



"SIDE GOLD"

CHAPTER 5: TIME OF HUNGER

TRANSLATION: NARU-KUN / K-PROJECT WORLD

"Demobilization"... Also known as "repatriation". This refers to the disarmament and return home of Japanese soldiers who have served overseas, or the process of doing so. Because of fears that the remaining troops would become a resistance force in the area and the need for a rapid withdrawal of opposing Allied forces, military personnel were given priority to return home over civilians. Some of them were detained in Siberia and their return home was delayed for several years. The total number of veterans exceeded three million.

"Atsugi Air Base is under attack by a mysterious group of paranormal beings".

By the time this urgent message was received, a transport ship had already sailed from Yokosuka, with no time to assess the situation, let alone provide relief. The ship was registered in the United States. The ship was advertised as a converted light aircraft carrier, many of which were built during the last war and frequently shuttled between the United States and Japan. This was a common story after the war.

However, anyone who served in the navy of either country must have noticed a discrepancy between reality and history. The reason for this is the strangely thin flight deck, which for some reason has not been removed, and the enormous size of the hull, which is as large as a full-fledged aircraft carrier. In short, it was a ship that looked like neither a transport ship nor a light aircraft carrier.

Furthermore, this supposed transport ship left in a hurry, just under 30 minutes after receiving the emergency report. This is because the time is too short to reach boiler pressure, meaning that the ship is normally moored maintaining pressure. It was an extremely abnormal operation that would not normally occur.

However, for the ship's crew, or rather its commanders, the anomaly was natural. No matter what happened, they could not in any way allow those rogue paranormal beings to come into contact with that ship.

No matter what, absolutely.

That is why the Captain made the decision to set sail immediately after receiving the emergency report.

Yes, actually... although it may be a bit obvious to say, both the "ship" and the "captain" are only on paper. The ship was a special vessel under the direct command of the Department of Defense, and its captain was a colonel in the United States Navy. The crew is almost entirely made up of naval personnel.

The intelligence agency "Nanakamado" only recognized the ship as a camouflaged transport vessel carrying a unit of paranormal beings to be mobilized for their secret plot. Only the chief engineer suspected that the ship could also be used as an information gathering vessel for the CIA, but, considering his own plans, he turned a blind eye.

However, the truth is far from that.

It is true that there were several high-ranking Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agents on board, and they had their own section on board to collect and analyze information, but this was only one aspect of their mission. The mission given to them by their home country was extremely important and one in which they could not afford to make any mistakes.

They retreated to the sea, where interference from land would be impossible, while continuing to gather information.

Atsugi Air Base has already been lost, the radar installed there is out of control, and it seems that the psychic troops stationed there have been completely wiped out. The long-feared demon-class psychics (monsters that could even neutralize heavy weaponry) had finally bared their fangs at the occupying forces. And now, all of these supernatural beings have gathered in Nanakamado, in the heart of the city, and are competing against each other with their "Sword-like Brilliance (Schwert)" floating in the sky of Tokyo.

How far will this conflict spread?

They are very careful in investigating the situation.

The chief engineer of Nanakamado was informed that their code name was "Skinny".

It's not just the name of a team of top CIA officers. It was also the infamous nickname given to the entire top secret mission in the home country, "Option 3", that his team was in charge of.

It's an abominable name that can never be honored.

Before he knew it, the freezing rain had turned to snow.

Nightmares overflowed from that pale white curtain.

It violently rose from the ground and swallowed the weakened "Green King" Iku in one gulp. The "Colorless King", clad in an infinitely sunken void, swelled.

Black smoke rose into the sky and nothingness, resembling drops of ink spreading over water, pushed away the falling snow.

The outline that pushed away glitter, large hands appeared and thick legs stretched out.

A wavy and sinuous silhouette was beginning to take shape.

The tip tilted and pointed towards the sky.

(No.)

The "Blue King", Somei Nazumi, was the first to understand the meaning of the scene and expressed her sense of crisis.

"Sever your connection with the King right now and escape!"

The voice reached the servants of the "Green King". It came but they were unable to move. Everyone stood frozen, trapped in a nightmare that grew and engulfed the supposedly invincible King.

Before their eyes, the tip of "nothing" that looked up at the sky opened up and turned into a jaw.

In an instant, the lightning that had spilled out of the "nothing" as a remnant of what had been swallowed grew brighter.

Or rather, it was condensed to draw them in.

The strange "nothing" enveloped the members as if it was sucking in all the scattered energy around them. Before they had time to scream or even regain their senses, the entire "Biribiri" gang disappeared into its maw.

A loud rumble was heard, indicating a rupture in the air, and only silence remained in the snow.

As Nazumi stared at it, the "nothing" grew even larger.

(This isn't just a case of being a loser, but the power of the rightful "King" chosen by the "Slate" has been absorbed by him along with his limbs... Despite being so cautious, he has done so without hesitation!)

Although he felt angry at himself for not being able to cleanse it, his thoughts still flowed calmly.

The "Colorless King" had shocked even the other Kings by simply gobbling up the stray dogs, and now even the "Green King"... the situation was no longer something that could be contained by a police mobilization. This would be the most feared thing: a head-on confrontation between two Kings on the outskirts of the capital. In the process, or as a result,

(Who, where, what do they intend, how and when will they act?)

He ended up in a situation where he had to investigate every movement that arose. As he threw himself into the task of sorting the huge and complex pieces of the world into the desired direction,

(More than fun, first and foremost...)

Nazumi then regained his composure.

Or rather, he returned to his senses.

In front of him, the "Colorless King" was looking up at the sky, but then, with a thunderous roar, he sank both his hands into the ground. Or rather, he put both his front paws into the ground. Nazumi finally captured the full image, which was previously difficult to grasp due to its large size.

(A beast over 50 meters long... no, a reptile or an amphibian?)

Eerie eyes that cannot be focused,

A ferocious jaw lined with countless sharp fangs,

Four thick legs extending from a thick body,

A long tail that is both powerful and sharp.

They were woven together like shadow puppets, out of "nothing". A green beam erupted from his open mouth, flickering and sparking like a snake's tongue. Nazumi didn't know why the "Colorless King" had taken that form, but at a glance it was clear what he was trying to do.

He was about to leap towards him, close to the ground.

It's astonishing size took up half of his body in the spacious front yard of Nanakamado. The pressure of that movement would have been enough to cause a normal person to faint, but Nazumi was able to withstand it head on. The way his sword remained motionless in his stance clearly demonstrated his calmness of mind and body. With each breath, the blue glow grew denser.

(It's not the size or weight that's scary.)

As snowflakes filled the field of vision, the massive black body of "nothing" tilted.

Amidst colors reminiscent of a watercolor, the silence was about to be broken for a few seconds.

The enormous weight crushed the earth and flew towards the only blue thing.

Both of its front legs were stretched out as if it was begging for something.

If it could reach it, the Nanakamado house guarding its rear would be blown to pieces.

"Ah!"

However, with a flash of will, Nazumi was stopped by the firmly placed blue shield.

The earth shook, the wind blew, and the snow was gone.

Crushing the tip of the burden with his own blow, the "nothing" was still leaning against the wall. Nazumi, staggering towards it and clinging to it, caught the body of the 50-plus-meter giant near the wall and stared at it from under the brim of his hat. Not at the giant enemy, but at the shield he himself had raised.

(What's scary is the ability of the "Colorless King"....!)

The incredibly sturdy shield of the "Blue King" began to wobble. As if it was absorbed by the hollowed-out edge of "nothing", the area was slowly eroding from the point of contact.

(Our powers just don't match up well.)

Though that was the impression he had, the analysis continued endlessly.

(Anyway, I was able to catch it for now... it wasn't the usual shield-based one, but something different...)

As he began to search, at the edge of his vision, beyond the snow, something strange came flying towards him.

(.....?)

It was a rotating rectangle.

However, the rotation immediately stopped.

To be precise, several red threads were touching the edges of the square, preparing to fly away.

The rectangle stopped rotating and slowly fell towards the top of "nothing".

As the distance shortened, it became clear that this was a thick iron plate that was being placed at a construction site.

It was a perfect fit, as if it were a joke, as the iron plate was placed against the "nothing"'s head, or rather against its cheek.

A fist filled with concentrated red power slammed into the iron plate.

"You're really tough, you bastard!"

The red power passed through the metal plate to its cheekbones.

Suddenly, the "nothing" was hit on the side of the face and its massive body was thrown to the side and fell to the ground.

A man stepped on the rising rumbling of the earth.

"Haha! I guess I can hit him like this."

After taking off the shield, Nazumi called out to the man who was acting like a child.

Of course, there were no words of thanks for the rescue.

They are dissatisfied with the fact that the trial had been brought forward.

"That's something I wanted to do three moves in advance."

"Shut up, you're too loud! In a fight, the one who strikes first wins!"

The "Red King", Unno Yutaka, roared as he blocked the heat from the blow from his right fist with the palm of his left.

The shelter beneath Nanakamado, a huge warehouse that had been reinforced and converted into a shelter, trembled gently. The unreliable lighting flickered and the non-combatants and wounded gathered there looked anxiously at the ceiling.

One of them, Thomas Colt, the commander of the Nanakamado combat unit, lowered his gaze and continued to speak.

"Are these tremors also the result of the battle between the giant monster and the "Blue King" you spoke of?"

In front of him was the deputy director of the Fourth Legal Affairs Bureau, Somei Chika, who nodded.

"According to the report I just received, that's correct. It seems that the battle has already advanced beyond the stage of our goal of "persuading the Green King"."

"But do you still intend to follow the "Blue King's" orders?"

"Yes. As long as the orders are not withdrawn. That person's ideas have a degree of validity that goes beyond the understanding of ordinary people. First, I will contact this person called "Miya" and take another look at the status of the battle. Would you be willing to cooperate?"

Hearing that, Colt nodded easily.

"We have surrendered. Of course we will obey."

There is no point in resisting any longer. The chief engineer's plan was foiled and the fighting forces were suppressed. Above all, something far beyond those small matters

was developing outside. The monster that had been devouring these paranormal beings was shaking its huge body and attacking them.

Colt looked at the remaining engineers gathered in the shelter.

Everyone in the shelter, both Japanese and American (including the doctor who was keeping everyone quiet to avoid complicating things) agreed with the silence. They are different from the agency heads who will lose a lot if they are dismissed. Even after their defeat, they still have a tomorrow they must face.

(I wonder if I will have that tomorrow.)

As he thought this, Colt picked out from his memories an image of the person he was to lead into tomorrow.

"I have a feeling that I might recognize that girl called "Miya". Let me show you the way."

Although he felt pain at the thought that no one but this woman would see him as he left the Strain detention center, he still led the way. Contempt towards the villains was something that even they desired as punishment.

To show them her trust for accepting his surrender, Chika ordered two of her entourage to accompany them.

"Thank you for your cooperation. Let's go, Rokugo-kun and Hentani-kun."

"Understood."

"Yes!"

However, their progress soon came to a halt.

A man stood at the entrance of the only shelter.

There was no sound, no presence, and no weakening.

Chika naturally let out a warning sigh and realized what was going on.

What it means for him to be here now.

She asked in horror.

"You're from "Tokijikuin"..."

"Yes."

The man, wearing an old national uniform, was carrying a wired communication device on his back. With the receiver on his back,

"I would like to be briefed on the current situation."

The explosive words were spoken in an incredibly calm voice.

"The "Golden King" will soon enter the battlefield."

As the aircraft carrier heads out to sea, the "Skinny" section installed inside it broadcasts the latest developments in the battle between the "Kings" taking place in Tokyo.

Heavy snowfall forced the monitors to get close enough to be exposed to the aftermath, but this was not a major problem. They are all Japanese who have been hired and trained locally. A high salary will keep them there.

The real problem was the fighting taking place on the ground.

A gigantic monster, perhaps 160 feet long, suddenly appeared and went on a rampage, shaking the earth. That alone was an incredible, nightmarish event, but there are people who are fighting back.

On one hand, there are demons that are infamous among the occupation forces.

On the other hand, there is the suspicious head of a newly created security force.

Only a few people, including the leader of the group of supernatural powers that attacked Atsugi Air Base and forced the aircraft carrier to depart, are causing unrest. It was even suggested that the monster might have been a mutated version of the same guy.

A world that everyone recognizes as normal.

There is an abnormal power that runs rampant and can easily override it.

Each of them is the work of a single individual.

And that was the real problem.

In today's world, it is unacceptable for powerful individuals to request the disruption of society at will. Furthermore, the "power" held by "kings" is not a power built by social institutions and is not accompanied by restrictions. It was direct power and violence, not limited solely by the will of the individual.

And that was why they were watching it.

Is it something that should be used?

Is it something that should be eliminated?

Either they can stay alone, or they can conspire, or they can come to an agreement...

They continued to send observation reports back to their home country, where a decision would be made on how to respond.

Neither the US government nor the Central Intelligence Agency took into consideration the intentions of Nanakamado, the local intelligence agency of the occupied country. The

pretense of agreeing to a clever deal was merely a bait to get them to gather as much detailed information as possible about the Slate and the King.

All they need is the information to make a decision.

Ever since a king was lost in the Atlantic three years ago, the US government has been doggedly and meticulously observing from afar the burnt ruins of post-war Japan as a new testing ground.

The intelligence agents of the home country, including "Skinny", had discussed countless cases of people who had regained power, with the "most powerful person on Earth who is not a King" holding the title over their heads.

