several rooms centered on a common room. Akio Minato died after being attacked by "Purgatory" that was waiting for them.

— The cause of death was the penetration of the chest by the fist that housed the Red Clansman's flame. Instant death.

— Akio Minato's death interrupted the cooperation of the six chainsaws, and the formation of "Scepter 4" collapsed. The waiting "Blue King", Habari Jin and Minato



Hayatoshi rushed inside. Although the war situation was restored, Hayato Minato was also pierced in the chest and died by the same clansman who killed Akio Minato.

"Dad and mom were killed by the same guy."

Hayato's murmuring voice fell into the darkness of the sound of rain.

Following the report, there was also a corpse examination plan for deceased parents. There, Hayato and Akito learned about the state of their parents' bodies, which Shiotsu did not show at the funeral.

When they slowly turned the paper over, the materials of the "Purgatory" members who participated in the battle continued. Noto Kongo, died. Katsunori Tada, died. Keiji Fujitani, died. Fumiaki Honjo, died. Shogoro Yamazaki, died. Kaga Kotetsu, died.

The endless materials of the dead continued to be delivered. Those whose identities were known were given their names, photos of their lives, and backgrounds. For those whose identities could not be identified, a photo of the body was attached to the material with only "Unknown" in the name column. Some of them were so damaged that it seemed impossible to identify them.

Neither Hayato nor Akito were afraid of the horrible pictures of the bodies. They looked and stopped at a page.

Makoto Magara, assassin of Minato Akio and Minato Hayatoshi, escaped.

He was in the materials of the "Purgatory" members who survived and escaped. He was a very young man compared to the other members. He even looked like a child.

"The guy who killed mom and dad is still alive.", Akito said. He was a dry voice without emotions.

The two then silently stared at the material for a long time.

Finally, they closed the file on both sides and returned it to the shelf. They quietly left the library and walked down the dark corridor.

It was still raining heavily. However, Hayato and Akito forgot to put on their rolled-up raincoats and walked out as they were. A large drop of cold rain hit their bodies, but they felt nothing.

The heavy rain made them soak in a few seconds. When they returned to the dorm room, they took off their wet clothes on the floor, roughly wiped their bodies, and put on their home clothes.

There was a bunk bed in the bedroom, and Hayato usually used the top bed and Akito used the bottom bed, but they snuck into the bottom bed together without saying anything.

The two lay in silence, their backs pressed together to protect each other's helpless backs. The rain-beaten body was cold, and the limbs remained cold, but the backs that touched each other were feverish and felt burning. They thought it was the temperature of anger.

They even had a strange feeling that the amount of heat from anger would change so much just by knowing the face of the human who killed them.

Until recently, the death of their parents was beyond the mist.

The sadness of loss was bitten many times, thinking that they could no longer hear the voice of their father who sweetly and intelligently advised them, and that they could no longer see the back of their mother, who was bold, and never made a mistake on the important point. However, the feeling of death itself was ambiguous. That's why they wanted to be members of the Blue clan, they could choose a beautiful word to inherit their parents' will instead of revenge.

It is also because it was adorned with the sound of martial arts, which seemed to produce proud, and they were sent only looking at the beautifully groomed face without seeing how their parents' bodies were destroyed.

However, it was not the vague concept of "enemy" that brought death to his parents, but a living human being with a name. His hands pierced the bodies of their parents, crushed their organs and made a wind cave in his chest.

Hayato and Akito didn't express their feelings about it, but shared their anger at not being able to handle it with their backs touching each other.

It was less than a few weeks after that that they were motivated to believe in the word destiny.

Hayato and Akito witnessed the appearance of a true childhood pattern.

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After the hideout received the avalanche from "Scepter 4", the people of "Purgatory" were chased and scattered.

Takao Kurayama survived the battle with "Scepter 4" in the Kaume Detention Branch, and later returned to the house where his wife and children were.

Takao Kurayama was married. He entered the registry long before Kurayama entered "Purgatory". The other woman was a cabaret girl with a deeply carved face and a dull atmosphere, and she said that she had a son, so he asked, "Would you like to get married?". It was not a statement of sense of responsibility, but rather a favor to a woman who declared that she had a child. Kurayama didn't take marriage very seriously, so either one was fine. Even after registering, his life did not change, and the woman gave birth to a child and raised him alone. While doing anti-social work in an anti-social organization, Kurayama would occasionally go see the faces of women and children.

