



MISSING KINGS
RAIRAKU REI / GoRA

TRANSLATION: NARU-KUN / K – PROJECT WORLD

CHAPTER 2: RECOVERY OPERATION

Lying on his back on the couch at the HOMRA bar, Yata stared at the ceiling listlessly without sleeping or doing anything.

He's been coming there for years, but he'd never looked at the ceiling like this until he was left alone.

When everyone was there and "Homura" was in high spirits, he would always look at his comrades' faces or Suoh's back.

He heard the door to the bar open violently.

However, Yata, who was tired and weak on the couch, ignored him as it was too much trouble to get up. Kamamoto's voice came along with the sound of turbulent footsteps.

"Hey, Yata-san, it's an emergency!"

For some reason, a loud crash rang out.

Now that he thought about it, Yata absently recalled that he had just received a call from Kamamoto. He ignored him, thinking it was just a scolding, as if he cared.

Yata lay down and stared at the ceiling, speaking lazily.

"Kusanagi-san always scolded me to shut up in the bar... well, what about Kusanagi-san? Did she leave the bar to go somewhere else?"

"Hmm." Yata snorted. However, Kamamoto never responded.

Thinking what the hell, Yata sat up, turned around, and rolled his eyes.

"Oh, what's going on...?!"

At the entrance to the bar, Kamamoto was lying on his stomach. His back was torn and his clothes were black with blood.

"You must react now, Yata-san...!"

Kamamoto said that with painful sweat pouring down his face, getting up after failing many times.

"I'm in trouble, Anna...!"

"What the hell?! What's wrong?! What happened to Anna?!"

After being in a daze for a while, Yata fell off the couch and picked up Kamamoto. Kamamoto groaned, as if his wounds were convulsed from the blow.

Yata made Kamamoto sit on the couch in the bar, and Kamamoto blew out a harsh sigh.

A mysterious ninja-like person from the Green Clan came to Kamamoto's family's liquor store and asked Anna to use her psychic ability to find the "Silver King".

When she refused, he tried to take Anna by force.

She was rescued by the Black Dog who found her by chance and although he was able to repel the ninja several times, he was attacked by a strong swordsman named Yukari Mishakuji, who was said to be Kuro's older brother, and kidnapped Anna.

Hearing what had happened, Yata clenched his fists so tightly that his nails dug into his palms.

At the same time that anger against the criminal was welling up, he had the strange feeling that he wanted to punch himself.

Kamamoto contacted Yata when he was first attacked by the ninja. It was Yata who decided that it would be a boring story anyway and ignored him. Kamamoto, who was unable to contact Yata, accepted Kuro's offer to stay on Gakuenjima, where he has his base.

Yata was irresistibly frustrated at having to trust another clan's Black Dog more than himself, a comrade to whom he believed he was bound by a bond stronger than blood.

"So where did that fagot go that kidnapped Anna?"

Encouraged by a tingle of impatience, Yata asked, but Kamamoto shook his head.

"The Black Dog is chasing him, but I haven't heard from him yet..."

Yata gritted his teeth.

Anna is an important companion to Yata and someone he must protect, just like the family Suoh and Totsuka left behind.

He didn't know what she was going through, nor did he know where to go. The fact that he had no choice but to trust other clansmen and just wait made Yata feel his stomach burn.

Yata turned his back on Kamamoto and flopped down on the counter, impatience and anger swirling in his stomach with nowhere to go.

"Yata-san..."

Suddenly, Kamamoto called out to Yata as if he was leaving.

"Fushimi... Yes..."

The name came out of Kamamoto's mouth. Yata shook his back. Kamamoto leaned forward momentarily as if he had made up his mind.

"If you ask Fushimi, he might know something."

He looked like he was holding on.

Yata was unable to reply immediately.

Even Yata painfully understood how Kamamoto felt when he failed to protect Anna and she was kidnapped. If something were to happen to Anna, it would be such a feeling that he would not be able to live with it. Several thoughts ran through Yata's head in an instant.

Fushimi, who betrayed Yata, betrayed "Homura" and went to "Scepter 4" with sand on his hind legs, but he didn't think he had any ill will towards Anna.

The last time he saw Fushimi was during the Battle of Gakuenjima, where Suoh lost his life. That person was useless. Seeing Suoh's unbridled power, Fushimi moved away.

However, Yata believed that even Fushimi could not have felt anything. There was no way he didn't have feelings for Suoh, who changed his world.

But in the end, he is a traitor. Even "Homura's" sign, which is his pride and proof of his bond, was burned by himself, and he still denied the existence of "Homura".

(Damn, do you trust him? Do you think he'll help you in the first place? But... because...), Yata thought.

His mind a mess, Yata kicked his chair and stood up. He ran out of the bar without looking at Kamamoto.

He ducked down the side street of the HOMRA bar and struggled a few more seconds. He put his fist to his forehead, scratched his head, punched his knee, and finally reached out to grab the watch-shaped PDA on his wrist.