And today,

A situation has presented itself that fits into one of those cases.

At least that is what they determined.

They wait and continue to transmit more information back home.

A response from the only person in their home country who was above them.

He gave the go-ahead to carry out the secret mission "Option 3".

The tension of witnessing a historic event.

It is not tension from what is happening now.

The incident is about to occur.

It is they who wake it up.

The huge body of "nothing" fell on its side, raising a thick cloud of light snow that had begun to accumulate.

Ignoring that, Todokoro Suwako and Tamataro Okuma rush towards the two kings.

"Yutaka-chan!"

"Is your arm okay?"

Unno squeezed and released his hand, testing its strength.

"Of course! The foolproof plan was a great success and that guy was crushed like a paper balloon."

"He wasn't crushed. It seems he collapsed due to the impact."

Nazumi's quick correction made him frown.

"It's so detailed, every single thing."

Pretending not to notice, Okuma bent his sturdy back and broke whatever honor his boss may have missed.

"Blue Hat Man, are you okay?"

On his back were three thick construction iron plates, each of them as thick as a tatami mat. That seems to have been what helped Unno's earlier attack.

Nazumi also has a cool attitude when talking to anyone other than Unno (though he is secretly confused by the strange nickname).

"Yeah, thanks for the help."

"Who's going to help? The only thing left is an annoying guy getting punched in the face..."

"This isn't the time to do this, you bastard!"

When Unno responded with a nasty remark, Suwako slapped him hard on the shoulder.

Indeed, this isn't the time to do it.

The "nothing" lying on the ground slowly began to rise. The roof tiles of the burned houses were scattered everywhere and the tilted buildings were pushed to the side and collapsed.

The surrounding forces, which had already put some distance between them and the Nanakamado site, disappeared even further in the falling snow, and the entire area became vague and misty like an illusion, with the exception of anything created by the movement of the "nothing".

As Nazumi prepared for a new attack, he called out two people in particular and one more as a bonus.

"I'll explain it briefly. As you may have guessed, the "Colorless King" eats those who possess power. He just devoured the girl who called herself the "Green King" and her group, and has become what he is now."

Both Suwako and Okuma have quick minds. They immediately understood the situation.

"You and your friends are in the building behind, right?"

"I see, that place is filled with blue-clad men and Colt's men, and that monster is chasing them... it's like a bear in front of a beehive."

Unno also hears and understands, but he pays no attention to it.

"The punch worked, now it's time to kick."

A rumbling sound shook the three people in astonishment.

The "nothing" that rose black in the depths of the snow was slowly moving away into the distance.

"Eh? Did it run away?"

Unno's prejudice,

"No."

As if in a hurry to get the first place, Nazumi immediately denied it. He tilted the brim of his hat and narrowed his gaze.

Beyond the snow-covered landscape, the huge body of the "nothing" was passing by, moving at an incredible speed.

"That's bad. Instead of attacking head on, it's trying to find an easier direction to attack."

"You're not going to lose sight of that size and those footprints... hmmm?"

Okuma said, but when he looked around he realized something.

The heavy snowfall made it difficult to see even two hundred meters ahead, and even the footprints of the giant "nothing" were obscured. It was getting difficult to reach a clear position.

"Snow at a time like this? I know, should I try searching with my thread?"

"That's not good, what if something happens and you get swept away?"

This time, Unno immediately rejected Suwako's proposal.

Nazumi, not wanting to waste time arguing, proposed a second-rate solution.

"Instead of arguing here, let's split into two groups, one in front of the house and one behind the house."

In the midst of this dire situation, Unno finally nodded.

"Okay, you're the tail."

"You're the one behind this."

He just couldn't get along with Nazumi.

"Who wants to sneak around behind closed doors now?"

"This is supposed to be my position, right?"

Before Suwako could speak a second time, he asked, "Is this the time to do this?"

"To your left, coming from the nine o'clock direction."

A relaxed voice was heard, out of place in the situation.

".....!"

The two kings jumped in the same direction as if bouncing.

Unno muttered,

"Okay!"

"Here it comes."

Nazumi caught the approaching shadow across the brim of his hat.

At exactly nine o'clock, a huge "nothing" appeared in his sight, breaking through the curtain of snow.

Like a giant disc, aiming at the tip of his nose,

"Ooooooooooryaaah!"

Okuma used his incredible strength to throw a metal plate.

Next, at Unno's obvious command,

"Now!"

"Good!"

Responding with a strong smile, Suwako shot out a thread of red flame.

The tip touched the edge of the iron plate, delicately adjusting the trajectory of the fall.

This time too, the metal plate fell perfectly into a position blocking the charge directly in front of it.

(Good.)

(It's exquisite.)

Only inwardly did they agree.

Unno kicked out with red power all over his body.

"Die!"

Nazumi struck the sword with a thick layer of blue power.

"Aaaaahhh!"

Almost simultaneously, they pierced through the metal plate and smashed it into "nothing".

In addition to his own burden and weight, his huge body received an extremely powerful blow from the front, sending him flying in the opposite direction. His neck was bent at a strange angle. It would have been a fatal blow to any normal living being.

The second noise was heard, a rumble that not even the snow could hide.

Sensing that they had achieved their goal, the two Kings each laughed in their own way, and then, realizing that they had coordinated their reactions, they spat out their own laughter.

"Hmph, don't go around. Your kicks are a bit sloppy."

"That's what I say. I have to avoid your weak legs when I swing my sword."

And there was another person.

"Come on, come on, you two. Now's not the time for that, right?"

The only sound he could hear was the same relaxed voice from before.

Perceiving his tone, which was open and tolerant of people's opposition, both of them softened their tone.

"So you are brother Otono after all."

"I'm glad you came, "Gray King"."

From the mysterious sight of a thin mist floating through the snow came the hesitant reply of the "Gray King", Otono Benji.

"I'm not here... it's scary, so I'm just watching from afar."

"But it was still a great help. Thank you for your quick instructions."

"With the combined strength of my brothers, that monster will be a piece of cake."

There was a hint of embarrassment in the young men's voices as they spoke.

"I'm not there, but there are about ten strange people hanging around. They're all carrying huge walkie-talkies and even dangerous-looking guns."

"Hmm, there shouldn't be any reason for Nanakamado to move now... I wonder where they're from."

"Who cares? Anyway, that will be after we blow that bastard up."

Both of them looked towards the snow in frustration.

The silhouette of a winding hill was barely visible. The "Red King" and the "Blue King", two paranormal beings with extraordinary powers, attacked it multiple times without mercy, but the "nothing" showed no signs of stopping. The neck, which should have been

bent, straightened again and green sparks lit up at the top again. It didn't seem to stagger from the blow nor did it show any signs of running away in fear.

It was just a way to endure it, but it wasn't working.

This fact hurt the pride of both Kings to some extent, and also made them very aware that the monster was also a "King", but of course they never revealed even a trace of their true feelings in front of the other.

Unno said to Suwako and Okuma who had met up with him:

"That bastard is still going strong. Don't let your guard down."

"Gray King, could you please continue searching for the enemy?"

Nazumi was left in the hands of Otono, who was nowhere to be found.

"Yes, I will try."

As they nodded in response, Suwako and Okuma looked puzzled (realizing that Unno will probably be too lazy to say anything), trying to explain why the "Gray King" was also there.

At that moment,

"The vice-principal reports to the principal!"

Chika's voice echoed from the speakers of the Nanakamado building, which was still in operation.

Nazumi's face instantly lit up and Unno grimaced in disgust at the sight.

"The individual in question has been secured!"

Up to this point it was going as Nazumi expected.

But the voice continued.

"We have accepted the new proposal and are preparing to move the individual outside! I need support!"

He stopped giving Unno the smug look he was about to give him,

(A new proposal? Transfer of the individual?)

Nazumi began to investigate the strange reports.

The person in question was "Miya", whom Nazumi had ordered Chika to protect and contact. Although there is no hope of persuasion anymore, if it is available it can be used to gather information and seek solutions.

That was true, but it seems that a new proposal has been made regarding "Miya". Taking them outside was a bold move, but if Chika agreed after learning of the situation, it must have been in line with military logic.

Above all, there is only one force that can come up with a proposal at this time...

(It is not my style to act without knowing the content of the proposal, but it is much better than continuing this useless exchange of blows.)

Nazumi decided to ask the person beside him.

"Isn't it enough to provide support by myself?"

"Don't be silly, you're trying to attract some bastards. That would be the perfect opportunity to beat you up."

Unno really has a keen sense.

Although he didn't understand the meaning of the words, he immediately sensed that something was going to happen.

Suwako and Okuma were already excited by the idea.

"Do you need help with something, Chika-san? I'll help you."

"The boss seems to be in the mood too."

And then, at the end, as Nazumi tried to make him understand, Otono suddenly muttered.

"There's someone here."

Everyone felt as if that word had been the trigger.

"That guy right there."

On the other side there was nothing, green sparks flying from the top of his erect neck.

Standing in front of Nanakamado, they couldn't see past the falling snow.

However, they knew someone was coming.

The "Blue King", the only person there who knows the visitor's true identity, he waited.

Not to meet him. He was waiting to see what kind of attitude he would have as he joined the fight. After having been extremely careful to keep the Slate and the King hidden from the public, he finally came to light. Because he was calculating and wanted to take advantage of the incident, or because he couldn't contain his burning ambition, or because he saw that he could no longer hide and moved to eliminate him quickly... the "King's" "fate" would be decided by his reasons.

And,

Many troublesome thoughts were banished.

A clap that shouldn't have been heard rang out.

That clear sound pierced the entire scene.

He spread his hands widely and forcefully, palms together at eye level.

Following suit, the falling snow split to the left and right like a stage curtain.

All the kings present caught sight of the figure in front of them.

Once that was done, he looked intently at each person in turn.

He, the "Golden King" Kokujoji Daikaku, spoke loudly.

"Finally we are all here. Come on, let's talk."

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It was a completely unexpected call.

A man was about to make a decision.

Last month he was re-elected to a second term as President of the United States, overcoming overwhelming odds (the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers also ran for the same election, but was defeated miserably at the party convention).

He had an unusual career path, having been promoted from vice president to president following the sudden death of his predecessor, even during his first term before his re-election, which was said to be the biggest upset in history. Moreover, he took office in April 1945, a month before Germany's surrender and four months before Japan's surrender, in the midst of a state of emergency that also involved the direction of the post-war system.

The position of vice president at that time was essentially a minor one, and during the time he held that position he was neither on the front lines of diplomacy nor informed of important issues of national policy. His sudden appointment as president in that situation was something of an unexpected thing for him.

He vividly remembers the contempt he received from those around him during that time. The accomplished heads of state who have moved the world, the sinister and evil government ministers, and the stubborn military leaders who did not like being told what to do... all treated him as "an amateur who had suddenly burst into the poker table".

An example of this disrespect was the "Flying Ghost Ship" incident.

He is said to have tried to persuade the owner of the ghost ship, a defeated scientist who called himself "King", to come to the United States, but failed. In that incident, the policy was decided while he was out of the matter, as he was not informed of anything and he

himself was not even allowed to converse with the other party. Although it bothered him at the time, he can now look back on it with dark pleasure.

At that time, the scientist said in a conspiratorial tone:

"From now on I will not side with any country and I will not give this "power" to anyone."

And...

So, now, three years later, what are the results?

It was a fact known to everyone that what the scientists were saying was complete nonsense.

The source of this power, the "Dresden Slate", was managed to be smuggled into Japan by a simple lieutenant who was pardoned by the Allied forces, allowing the production of supernatural beings in the ruins of that defeated country.

All those present at the meeting who ignored him and discussed plausible things failed to seize "power". The reason they did not blame him for their failure, as they did with the "Flying Ghost Ship", is simply because the United States does not officially recognize the existence of supernatural beings.

He is the only one who knows that the policy of considering Japan as a testing ground is just a hindsight excuse used by those who missed their chance. When they realized it, the number of supernatural beings had increased to the point that it was no longer possible to eliminate them secretly. Not only that, but they had also gained influence and power of action, infiltrating even public institutions. That was the shameful reality of the situation.

However, these mistakes and misinterpretations played in his favor. By correcting the mistakes and covering up the misinterpretations of those who had underestimated him, he was able to achieve true leadership as President of the United States.

One of the results was the takeover of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers occupying Japan... a self-proclaimed hero and showman obsessed with the occupying nation, was probably naively satisfied that he had "won the intelligence war" by preventing the establishment of a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) branch in Japan, but it ended up benefiting him greatly in the end.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was bound in intense resentment toward HQ, due to HQ's firm message that "the handling of Sword-related matters in Japan will be supervised by HQ, and the home country must not interfere beyond its means", and to counter this, the CIA sought to forge stronger ties with the local government higher-ups.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, he aided, protected, and participated in Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operations against Japan... eventually gaining a leadership position. Needless to say, the main target and focus of his operation was the prey that had

escaped from those who had previously sidelined him and failed... the "Slate" and those with supernatural powers.

It's not that he simply desired that special power.

As long as the effect was the same, it wouldn't have mattered if it was something different.

Anything that can become a new global strategic force to replace nuclear weapons.

More than three years after the end of World War II, the US plan for international control (or control, in other words) of nuclear weapons based on the first-mover advantage had long since collapsed. No one would hesitate to develop weapons that would give them an advantage. Every country that can do so is eager to develop and deploy nuclear weapons.

