



K - ONE YEAR LATER:

CHAPTER 9: SEE YOU AGAIN (BY RAIRAKU RED)

TRANSLATION: NARU-KUN / K-PROJECT WORLD

A year has passed since then.

"I'm here~..."

Sukuna Gojo moaned from the pain in his knee.

After daily sword practice with Mishakuji, that kind of pain would appear at night. While he was crouching on the floor and rubbing his knees, Mishakuji came out of the bathroom and laughed.

"Oh, Sukuna-chan. You look bad."

"You look bad! You look bad!"

From the top of the perch set up in the room, Kotosaka agreed with Mishakuji and sneered at Sukuna.

"Shut up."

He was used to injuries like bruises, but he didn't like the pain in his joints. Mishakuji said as he slid a lotion-soaked cotton pad over his cheek.

"Growing pains, right? It's easy to over exercise when you're growing up. Did you stretch correctly?"

"....."

"Even though you are active in practice, why are you skipping it? Cooling down is important maintenance for your body."

Sukuna reluctantly started to stretch after hearing that with an exasperated face. It was too late for a post-exercise cool-down, but he felt that slowly stretching his body eased the pain a bit.

"Hurry up and take a shower after you're done stretching. The one who should make dinner today is Sukuna-chan."

"I know."

After swinging his sword out with all his might, Sukuna was covered in sweat and dust. Mishakuji wouldn't let him walk into the kitchen looking like that, and even Sukuna felt uncomfortable.

As he was about to go to the bathroom after finishing his stretches, Mishakuji called out, "Sukuna-chan."

"What?"

Looking back, Mishakuji stood next to Sukuna and smiled amusedly.

"As expected, you have grown."

"Eh... Yes?"

Mishakuji looked at Sukuna and he was as tall as ever. But when they told him that, just a little... he felt that Mishakuji's face and his eyes were getting closer than before.

He didn't care if he told him that he was growing. Though Sukuna replied curtly, "Maybe so.", and he triumphantly headed to the bathroom.

In the time of "Jungle", Sukuna had a way of fighting that was based on the great powers that Nagare had given him.

He fought by freely manipulating a scythe that was taller than his body, equipped with a blade made of powerful green lightning, with his supernaturally strengthened physical abilities.

Of course, he could still fight the same way he did then. The power that he received from Nagare has not yet disappeared from inside Sukuna.

However, he had no guarantee that the power would continue since the "Slate" was destroyed.

That's why Sukuna asked Mishakuji to teach him how to use the sword.

Mishakuji's strength does not depend solely on his supernatural powers. He is rooted in a trained body and mind, and polished technique.

Sukuna wanted something that could be called his own power, so that even if the time came for his super power to disappear, he wouldn't go back to being a helpless child.

After taking a shower, Sukuna stood in the kitchen after properly drying his hair with a blow dryer since Mishakuji was noisy.

He boiled water in a pot, added the onions and broth, and while it simmered, he chopped the green onions, ham and carrots. Iwa-san always wanted to add green peppers, but he didn't like them, so he skipped them (well, if Mishakuji had green peppers when it was his turn to cook, he would have eaten them). Carrots, he also cut into large pieces for Kotosaka and set aside.

He placed a beaten egg in the pot of bouillon soup and finished the egg drop soup first.

He made scrambled eggs by dropping two egg mixtures sprinkled with salt and pepper into a hot skillet and putting them on a plate. He put the carrots in the pan, starting with the hard-to-cook carrots to stir-fry, then add the rice to stir-fry. The smell of sesame oil and ingredients filled the room, making Sukuna's stomach growl. He also added green onions and ham, returned the scrambled egg to the pan, and drizzled it with soy sauce. Fried rice can be made quickly, and if he adds vegetables to it, even Mishakuji, who is picky about nutritional balance, won't complain, so it has become a Sukuna staple. No matter what, he couldn't reach the taste that Iwa-san did.

"I did it."

He arranged a bowl of fried rice for two and a bowl of egg drop soup on a small table, and served Kotosaka a bowl of chopped carrots, apples, and walnuts.

