



## **K - ONE YEAR LATER:**

### **CHAPTER 10: MYSTERY CLASSMATE (BY RAIRAKU REI)**

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

A year has passed since then.

Anna Kushina attended a public high school in the city of Shizume.

Anna was hospitalized in an extraordinary research center when she was a child, and even after leaving there, she lived alone in "Homra" and did not go to primary school.

There was also the reason that Anna's sensitive ability, that she tends to see other people's minds, was not suitable for the closed group life of the school.

However, in her high school year when the "Slate" disappeared, Anna decided to go to school, partly due to Kusanagi's recommendation. Until then, Anna had been content to interact with everyone in "Homura", but she decided to expand her world.

"Anna has grown into a wonderful young lady... I wish Mikoto and Totsuka could see her."

Kusanagi, who saw Anna in her uniform for the first time, said so in disgust, and Yata pushed him away and said: "Kusanagi-san, I'm sorry."

At first, everyone in "Homura" was worried about whether Anna was doing well in school, but as time passed, they got used to the situation that "Anna goes to school" and it became normal and acceptable.

For Anna, who has spent her time in a group of older men, school, where boys and girls of the same age meet, was a new and often confusing place, but she did her best to get along with her classmates.

She thought it was rewarding. However, Anna's secret problem was that she couldn't create a relationship at school that she could proudly call "friends".

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A beautiful and mysterious girl was sitting behind her.

Due to that fact, Kakine Tsubaki's body was stiff and tense.

Due to the recent class change, Tsubaki became a classmate of a beautiful and mysterious girl, Anna Kushina, and her attendance numbers were also mixed up, so Anna Kushina was sitting in the seat right behind Tsubaki.

Anna Kushina was a girl who attracted attention since she entered the school.

She was born with long white hair and red eyes. A face that looked like a doll. She was of few words and had a mysterious aura that set her apart from ordinary beautiful girls. Even the so-called "normally" cute girls who were the center of the class, were treated with special respect by Anna Kushina.

Tsubaki was in a different class during her first year, but she often heard rumors about Anna Kushina.

She did not appear to have attended any elementary school. (As to the reason, the most popular theory is that she was sick, but she wasn't sure.)

She looked like a noble lady from Fukamado, but in reality she was the boss of some scandalous delinquents from Shizume City. (It's a silly story, but there are surprisingly many eyewitness stories that lend credence to the rumors, like walking around with scary men, or going in and out of bars even though she was a high school student.)

Also, there were various rumors, such as that she was the daughter of a yakuza boss, or that she was a fortune teller that politicians could trust.

Regardless, she was a mysterious girl with many mysteries and difficult to approach. She couldn't really talk to her, and when she got a chance to talk to her, she got excited and told her friends, "I just talked to Anna Kushina!"

(If she was in the front seat, she would have watched her back carefully, but since she was in the back seat, she was nervous.)

Tsubaki groaned inwardly.

She felt restless and nervous just thinking that she was right behind her, but since it was a big deal, she would like to see her face up close.

Tsubaki slowly turned around and looked back.

(Wow, seriously she is mysterious.)

Up close, Anna was truly beautiful. She was not a vulgar beauty, she was a beauty with pure power, like a grateful work of art.

Her long lashes cast shadows on her cheeks. Her eyes lifted, and her eyes met.

"Ah."

A small voice involuntarily leaked out. It would not look good to look away or look ahead. Tsubaki frantically searched for a topic.

"Um, er... Kushina-san, what kind of power did you get in January?"

When she said "January," she meant January of a year ago. It was during the incident that everyone suddenly had a mysterious power and caused chaos.

It turned out to be an abrupt question, but since the memory of the incident was fresh when she first entered last year, it was a topic that was often used to create conversational opportunities, much like "What elementary school are you from?"

Anna didn't answer and just looked at Tsubaki.

It was bad? As she broke out in a cold sweat, Anna slowly opened her mouth.

"Tsubaki, you had the power of the color red, right?"

She was shocked by the fact that the mysterious beautiful girl suddenly called her name and that she guessed something that the mysterious beautiful girl had no way of knowing.

"Uh... W-why...?"

It's true that Tsubaki emitted a red light during that commotion. Later she heard that people whose power color was red had a high chance of emitting flames, but Tsubaki's flames didn't burn anything at the temperature of a heater, they just fluttered.

Tsubaki, who had such carefree strength, did not encounter any danger, so she remembered that confusion as a bit funny and extraordinary.