Among them, the Soviet Union was an "enemy" that required special vigilance. While other countries were still in the stages of information gathering and basic research, this greedy jackal-wolf nation was on the verge of manufacturing and testing a real device (in fact, the Soviet Union's first nuclear test was carried out in August of the following year).

In other words, the super weapon that "harnesses the fundamental power of the universe", on which the United States invested enormous efforts and budget in order to gain a decisive advantage in international relations, has suddenly, in just a few years, been reduced to a bargaining tool pitted against each other, similar to various inventions of the past.

Moreover, the conflicts currently occurring around the world as a result of post-war regime construction are extremely incompatible with nuclear weapons.

If it is obvious that people will not easily decide to use it, the effect will be even less.

What is needed now is a smaller but stronger force.

It was for these reasons that he turned his attention to the power of the "Slate" as "the next step after nuclear weapons".

A mysterious power that modern science has no idea how to explain.

Although it is a very personal thing, it is an overwhelmingly great power that an individual can possess.

The United States said so, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) continued to look for ways to obtain it.

Over the course of three years, observations of supernatural beings progressed and information was accumulated.

Some of them were taken out of the country and used experimentally in the espionage war.

At the same time, they assumed various scenarios, prepared for contingencies, and continued to watch carefully for opportunities, and finally that day, an unusual but promising case had finally arrived.

It was a case where a powerful psychic "King" had caused harm to the occupation forces and their subordinate psychic units, and even led to a battle between two "Kings" in the center of Tokyo. The gathering of important targets was confirmed.

Depending on the case that comes, the operation will enter the execution phase.

Compared to the meticulous preparations, the operating procedures were extremely simple.

Eliminate all the "Kings" that have appeared in Japan, and with the results, request the cooperation of "the only remaining person".

That's all.

Even calling it a conspiracy is an extremely crude and presumptuous tactic, but in negotiations where demands are imposed through the use of force, or in clearer terms, intimidation, even such crude intimidation is a form of acting. The more the "remaining" King perceived power to be threatened, the greater the impact would be when he was brutally annihilated. And there is no better means than nuclear weapons to crudely eliminate an entire King.

Eliminate all of Japan's "kings".

This was caused by a third nuclear weapon hidden on an aircraft carrier.

The code name for the secret mission was "Option 3".

The victorious nations reaped the benefits of the grace and chances that had been lent to the defeated nations.

This is how the occupation that lasted three years would later be remembered.

Along with the newly acquired "power" of the United States.

Even from the perspective of the United States, the inadvertent bombing of a city in an occupied country not at war, and the third massacre with nuclear weapons, would surely provoke harsh criticism, but it would not be difficult to decide to ignore it.

This is the United States.

Even after the end of the war, conflicts of all sizes, including colonial independence movements, continue around the world. Countries with their complicated ties and conflicting interests are unlikely to be able to unite to make effective condemnations.

This, with regard to the United States of America.

Rather, it will be a strong warning and demonstration to those countries that the United States does not treat nuclear weapons as a taboo and that they remain a real option if necessary. Without causing harm to others.

Above all, the intention behind this murderous act is unlikely to be understood by anyone other than the leaders of the United States.

Although there were discrepancies in policy with the home country, the occupied country was undergoing a smooth reconstruction and the country was destroying itself.

To an outside observer, this would seem like nonsense or even inexplicable madness.

However, it was that period of confusion and turmoil abroad that the United States suffered through.

The situation was brought under control while other countries, even the Soviet Union, were unsure of its intentions.

Specifically, after the nuclear bombing, they unearth and secure a "Slate" that was kept in strict secrecy in the burned-out suburbs of Tokyo. Once this was accomplished, the only thing left to do was to inform the "sole remaining person" of the following.

"Surrender yourself to the technology to control the "Slate" in your hands."

And.

This is different from the previous "negotiations", which were carried out without any preparation. It was an "intimidation" that shattered the illusion of the "Kings" that the other party had relied on as their power. The fear and panic of whether it would really go that far would surely open the clam's mouth.

They did not believe in the strength of the principles of "the sole remaining person".

Rather, they despised scientists as a species.

People who believe that the world can be explained by formulas and theories are generally ignorant when it comes to dealing with the complex and strange reality... or worse, they don't know what to do. They are all ignorant people who lock themselves away in universities and research institutes with their peers and avoid the natural responsibilities that come with living in human society (such as optimizing budgets and demanding results).

As a result, scientists easily tend to resort to naive idealism and fantasy that are not based on reality. The traitors who leaked important secrets about nuclear weapons development to the Soviet Union were not only thieving spies, but also many scientists who were driven by foolish ideological beliefs.

One of them, who did not understand the gravity of the situation, had a brilliant idea without losing face: "Let's call on the Soviet Union to share information in the realm of

peaceful uses." This he did shamelessly, even though he was in the middle of research on weapons of mass destruction with American personnel and funding.

He despised the scientific species for being primarily responsible for dealing with reality.

If you show this kind of guy a real punch, he will give up and surrender.

The "only remaining person" barricading himself on the ghost ship will likely face a similar outcome.

It was at the end of these largely prejudiced thoughts that he was about to give the order for the secret mission "Option 3". Not even an hour had passed since the telegram was received.

He called his aide and expressed his decision in words that could not be misinterpreted.

And then one word: do it.

Murderous plots are set in motion by personal ambition, calculation, and discomfort towards others.

+++++

"Talk?"

Although he didn't make a sudden, loud noise like Unno Yutaka,

(With this raging monster?)

Nazumi was also shocked.

Nazumi knows that he is not a lukewarm person who dogmatically seeks reconciliation. There was no way he didn't understand that this carnage was a turning point that would decide the fate of all Kings.

But still, he didn't understand why he would start an argument.

In the middle of the main street, a figure stands in the deserted, snowy landscape, the white curtain raised. He is wearing black khaki Japanese clothing with gold detailing at key points and is not carrying a sword. Only his feet are protected by practical long leather boots.

"Have you removed the snow?"

"Is that what your wife was talking about...?"

Okuma Tamataro and Todoroko Suwako were also stunned by the scene, which looked like the beginning of a real play.

They could barely see him, with a huge nothingness between them.

That was not the case.

No matter where they were, they were clearly visible, with a presence that could not be ignored. Nazumi, Unno, Suwako, Okuma, and from his point of view, Otono Benji and, above all, even the "nothing", were watching him.

As if their eyes were captivated by something dazzling.

His tone was stern, but he exuded a strange joy as he confidently introduced himself.

"My name is Kokujoji Daikaku, the "Golden King"."

And then Kokujoji immediately questioned.

"Who are you?"

It was already too late to know who he is.

"Where do you come from and how do you live?"

They wonder what is necessary to decide the future of their "King".

His vision, staring into "nothing", overlapped with his former dream. A silver dream, before he became "King".

In the dream, stars twinkled in the black sky that separated the silver-white world from the other world.

Now, as the snow begins to fall again, the Kings are reunited.

The dream and the image overlapped in his senses and transformed into certainty.

Seven people.

These are all the "Kings" created by the "Slate".

That was why he had to ask.

To grasp the full picture of the logic that incorporates them.

What kind of person is this "someone" before his eyes?

"Now answer me, "Colorless King"!"

The monster of "nothing", or perhaps "someone" who was asked, the "Colorless King", nodded his head in confusion. It was as if the beast was probing something, as if it was asking a question in return.

But before long, aside from that,

"....."

The human part slowly seeped out from the depths of "nothing".

"...hand..."

They were fragments of words that had spilled out from between his writhing teeth, just like that night when he had appeared as the mysterious "Black Cloak". The fragments gradually took on meaning, like bleeding colors forming an image.

"That's right."

And then the words were revealed in their entirety.

"Help me, I'm hungry and I feel like I'm going to die."

Kokujoji narrowed his eyes in pain.

It's not just about the meaning of the words.

At the same time, he captured the essence of the monster.

He knew this because he was the "Golden King".

(This "Colorless" is clearly different from the other "Kings".)

Within the giant monster, there is no feeling that someone has been swallowed, nor that the swallowed person's power is creating anything. Simply swallowing it would result in nothing.

(No... it's not that lukewarm... it's trying to swallow all the power that the "Kings" (us) have shown, the traces they've left behind, and the things they've accomplished, and take them to that other side of "nothing".)

Understanding the essence leads to understanding existence.

(I see.)

This monster is not someone who can accomplish something by consuming the power generated by the "Slate". The reason it seeks power is to return the scattered power to nothing once again. They were beings that could be described as a reaction against reality, sent to eliminate all evidence of the existence of these supernatural beings from this world.

Kokujoji was shocked to be the liberator of the "Slate", and also horrified to be one of the Kings.

(Does that "Slate" not only give power to people, but also expel those who threaten that power? Should the last "Colorless King" be seen as a test or as the embodiment of judgment?)

Whether it was designed that way from the beginning or the "Seventh" had simply been unlucky enough to receive such power, Kokujoji had no choice but to accept it.

He could not join forces with that pitiful monster.

That was incompatible with the six "Kings".

(I see.)

The complete truth he sought was crueler than he had imagined.

(That dream will never come true.)

A dream in which all the "Kings" gather together and create a paradise in this troubled world.

Gold, red, blue, green, grey, colourless... and one day, silver too.

That was the desired future, the miracle that had come about thanks to the "Slate".

He intuitively knew that he had just been crushed.

(But it's strange.)

However, Kokujoji did not succumb to pessimism or depression.

(I don't think I'll let something like that stop me.)

On the contrary, the more the strong waves of difficulties shook him, the more he felt a tenacious life breathing within him.

The forces that make that happen are neither complex nor special.

It was a crude and completely primitive idea.

We have to live.

It was a carefree and above all realistic situation, which did not make him look back or bow his head to the ground. Just like right now.

(Even though the dream I have longed for has been shattered, I still want to move forward.)

We have to live.

Whether consciously or not, everyone lives this present moment hoping for that... and the "Golden King", Kokujoji Daikaku, is no different.

(Next... let's take the next step and seek a better future.)

Carrying his past steps on his shoulders, he will move forward towards the present, facing his future steps.

He will add another resolution to the ones he has made dozens, even hundreds of times.

That spirit and soul turns into a stern yet cheerful voice.

"In that case, there is no point. Let's fight."

He turned his gaze from the sky to the earth.

As for the monster, it simply stood there, as if it were still lost in a nightmare.

(So how did it come out?)

As he thought about that, a fine mist began to gently surround him.

From deep within, Otono's timid voice resounded.

"That seems rather unexpected, but is the discussion over, my lord?"

Kokujoji didn't seem to mind the strange honorific he received from him and simply laughed.

"Yes, we've talked enough and we understand each other. We have no choice but to fight."

(What a funny boy.)

Otono was a little taken aback by how different the impression he had of the "Golden King" was from the one he had heard from Nazumi. He was taken aback, but also intrigued to know what it meant.

Kokujoji, on the other hand, continued with vigor.

"You must be the "Gray King", Otono Benji. Nice to meet you."

"Thank you. If you want to whisper something to me, I'll be happy to help."

Otono let himself be drawn in and gave him a pat with his hand, but then felt a long-awaited pain from the tightness of his burned skin. "That's not like me.", he said with a wry smile before getting to the point.

"During our discussion, it seems the other party has completed their preparations."

Kokujoji looked at the monster charging towards Nanakamado. Although they said they were ready, the Red and Blue members seemed to be arguing about something (though it was only the two Kings arguing).

On one side are the "Red King" Unno Yutaka, Todokoro Suwako, and Okuma Tamataro.

The other group consisted of the "Blue King", Somei Nazumi, and Somei Chika, who seemed to have joined them during the discussion.

A thin girl who appears to be "Miya" is tied to Chika's back. Although she is scared, she seems to be prepared. She doesn't seem to be trying very hard, just keeping her eyes closed and holding on tight.

"The man in the blue hat said, "All we need to do is have this girl join us, so I took it upon myself to make the arrangements." The ones in blue are the ones carrying the balls, and the ones in red are the ones acting as decoys. Is that okay?"

"Very well. I'll try to change things up as much as I can. After we meet, you'll have to give me some time to explain the plan to "Miya". That's all you need to know."

"That makes sense."

The fog cleared with the answer.

Feeling a hint of joy in his voice, Kokujoji's cheeks relaxed involuntarily.

(Sorry... but I'll keep going.)

After apologizing to the "Colorless King" for unintentionally excluding him from the group, he stepped forward in high spirits, ready to go on.

Towards a stronger, more desirable future.

It's not perfect, but it's still worth achieving.

Towards a future where they can work together with the dreams and kings who believe in that.

Hearing Kokujoji Daikaku's message, Unno Yutaka and Somei Nazumi nodded.

"Yes."

"Understood."

As soon as they handed it back to Otono, they turned their backs and ran away.

"Come on, guys!"

"Chika-san, let's go."

They argued over who would go to the right or left of the monster, but in the end, they naturally decided to turn their backs. Unno, Suwako, and Okuma are on the right. On the left are Nazumi and Chika, and Miya is being carried on her back.

Since those following them didn't care which one it was, there was no further discussion.

"Chika-san, be careful."

"I'll try to lure them as much as I can, but be careful."

Suwako and Okuma spoke to him casually.

"Yes. You should be careful not to get too involved."

Chika, who answered clearly, even seemed friendly to her companions.

"Don't be so hesitant!"