"Itadakimasu!"

When he clasped his hands together, Kotosaka also yelled, "Itadakimasu!"

"Sukuna-chan, you're also getting used to cooking. At first it was terrible."

Mishakuji said after taking a bite of the fried rice. It was apparently a passing grade.

"I've never done it before, so it's not good."

Sukuna was the only son of a prestigious family. Since the end of the war, most of the family members have held important government posts, and his father was also a high-ranking government official. In such a house, his mother wanted to control everything over Sukuna, brandishing her distorted love.

Of course, they had never made him cook. Sukuna only ate food made by chefs that his mother approved of, and he was not allowed to eat food made by amateurs.

He wondered what she would think if she knew that Sukuna was eating the fried rice that he made himself.

When he was at his parents' house, he ate food cooked by the chef, after leaving home, he ate what he bought at a convenience store, and after becoming a J-Rank in "Jungle" and entering that secret base, he ate Iwafune's home cooking every day. Now when Sukuna prepares meals, Iwafune's kitchen is ideal. It's not because it's easier to imitate than chef's cooking.

That was because the food that Iwafune made was the most delicious that Sukuna had ever tasted, and it was what he believed was necessary to live.

"If it's something like this, I should have asked Iwa-san how to make food properly."

The fried rice made by Iwafune didn't seem to have been made with anything special, but it had an uncanny depth and was really delicious. Even if he got used to cooking, the taste of Iwafune would be far away.

"Yes. But doing trial and error on your own without knowing the answer is a good experience."

Mishakuji said that with a cold face and changed the topic to "Now that I think about it...".

"You're thinking of leaving this town soon, aren't you?"

"Ah. Where do we go next?"

"I'm going back to the center."

Mishakuji, Sukuna, and Kotosaka have been moving from one place to another ever since they lost the secret base where they spent time with Nagare and the others. Sometimes they would wander for days, and sometimes they would rent an apartment by the month and settle for a while, like this time.

"Ok, but aren't we just wanted people?"

Both Mishakuji and Sukuna are the core of the criminal group that wreaked havoc on the world a year ago. They had no intention of getting caught, but it was quite a bold move to head back to the center of the city where it would be easy to see "Scepter 4" and "Tokijikuin".

"You know, Sukuna-chan. It seems that the "Blue King" is on a trip now."

"Really? They must be fucking busy, what are they doing?"

Due to the release of the "Slate" made by Nagare, people all over the world became supernatural beings. Most of them lost their strength due to the destruction of the "Slate", but there were surprisingly many who retained their supernatural powers. Even if the "Sword of Damocles" disappeared, the responsibility of the "Blue King" would not decrease and should have increased.

"So, are you going to prepare something in the absence of the "Blue King"?"

Remembering the excitement from when Nagare was near, Sukuna instinctively leaned forward, but Mishakuji smiled wryly.

"Idiot. No, I'm just going to see how things go."

Mishakuji narrowed his eyes and looked out the window.

"A year has passed since that incident, and I feel like the shape of the world has changed a bit."

"Shape of the world?"

"Yes. The consciousness of the people who shape this world must have changed. Nagare-chan's plan was defeated, but at least the people are different from when they knew nothing. I felt the "possibility" within me, though just off for a moment. There are many people who still have the light of "possibility" in them."

Sukuna looked at Mishakuji with wide eyes.

"The area where the influence remains strongest is, of course, the area around the city center where the "Slate" was located."

Sukuna had never thought of it that way. Nagare lost, and thought it was all over.

Memories of the time spent with Nagare and the others surfaced, and Sukuna grabbed a spoon and said, "Ok, let's go back."

Kotosaka also spread her wings in unison and yelled: "Kuwah!".

The new residence was decided near the old Yomido Gate.

The gigantic door that was just above the secret base of "Jungle" had already been buried, but the fact that it was the center of the turmoil left a trace, and despite being in the center of the city, the price of the earth was falling.

Mishakuji and Sukuna rented a small apartment with Kotosaka and started living there.