Because she talked about it relatively casually, she had quite a few friends at school who knew about Tsubaki's power. Did Anna hear from anyone? But who would put a particularly uninteresting story about an ordinary girl like Tsubaki in Anna's ears?

"It's the same as Tsubaki's name."

"Eh?"

"A beautiful red like a camellia flower."

She said it as if she had seen it.

Anna's eyes seemed to be looking at what happened in January on the other side of Tsubaki.

Now that she mentioned it, she thought that Tsubaki's power that came out at that moment was like a camellia flower dancing in the air.

Tsubaki looked at Anna's beautiful face and once again thought, "She's really mysterious."

The mysterious girl Anna Kushina had the image of a solitary and lofty flower, but when she started talking to her, she responded unexpectedly. She seemed to be of few words, but it was just a personality trait, and she didn't seem to dislike her idle talk.

"Tsubaki, did you have that kind of courage?" That's what her friends who were in the same class as her in first year told her, but it was only at the beginning that she needed the courage to talk to Anna.

Although she was expressionless, she was not angry and was very cute when she smiled sometimes. Maybe because she didn't go to elementary school, her answers were a bit off, and being ignorant of trends is more of a "gap" than a "mystery", she was happy that when she told her what was hot in at that time, she heard intently with a straight face.

"I'm happy to be Tsubaki's friend."

She was eating crepe on the way home from school when Anna suddenly said that.

Tsubaki was nervous because she never expected that mysterious girl to say such a thing. The hand that held her crepe strengthened.

Anna elegantly bit into the edge of the crepe with many red berries wrapped around it and relaxed her eyes.

"It's the first time I buy and I eat with my friends."

"Ah, Kushina-san, you look like a girl."

"I'm not a girl."

"How is your family, Kushina-san?"

Tsubaki suddenly remembered one of the rumors about Anna, the theory that Anna Kushina was the daughter of a yakuza boss. That was ridiculous, she laughed to her heart and waited for Anna's response.

"Um... There are a lot of people who are like family."

"Eh?!"

"Sometimes people get scared, but they're all good people."

"They're like a family, so they're not related by blood?"

Tsubaki secretly broke out in a cold sweat when the weather turned suspicious.

Anne agreed.

"But we are connected by a bond stronger than blood."

(Let's not delve further into this story.), Tsubaki thought.

Although she still didn't have the courage to find out the truth from Anna, she didn't dare run away from being her friend. The agitation caused her to bite too much and the cream overflowed.

Anna's slender white finger reached out and touched Tsubaki's cheek.

"Your cheek has cream on it."

Anna smiled as she wiped the cream from Tsubaki's cheeks with her clean fingertips.

Tsubaki's heart was beating a different type of beat when she sensed the presence of a yakuza in Anna's house.

When she was about to fall into a perverted mood, she heard a loud laugh that snapped her out of her joyful feelings.

Looking around her, she saw a group of guys coming out of the arcade across the street.

"Oh."

Tsubaki involuntarily shrugged. Anna looked at Tsubaki curiously.

"Right now, among the people who came out of the arcade, Tsushima-senpai is a third-year student at our school."

Tsubaki answered Anna's question as she looked away so as not to make eye contact with them. Anna tilted her head.

"Bad rumors?"

"He still has the power of "January", and that's why he's doing bad things. It's a power that makes his hands hot like a hot iron, if he threatens, everyone will listen to what he says, so he's talking about doing what he wants behind the scenes."

Tsubaki only had the carefree power to make her look a bit beautiful, but it seemed like quite a few people had the power to use violence. Most people's powers wore off quickly, but it was a bit scary to think about what would have happened if everyone's powers had continued.

In fact, even Tsushima, a senior who seemed to have some strength, was feared by everyone because he always carried a weapon.

However, instead of freaking out when she heard Tsubaki's story, Anna looked directly at Tsushima.

"Hey... Kushina-san!"

She was about to say that it would be better not to make eye contact, but before that, Tsushima caught Anna's gaze. Even so, Anna didn't take her gaze from him. Tsushima turned his foot towards her as if he was attracted to her.

Tsubaki turned pale and grabbed the hem of Anna's uniform.

"You're Kohai from our school, right? I've seen that face before."

Tsushima, standing in front of Anna, said that. The bad boy who seemed to have his entourage also surrounded the bench where Anna and Tsubaki were sitting.

Tsubaki was completely scared and crouched down, but Anna looked at Tsushima with a doll-like expressionless face. Tsushima's eyes were so direct that he frowned.

"Hey, say something."