"Chika-san, please don't leave me."

With that unpleasant impulse, the two factions separated.

The "Colorless King", who had been lost in stupor ever since he answered Kokujoji's question, also reacted to his prey's new movements. His long, snub-nosed neck leaned forward, and green sparks shot out from the corner of his mouth.

"I... am..."

Perhaps a remnant of what happened before, fragments of words spilled out from the sparks. Rather than a voice calling out to him, it was a vague, sad sound, like a distant call that echoed endlessly.

"Yes."

Accompanied by that sound, the monster's head spun wildly.

Without aiming at any of them, the "nothing" simply reacted to what passed before its eyes.

The result of the odds bet was blue. Nazumi, Chika, and Miya carried on her back.

He had neither the intelligence to think nor the will to threaten. Like a moth to the light, the giant began to move.

Taking the opportunity, Kokujoji shouted loudly.

"I'll listen to you, tell me!"

"I'm hungry."

The monster stood for a moment, added another voice, and then took another step into the blue again.

Behind him, Unno, who was keeping his distance in the opposite direction, shouted.

"Over here... monster!"

At the same time, he threw out a fist-sized piece of debris. The debris is imbued with the power of the "Red King" and pierces the sky with a force surpassing that of a cannonball. In the wrong direction.

"This isn't control!"

Suwako coiled the rope she had laid out in advance along the area, changing the trajectory of the bullet.

The debris curved sharply from the side and hit the monster squarely in the neck. The scorching explosion was absorbed by the "nothing", but the physical force of it shook its body and made it stagger along with his voice.

"Please give it to me."

Unno was satisfied that it had worked to a certain extent.

"I'm counting on you!"

He shouted happily. He didn't notice Suwako walking away with an indifferent face.

"Okuma, ball!"

He shouted.

"Okay."

Okuma grabbed the debris like an experienced catcher.

"Even Eiji Sawamura would be jealous... I'll throw a fastball!"

He probably threw with terrible form again.

This time too, Suwako twisted her fingers with one hand to correct the trajectory.

The debris shot out from below at an angle, slicing into the monster's cheekbones from the opposite direction. The giant body wobbled, then finally bent its front legs at the knees and sank to the ground.

"Did you see that?!"

Ignoring the boss who was raising his fist, Okuma looked past the fallen monster.

Deep in the rising snow smoke, the shadows of two people, one big and one small, can be seen running with good posture.

"Looks like they managed to get past us."

And then, Unno snorted,

"Is it possible that a monster like this can do something? Well, I guess that's a relief."

Suwako muttered as she half-relaxed.

"Idiot! Chika-san and I have a child together?!"

With the two of them on his shoulders, Okuma leapt.

Right below them, a monster's tail, as thick as a train, passed by at an incredible speed. The surrounding rubble and the few remaining houses were blown away and scattered by the wind.

"Oops!"

"Eek?!"

Okuma ran off, taking with him both the cheers and applause.

"He took the bait, let's run away!"

Behind him, the monster turned, swinging its massive body and tail around. Not only that, it leaned forward. A voice calling for help echoed from the mouth that seems to have a dislocated jaw.

"I'm hungry. Give me that."

The monster began its fierce pursuit, fixing its gaze on what it wanted.

A little ways away from the snowy landscape.

"Don't run away, monster!"

"He's coming, he's coming, ahhhh!"

Hearing a commotion mixed with heavy footsteps, Nazumi and Chika arrived at where Kokujoji was.

"Sorry to keep you waiting."

"Miya-san, you're safe and sound here."

"Thank you."

The pair felt a strange sense of unease at that familiar figure, who only gave them minimal attention back.

It seemed as if he was looking up a little taller than usual.

Has he grown a little?

(And somewhere, too...)

Before he could get a clear answer, Kokujoji bent down and knelt on one knee. He got to eye level with Miya, who's lying on Chika's back with her eyes tightly closed, and spoke to her. Not with false kindness, but with true reliability.

"Welcome, Miya. I'm Kokujoji Daikaku, I'm also a "King"."

"Just like Iku-chan?"

Miya timidly opened her eyes and looked at her opponent. The shoulder straps are untied and she stands weakly. When Chika gently put an arm on her shoulders, she felt safe enough to be able to speak, but even that was a matter of a short time.

After all, a giant monster was rampaging nearby.

Away from the three of them, Nazumi was standing guard.

(Should we put a shield on her to make her feel safer?)

That was what he thought, but considering his earlier guess, the "nothing" reflexively pounced on the "powerful person" who caught his attention. Putting up a visible shield would probably only attract more intruders.

And so far, the "Red King" and his two members were doing well. They staggered and stumbled, they fled and raged, even though they struggled and fled, they were still able to control the monster.

(Well, if they don't do that much, it's not worth trusting them with anything.)

After setting the bar higher than the sky, Nazumi gave himself a passing grade. On top of that, he keeps his eyes peeled for any monsters that might suddenly take an interest in him.

Behind him, Kokujoji began to explain the gist of the operation.

"As you may have heard, your King and her companions are currently being held captive by that monster. Can you help us rescue them?"

"Can I help...? But I'm the least sensitive to electric shocks out of all of us..."

The girl replied in a weak voice, so he spoke directly to her.

"Alright, let's all work together."

Suddenly Miya stopped complaining. It wasn't because she had any doubts about saying something so bold to someone. It made her think that, if they worked together, maybe they could pull it off. Before she knew it,

"Yes."

He even replied, "Yes."

Chika asked, putting an arm around Miya's shoulders, hoping to help her with the conversation.

"But how exactly?"

Kokujoji nodded and continued his explanation. At first, it's a general explanation to help the girl understand, and then gradually moving on to actual actions and things to keep in mind, and confirmation of what Miya has noticed, before finishing in no time.

(Is that the plan?)

(Is that really possible?)

After hearing the whole story, Chika and her husband were almost stunned.

They both thought that a more realistic and common sense plan had been prepared. Because of the great trust he had in Kokujoji, he had not asked for details until the last moment, and yet he was proposing such an absurd operation as a plan... but strangely enough, he had no desire to object.

The confident way he explained evoked the hope that "maybe it is possible" and the strength he himself currently harbors. A strong desire to take on the challenge of "maybe we will succeed".

Both spouses couldn't help but think the same thing.

(Something has changed in him.)

Was Kokujoji Daikaku really such a bold and unrestrained person?

Without even a moment to check, the "Golden King" took action.

"Come on, Miya."

As he said that, he easily lifted the small body onto his shoulders.

Miya was neither frightened nor worried by that almost violent act, but instead clung to the head of the person who offered to join forces with her. With all her heart, wanting to help her "King".

Kokujoji cried out, increasing the feelings he had received and making them stronger.

"Otono Benji, are you here?"

"Yes, my lord."

From deep within the fog beside him, Otono replied as if he were an old acquaintance.

"Tell Red that we will attack now."

"Yes."

When the fog cleared, Kokujoji spoke to Nazumi and his wife, who were standing on either side of him.

"Please join forces."

Chika took out her naginata and replied briefly and clearly.

"Yes."

Nazumi, who was lightly holding the sword, had several implications.

"Yes, let me see for myself."

The three of them kicked up the snow and ran off.

Up ahead, deep in the falling snow, the battle between "nothing" and "red" continues.

Unno, who didn't like pointless fights, was getting quite angry, but still didn't lose his temper because he had received a message from Otono saying, "A fight is going to start now.". Although he didn't have any basis for it, he had a feeling that something interesting was about to happen and was eagerly waiting for the moment to act.

Suddenly, that premonition manifested itself in perfect form.

"Unno Yutaka! Hit him with all your might!"

Kokujoji's loud voice shook the snow.

The tone of his voice wasn't a cold order.

Like a fire, it was a passionate encouragement.

In essence, he's saying, "Go ahead and do it.".

When told that, Unno didn't hesitate to respond.

"You have a good eye, shining gold!"

His heart, his eyes, his body, everything ignited in an instant.

"Okuma! Suwako! To the crown!"

He roared and leaped into the air, transforming into a ball of fire.

Both Okuma, who threw the iron plate when asked, and Suwako, who was spinning the red thread, were happy, perhaps even more so. He is no longer a lost and desperate child on the run, but a bossy and courageous man without limits.

(Good job, Unno! Don't overthink things.)

(Hit him in the forehead, Yutaka-chan!)

Unno's fist came crashing down towards the target the two had prepared, the metal plate that was perfectly placed on the monster's head. A sword-like red light flickered in the snowy sky, and from its tip fell a bolt of lightning that could be mistaken for a shooting star.

"Ohhhhhhhh!"

The monster was knocked down, exactly as he wished, with a thunderous blast of air. The heavy blow that came from above caused his neck and limbs to bend and twist like a thrown string puppet.

Kokujoji ran forward and called out to someone above his head.

"Miya, now!"

"Ah..."

Miya, who was being carried on his shoulders, froze for a moment in fear at the sight of the monster crouching in front of her as she opened her eyes... However, seeing that green sparks were still coming out of the giant head hitting the ground, proof of her King's status, she raised a finger.

"Lightning!"

Her desperate but weak cry produced a faint electric shock on her fingertips, just as she had confessed.

Then, a moment later,

"Sharp!"

Kokujoji unleashed his fierce fighting spirit. At the same time, he steadied his feet, pointed two fingers at the monster, and channeled the power of the "Golden King" into it.

Miya, who had been stroking the air in vain, began to emit a surge of electricity.

Not only that, it turned into a powerful lightning bolt that produced an avalanche.

The moment its tip came into contact with the sparks coming out of the monster's mouth,

"Iku-chan!"

Miya jumped before he could urge her on, shouting again.

Kokujoji also seized the opportunity.

(It connected!)

He grabbed the lightning bolt with both hands.

"Okay, back off!"

At the command, Nazumi and Chika extended their hands toward the green torrent that flashed.

(Seriously.)

(That's impossible.)

It was done.

There was no numbness or heat and he was able to firmly grasp it like a rope.

In case of ingestion, tie a rope and pull it out.

That was the whole story of Kokujoji's plan to retrieve the "Green King". Although the Somei couple are extraordinary heroes in different directions, he naturally conceives and carries out illogical acts that still irritate him.

"Pull back! Pull back!"

Naturally, he also made the same request to Unno and the others, who were watching in amazement at these heinous acts as they pulled the torpedo rope with great force.

"Join us! Save the "Green King" and the children!"

Of the three who woke up after hearing that, Unno was the first to jump aboard and grab the rope.

"Haha, what is this?!"

Okuma and Suwako, who were following him, were also frightened.

"Well, if it's heavy work I guess I can manage it."

"If you ask me to help a child, I have no choice but to do so."

He put on the same expression as everyone there and took a step back.

Miya was resting her foot on the end of the rope, Kokujoji was holding it like a weight in the middle, and Nazumi and his wife were up front preparing for the monster's counterattack; everyone was pulling on the rope with expressions of incredible strength and incomprehensible amusement.

Even after a fierce battle, they still put all their strength into the tug-of-war with the monster.

It's so serious and so ridiculous.

Even for the "Red King" and the "Blue King", who had wielded incredible power until now,

"Get your act together, blue hat! Follow the example of your wife with strong roots!"

"You're too noisy, why don't you put your extra energy into the rope?"

The "Gray King" spoke bitterly from deep within the fog.

"It's a pity I can't participate in all this chaos."

It was the first time he had seen something so strange.

However, there was one person among them.

"In that case, support us with your voice and heart! Even that will give us strength!"

Only the "Golden King", who replied cheerfully, showed no signs of confusion. That's because he is the only one who acts based on a single conviction. The mindset that is the source of how supernatural beings can manifest their powers.

"Be free, be tough, be optimistic!"

Kokujoji shouted that.

"We can do anything!"

Putting it into words may seem trivial, but it will have a huge impact on an era that will define the future.

"Be like that and act with that in mind!"

It was not a coincidence nor something that suddenly came to his mind.

That was the result of his daily efforts to discover the laws that govern the raging waves of light and shadow in the vast expanse of the sky, where clouds of stars float and rivers of silver flow. But it was also a completely unexpected discovery.

What he had felt to be the epitome of truth, what he had tried to grasp in every detail, the overwhelming spectacle that his own power had projected, was actually nothing more than a design. The important thing was not to "look at it" but to "move it". Now, every time he exerts his power, the laws and truths he perceives do not "move", but rather change by "setting them in motion". With the intervention of the will, that scene can become anything.

It originates from himself and exists by himself.

Freely adjustable.

If we think about it, the King's power has always been to "move" things according to his own will.

To exert one's own power to the fullest is to freely create laws, truths, the world, and the age.

Once he realized that he was using his power to the fullest of his own will, the gears clicked into place and everything started moving.

Yes, Kokujoji understood.

There's no way that wouldn't be fun.

If he decides to do things that way and keeps going, the path will open up.

"Now, back off! Back off and get the kids back!"

As he uses his will and strength to get things done,

"Come to think of it."

Otono shouted in a somewhat casual tone.

"I'm the one who's here to watch, so I guess I shouldn't be the one to say it."

"What?"

Although he was aware that he was becoming talkative, he couldn't help it and started asking questions frankly.

"Even though this is the time to gather the power of the swords, you still haven't unsheathed your sword."

"Mmm."

Hearing that, Kokujoji simply looked up.