Life didn't change much. Sukuna had Mishakuji teach him swordsmanship, sometimes complaining of growing pains and taking turns cooking and doing chores.

He has been running away from home since he was in the fifth grade of elementary school. It wasn't good for his knowledge to stop as a child, so he started doing correspondence courses on his tablet.

That day, Sukuna finished his math class, finished preparing the curry for dinner, and came out with a bamboo sword.

Since Mishakuji has been out since morning, he had no choice but to wield the sword by himself that day. Carrying the shinai in a cloth bag over his shoulder, he went to the small and desolate park where he used to practice, and practiced suburi and kata moves for a while.

He also did cool down stretches correctly and wiped off sweat. He rolled up his sleeves because his body was hot after working out. He had many bruises that had been hit by

Mishakuji in yesterday's practice, but he felt that his arm, which was only thin and white, had grown a little stronger.

Sukuna started walking again with the bamboo sword bag on his back. He did not walk the way home, but a walk with no destination.

After returning to the city center, aimlessly walking around the city after sword practice had become Sukuna's daily routine.

It was an action of thought to look at the city while being aware of what Mishakuji had said: "The shape of the world has changed."

Although he avoided the patrol route of "Scepter 4", it was possible that he would be caught by the city's surveillance cameras, and there was a chance that someone who knew Sukuna's face would find him. However, he thought that he should get involved in a fight if necessary, and he had no intention of living in secret. Mishakuji probably knows Sukuna's daily routine, but pays no attention to it. His own responsibility is the principle of "Jungle".

That day too, Sukuna watched the city as he thought about the dream Nagare had.

Incidents caused by people with supernatural powers were more likely to occur in Tokyo than in rural areas, but other than that, there didn't seem to be any particular changes.

"The shape of the world has changed, huh..."

Sukuna pondered over Mishakuji's words and looked at the streets where people who seemed to live the same daily life came and went.

A black limo drove past Sukuna. Right after that, a sharp brake sound resounded.

Sukuna casually turned around. The rear door of the suddenly stopped limo was flung open. Sukuna's eyes widened when he saw the person who came out from inside.

"Mother..."

Sweat broke out all over Sukuna's body.

The woman was staring at Sukuna. Sukuna's mother's red lips trembled.

When he was at his parents' house, her mother was a symbol of control for Sukuna. She tried to control everything from Sukuna by suppressing Sukuna with her great love.

"Oh, Madam!"

A man ran out of the driver's seat. For a moment, he thought that he was a servant he didn't know, and realized that it was only natural since it had been over three years since he left home.

"Sukuna..."

His mother called out to him with a trembling voice.

Sukuna couldn't move a single step from where he was, just silently feeling his mother's gaze running through his entire body.

Tears welled up in his mother's eyes.

"Give me back my Sukuna...!"

His mother said that with a broken voice.

Sukuna felt his blood drip down. But at the same time, like a frog looking at a snake, his body, which had been motionless, was released.

At that moment, he realized that he was no longer "Sukuna, his mother's property".

"What a dirty bruise! Even though you were a smart kid, you didn't go to school for years! You're like a bum! Ah, this is not good. It can't be undone...!"

The bruise was proof that Mishakuji had trained him to become stronger. Even if he doesn't go to school, his mind is not inferior to that of a child of the same age. He also acquired programming and hacking skills under Nagare. Being taken care of by Iwafune, he lived a much more humane life than when he was at home. He can now cook his own meals, even if he isn't as good as Iwafune.

However, to his mother, all of that was probably the "dirt" that ruined Sukuna.

Only the Sukuna, who was treasured, cared for, polished and loved by his mother like a jewel, was Sukuna to her.

The driver appeared in front of his mother crying.

"Young gentleman. Anyway, get in the car. You should calmly talk to your parents after you get home."

That's what the man said. He must be an indentured servant after Sukuna left home. Although he called him that way and used honorifics, instead of looking at Sukuna as the employer's son, he was closer to looking at the enemy.

Sukuna shook his head silently.

"I won't go upstairs. I won't go home."

"If that's the case, I'm sorry, but even if I use force..."