Finally, Kagutsu Genji appeared, "Purgatory" was born, and Kurayama's organization was also incorporated into "Purgatory". At that time, many of his friends died, but Kurayama survived and obtained a life flame in exchange for his right ear.

He felt that the screw in his son's head was flying, but as he grew older, he felt that he was weak, but the decisive factor was when he was expelled from "jail" and returned to the house of the woman who was his wife. He seemed like he saw it somewhere and had great admiration for Kagutsu.

"Father, are you that person's subordinate? I also want to be a subordinate."

The boy told him that, Kurayama laughed, but was strangely devoured. Even if he threatened that he would be killed, even if he told him that he needed to be prepared to burn a part of his body to become a subordinate, the glow in his eyes kept increasing.

Upon receiving the installation from Kagutsu, a part of the body is destroyed by the captured flame. The one who dies will die, and only the one who survives will become a member of the clan. In Kurayama's case, the place where the flame went out and burned was his right ear.

The boy stared at Kurayama's burned and nonexistent right ear with eyes close to envy, saying, "Oh. I'll dedicate every part of my body to him."

It was clear from the fact that his eyes were uncomfortable that it wasn't a joke. It was a human eye that he would see daily if he lived in "Purgatory", and he could throw away anything by the time he burned the life out of him.

He was somehow sick of his son not being old enough to have those eyes.

"It's not crazy.", he said.

"Kurayama, what are you doing?"

The voice was released and Kurayama raised his face. He looked like he was lost in thought of him with a pile of gold in his hand.

Kurayama was counting money with two men in a room where the concrete wall was black from being burned.

"Oh, yeah."

The man who spoke to Kurayama bowed slightly and counted the money in his hand.

Kurayama returned home after being chased by "Purgatory", but after a while he left the house and entered the office of the organization he belonged to before becoming a member of "Purgatory". The reason why he returned to the building where he couldn't smell the scorching odor due to the donpachi when he was taken to "Purgatory" and joined his friends was to resume Shinogi, who earned the top pay. "Purgatory" is different from ordinary gangster society, but Hitoshi Soma, who is number 2, has a solid cash flow and

has a mechanism to raise money from the bottom. He didn't know if the maximum payout had been properly raised to Kagutsu or if it had been absorbed into Soma's pocket.

It was Hiura who asked to restart Shinogi, and he was Kurayama's older brother in the previous organization. However, it is the same in "Purgatory", and, in the first place, "Purgatory" has no other hierarchical relationship other than the force of power. He didn't have to drag the hierarchy from his previous story, but he didn't have the bad feelings of rubbing against it (rubbing usually means killing each other in "Purgatory"), so Hiura was still his older brother.

"Joe Norkin, this is good!"

Another man put a part of the counted gold in an envelope and made a cheerful voice.

Ed, whose real name is Edward, is a brilliant man and has a unique record of illegally entering Japan from Mexico and arriving in "Purgatory".

The envelope that Ed had put aside was placed on the edge of the table and the remaining money was distributed by three people.

"Tonight is a party! Eat good meat and good sake!"

Ed laughed and fanned out his own layout.

At the back of Kurayama's right ear, there was a sudden buzzing of flames. Kurayama's right ear was burned to the eardrum, but on the right side he could hear the sound of flames instead of the normal sound. The flame was sensitive to signals from others, and Kurayama survived for a long time thanks to the ability to hear the signals he had obtained in exchange for losing his right outer ear and eardrum.

"He is a guest."

A few seconds after Kurayama said that, he started hearing footsteps that could be picked up by his left ear and spoke.

When Hiura answered, the door opened and two young men dressed in black appeared. It is a boy-like duo that doesn't look good in the black suit that is synonymous with "Purgatory". Kyoji and Taku. Soma loved them quite a bit and they were often assigned to work as cabin messengers.

"This is Soma-san's errand."

Kyoji raised a hand and said that with a careless gesture.

Especially when he looked at Kyoji with a baby face, Kurayama sometimes remembered his son. He told him that the "Red King" would not have a child as a subordinate, but when he saw Kyoji, he felt that this was not the case. Either way, there was no point in trying to guess Kagutsu's heart.

"What is there to give Soma-san?"

Kyoji said with a meek mouth, moving his palm to urge him on. Hiura's temple, who doesn't like the attitude of young boys, jerked back, but Ed issued a bright voice at the right time.

"Oh! Sure! Yeah, wait a minute."

Ed handed Kyoji an envelope containing the gold he had just set aside. Kyoji greeted him casually, "Yes, surely."