Beyond the falling snow, high in the sky a red and blue glow in the shape of a "sword" (Schwert) could be faintly seen. Those enormous crystallizations of power, pointing their tips towards the ground, were supposed to be proof that the King was exerting his full strength... but just as Otono had said, the golden sword was not there.

"That is a good question."

Kokujoji answered without showing any sign of offense.

"Playing with a ratio of "three against two" is a bad move. To be sure of victory, one must play with a ratio of "four against one".

".....?"

"And for that reason I must win this tug of war!"

Otono did not understand what the story was saying, but he did understand one thing. As the man in charge of mediating the situation, it was noticeable in the atmosphere of his voice and the enthusiasm that permeated his heart.

"Haha, I see."

The essence of what he wanted to know was the source of the joy exuded by the man called Kokujoji Daikaku.

"You really love doing things together, my lord."

And then "everyone" heard what he said.

Hearing that, everyone pulled harder.

However, there was one person among them.

Only one person who couldn't join "everyone", his enemy, the "Colorless King", was resisting the power that was trying to pull the "Green King" out of his own body. He clenched his limbs so tightly that they dug into the ground, clamped his mouth shut to prevent green sparks from flying out, and put all his strength into the tug-of-war.

But,

"...kid..."

That resistance was finally reaching its limits.

"...ugh..."

It wasn't just physical strength, but the power of the three Kings telling him "this is how it should be" (and the modest encouragement of one of them) that finally produced the desired scene.

The base of his neck, which had been stretched so far that it seemed like it was going to be torn off, began to faintly glow with a green light, and that light was gradually drawn towards his throat. Something was coming out of his mouth. The voice escaping from the edge of his closed palate had become denser and had taken on a sad tone.

"Where...?"

The end came suddenly.

A lightning rod with sparks coming out of his closed mouth,

The green light headed further up from his throat.

The moment the two touched, the entire skull of the monster exploded into pieces. Attracted by a strong "force", the girl who was the source of the lightning attack, and the children connected to her, were thrown into the air.

Taking advantage of the momentum, hundreds of white fragments flew out from the monster's neck. Those white things buried in the snow are human bone fragments. That was the end result of those with supernatural powers being secretly swallowed by the monster "Black Cloak" and their powers being completely absorbed.

Before that could happen, the "Green King" Iku Tsunogui and the Biribiri Gang were rescued, and instantly dragged towards the end of the rope, as if escaping death.

Miya, was the one who fell the hardest on her butt from the effect of the rescue.

"Iku-chan! Everyone!"

The girl opened her slender arms to welcome them all, but naturally it was too much for her and they all fell face down into the snow. At the same time, the green power protecting those who were swallowed disappeared. The children, already unconscious, fell onto the snow.

The only one who remained conscious was the "Green King".

"Miya-chan..."

She leaned her small body on the chest of her friend that she had finally found.

"I was watching from inside... Thank you..."

Her haggard face clearly showed signs of fatigue, but she was still smiling.

Miya smiled back at her King.

"Yes. Everyone here helped me."

"Everyone here" she was referring to welcomed the "Green King" by sitting on their butts, instead of standing up and bullying her.

Nazumi who had been fighting with her just moments ago now let out a rare sigh of relief.

"It seems we can finally talk calmly."

"What a carefree thing to say. I'm not done fighting this bastard yet."

As he spoke, Unno, who was also sitting cross-legged and resting, lightly punched him.

Kokujoji asked beside him, watching the situation intently.

"What do you think, Otono Benji?"

"Yes, it seems it's time to put an end to this."

Hearing Otono's voice, Chika, Suwako, Okuma, and the others also looked towards the monster. The three of them had planned to grab the children and retreat if the situation worsened, but it seemed that the King and his companions were more relaxed.

Deep within the snow that continued to fall, "nothing" crouched as if a concentrated darkness had indeed lost its power.

"Where is it...?"

Although a mournful cry could be heard coming from the base of his neck where his skull had been blown off, there was no sign of him regenerating. Not only that, even the outline of the giant body was gradually fading away and starting to shrink.

"Where did you go...? You're gone."

His voice, as if trying to make his pain understood, grew weaker as he continued to speak. Soon the voice stopped and the body disappeared. It was as if he was convinced of that.

"Where did you go...? Don't leave me behind..."

Finally, the voice would reach its final stage of agony and the poor "Colorless King" would fall and die.

It was supposed to be like that.

Suddenly,

Kokujoji Daikaku, Unno Yutaka, Somei Nazumi, Tsunogui Iku, Otono Benji... even the "Colorless King" who was about to disappear had noticed it. Realizing this, he looked up at the snowy sky.

A huge "force of destiny" comes from high in the skies, which will dramatically change the existence of everything that exists on this earth, in this country, and even in this world.

After receiving the President's telegram, the "Skinny" section immediately put "Option 3" into action. A modified B-47S high-altitude bomber, dubbed the "Versifire", took off from the carrier toward the sea and began to rapidly climb to bombing altitude and turn to enter the bombing course.

The only thing that was reported to the regular crew members was that this was a secret operation. From the beginning of the operation, they were one of two select bombing teams (the other being the "Trash Hands" team) that had been rotating through top-secret bombing training in the United States, Yokosuka Naval Base, and the Pacific Island region, and were some of the best bombing experts in the entire Carrier Air Wing.

Although they were forbidden from landing in Japan or having access to any information, they had a vague idea of the mission direction based on the content of the bombing training, but the bombing target was kept secret until the start of the operation.

Even when suddenly the special crew member who appears as a passenger, a Marine colonel in charge of handling the atomic bomb, told them that the location was "right in the middle of Tokyo, Japan", they showed no particular reaction.

They are professional soldiers and have been trained to follow orders. The most important thing is the special assignments, promotions, and vacations that are earned through missions, and rebellion or dissent from superiors is never even considered.

In order to be able to return home as soon as possible, they carry out the tasks given to them.

The ideal is to be able to fully demonstrate the results of their intensive training.

That was what they had in mind.

The true nature of Hiroshima and Nagasaki continues to be concealed, with the exception of a few accusations, by press censorship and propaganda, but even if they had known the truth, it probably would not have made any difference. Replacement crew members would simply have been recruited. To them, Japan was just another landscape to behold from the harbor.

Of course, they showed no interest in the long speech given by the Navy captain, who was a special crew member, about the historical significance of this secret operation and how it would contribute to great achievements for the United States and the capitalist world as a whole. For them, bombing was just one of their daily missions.

After a briefing on the objectives of their bombing raids, the only thing they did before the final inspection of their aircraft was to offer a devout prayer in the prayer area set up on board the aircraft carrier.

The "Versifire" they were piloting began to circle over the Kanto region smoothly, just as they had practiced. The area was covered in stormy snow clouds, the worst possible weather for a bombing raid, but the plan remained unchanged. The real objective of the bombing raid is a situation where supernatural kings gather in one place. There was no way to postpone or cancel it.

Since this mission cannot be scheduled at a specific time, they were provided with state-of-the-art equipment. This is not a conventional visual optical sight, but a new type of radio-guided radar sight.

The bombing raid was directed by locally hired Japanese operatives, who were positioned in a wide area surrounding the battlefield. It was this radio guidance device that Otono mistook for a "huge radio".

Of course, these people never imagined that an atomic bomb would fall in the center of the circle they were forming. All they could do was shiver in the snow, complaining about the heavy burden they were told an observation team represented.

As they turned, the "Versifire" completed its radio guidance adjustments, then lowered its altitude and entered the bombing path. It was a completely unexpected event, but the red and blue "Sword-like Shine (Schwert)" floating low in the sky was directly in front of them, welcoming them like a guiding light.

During the descent, the bomb bay doors opened and the atomic bomb was released.

The third atomic bomb dropped on Japan, "Skinny Guy", which gave the section its name, was thin but several times more powerful than the previous ones and fell into the snow clouds as if it were being absorbed.

If it had been the "Silver King", it would not have been more affected by the destruction than a gentle breeze.

If it had been the "Golden King", he would have raised his fist and sent the object flying high into the sky.

If it had been the "Red King", he would have jumped up and kicked the atomic bomb back onto the aircraft carrier.

If it had been the "Blue King", he would have raised a solid shield to protect those beneath him.

If it had been the "Green King", he would have been able to neutralize the explosion with the power of alteration he unleashed along with the lightning.

If it had been the "Gray King", he would have enveloped it in a thick layer of mist and banished it to the vast expanse.

But now,

The "Colorless King", hungrier than anyone else, took the bait before anyone else.

The giant body, which had almost lost all of its thickness, stretched out into the sky like a thin, sharp needle. To satisfy the hunger he desired more than anything, he wanted to devour the piece of "power to change fate" that had fallen from the sky.

That power (the atomic bomb), "Skinny Guy", activated a barometric reactor by means of a spring-loaded timer, which opened all electrical circuits at an altitude of 2,000 meters, causing the detonator to receive a signal from a radio-controlled induction device on the ground, and then the neutron generator went into full operation at the optimum altitude for massacres.

The nuclear fission chain reaction released enormous amounts of neutrons and heat.

For a moment,

It was sucked into the "nothing" that stretched out like a jaw.

The "Colorless King" swallowed all that destructive power that could change destiny.

Everything that should emerge instantly caused the "nothing" to expand like a balloon. The expansion became a pseudo-explosion, splitting the air and sending violent tremors through the air. That was repeated two or three times, perhaps like the vomit produced by swallowing an immense amount of energy, or as a final resistance to the reality of the atomic bomb explosion.

Either way, the result of the "predation" created an extraordinary spectacle.

This was completely different from the mushroom cloud that should have appeared.

Appearing low in the sky was a gigantic sphere that could be mistaken for a completely black moon.

Its expansion and violent tremors scattered snow clouds over a wide area, bringing back the blue sky of winter and the midday sun. In the distance, where the drifted snow glistened in the sunlight, a huge red and blue glow in the shape of a "sword" (Schwert) dominated the sky.

Everyone in the suburbs of Tokyo saw it.

The intoxicating fantasy or the terrifying nightmare.

With the explosion, a clear sky appeared and suddenly a "strange object from this world" appeared.

(That has now changed...)

Kokujoji did not rely on logic, but experienced it with his own eyes.

The Kings, who were looking in the same direction, also realized the same thing...

The people recognized his "power".

With that realization, the world changed.

The various inexpressible certainties, including the existence of the bomb (or something like that) that had caused this, could not be logically digested nor sublimated into emotion and were instead returned to the reality that had changed in one fell swoop.

The sphere of "nothing", which even absorbs light, fell once again, having been devoured with the "power" it desired.

As if it were a giant bird's egg being laid, it landed with a thunderous roar and raised a thick cloud of dust.

Naturally the Kings on the field took a few steps forward.

Of course, it's not for the sake of welcome.

This is to protect the people behind them from what's coming. Unno is the first to become a shield for his subordinates, Nazumi naturally becomes a shield for Chika, Iku fights back despite being exhausted and becomes a shield for her companions, and Kokujoji boldly becomes a shield for everyone.

"Tch... That bastard took something dangerous and has now come back to life."

Then, from the dust that was clearing, it emerged.

This monster was indistinguishable from the four-legged lizard that had been fighting until just now.

"That "bad thing" is something I'm curious about, but I'll only pursue it after I've overcome the immediate threat."

It walked slowly, making a rumbling noise.

The kings noticed and raised their gaze higher and higher.

"What is this?"

He looked down from beneath the thin, transparent "Sword-like Radiance (Schwert)" floating between red and blue, with his head at a height of perhaps fifty meters.

The monster stood up.

"What an unbridled test that is imposed upon us! To be told that we must overcome even this..."

Something beyond normal identification, like a reptile or an amphibian. If you just look at its features, it could be an ancient dinosaur. But what is actually happening is something even more impossible.

If they had to choose a word from the classics, perhaps they should call it "monster".

The monster let out a roar that struck deep within, incomparable to the weak throes from before. The world has already changed. Common sense does not protect them from anything. Abnormality attacks relentlessly.

Faced with an unimaginable situation, the group failed to read what was normal for the monster. Although they knew that its jaws were open and aimed at them, they couldn't imagine what would come next.

However, they were able to act pretentiously at the right moment because they were faced with hostility and murderous intent.

Hostility and murderous intent began to swirl within its jaw.

Seeing that, which they had never seen before, Unno and Kokujoji, who displayed their battlefield instincts, cried out.

"What?! Something's coming!"

"Disperse!"

Screaming, he ran out to act as a decoy for "something dangerous", though she didn't know what it was.

Half a second after the two,

"No!"

Nazumi, who had predicted the worst possible situation, took a firm stance. As he checked Chika's position, he quickly sheathed his sword and gave instructions in a voice that left no room for argument.

"Gather around me, quickly!"

"Hurry up, I mean."

Suwako anxiously looked around. She gets into dangerous situations every day and can sense when an emergency is approaching simply by the tone of his voice. Thus, she scattered the red threads in all directions and tied up the Biribiri members who were still lying in the snow. That was the end. She finished it, but she still needed one more step.

(The force that draws everyone in immediately...)

Iku was holding her hand.

"Thank you."

As she said that, green lightning flowed along the threads, reinforcing the force and attracting all of her allies with incredible speed. A shocked Okuma, Unno, Kokujoji, and others ran to catch them, and Iku herself hugged the frightened Miya.

As if it was her duty to check on the situation, Chika shouted loudly.

"Everyone, stay safe!"

"Understood."

Nazumi who returned, concentrated his energy and formed a spherical shield to protect everyone gathered there.