"It's better not to do bad things using your power."

Somehow, even though she may not have responded to the request, Anna suddenly said something like that.

Tsubaki's face, which she had thought was completely drained of blood, began to bleed even more. She pulled at the hem of Anna's uniform so she won't say something weird. Desperately she sent a silent signal, but Anna paid no attention.

"Hey, what kind of advice do you give Tsushima-kun?!"

"Just because you're kind of cute doesn't mean you're disrespectful!"

The entourage roared. Tsubaki looked at Anna next to her with the feeling that she was about to die. Anna was still looking at Tsushima with a beautiful expressionless expression that showed not the slightest bit of agitation.

Perhaps because the surroundings were excited, Tsushima's face relaxed, and he slightly raised his hand to control the surroundings.

"Hmph, to give me an opinion. You are an interesting woman."

Tsubaki, on the other hand, freaked out and withdrew a bit.

"What is your name?"

"Anna Kushina."

"I will remember."

Tsushima left with his entourage. As his back disappeared, Tsubaki let out a long, deep breath.

"Kushina-san! Don't say those things to scary people! Don't stare at them in the first place!"

Tsubaki complained with half teary eyes, but Anna tilted her head blankly.

Seeing those innocent eyes, Tsubaki withdrew any further complaints and let out a sigh.

"I shouldn't have said something rude..."

She knew that Anna had a mysterious side... or rather, she didn't know what she was going to do, but she let it slip and reflected on herself. Tsubaki straightened her back and turned to face Anna.

"Anyway, Kushina-san. Be careful from now on. That person seems to have set his sights on Kushina-san. Even if he invites you, turn him down while trying not to make him angry. Try not to be alone as much as possible."

She said that feeling that she should protect that mysterious girl. Anna kept looking at Tsubaki with innocent and beautiful eyes.

Soon everyone at school knew that Tsushima had his eyes on Anna Kushina.

That was because Tsushima, a third-year student, had often been seen going up to Anna's class, which was in a different grade, to pick on her and get involved with Anna when she was trying to go home from school.

Anna didn't seem particularly worried or angry, but of course she didn't seem happy either, and she treated him nonchalantly with her usual doll face. If someone spoke to her or invited her, she didn't ignore it, she would simply say: "I don't want to go, so I won't go."

Tsubaki was scared next to her and couldn't do anything, but at least she was more aware of being with her so she wouldn't be left alone.

"I hope she gives up on Kushina-san soon..."

On the way home from cram school, Tsubaki muttered under her breath to herself.

Anna didn't seem to mind, but the commoner Tsubaki, just being next to him made her stomach ache. Furthermore, due to Anna's bluntness, Tsushima, who was smiling at first, gradually felt his mood worsen.

Tsubaki let out a deep breath.

Due to the exhaustion of studying in cram school and Anna's case, her body felt like she was craving sugar and she was thirsty. Tsubaki found the light of a vending machine floating on the street at night and bought an orange carbonated drink. That went before dinner, but she thought a sweet drink would be fine, so when she drank half at once, she heard footsteps and voices.

"That Anna, it's bothering me that she's being too arrogant."

That was the voice that had been bothering Tsubaki lately. Tsushima was approaching while he was chatting with his entourage.

Tsubaki quickly hid behind the vending machine.

"It's because Tsushima-kun is nice to her, aren't you getting carried away?"

"She feels like a princess who takes pampering for granted, so maybe you should teach her about fear of men around here, okay?"

Hearing the words of his entourage, Tsushima burst out laughing.

"That's right. She doesn't know I'm a scary man."

(What are these guys planning?)

Tsubaki trembled with equal amounts of anger and fear welling up. Her hand slipped with the rhythm and the soda can, which was half full, fell out.

Tsushima and the others turned to the sound of the can hitting the asphalt with a thud.

"Eh? You're Anna's waistband."

Tsushima, who came over to the side of the vending machine where Tsubaki was hiding, said that in a mocking tone.

(What kind of waistband? I'm Kushina-san's friend. You're the only one next to her who just tries to please her. By the way, why do you call her Anna? Even though I still call her by her last name.)

Various thoughts popped into her mind, but she looked at Tsushima without saying anything. At that moment, anger prevailed over fear, making her eyes sparkle.

Looking bluntly at Tsubaki's face, Tsushima thought of something, snorted, and laughed.

"Ok. Hey, lend me your PDA."

"Eh?"

"Hurry up."