During that time, Kurayama's right ear caught the sound of a small flame still buzzing. The flame in the right ear, reacting to the signal, emitted a flickering sound that was particularly sensitive to hostility.

"You guys got it with someone."

"Eh?"

Kyoji frowned.

"He's small, but I heard the hostility was directed at me. Out of the office. Maybe it's two."

At Kurayama's words, Hiura distorted his face and looked at Kyoji and his friends.

"What are these guys doing?!"

"What?!"

Hiura yelled at him, and Kyoji's head filled with blood as well. However, Taku held Kyoji's shoulder from the side and stepped forward.

"I'm sorry, but I'm going to get rid of him soon, so you have no complaints, right?"

Taku tried to leave the room with Kyoji, but before he did, the sound picked up by Kurayama's right ear was far away.

"No, the sign is going to go away. Maybe I'll call my friends."

"Can you chase them?"

"I can't keep up, but it's a nuisance. That little sign isn't blue clothes. Maybe something from the mob. It's easier to wait for your friends to come back and then finish them off."

Kyoji and Taku looked at each other as if to consult, but Kurayama waved them away.

"I'll get rid of him here, so you should go home and give Soma-san the money. I'll kill you if you're a cat."

"I'm sorry!"

Beside Kyoji who barked, Taku gave Soma a warning as he made a slightly involuntary face.

Currently, "Purgatory" who has lost his home base is scattered and hiding on his own. Soma used youngsters like Kyoji and Taku who could become couriers and fundraisers.

To summarize the notification elements, it was said that the time of the war with "Scepter 4" would be indicated there, so they would avoid any flashy action as much as possible, but if they did, it would be an outburst in "Purgatory". Such release was transmitted through Taku's mouth.

"Kurayama. Why did you go home? It's his fault, so I wish they'd tighten up."

After repelling Kyoji and Taku, Hiura said that in an unpleasant voice. The main reason was that it was troublesome for Hiura, who hated cheeky youths, and Kyoji and Taku would be an unnecessary quarrel, but Kurayama scoffed as he lit a cigarette.

"I've been lacking in exercise lately, so I only wanted to do it if there were clients who might diverge."

Hiura snorted and Ed laughed, "Takao, I'm fine!"

When Takao Kurayama's right ear heard the sound of hostility again, he was skeptical about the smallness of the signal, which was exactly the same as before.

Didn't you call your friends? Are you going to keep monitoring? He was wondering, "I'm going to take a look outside.", he said.

As he walked down the stairs of the building, the sound of hostility grew louder. However, it was strangely unstable. It was murderous, but it made a terribly immature sound. Anxiety, fear, and conflict mixed and wavered. The one of those who are not used to murderous intentions.

The immature killing intent was heard from the side of the building's entrance. It was not visible from the stairs of a narrow, dark multi-tenant building.

When he deliberately left the building unprotected, a large leaf came out of the blind spot.

Kurayama flipped the sword over with his arm engulfed in flames. It was an unusually thick and heavy blade, but the silhouette of the human with it was small.

"Huh?"

It was a boy who had a large sword that was as tall as his own.

A boy the same age as his own son. He forgets if he was eleven, twelve or thirteen, but he was a kid that age anyway.

The boy was attacked by Kurayama and staggered from the weight of the sword. However, he did not let go of his hands that were holding the handle of the sword.

When Kurayama stopped moving towards an unexpected opponent for a moment, his right ear heard another murderous sound.

An attack that pushed straight into the heart from behind him. Without turning around, he felt it alone at the sound and turned around.

The silver blade passed through the side. He put a roundhouse kick to his back holding him up. He was unable to light the flame because he was unconscious.

"Wow!"

The person who attacked from behind was also small. He groaned and rolled to the side with the greatsword, but soon got up and repositioned the sword. The sword was familiar to "Purgatory". It's a formal saber from "Scepter 4" that should normally emit blue light.

The faces of two children, each holding a standard saber and a huge saber that seemed to be a custom-made item, were eerily similar. The children, who had thin eyes and thin lips and seemed to copy and paste, looked at Kurayama with a look like that.

"Where's the baby-faced guy?"

Said the boy with the big sword.

At that moment, some scenes flashed in his head and Kurayama grasped the rough situation.

A sword of the blue clothes, possessed by a boy who has no signs of special powers. A familiar formal saber and a rare but familiar great sword.

Immature killing intent and Kyoji's name.

