



K - ONE YEAR LATER:

CHAPTER 1: BUSY AND QUIET (BY TATSUKI MIYAZAWA)

TRANSLATION: NARU-KUN / K-PROJECT WORLD

A year has passed since then.

Kuro Yatogami got up before dawn. It's a long-standing habit and he doesn't need an alarm clock, his consciousness wakes up very naturally.

And when he got out of the futon, he washed his face without turning on the lights in the common space so as not to wake up his roommates, Shiro and Neko, he put on training clothes and left the room with his favorite wooden sword in one hand.

Looking back at the student dormitory where the three of them lived, it was dark and sunk in the morning mist.

If that were during the testing period, the lights in the rooms of the students who would be desperately studying all night might be on.

At that time, Kuro was in his heart,

(Do your best.)

He heaved a quiet sigh and headed off to morning practice.

Since he started living in Gakuenjima, it was a perfect place for sword training.

There were small forests, quiet sanctuaries, and rocky areas along the sea. It was perfect for training, meditating and running fast.

That morning, Kuro chose a small vacant lot a bit away from the dorm.

He shook the wooden sword he brought there, stood still and swung the sword again. In that way, he checked and corrected the subtle feelings in himself over and over again.

What is the optimal foot position?

What is the best grip?

He continued to search for the best physical treatment without getting tired.

Kuro gently closed his eyes as his body sweated a little and the dawn light shone on the wasteland.

(Yes.)

During training, the sharp sensation mixed with the darkness of the trees and he perceived the sign that someone was approaching there.

From then on it was the paid part.

(Two people... No, three people.)

He could see they were killing the footsteps. Holding their breath and gently reducing the distance.

Then...

(No murder instinct.)

The next moment,

"Oh!"

"He received it!"

"Sensei, be prepared!"

Three signals came at the same time as they shouted.

Kuro constantly moved.

As he swept his body left and right with a water-like motion that he could barely feel the force, he backed away from the gap, dipped his hips, and drew the wooden sword from the bottom up.

He heard pops in quick succession, and three bamboo swords flew high into the dawn sky.

"Well, I'm numb."

"Great!"

"Kuro-chan Sensei, as expected!"

Kuro sighed as he opened his eyes and reconfirmed the attackers.

"You guys are...?"

They were the members of the kendo club. One with black hair, one blonde, only one had a shaved head. They got up from where they fell and were picking up their bamboo swords which flew away while waving their numb hands.

"What are you doing?"

When Kuro asked with a scared face,

"We were on our way to volunteer training."

"So, we saw Kuro-chan Sensei training."

"I wanted a move."

They responded with a smile without being afraid.

The advisor of the Kendo club fell ill, and Kuro, recommended by the advisor, was supervising the activities of the club.

Furthermore, these three boys who were really bad boys were also dorm students at Gakuenjima, so they inevitably ran into each other almost every day.

Therefore, he was treated with an attitude that he did not know if they respected him or not.

One of them raised his hand.

"Hey, Kuro-chan Sensei. It's a good idea, so train me from now on."

Another person tugged on Kuro's sleeve.

"That's right. The tournament is close."

The last person clasped his hands together with a serious expression.

"We really want to win this time."

Kuro thought for a moment,

"So is."

There was no reason not to support the young enthusiasts.

"Ok. I'm going to go to the dojo."

The three people cheered.

Along the way, the students praised Kuro again.

"But Kuro-chan is amazing, right?"

"I am really a teacher."

The others clapped silently.

Kuro just smiled.

He knew better than anyone that he was still far from such a situation.

The previous move was also a bit stiff and a bit awkward.

Because they were at the student level, he was able to deal with it with a margin, but he didn't know what would have happened if they were skilled bullies to some extent.

(If was Ichigen-sama...)

Kuro suddenly thought.

(He would have immediately found out who they were when they got closer.)

No matter who the other party was, it was almost impossible for them to enter without Kuro noticing. It was possible to distinguish between the homicidal instinct of a killer and the childishness of those who were trying to make mischief.

However, he still hadn't reached the divine area where he could immediately see the identity of the other party just by signaling to approach like Miwa Ichigen did in his memory.

(I still need more.)

Kuro thought with a smile.

It was a quiet moment before dawn, but it soon changed to something dense and hectic as usual.

After finishing the instruction to the Kendo club members, he return to his room, take a quick shower, get ready and start preparing breakfast.

Steam came out of the rice cooker that had been set on a timer beforehand, and Neko started to wake up as the miso soup properly extracted from the soup stock started to smell really good.

"Kurosuke, good morning~"

Neko grew up and wore sleepwear.

"Oh, good morning."

"Wagahai, I'm going to take a shower~"

Neko went straight to the bathroom. She was still sleepy, but she showed her intention to get up and go to school.

"Compared to that."

Kuro sighed and headed to Shiro's room when the cooking process was complete.

"I'll go in."

Gently knocking, the silver-haired youth was still in a daze holding a pillow. Buried in a large number of books, it was a room that seemed to be that of a scholar.

"....."

Kuro put his hand on his waist and narrowed his eyes. When he was wondering how to wake him up, Shiro suddenly started to wake up. He yawned softly, looking at him,

"Hello, Kuro. I dreamed that you woke me up in a dream. Then I woke up twice in my dream. Is it really real now? Good morning."

Kuro had no choice but to smile at the soft words.

"No. You are the same as always, Shiro."