Tsushima snatched the bag from Tsubaki and grabbed the PDA that was in the pocket. "Give it back to me!" Tsushima's entourage held back Tsubaki, who extended her hand.

Tsushima fiddled with Tsubaki's PDA for a while, then smiled and looked at Tsubaki.

"I'll call Anna with your PDA."

There are several abandoned buildings in Shizume City.

It seems that they have played a role in the deterioration of public order, such as being used by homeless people as a place to live and criminals to hang out.

Tsubaki was taken to a nearby abandoned building by Tsushima and his entourage.

Sitting on a dusty tube chair set along the wall, she crouched down tightly holding the bag that was handed back to her. Only her PDA continued to be taken over by Tsushima,

and she couldn't call for help or send a warning to Anna that she shouldn't come. There were four in Tsushima's entourage, two of whom were on Tsubaki's left and right, and she seemed unable to escape.

"Don't be so scared. As long as Anna is calm, neither you nor Anna will get hurt."

Tsubaki gritted her teeth at Tsushima's laughter. Her heart had been beating so hard inside her chest for a while that she was aching, and due to her fear, her breathing had become shallow and it was a bit difficult to breathe.

However, anger welled up to the point of swallowing even that fear, and Tsubaki's mouth moved.

"Kuh... Kushina-san won't do what you want...!"

"Ah?"

Tsushima raised his eyebrows and moved closer to Tsubaki. His right palm glowed red hot. In the dark and abandoned building, Tsushima's hand turned red and light, like cast iron. Tsubaki took a deep breath. The entourage to Tsubaki's left and right jumped back as if they were scared.

Cursing, Tsushima's palm hit the wall behind Tsubaki. The sound of the concrete wall burning next to her face made Tsubaki fall off her chair without screaming. The wall that Tsushima touched had a clear mark from his palm, like a hot iron.

"Haha, are you scared? My right hand is getting ridiculously hot."

Tsubaki, trembling, rubbed her buttocks on the ground and stepped back to get away from Tsushima. Seeing Tsubaki like this, Tsushima took a deep breath.

"Because of what happened in January, I became a monster, no one can beat me. Don't think you're going to go against me too."

"What are you doing to Tsubaki?"

As if interrupting Tsushima's words, a calm and beautiful voice resounded.

At some point, there was a small shadow at the entrance of the room. Anna had arrived. Because Tsubaki was caught by those guys, Anna was drawn to a place like that.

Tsushima smiled and turned to look at Anna.

"I was just teaching her about my powers. Because this girl seemed to underestimate me. Anna, you too. I've been acting wrong, so you've been arrogant up until now, but..."

Tsushima couldn't say for sure.

The room was suddenly filled with red flames. The interior of the dark and abandoned building was brightly lit, and Tsubaki narrowed her eyes for a moment, then widened them.

There was a spinning sound as the flames burned. She knew that the sea of fire referred to such a scene. The whole room was on fire.

However, the flame did not scare Tsubaki. Tsubaki's body was surrounded by a dome of red light and the heat from the flames was transmitted just like the heat of a hot sun.

That was clear from the fact that the metal desks and chairs had melted and lost their shape that the flames that filled the room weren't fake. That flame contained a higher temperature, much higher than ordinary fire.

Tsushima and his entourage were shouting. They weren't burned, but they weren't enveloped in a dome of light like Tsubaki either. They were surrounded and stunned by the billowing flames that seemed to attack them at any moment.

Anna walked slowly through the flames. As she watched Anna walk through the fire in the cool air of walking across a meadow, she realized that the fire was a part of her.

Anna stopped in front of Tsushima, who was crouched on the ground and desperately trying to get away from the flames.

"I won't forgive anyone who hurts my friends."

Tsushima was speechless for a while, opening and closing his mouth, but finally managed to get a few words out.

"I'm sorry..."

The flames that filled the room suddenly disappeared.

Anna turned her feet towards Tsubaki, paying no further attention to Tsushima and the others who were sitting still.

Facing the stunned Tsubaki, Anna lowered her head in apology. She knew that she was depressed because he had scared her, but Anna's bright red flame had completely consumed all the fear in Tsubaki.

"It was a beautiful red flame..."

Such a stupid impression came out of Tsubaki's mouth.

Although Tsubaki had witnessed a terrifyingly hot sea of fire, for some reason Tsubaki remembered the dim warm red light that she emitted in January.

"Anna! Don't go alone!"

There was a voice calling for Anna and multiple footsteps, and grown men ran into the abandoned building. A small man in a knitted hat and a large plump man in front, followed by six other men.