Battle in the "Prison". A scene of killing each other with the blue clothes in the corridor.

The great Venus that Kyoji defeated.

"Are you guys relatives of Akio Minato?"

Akio Minato: Although she was a small woman, she looked like a fierce man who wielded a great sword that matched the good devil. He hears that it was Akio Minato who killed Hiiragi who was number 3 in "Purgatory".

"Do you know my mother?"

The boy with the formal saber said that.

He wondered if there were two children as big in front of that woman as a boy. He thought she was her little brother or something.

Probably, after finding Kyoji and following him, they thought that this was his hiding place. Is it because they went looking for the saber?



It was shallow and meaningless to run to death.

In Kurayama's mind, the face of another boy who was in a hurry to die came to mind.

"Ahahahaha!"

High-pitched laughter erupted on the stairs.

When he turned his face, he could see Hiura happily distorting his face and shaking his shoulders and laughing at him.

"If you think about what kind of customers will come, will it be Minato Akio's son?"

Hiura slowly walked down the stairs and stood in front of the children.

"No, the best! Two of them!"

Hiura's eyes shone brightly. Hiura hated cheeky youths and he hated cheeky children more, but as soon as he became the target of harm, awkwardness turned to joy. In response to Hiura's sadistic killing intent, a flame sounded in his right ear.

Kurayama took a step back in a mood that couldn't kill him beautifully.

"Let's kill an animal here for the first time, and feed the other alive with blue clothes! If the child in the family becomes a hostage, can there be blue clothes that will be killed quietly?"

The children held the sword with a tense look. From that position, he knew they had some sword knowledge, but it means nothing to a combat-ready "Purgatory" opponent, other than just stabbing a shielded opponent in the back.

Flame violently erupted from Hiura's chest. He burned the front of his black suit and ignited the burn marks on his chest. He spread his arms wide and lunged at one of the boys to hug him. It was a hug from hell that burned alive with flames and wouldn't let go until you died.

There was a murderous sound in Kurayama's right ear.

It was not the sound of Hiura's killing intent. It was not the sound of children.

It was the sound of his own killing intent coming out of Kurayama's body.

Well, he calmly acknowledged that he wanted to kill Hiura and decided that if he wanted to kill him, he couldn't help it. The humans in "Purgatory" do not control his murderous intent.

Kurayama circulated the flame from the back of his right ear to his entire body. He took a deep step and swung his right arm. Kurayama's fist hit Hiura's defenseless back.

Kurayama's flame struck from his fist to Hiura's body. Hiura, who had concentrated his abilities at the front of his body, boiled his blood and internal organs with a blow from behind and spit out boiled blood.

"Ku, Ku...Kurayama..."

Hiura called out to Kurayama spitefully, turning only his face and moving his mouth wet with thick blood.

"I didn't mean to hate you enough to kill us, but I wanted to kill you. It's bad."

Hiura collapsed forward as he looked at Kurayama. The flames on his chest that had been emitted completely burned the asphalt. On the back, the part hit by Kurayama's fist had the clothes and flesh burned, and the blood bubbled up for a short while, but it soon subsided.

When he raised his face, the children looked at the dark mountain with astonished faces.

He thinks it's ironic.

On the battlefield of that "prison", Kurayama watched Akio Minato die. The woman, who had been slashing the necks, arms, and torsos of the people from "Purgatory" without hesitation, like a reflex monster, stopped moving for a moment when she saw Kyoji's face.

The reason was that she was able to understand the dark mountain that she was looking at the end, but at the same time it was also mysterious. Akio Minato no doubt hesitated to cut when she saw Kyoji who was a boy. However, it often happens that the ace class in blue clothes, which is a different vector from "Purgatory" and mercilessly cuts the enemy so that there is no human heart, stops and makes a gap just because the opponent is a child.

However, as a person who had just inadvertently killed a friend with murderous intent, he had a feeling that humans are unexpectedly like that.

"It's not crazy."

To the children who stood up, Kurayama vomited in a childish tone.

"Did you guys really believe that you could take revenge, even if you didn't have the power? Is the child's brain made of cotton candy?"

He looked at the children with a confused expression and bit his tongue.

"Go home, shit and go to bed. Or do you want to kill me with your mother's sword?"

The children bit their lips hard and slowly backed away from Kurayama and Hiura's corpses. Kurayama watched the cautious stance of not turning his back until he was out of range, taking out a cigarette. He chewed the filter, he turned it on and took a break.