Another half second later,

A storm of hostility and murderous intent erupted from the monster's mouth. Normally invisible in the sunlight, the irregular, high-pressure air churning through the air scattered a diffuse glow like pure white flames everywhere.

Its destructive power could not be compared to that of flames.

After hitting Nazumi's shield, it staggered and wavered for more than ten seconds, and the white flames had pulverized everything they touched, from the road to the houses and overturned vehicles.

When the monster saw the blue shield disappear from below, it changed direction and began to move away. The rumbling sound caused by its long strides carried with it the "sword-like light (Schwert)" from the zenith and moved away into the distance.

At some point, the red and blue "sword-like (Schwert)" glow also disappeared, under the empty sky. A blue shield rolled out from a corner of the ruins, where pieces of wood and stones were piled up. It wasn't an intentional hiding spot. It was repelled by the high pressure of the white flames and was buried under the rubble.

The shield was suddenly released, and everyone who was safe was thrown out. Incidentally, the ground that made up about a third of the sphere's base also crumbled, like a vestige of what existed before the destruction.

"Damn it, that bastard... Hey, are you guys okay?"

Unno, who had already clenched her fists, said to Okuma and Suwako, who were sitting on their butts.

"Somehow."

"Ouch... that was horrible."

Meanwhile, Nazumi noted with relief that no damage had occurred to the Nanakamado facility. The monster also left in a different direction. It seemed like it had consumed enough energy and was satisfied. After those thoughts,

"We're obviously safe, but are you okay, Chika-san?"

He called out to her with an indirect gesture.

"Yes, thank you."

Chika had already recovered and was examining the remains.

The rock-like lump in her hand crumbled into pieces with just a light squeeze.

"Rocks and wood are as fragile as soybean pulp... What is this?"

An unexpected person answered that question.

"A voice that desires, a voice that is afraid... that is the power that combines the two."

Iku was consulting with Miya to make sure that her friends were safe.

"The entire time I was inside him, I could hear him screaming."

From a limited number of words, Nazumi instantly constructed a logic.

"Hmm, so that power was a type of telekinesis... an attractive force that draws you in with desire, and a repulsive force that pushes you away with fear, a chaotic mix of both contradictory forces that was then unleashed... perhaps we could call it a "super contradictory line of force"."

"This is no time for excuses!"

Unno, who seemed completely unconcerned, shouted.

"Let's go after that bastard right now!"

So he urged Kokujoji excitedly.

"Hmm? What's wrong, "Golden King"?"

"....."

There was no response that would have been expected if he had been hit any further.

On the contrary, he stopped dead in his tracks, staring at the back of the "Colorless King" as he walked away.

(How fast the world is changing.)

He was overwhelmed by the sheer speed of the event, but he still retained the excitement from before, the feeling that his "Kings" were "moving the world", or rather, it was because they were carrying it along.

No matter how "strong" one is, can they really maintain this speed?

Or perhaps it is precisely because they possess "power" that they are required to run so fast.

Something that came from above, something that was devoured, something that was devoured and transformed... the things that transformed and attacked one after another are now, with no time to waste, about to overflow into the ordinary world.

(Leaves the evacuation zone... soon after, combat with the siege forces begins.)

The deserted evacuation zone, shrouded in snow, was a shell of common sense, isolated from the rest of the world, no matter how rampant the supernatural powers might be. Now then, that can be easily crushed as well.

(We must quickly withdraw the besieging forces and evacuate the civilians in our path.)

The overflowing transformation threatens to engulf everyone.

It is no longer just the visual impact of seeing a black moon.

The direct violent threat of the "Colorless King", who had transformed into a monster, was drawing near.

(We, no one but ourselves, must take action to stop it... but is it really okay to let this "power" flow out and use it in front of the people living in this present time? This is a "power" that can arbitrarily create laws, truths, the world, and the era.)

Reality pushes him forward mercilessly, not allowing him even a few seconds of hesitation or serious concern.

Now, a word from the "Green King" called for a change.

"Don't let him go."

"What do you mean by that, Iku?"

Sensing the girl's intelligence, Kokujoji asked seriously.

Iku clumsily got to the heart of the matter.

"Once he reaches the sea, he will relax and let himself go."

And the sense of crisis was clearly conveyed.

"If he were to unleash it, all the force holding him back would pour out."

Nazumi translated her words again.

"In other words, when the "Colorless King" reaches the sea, for some reason he will feel relieved and release the emptiness that makes up his giant body. Then, the power that was swallowed up in the sky will begin to overflow."

That "power" that made the sky explode... They had no way of knowing the exact nature of the object that had been swallowed by the "nothing", but the extent of its threat was imprinted in their minds. What if it premiered on the coast of Tokyo Bay?

A chill ran through everyone who heard the story.

Kokujoji is forced to act in the face of harsh reality and time-bound circumstances.

"Otono Benji, are you okay?"

"Yes. I'm glad I didn't muster up the courage I didn't have and didn't approach you."

A voice emerged from the fog surrounding him, as if it were a normal place.

As a former officer, Kokujoji asked the former soldier.

"You were listening, right? Can you accurately calculate the direction he's traveling in?"

"Wait a moment... Hmm, it seems he's heading directly south. I think he's going to skirt the moat from Tokyo Station to Ginza and reach the mouth of the Sumida River."

"Okay, thank you."

Saying so, he clasped his hands and called a man from "Tokijikuin" who was wearing a communication device. He picked up the receiver and requested the operator to connect him to the emergency line. After a short wait, he got ready.

(Anyway, for now we must take practical measures.)

Naturally, the people around him also watched the development of events. No matter what they did, they all understood that to face that monster they would need the combined strength of the Kings, just like in the tug-of-war earlier.

After a short pause, the call was connected.

His opponent is the person with the most power he can control... the chairman of the ruling party.

Without much ado, Kokujoji made a reasonable request to protect the citizens, and also asked that preliminary steps be taken so that they can fight the "Colorless King" at will.

"As stated earlier, the battle situation is serious. Please evacuate all civilians on the route immediately."

But,

"....."

For some reason, the President did not immediately respond to this request, which was supposed to be urgent.

".....?"

Kokujoji, knowing that his partner is far from clumsy, waited for a response, though he was perplexed.

After a few seconds, probably a period of deep thought, the question arose.

"By what authority?"

"Eh?"

Kokujoji couldn't help but respond in an idiotic voice.

The President reiterates his statement once again, making sure to carefully consider what he is saying.

"What authority do you have to interfere with the emergency command, I ask?"

Kokujoji's confusion only increased. He also knew that, in an emergency like this, he was not the type of person to waste time arguing... or so he thought.

"Now is not the time to get hung up on formalities..."

"It is very important."

The President's tone remained unchanged. He took his time and enunciated each word carefully.

"A country is a mass of such shapes... We cannot and should not take any action based on someone's opinion without any official authority. Let me ask you again, what is your position?"

Kokujoji finally noticed that deliberate confirming tone.

The President was forcing him to have that urgent conversation with some "very important" intention.

He spoke carefully, making sure his voice and answers did not sound careless.

"A private bodyguard of the ruling party."

"That is not enough at all."

The President's words were blunt.

"We cannot protect the country by just protecting the politicians."

That was not an insulting remark. It was a harsh reality.

Kokujoji understood that and had no words to respond.

"We are, first and foremost, an occupied country. There is someone higher up who should take action."

The next words were:

"However, you see..."

Suddenly, he let out a faint smile.

".....?"

"The authority that should take action, the Headquarters of the occupation forces, is currently busy preparing for the withdrawal. It seems that Yurakucho is on that road. The marshal was the first to withdraw and has not reported his whereabouts. It seems that they are wary of any outrageous acts that take advantage of the confusion. It is a little sad to hear this from their benefactor."

Kokujoji still couldn't understand what the president was trying to say in his long speech.

The story continues.

"In other words, now that there is a vacancy, our government of Japan has no choice but to act independently. However, at present the country doesn't even have an army. There is really nothing we can do except issue an evacuation order..."

Among them, there was a word...

(Vacant?)

Kokujoji felt a strange sense of unease.

It is a phrase that means there is no king. He was probably comparing the Marshal, who was the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers and effectively ruling Japan, to a king, and using that as an analogy to a situation where there was no one in command, but the

President should have known without a doubt that the members of "Tokijikuin" were chasing him.

If there is another meaning, it could be political, that the highest chain of command has fled.

".....!"

Suddenly, a flash of lightning appeared within the "Golden King".

"If in an emergency situation like this, a political upheaval was to occur, and even the marshal was unknown, our Japanese government would have no chance of survival. This is especially true if the opponent is a violent organization with deep roots in the heart of the government."

Suddenly, Kokujoji began to feel an unexpected palpitation.

This was no time to fret or hesitate as if it were someone else's problem. He realized that he himself was part of a changing world and that precisely because he possessed power within that world he was a King.

(Everything is speeding up a lot.)

The plan had already been in motion for some time.

He had also been preparing for whatever was to come.

However, there was no concrete date as to when that would happen.

It was the goal of a distant dream, something to be achieved within ten or twenty years.

(This is what "change" means... or rather, "change it"?)

Now it is not just a dream.

Actually, it is within his reach.

The key to making that happen was pure will.

They wield their power according to their own will and create laws, truths, the world and the era freely.

The time had come to do so.

Too soon, too inevitably.

Kokujoji asked quietly.

"Since when are you aware of our intentions?"

"It's been a long time. Although I used it for my own convenience, I was always afraid."

Contrary to what he said, the President's voice sounded amused.

He added with a laugh.

"Until I can determine the power of that "Slate" and who you are as a person..."

"Thank you for the kind words."

The President continued, pretending to be a deliberately strict teacher.

"This is not something I entrust to you based on your mood or personal feelings. It's too big for that."

"Of course."

"That light in the sky... What do you think of the light that has turned you into a monster?"

This is what led the President to choose his current path.

Kokujoji replied as he recalled the core of the situation.

"I don't have any proof, but judging from the situation, I think it was a nuclear attack from an aircraft carrier that was in Yokosuka... or at least ordered by the mainland United States."

"I agree. The United States of America has taken such an outrageous action... that it is unforgivable, regardless of its existence. As a resident of this country, this cannot be tolerated."

"Yes."

A clear and concise agreement is returned, along with an honest and sincere wish.

"And so, to protect myself against the violence and senseless acts that will surely continue in the future, I bet on you. I believe that you are the only one who has the "power" to entrust our country to."

"....."

"Now, give orders to your guards and do what must be done. Let us protect our country from harmful intentions and nurture it under the sun of ever-increasing prosperity. Kokujoji Daikaku... no, "Golden King"."

"...I understand."

Kokujoji Daikaku's tone of voice as he replied had changed.

It had transformed into that of a master who would not cower before anyone.

"At home we take control of the country and at home we conquer the enemy. Come and observe our skills."

"Please."

The call was disconnected.

Kokujoji called out in a calm and cheerful voice to the group who watched in amazement the events unfolding.

"Just one more call, give me some time."

He calmly gave orders, this time connecting to a different emergency line.

"To all members of "Tokijikuin". Immediately execute "Armed Uprising Plan 5"."

It was an order to overthrow and take control of the current state, the occupied country of Japan.

There is no need for a pompous military parade, as has happened in some past cases. The numerous supernatural beings that had originally been stationed as guards at the heart of the government and in key departments have now turned their attention inward. With just that, the suppression would be completed quickly and absolutely. Even when attempting to take control, a minimal number of personnel is sufficient.

Furthermore, the fifth plan was the most extreme, involving not completely concealing the paranormal powers and using all available force to suppress them. Within an hour, the nation's vital interests would be in the hands of "Tokijikuin".

The targets of the plan to take control include both Houses of Government, the Prime Minister's Official Residence, the private residences of important cabinet ministers, the National Public Security Headquarters, and the Tokyo Metropolitan Headquarters of the National and Prefectural Police. The targets to take over by deploying forces included the suddenly vacant Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, some embassies, newspapers and broadcasting companies, American military bases, the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department, and the National Fire Agency.

"Also, once the situation has calmed down, in addition to reading out loud the standard "National Guidance Statement", it will also be verbally announced that the natural disaster in question is a nuclear bombing by the United States of America. After that, in coordination with the relevant ministries and agencies, you will quickly evacuate all civilians from the enemy's path. I hope that every member of your team will work tirelessly to accomplish that. That's all."

In short, there are only five or six.

That alone will decisively change the character of the nation.

However, for Kokujoji, that is just a hidden story.

There are still many important issues that they themselves must address.

"I'm sorry for keeping you guys waiting."

Now much larger, Kokujoji turned to look at the faces that were waiting for him.

No longer were there ordinary people who were overwhelmed by the speed at which the world was changing and hesitated to use the "power" they possessed. The person before him was a "King" who was willing to take responsibility for changing the world, a powerful ruler who was fully aware that from now on, "they are the ones who will change the world", and who stepped forward with confidence.

To usher in a new era, the "Golden King", Kokujoji Daikaku, issued the order.

"Come on, all that remains is to defeat him!"

The monster kicked the besieging force's tanks and advanced.

The monster continued to advance, crushing an abandoned tram.

(Why are you afraid when you see me?)

(Why do you see me and run away?)

The view from above came to his mind.

Looking up, he found face after face filled with surprise and faces trembling with fear.

Backs and backs appearing, then backs and backs running away helplessly.

His thoughts were interrupted and he began to vaguely understand the meaning.