"I'm sorry, Misaki. My friend might be in danger."

"You are ok?"

"Yes."

The person in the knitted hat nodded and snapped his fingers as he turned to look at Tsushima and the others.

Tsushima and the others were still hunched over, their faces trembling as they looked at the terrifying men who suddenly appeared.

Not knowing what to do, Anna took Tsubaki's hand, stood up, and led her to the exit of the abandoned building.

"Don't do anything terrible."

Before leaving, Anna turned around and said that to the men.

"Haha, don't worry! I won't do anything immature. However, it is the duty of an adult to properly scold a bad boy."

Said the man in the knitted hat. Anna tugged at Tsubaki's hand and left the abandoned building.

"Hey! What are you doing bringing a girl to a place like this?!"

"Don't be shameless, damn kid!"

"Don't look at Anna with strange eyes!"

Tsubaki cringed when she heard an angry roar.

Those men were probably Anna's "family people who were connected by ties stronger than blood".

"Well, Kushina-san is... the daughter of a yakuza boss... is that so...?"

When she couldn't help but ask, Anna gave her a dumbfounded look, then smiled a little and shook her head.

"No."

"But..."

"I was once a 'King'."

This time it was Tsubaki's turn to flinch.

Anna didn't say anything else and walked down the street at night, hand in hand with Tsubaki. When they got to the point where they could no longer see the abandoned building, the hands holding her slipped. As soon as she released her warm soft hands, she felt a sudden chill.

"I'm sorry I made you scared because of me today."

Anna lowered her head towards Tsubaki. Tsubaki panicked.

"Oh, that's...!"

"But... Tsubaki, if you want, I would like to continue being your friend."

Tsubaki became uneasy. She opened her mouth thinking that it was time to say it.

"Mmm, of course! Um, if you don't mind, Kushina-san... can I call you Anna-chan...?"

At Tsubaki's suggestion, the mysterious Anna Kushina laughed like a normal girl, as if she had lifted a mysterious veil.

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Anna Kushina attends a public high school in the city of Shizume.

Even after a year, she secretly worried that she wouldn't be able to create a relationship at school that she could proudly call "friends", but recently she finally made a friend in her class.

Due to the troubles from the other day, all of "Homura's" worries had returned, and it was a bit annoying to worry about strange men approaching Anna again, although it was a fun day.

"Anna-chan, thank you for today. It was the first time I had entered a bar, so my heart was pounding."

Anna had invited Tsubaki to the HOMRA bar where she lives. (The suspicion that Anna was the daughter of a yakuza boss had not been cleared up, so it also had to be explained.)

Kusanagi was delighted that Anna had introduced him to her school friend for the first time and served them pancakes with elaborate decorations.

"Come visit us whenever you want."

As she left the bar and was about to walk Tsubaki down the main street and say goodbye to her, Anna's sensory ability sensed him.

"He returned."

"Eh?"

Tsubaki tilted her head at Anna's mutter.

A moment later, there was a commotion across the street.

"What is that procession?" "A sightseeing tour?" "There are too many people, right?" She heard many voices murmuring.

She heard the sound of a large number of overlapping footsteps and saw a strange group marching towards them.

Walking in the lead was a tall man with glasses. The appearance of civilian clothes without wearing a blue uniform was unusual for Anna.

The "Blue King" Reisi Munakata.

And behind him, a mysterious group was following him.

From their facial features, skin color, and the clothes they wore, it was clear that they were people from various countries and cultural spheres, with various occupations. There were people who looked like high-class people, other people who looked like bad guys, and also people who looked like magicians who came from a land beyond the reach of civilization.

They were all of different races, ages, and genders, and they all looked at Munakata, who was in the lead, waiting for something.

"Oya, what a coincidence."

Munakata stopped in front of Anna and said that happily. Tsubaki looked at Anna with a surprised face.

"Ah, Anna-chan, do you know him?"

Tsubaki secretly asked in Anna's ear. Anna nodded curtly.

It is true that she knew Munakata, but she did not know the group behind him. Apparently, a lot of things happened while she didn't see him for a while.

"I heard you were on a trip."

"Yes. I'd like to talk about one of the memories, but excuse me for rushing."

Munakata said that and again led the group and walked briskly.

Dismissing Munakata and the mysterious group, Tsubaki let out a sigh.

"So you know someone like that. Anna-chan, you are really mysterious..."

Anna tilted her head vaguely after receiving an incomprehensible impression.

Continues in the eleventh chapter, "Reisi Munakata's Return".