After enough distance, the children ran off. After disappearing, Kurayama called out to the stairs of the building.

"Are you going to go up like a traitor? Or are they killing each other here?"

"Hahahaha! Well done, Takao!"

Ed came downstairs and laughed happily as usual.

"I'm fighting because I didn't want to do something with my friends. Do you understand?"

"Well, that's right. It's a daily fact that in the fights of "Purgatory" we kill each other, but now it can be said that it is a betrayal to kill a friend to help the relatives of a blue clothes."

"No, no!"

Ed shook his head in excess of action.

"I'm here to burn my heart! By killing a child who isn't a person with powers, my heart won't burn. I'm fighting too."

Ed said, "That's more than that.". He took out a bunch of gold from his chest and shook it.

"I'm planning on eating good meat and good sake tonight! Let's go early, Friend."

"That's right. Because I let the child escape, this place will be invaded by the blue clothes, and I'll move if I eat a meal?"

"Let's split the money that was for Hiura-san."

"I am not crazy."

Kurayama changed his mind and decided to think about the meat and sake he was going to eat, getting rid of his old friends and the troublesome boy who had tried to kill him.

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A reckless barbarity that can only be said to be a miracle to be alive, such as seeing a human in "Purgatory" and leaving without reporting, pulling out a relic saber, and even trying to avenge his parents. Hayato and Akito were rebuked by Shiotsu like a burning fire.

Habari suddenly visited them when they told him to be reluctant, except when they were at school and they had written an overwhelming number of sentences of remorse in their room.

"Wow, Commander Habari."

"Oh, why are you here?"

The members of "Scepter 4" were also excited, the two children who were not very active, were amazed by Habari came to their territory without warning.

"I wonder what the kids are doing that made Shiotsu angry and depressed."

Habari said happily.

"Gen-san, is he depressed?"

Akito asked intimidatingly. He didn't like that he was angry, but he didn't know that he was depressed. Habari laughed.

"Oh. He's depressed because he thinks he couldn't stop them from acting recklessly."

"That is..."

When Hayato rebutted, Habari easily nodded.

"He's a creature that thinks too much. That's also an advantage. I'm still thinking about it. What would be best for you and what should I do now?"

Incidentally, Habari turned to his brother.

"Do you still want to be my clansmen?"

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"Oh! Not a good feeling, Hayaaki!"

Azuma made a funny voice and was attacked by Hayato and Akito with the bamboo swords in both hands.

The two of them used light blue light on their bamboo bodies and swords, and breathed together to challenge Azuma. Originally, the twins were so close to each other that they could communicate with each other without words, but ever since the swordsman Azuma started training them together, the precision of the cooperation improved dramatically. Who was laughing at the twins who had been trained by Azuma, saying that they could become twin swordsmen whose bodies split in two?

"It's a face that doesn't float, Shiotsu."

Habari told him that from the side, Shiotsu deepened the wrinkles that had drawn between his eyebrows.

Currently, he was in the middle of randori training at the dojo. In other words, instead of Azuma playing with children in his spare time, Hayato and Akito also participate in training as members. They also trained to control the different abilities of blue and protect their body, so they didn't wear kendo armor like they used to.

The twins received the Habari installation and became members of the Blue clan.

"Perhaps because you make them clan members without warning."

"Haha, sorry, but it is up to the "King" to decide who will be the clan member, because there is no provision for the installation of a minor to have a guardian seal."

When he looked at Habari, who said that lightly, he gave him a cold look back.

"And you're too worried these days. It's to your advantage to worry and think more than others, but you should be free enough to stop worrying about unanswered things, right?"

The air in "Scepter 4" and "Purgatory" was getting worse every day. Today he was able to spend his time training that way, but there were so many emergency dispatches every day that he didn't know when he would be able to do it again. As the Vice-Commander of "Scepter 4", he couldn't afford to spend all his thoughts on his family.

Even so...

"Do you think the facility will reach a scene where those who have become clan members will be useful?"

"They can't be put on the battle board yet, but I'm sure they have the qualities. If they continue to train for different abilities, they can awaken as a Strain. Facilities currently mean collars and seeding for them."

"Sowing?"

Habari suddenly smiled at him.

"It's a situation where it doesn't matter when, who or what happens. It's a good idea to sow seeds for the future and bet on what grows."

"Don't play with those kids."

Habari laughed lightly and looked at Shiotsu with clear eyes.

"They will grow well, Shiotsu."

With no confidence at all, Shiotsu sighed deeply.