Looking at the man who said that and got ready, he realized that he was a supernatural being. Probably his mother's driver and bodyguard.

In this day and age when psychic crimes have increased, there are many things ordinary bodyguards can't deal with. It was no surprise that his mother, who was the wife of a high-ranking government official, was assigned a bodyguard with supernatural power.

"I see." Sukuna was convinced that the world's common sense had changed a bit.

The man took a big step forward. From the outstretched right hand, blue light spread out like a web. It seemed to be a capture-type ability that was similar to the nature of the blue clan.

Sukuna took a big leap.

Dodging the supernatural web, he jumped on the man's head while doing somersaults.

Before the man could react to Sukuna's movements, Sukuna slightly turned his body in the air and struck the man's neck with the bamboo sword that was still in the cloth bag.

The man whose consciousness was severed collapsed on the spot.

Sukuna landed and looked at his mother, who was staring at him.

"I'm sorry, but I can no longer return "your Sukuna" to you."

His mother's shoulders trembled at Sukuna's words.

The woman who once controlled everything in Sukuna now seemed small and weak in Sukuna's eyes.

"But, if one day you feel like meeting me as a human being, I hope we can meet at that time... Mother."

Without waiting for a response from his mother, Sukuna turned on his heel and ran. He moved his legs as hard as he could to cut the wind and get away from the place.

There was sadness. Surprisingly for him, it was painful for his mother to judge him useless and make fun of him.

Sukuna didn't stop walking even though he was far enough away from his mother. He ran with all his might to clear the mist from his heart. He was still small, but he was growing at a rapid rate, and he kept running with all his might.

He ran on impulse, and when he stopped his feet as he held his breath, he felt strangely relieved.

Sukuna let out a long breath and then took another deep breath.

He raised his sweaty face and looked at the sky. The wind blew and cooled his hot body, making him feel comfortable and cool.

The sadness and pain were still inside his chest, but they had found a place inside Sukuna.

What Nagare tried to create was a world in which each person was responsible for his own life, exerting his own forces as he wished. Even if Nagare lost, Sukuna will live the life Nagare intended. He didn't care if anyone denied him.

Because what Sukuna was playing was a game of life only for Sukuna.

Yes, it seemed natural.

Sukuna slowly took a step forward. He ran so frantically that for a moment he didn't know where he was, but after a short walk, he recognized the scenery. Apparently, he had made it all the way to Shizume City.

A school seemed to be nearby, and he saw a group of boys and girls in uniform walking towards Shizume Station.

He became aloof from himself, not even looking at the appearance of the children of the same age who were going to school.

Sukuna's eyes widened as he saw a girl who stood out from the passing boys and girls with carefree faces.

White skin, white hair, doll-like features, and red eyes. The girl who stands out, whether she wears the same clothes as those around her or not, is Anna Kushina, former third king.

-- That person attends high school.

With a strange feeling, Sukuna looked at Anna wearing her high school uniform and walking among ordinary children.

He thought that she would be floating in the school, but next to Anna, there was a normal girl in the same uniform who seemed to be her friend and was talking to Anna.

Sukuna had a general understanding of royal authority. Since Anna woke up as Strain from a young age, there were various circumstances that she had and it seems that she didn't attend elementary school.

For some reason, he thought that she would continue to walk a different path than normal children. Like Nagare, who became the "Green King", and Sukuna, who became a member of Nagare's clan.

However, when he learned that this was the path Anna chose, he felt a sense of understanding.

Anna's eyes, which were nodding towards the girl next to her, suddenly turned to Sukuna.

Sukuna lightly shook his shoulders and said, "Oh, no, it's too late to go."

Anna looked at Sukuna with too direct eyes, and the girl next to her also followed her gaze and looked at Sukuna.

"Who is he? A friend?"

The girl next door asked Anna. Anna thought for a moment.

"Yes."

And she agreed.

"Who is your friend? Don't talk nonsense!"

Sukuna raised his fists and turned his back on Anna, running at full speed for the second time that day.

It will continue in chapter 10: "Mysterious companion".