(Oh, right.)

(I turned into a crocodile.)

His vague consciousness was tinged with joy.

(You don't have to be afraid of anyone! You don't have to be afraid of anything!)

(I turned into a crocodile.)

The giant feet began to move faster.

Heading straight towards his destination.

(Oh, what happiness!)

(I want to sink deep into the water quickly.)

(I want to sleep peacefully and still.)

Looking down from high above he could see a flat blue sky.

The vast ocean can be seen stretching out to the horizon.

(I'm already full.)

(I'm not hungry, I'm not hungry.)

He moved his legs as hard as he could.

He no longer has to be afraid of what lies beneath his feet.

(Then all you have to do is escape into the dark, deep bottom of the water.)

(Then no one will be able to touch me.)

Anything that stands in the way of his progress will disappear with a single shout.

They make way for the one who has turned into a crocodile.

(Because crocodiles are scary.)

The monster stomped on the shattered remains and moved forward.

The monster heads towards the sea, where it will find peace.

Only the Kings pursue the monster as it heads towards the sea.

The reason is that the battles ahead would be too much for it. Because it was a fact, no one objected, but Kokujoji still received reinforcement from an unexpected person.

Chika was seeing off her husband.

"Victory alone is not enough. You must make sure that everyone returns alive. In particular, be prepared in case something happens, Nazumi."

As Kokujoji was overwhelmed by his spirit, Suwako and Okuma also joined in.

"That's right. The war is finally over and it would be terrible to die in a place like this!"

"I can't believe that's what the Yakuza (us) say. Well, I agree with you that we shouldn't die."

Miya also said, taking Iku's hand, saying that she would accompany her to the fight.

"Iku-chan, when you return, you'll give me lots of delicious food to eat. So..."

"Yes, I'm fine."

Iku is honest.

"If you wish it, Chika-san, there's no chance of that happening."

Nazumi is exaggerated,

"That's something you can only discuss after you've accomplished it."

Unno replied to each of them coldly.

To these people, Kokujoji gave a firm guarantee:

"I have no intention of forcing you to be reckless. That strange flame just now..."

"It's a contradictory line of force."

"That sudden attack by that superhuman line of force put us on the defensive, but this time it will be different."

"Do you think we have a chance of winning?"

"It doesn't matter if it's logical or not, we're just aiming for a great victory."

"Well, what about you?"

"That's right."

"You seem quite optimistic. Do you have any special cards up your sleeve?"

When Otono asked, Kokujoji answered with certainty.

"Yes. The conditions are set. No matter how I absorb that explosion, if we can catch up to it before it reaches the sea, our victory will be assured. This is because the "power" of the "Golden King" makes it possible."

And so the Kings set off.

Just as Kokujoji had declared, there was a feeling of great victory.

A new gray "Sword-like Shine (Schwert)" appeared in the sky.

The first to make contact with the monster, or rather look down on it from above, was Otono Benji, the "Gray King", who could see and hear freely from afar through the fog.

(The flatterer, on the other hand, got carried away and reached his limits.)

He couldn't help but find it funny.

It seems he's weak against that "Golden King".

Before he knew it, he had gone from being hidden to being dragged into a battle with an incredible monster. Otono still couldn't fully accept that reality.

(This fog was meant to hide me, to hide us, but that was all.)

The fog rose up surrounding the monster. That was to hinder even a little bit of its advance and create an opening for the other kings to approach. It made him think again how funny it is that you never know what might be useful.

The Kings' attack will begin soon.

It must have been a very beautiful and spectacular sight.

This is one wild party he can join.

(Well, that's just for now.)

As a former gangster, Otono understood that his current, uncharacteristic behavior was the result of him being carried away by the momentary excitement of the festival, and that he would have no choice but to leave once the festival was over. Like a scar, there is no place for him in the dazzling next era they will build. He did not ask for it.

He disappeared into thin air.

(The snow clouds have spectacularly dispersed... Now it is time for the fog to quietly disappear.)

As for him, he just wants to be able to continue running "Kirinoichi", a hideout that provides a brief place of rest for people who have nowhere else to go. That was his right, the lifestyle of the "Gray King", neither dissatisfied nor satisfied.

From behind the white curtain, the monster's voice roared like a foghorn, and somehow penetrated into Otono's heart.

A new green "Sword-like Shine (Schwert)" appeared in the sky.

Below them, the "Green King", Iku Tsunogui, was flying at lightning speed along the power lines.

Behind her, the three "Kings" Kokujoji, Unno, and Nazumi were being guided by an induced current. If the distance is short and there are few people, electromagnetic acceleration by allies is not necessary. She was able to fly on her own.

There are two reasons why Iku joined this battle.

One reason is simple and clear, to return the favor for being saved, she and her friends the Biribiri group, from the "Colorless King". The other is due to a unique intuition.

(If we can defeat it, everything will be fine.)

That was her intuition.

She knew that the monster, the "power" it possessed, was the final obstacle blocking the path they all walked together. On the contrary, the three people accompanying them and the other one watching and listening from afar may be companions walking the same path, even if their walking style is different.

(Screaming all the time.)

Iku could feel the pain and sadness in the voice of the "Colorless King".

(I've been listening to him all this time.)

She felt sorry for him and even wanted to cry.

(But he will lead us all into darkness.)

The "King" of change, who seeks to destroy and disrupt the present, will not recognize that.

The girl who aspires to live in the new era to come cannot allow that.

(I don't want that.)

Iku preferred the "Golden King", who was cheerful and direct, who set his mind to something and kept moving forward, and who never seemed to give up, than to say "it can't be helped".

Iku and the three Kings jumped at the strange sight of a fog that cleared.

A new blue "Sword-shaped Shine (Schwert)" appeared in the sky.

Freed from the induced current, the "Blue King", Somei Nazumi, danced in the mist with the momentum of his sudden approach. He dodged the giant body of the monster that appeared nearby and advanced in the direction he was heading.

(Now we just have to wait for the signal...)

After thinking that, he realized that even he was eagerly waiting for the "Golden King" to make his move, and a wry smile spilled from his face. Before he knew it, the former lieutenant had always surprised him, and it seemed that he had also begun to have high expectations of him. As he slowly drew his sword,

(He probably doesn't need a "cut" anymore.)

He was glad that Kokujoji had finally become a "King".

With just a hint of bittersweet loneliness.

After doing that, he completely changed his mental state.

(Watch out, guys, things are going to get tough from now on... after all, they've taken over a country.)

The current situation is that they've simply taken advantage of the confusion to occupy the core. No matter how overwhelming the military power of "Tokijikuin" is, political intrigue is another matter. Until they can establish power as a fait accompli and gain complete control over national affairs, they'll need to keep winning battles both domestically and internationally and making adjustments between big and small, hard and soft moves.

(The chaos of the early days has made things more difficult, and we're back to square one.)

The "Blue King's" role as the protector of order may not be over yet.

Nazumi suddenly felt like this.

(In that case, all I have to do is wait for the time to show my true potential while slowly "cleaning" the world.)

There are countless things he and they need to do, such as rebuilding the system, establishing laws related to paranormal abilities, and negotiating with various parties to accomplish that... but, before anything else,

(Seriously, I'm rushing.)

The "Blue King" decided to get to work on his current job, the extermination of the monster ahead of him.

A new red "Sword-shaped Shine (Schwert)" appeared in the sky.

The "Red King", Unno Yutaka, had dissipated the induced current and landed in front of the mist, looking a little displeased. For a moment, he felt that the series of events was pleasant and exciting.

Fun, happy, wonderful things... every time he encounters all that shine,

(Is this okay?)

The feeling of guilt stabs him deep in the heart.

The battle against the thunderous monster deep in the fog is absolutely fun, charming, and wonderful.

It was because of that that Unno felt the pain that was stabbing deep in his chest grow stronger.

(I was left behind, so I decided to throw it all out and let out everything that was boiling inside me... Wasn't that what you decided, Unno Yutaka?)

He couldn't say that he got carried away by it without even realizing it.

He went to that battlefield of his own free will.

When he came out, he thought that he was going to beat up the black-cloaked monster that was playing with his minions. That wasn't wrong, but the truth was that Unno had been unconsciously hiding a part of it.

To put it more plainly, it was about beating up the black-cloaked monster "along with people like him who thought he was left behind". He secretly thought of brother Otono

and the nasty Blue Hat... and then he added the shining gold and the Biribiri children, and he felt that they were "the same" as him. That was the reason why that present moment was so fun, happy and wonderful.

Now Unno clearly feels that hidden part. He can't help but feel that way.

(That's really too bad.)

Only one person, the black monster that wandered in the fog before his eyes,

(If my voice had reached you, perhaps you would have understood... since we are both "the same" person who narrowly escaped death.)

Unno was able to speak in the dimness he had originally decided upon.

And then, hearing the great voice of the "Golden King", Kokujoji Daikaku,

"Clear the fog!"

A sixth bright golden "Sword-like Shine (Schwert)" appeared in the sky.

As the voice said, the fog dissipated and the "Colorless King" within appeared, having arrived at the very center of Ginza. The sudden sunlight and even a golden glow illuminated the giant that stood above the main street.

And suddenly, the giant's body swelled even more.

Rather, it became thicker, larger, and stronger.

The monster, now three times larger, stared at the deserted city that had been evacuated and let out an even more powerful roar.

But,

"What the fuck, you bastard!"

Unno's friendly kick was accompanied by a powerful red force that bounced off his back. The blow, like a mass of heat that crashed into him, surpassed the absorption limit and caused a huge explosion on the surface of the body of "nothing".

To a spectator, it seemed as if Unno had kicked the gigantic monster away with a single kick.

In fact, that is precisely the case. It was a sight that almost seemed like a joke.

"It's not so much my understanding, but rather my senses simply can't keep up."

Nazumi laughed wryly and raised a wall-like shield in front of the falling monster.

The shield was taller and wider than before, and the blue glow was denser; not only did it easily support the enormous weight falling towards it, but it also repelled it.

The monster was kicked from behind and bounced off the wall in front of it as it fell, truly at its mercy. Given its size, it appeared to be moving slowly, but in reality it fell at an incredible speed.

Furthermore, Kokujoji was waiting for him where he had collapsed.

"Hmph!"

A perfectly timed bang exploded with a golden glow.

The light was overwhelming and a delayed tremor in the air unleashed a violent wind that even blew away the street lamps.

The monster flew through the air at a speed several times faster than it had fallen. After an unusually long period of time in the air, it rumbled like an eruption, kicking up a cloud of dust and crushing the clock tower along with the building below, then collapsed.

Amidst the lingering sound of a slight tremor, too dangerous to be called a glow, and the remnants of a great earthquake, a mist arrived near Kokujoji.

"Oh, I see."

Otono does not hide her excitement and speaks loudly.

"Indeed, we need to do this 'four against one', not 'three against two'... that golden sword is the rich man's trump card that will bring us a great victory."

This is the characteristic of the "Golden King's", "Sword-like Brilliance (Schwert)", "Great Enhancement for All Supernatural Beings". Anyone within this range of effect, whether King or member, friend or foe, will receive the benefit. It was a power that could not be used carelessly in situations where supernatural beings, especially kings, fought each other.

"Actually, adding the 'Colorless King' would make five, and with you and that guy it would make seven... the ideal would be for everyone to unite, without opposing anyone, you know?"

"....."

The muttered message seemed like a reply, but it was not, and the yakuza, sensing the subtlety of the situation, remained silent.

And then, accompanied by a flash of lightning, Iku appeared. She said it with a smile, satisfied with her strength.

"The people who couldn't escape were left abandoned outside, three blocks away from the main street."

"Thank you, Iku-chan. And you did a great job, Otono Benji."

"Yes."

"Thanks to that sword, the range and sensitivity of the mist have increased, so it's no problem."

At Kokujoji's request, while they were fighting the monsters, they were busy searching the city, which had been designated as an evacuation zone, to see if anyone had been unable to escape and to help them escape as far as possible if they found them. After that was done, Kokujoji turned to address everyone again.

"Alright, let's decide this here! Everyone, do whatever you want!"

The four kings replied,

"Hehe! You don't even have to say that!"

"Just be careful of conflicting lines of force."

"Understood."

"I'm just an insider, so I'm not going to wait patiently for a great victory."

Under the six-colored glow "like a sword" (Schwert) the final act of the "Battle of the Six Kings" as it is commonly called in the Secret History unfolded.

The "Colorless King", who had sunk into the ground under his own weight, pushed aside the rubble and stood up. This time, he will not be able to take the initiative with a surprise attack. Moreover, at the vertical tip, within the roaring jaw, a whirlpool of power was swirling.

(Strange, I want it.)

(Don't come, don't come.)

A huge, contradictory, superhuman beam of force erupted from the gigantic mouth, carelessly sweeping through the streets of Ginza, razing them without a trace. The monster's rampage spread throughout the area like a destructive force.

On the contrary, the kings scattered around him did not join forces...

As soon as the contradictory lines of force ceased without capturing their prey, each attacked as he wished.

One leaped with the force of not wanting to let go of the first shot,

"Get out of here!"

He punched his jaw, which was almost closed, into the air with a bright red iron fist.

There's no way a monster made of supernatural "power" would suffer a concussion, but the impact itself caused its massive body to tilt. The monster staggered, taking one step, then another, following the unnatural sway of a high-rise building.

(Why aren't you afraid of me?)