Even if they are sent to school, Kuro will continue to work shortly after taking a breather. Washing, light cleaning, washing. Kuro learned from Miwa Ichigen that the essence of training lies in the casual life of everyday life.

And there is no word "cut" in the Kuro dictionary.

Looking at the clock and judging that it was time, Kuro also went to school. Currently, Kuro was the deputy director of the school coffee shop attached to Ashinaka High School.

Twenty-five years of service. Stubborn. Excellent flavor. Jiro Tanaka, also known as "Tetsujin of Gakuenjima", who was fluent in everything from French to Japanese to Chinese, recognized his culinary skills.

At the time, Kuro was waving his arms in the kitchen as he made various recipes developed by director Tanaka Shokudo. He was working to inherit the "Tanaka Don", which is made by mixing fish caught in the sea near Gakuenjima with sesame sauce, and the "Mixed Food", which is very popular among the students in the sports club, and is a mixture of pork, garlic and fried food.

The public agreed that Tanaka, who will reach retirement age in about three years, was looking at Kuro as his successor and training him.

The student coffee shop is fast, cheap, delicious, and plentiful, which is quite different from the orthodox Japanese food that Kuro likes to cook, but he is diligent and enthusiastic. By the way, he was definitely building his position as a coffee shop cooking student.

Coffee shop work is not just about cooking in the kitchen. Before that, there are inspections of ingredients brought by the buyer, controls of the preparations made the day

before, meetings with each staff about the menu of the day, preparation of kitchen utensils, etc.

And after that, we finally have a busy lunch like a battlefield.

The hurried student's stomach was filled with a kitchen knife, a wok, seasonings, and fragrant smoke.

Even after the lunch break was over and the satisfied students had disappeared, Kuro's work was still stacked. He washes the dishes, polish the pan, and get everything ready for the next morning again.

When the time limit came, he greeted the chef and colleagues, left the workplace and went to the Kendo room.

There, as a kendo trainer, he supervised a total of 40 members, including men and women, and also practiced himself if necessary.

After Kuro became acting director, he injected more energy into himself and it was hoped that he would be able to aim for a higher prize in team competitions and individual competitions in the next tournament.

After a tense lesson with the students, Kuro finished showering and changing his clothes, and this time he left the school island in a hurry.

Meeting with a supplier who will deliver new ingredients, preliminary inspection of the wholesale district to buy tableware, etc. in bulk, shopping as a housewife, etc.

For Kuro, who has always been actively refining himself since he was a child, such a tense daily life felt familiar.

And at dusk when he was about to finish such a busy but dense day, Kuro suddenly stopped in front of a small park and went inside. Rusty swings and slides. It was an ordinary park with only a few benches.

As he held a shopping bag containing daily necessities, he sat down on a bench placed under a zelkova tree.

He wasn't tired or trying to catch a break. Recently, he had been intentionally trying to loosen the tension on him.

In his busy daily life, he dared to find time to relax like that.

At the time of the decisive battle with the green clan a year ago, Kuro managed to win the battle against his brother, Yukari Mishakuji, with a sword. However, Kuro did not believe that his ability was superior.

That was only a good estimate of ten and he only managed to pick up a couple of wins.

It was more difficult.

Kuro, who was so distraught, had the idea to plunge into a calmer moment.

Miwa Ichigen's image was in his head.

(He was always a natural person. He was at the weak end of playing without strength.)

Inevitably drawing closer to the teacher, Kuro tried to practice quiet "inaction" as a likely way to improve himself.

Of course, at first he had a lot of time and felt awkward and guilty as if he was jumping, but recently that had gradually subsided. And...

(Ah.)

The wind blew.

(Somehow today, I get it.)

Kuro closed his eyes.

He could see that space was expanding.

He could see that the tops of the trees were shaking. He could see the clouds flowing.

Sound of insect feathers.

The smell of wild flowers.

The applause of children in the distance.

His body became transparent and on the contrary, he could feel the surroundings clearly and vividly.

The sensation did not sharpen sharply, but the consciousness engulfed the surroundings forever.

There was no boundary between him and his surroundings.

At that moment, the sound of approaching footsteps reached his ears.

There would be no harm.

He understood it very naturally.

It was a woman.

The voice came out naturally.

"Seri Awashima?"

When he opened his eyes, Seri Awashima from "Scepter 4" stood there with a surprised face.

"Long time not see you."

When Kuro said that,

"Fufu."

Awashima laughed.

"I came here because I saw you unusually vaguely from a distance... but it's different. Did you raise your arm again?"

"I don't know. But that's how it is. I think I kind of understand why my master kept writing haiku."

Kuro simply shook his head at the smile on Awashima's mouth, who looked suspicious.

"Do not worry."

Kuro and Awashima have only met a few times since the incident a year ago. It's nothing familiar, but it's not as confrontational as it used to be.

There was an atmosphere of recognizing each other as a comrade.

Awashima said,

"Give my best regards to the 'Silver King'."

Saying that, she tried to leave easily, but Kuro asked behind her.

"Reisi Munakata hasn't returned yet?"

Awashima looked back once.

"Unfortunately not."

He smiled bitterly.

Then she turned forward and headed out of the park. Now she was under unimaginable pressure and there was a lot of work to do.

Kuro saw her back and then said,

"Well, I'll be back too."

He stood up slowly. The time to loosen up was over. Shiro and Neko were waiting for him.

He once again launched into the comfortable race of day to day.

It will continue in the second chapter, "The absence of the King".