(I turned into a crocodile.)

Next, Iku stood in the middle of the main street, spreading her arms out like an orchestra conductor, then closing them again.

"A truly powerful technique."

The small induced currents she placed all over the place drew an immense amount of energy from the downed electrical wires throughout the devastated city. It transformed into a rope and a glowing green net that bound the lower half of the monster's body.

Nazumi was amazed by the girl's skill,

"You already learned tug-of-war? What a girl!"

Deciding that a shield wasn't necessary for the moment, he focused his strength on the sword. After determining everyone's position, he cut it down with a single slash. A blue light that followed the path of the sword ran down the monster's right side to its left shoulder, and its left arm fell off.

(How strange.)

(Why?)

Though it let out a landscape-shaking scream and writhed in agony in its bonds, the monster instantly began to regenerate its left arm. And then, a dazzling golden light shone from those sunken, wide-open eyes.

Kokujoji rushed towards the lightning net.

(Is it okay to defeat it? The bomb inside is...)

"That's not enough. I'll use all of your power here, it poses a threat!"

Approaching the monster head-on, Kokujoji took a deep breath, gathered his strength, and then slammed into it with a golden explosion of a punch. One punch, two punches, five punches, ten punches, and more, and more, and so on.

The monster struggled within its bonds, writhing and leaning back, gathering all of its remaining strength. A line of contradictory force... the power that erases everything with the cry of "desire" and the cry of "fear".

(Strange, they don't run away.)

(Why am I so hungry...?!)

Directly above him, Unno launched a red kick that emitted a power that surpassed the power of a nuclear bomb.

"I'm the one who must do it!"

Similarly, directly below, Nazumi waved his blue sword and changed its properties to attack.

"No, it's me."

He struck his jaw from above and below, crushing him.

With their exit blocked, the contradictory lines of force have nowhere to go and release their power on the spot.

After a moment,

The upper half of the giant monster's body was torn in half.

Kokujoji screamed as he saw his thick armor, hardened by fear, shattered.

"Who are you, human?"

(I'm hungry...)

It's not just about answering the last mystery left from the battle so far.

"Come with us! We hope you can come with us!"

(I want someone to connect with...)

He never gave up on his ideals and threw himself at them with his hand outstretched.

"With just that you should be able to do it too!"

(Very scary, very scary.)

The essence of existence,

The negative power it carries,

The intention behind the "Slate" that was sent out,

Even though he understood everything, he still extended his hand.

However, the "Colorless King" never took it.

+++++

He was not born into a particularly good family.

However, they were a decent family because they could work every day and earn a living.

However, after he was drafted into the army, only bad things happened to him.

After going to war, scary things were added to the unpleasant things.

Still, it was better while fighting.

After the country lost, it became hell.

The entire unit surrendered, but they were not allowed to return to their homeland.

They were put into freight cars like cattle and transported to the far north.

There was nothing, there was nothing, just the detention center.

There they made him work.

They wore short shoes that broke easily,

They huddled together in a tent that didn't even have a floor.

They survived each day on bread crumbs, salty soup, and millet porridge.

They were made to work until they were completely exhausted.

Anyone who was hurt died.

Anyone who destroyed something died.

Those who did not have enough nutrition died.

Those who were exhausted died.

Some even decided to commit suicide.

Some died while trying to escape.

He could not even move the spoon.

"I'm hungry... give me... that..."

There were days when he desperately asked for help and managed to survive.

Everyone was desperate to work,

Everyone was desperately trying to survive.

But, if that were not enough, he was beaten.

A committee was formed that advocated a democratic movement.

The United States loves war, the Soviet Union loves peace,

He started shouting something like this.

If I cut wood, trim it and load it into my car, I can earn a living.

That was all he needed.

But, if that were not enough, he was beaten.

Soon, some of them began to act out a hair-raising court case.

Exposing reactionary elements, making self-criticism and mutual criticism,

He started shouting something like this.

If I cut wood, trim it, and load it into my car, I can make a living.

That was all he needed.

But, to top it off, he was beaten.

In those days, something very important happened...

Human beings were worn out.

And then how much time had passed?

The man who brought his former superior officer to trial,

The guy who wrote a letter of thanks to a Soviet leader,

Thanks to having people like that in the same workshop, he was able to return home.

Before returning to Japan, he was going to join a certain party,

"Participate in the revolution in some way."

A big shot forced him to make a promise, but he forgot everything on the evacuation ship.

He was very happy to be able to return home alive.

However, as soon as he arrived at Maizuru, he was arrested.

The people who were with him ran away, leaving him alone.

"Where did you go...? Don't leave me behind..."

His body had already deteriorated, so he couldn't run away.

Apparently, among the items left behind by those who fled were some suspicious books and documents.

Suspicion of redness, etc.

Was he a spy too?

The occupation forces interrogated and beat him, but he didn't understand anything.

He was escorted to Yokosuka,

When he was about to die, he was thrown into a support center in Uraga.

In the end he didn't know what was wrong and what was forgiven.

After a while, the support center was closed and he was expelled.

He wanted to return home, but since he was arrested immediately after landing, he had practically no documents.

Demobilization certificate, repatriation certificate, etc.

There must have been something there, but there was nothing he could question.

He didn't know where the people who took him were.

The man who was shouting on the street corner that he would let them go home somehow resembled the committee member.

So he was too scared to come closer.

Maybe they would betray him again, like they did some time ago.

They might label him a traitor and leave him to his fate.

So he was too scared to come closer.

He survived with what he had left and what they gave him.

In the end he got there.

Sometimes he picked up trash that other people had thrown away,

There were also scary creatures hanging around, so he couldn't get out.

Among them,

He couldn't move his body anymore.

He was hungry.

He wanted some food.

But he was scared.

What could he do?

He didn't know.

He was hungry.

Everything would be fine, he wanted it.

But he was scared.

Next,

He might die.

But he wanted it.

But he was scared.

"Help me... I'm hungry... I'm going to die..."

His voice didn't reach anyone.

That was all.

Too scary. Too scary.

+++++

It had been about an hour since the monster disappeared.

At dusk, the Kings finally arrived at the epicenter of the incident.

The sea breeze smelled of fish and the dock was dilapidated and messy.

"I never thought someone like him could figure it out from just an insider's point of view.
This is also that sword... oh, wait."

Otono stumbled on the unstable walkway and Kokujoji had to help him. He insisted, uncharacteristically, on showing him around on foot and laughed sheepishly beneath his bandages.

"I'm sorry, my lord."

"What?"

Kokujoji made a short trip back.

It wasn't a suitable place for a pleasant conversation.

These are so-called floating settlements, with boats of all sizes populating the shoreline, from houseboats consisting of flat barges with cabins on top, to small boats with tents and even floating barrack-like structures.

Originally, the railway line only reached as far as the mouth of the Sumida River, passing through Tsukishima and Kachidoki, but after the war it continued to extend southwards,

absorbing overworked workers, homeless people and even thugs. This was part of the image of the time.

They visited near the southern end.

It was an area like a pontoon bridge connecting the area to a small island off the coast.

The vast, desolate area is a collection of dilapidated shacks that could disappear on a stormy night.

It was dusk and the shadows on the boat were deep. The area below the gangway is also submerged in stagnant darkness, filled with the sticky sound of water. The small island in front of them was half submerged in water, surrounded by a field of tall reeds and rushes, and not a single light could be seen from the windows. It is rumored that this place, commonly known as "Ashinaka", is conveniently used as a meeting place for illegal transactions.

Without paying attention to the suspicious terrain, Unno took the lead with two or three boats.

"Is there some guy hiding in a place like this, brother?"

"Yes, he always came from the south and returned to the south, that was what I felt every time I saw "Mushikui". I was sure that he had taken the form of a snake and crawled out."

On the other hand, Otono, who has a small and unreliable gait, calmly replied.

Nazumi, who was watching from behind, summarized the information he had heard so far.

"The truth is that all the shapes we faced were just the outstretched hands or swollen mouths of the "Colorless King", and he himself had been here the whole time... Though it's hard to believe at first."

"Maybe that's so. Most of the energy was being used to explode, but it felt like a small fragment was being sent far away."

Beside him, Iku muttered as she hopped on the rotting bow of the ship like a small bird.

Skilled at grasping the structure of things, she combined her own experiences and sensations, Otono's explanation, and Nazumi's interpretation to get a rough idea of what the "Colorless King" was like.

"He was so afraid of the power he had consumed that he was reluctant to accept it. He was very hungry."

Sadness made her small, hunched back even rounder.

Nazumi added more information.

"In other words, while as a living being I desired it, as a human I rejected it. The power he had consumed while he was the monster "Black Cloak", was probably only enough to sustain his life, the bare minimum."

In the twilight, a brief moment of silence passed.

"The others who were devoured only had their lives nibbled away, so it was a waste of their lives. But then we got serious and punched him, and he was the one who was knocked out first."

Unno spat in disgust.

"Even if he hadn't fought us and had reached the sea... this entire pier would have been destroyed, wouldn't it? I wonder why he was starving and suffering."

Otono was pouring out his kindness as he said that.

"Unlike us, the "Colorless King" wasn't capable of holding a proper conversation. All we knew was what we felt when we first met, and there was no way to know anything more than that. Nor was there any way to know what kind of "King" he was."

Nazumi was sad that he hadn't found a solution.

"What I felt... is a poor boy who can't be with anyone."

Iku was concise and used few words.

"I was very afraid of the bonds that came with power."

Then Kokujoji spoke with a sad look on his face, squeezing the hand that had been denied to him until the very end.

"But human life is based on connections. If he is alive, then I am still..."

The Kings, who have had much to do with death, know that such hope is slim.

Yet even so, no one laughed at Kokujoji's naivety.

Finally, Otono turned his gaze to a ship.

"...It seems we have arrived."

It was a small, rickety vessel, with barracks on top and looking similar to a pleasure boat.

It is surprising how it does not sink with such a shallow draft and being submerged in water.

"Me first."

Unno crossed the board first, keeping a watchful eye around him.

But naturally, there was no movement, neither inside nor outside.

The sound of the crashing waves and the stench of floating garbage were the only things that decorated the hut in a gloomy manner as the twilight deepened. Everyone stood in front of the entrance, which was nothing more than a hanging straw mat.

Kokujoji and Otono had already noticed that by this time.

"....."

"Hey Iku-chan, come here."

Otono, as an adult and as a person, tried to stop the girl, but...

"It's okay, I've gotten used to it."

Iku shook her head. She could tell that too from the stench of rotting garbage.

Unno frowned.

"That's not something a child should say."

"Come on."

Nazumi encouraged without pushing.

And so, the six kings were finally gathered.

He was dead, leaning with his back against the wooden wall at the back.

The face visible beneath the long, unkempt hair was abnormally thin and devoid of flesh. The same could be said for his completely thin, rag-wrapped body. There were no gestures or expressions to suggest any kind of will. There, it was as if life had been cut short, and it was the kind of death that could be seen everywhere, a face of death they were familiar with.

The true identity of the mysterious "Black Cloak", the man who had become a monster, the "Colorless King" who had devoured a nuclear bomb and wreaked havoc, was found starving to death in the back of a completely empty room, without a single morsel of food in sight.

Iku didn't feel bad about the situation.

His appearance was normal for today's society.

"The same as everyone else."

"Ah, it seems we kings can die as humans too."

Considering his own circumstances, Otono even felt grateful for that.

Unno apologized to the man on the other side of the death he missed.

"I'm sorry, we were the only ones having fun."

"What would have been the right answer... or is this even the right answer?"

Nazumi saw death before his eyes as yet another problem piled up and needed to be solved.

After hearing the voices of everyone present, Kokujoji finally stepped forward in front of him.

He searched for the right words to say.

(Will your death not be in vain?)

It was different.

(Is it thanks to you that I was able to get this far?)

It was different.

(What would have happened if we had met before?)

It was different.

Having been drawn into the events caused by the "Slate", having prolonged a painful life and death because of it, having forced death and destruction that were never his intention, he has no intention of attributing it all to fate, or judging it in terms of right and wrong. Because facts are just facts.

The time for falsely asking for forgiveness is long gone.

He decided to be honest about what he was carrying inside.

These are...

"Why?"

All plausible reasoning was suddenly shattered by an overflow of emotion.

"Why didn't you take my hand? Why didn't you try to make everyone happy?"

What came out of his mouth was a selfish attachment to the dream he was trying to create. It was a one-sided denunciation of the other person who had not tried to create together with him the desired mystery, the desired miracle.

The other kings present looked in amazement at the distressed state of the "Golden King" when they saw him for the first time.

"If you had taken my hand, I could have taken you with me!"

The dead "Colorless King" remained silent.

But still, the "Golden King" continued to express his feelings.

"Why didn't you come with me? Why did you die alone?"

It was an angry cry that sounded like a wail.

"I don't even know your name!"

It was a wail that sounded like an angry scream.

The kings, all of them different in terms of where they were born and raised, their personalities, aspirations, ages, and occupations, all wanted to hear the thoughts... not logic, but emotions... that were conveyed in the voice of the man known as Kokujoji Daikaku.

A fierce battle between the supernatural "Kings",

Political turmoil in occupied Japan played out behind the scenes.

The manifestation of "power" that decisively changed the world.

That little feeling gained after all those twists and turns is the true achievement of that battle. Without even realizing it, it was the seed of a Fusang tree that would send out branches and leaves to future generations.