With a strong hand, he calls the number for the first time in three years.

The possibility that there would be no answer crossed his mind, but when he was about to count the tenth call, the call was suddenly connected.

"...Saruhiko?"

Yata asked with a strained voice. What he got back was a little tsk.

"Identify yourself. Is it from an unregistered number? Who are you?"

"You're a monkey... you've been picking fights from the start."

Yata reflexively sulked at the intentionally disgusting way of putting it.

"Fighting? It's no fun fighting you now. Without the Sanctum's protection, I'd end up intimidating a weakling."

Fushimi's mocking voice echoed over the radio waves.

Yata held his breath for a moment and pounded his fist against his chest as if to scold himself for reacting like this.

"Mikoto-san's power is still within me! I will always be your opponent!"

In fact, inside Yata's body, the flames Suoh gave him still remain. Although not as strong as before, the fire has never been extinguished.

However, Fushimi snorted.

"I don't like it. If you really want me to take care of you, you can switch to another clan."

"Hey, don't make me equal to others! My only clan is "Homura"!"

"Hah, isn't that "Homura" almost disbanded already?"

Through the PDA, he heard Fushimi spit it out with a mixture of mockery.

Fushimi's words pierced deep into Yata's heart. His heart ached as he remembered the scene inside the bar with no one but him.

Yata gritted his teeth and turned away, unable to find anything to answer.

"That happens because you lean on something like a comrade."

After a short pause, Fushimi muttered under his breath. That voice didn't have the enthusiastic color that he had until a while ago, and for some reason it sounded a bit lonely.

Yata swallowed his emotions and tensed his voice.

"...Listen to me, Saruhiko. Anna was kidnapped. According to Kamamoto's story, it was the work of Mishakuji of the Green Clan. But I don't know where they took her. Don't you have any information? If you know anything, please tell me."

As he squeezed out the words, he actually bowed his head. Fushimi's irritated click of the tongue echoed on the other side of the PDA.

"I'm not your informant."

"Even I'm too angry to ask you to do something for me! I'm so upset I'm going to vomit! But, I don't have Mikoto-san or Totsuka-san... Kusanagi-san either. I can't think of anything. I have no choice but you...!"

The feeling that stuck in his chest was like a jagged, distorted mass, and Yata spat it out painfully. As if he was holding on to him, he brought his face closer to the PDA in his hand.

"You don't hold a grudge against Anna, right?"

Silence followed.

Yata waited patiently for Fushimi's reaction, as if he was waiting for a verdict.

After a few seconds, which seemed incredibly long to Yata, the call was cut off without a single word being answered.

Yata stared at the PDA, whose call screen had disappeared.

Anger and disappointment slowly welled up. Yata was disturbed by a feeling of pity for himself, which he expected, and an emotion that, although he did not want to admit it, could be classified as "pain".

Shaking his fists, Yata converged the wave of intense emotions into anger and stood up as if he wanted to shake it off. He went out into the street and ran back to the bar.

"Hey, Yata-san, Fushimi is..."

Yata ran up the stairs without answering Kamamoto, who was waiting for him, and without even looking at him. Kamamoto followed Yata while he protected his wounds.

In the corner of the room where Yata had been huddled for a while, he searched for a box in which various unorganized things were thrown.

"Dammit! I was stupid for even thinking he had a heart!"

As he screamed poisoned, he rummaged through the box looking for something that could be used as a weapon. Unnecessary things were thrown away one after another.

From Yata's appearance, he must have guessed the outcome of the negotiations with Fushimi. Kamamoto slumped his shoulders dejectedly and frowned sadly.

Yata found the metal bat that he used earlier in the box, but it was crushed and rusty. He remembered when Kusanagi had left and the bar was in disrepair with no one but Yata, he twisted it and left it lying there. That made it difficult to use as a weapon.

He clicked his tongue and tossed it away.

"What are you going to do, Yata-san?"

Kamamoto asked with a puzzled voice.

Since it came to that, he was going to catch some blues out there and ask them if they had any information, even if it meant taking them down.

He found a mop and wondered if he could wrestle with it... just as the bell rang on Yata's arm, announcing the arrival of an email.

Throwing away the mop, Yata looked down at the PDA. Immediately, the expression turned serious.

The sender of the email was Fushimi, who had ignored Yata's plea earlier and unilaterally hung up.

Yata braced himself and opened the email with a projection hologram in the air. The email had no text, but an attached image.

The image was a map of downtown Tokyo. One point was marked in red.

Yata widened his eyes.

"Saruhiko..."

Involuntarily, a dumbfounded voice leaked out.

Fushimi stretched out his hand without saying a word, and Yata's turbulent emotions gradually subsided, and he began to have a fever.

He felt as if a power he had been missing for a long time had returned. Yata raised the corners of his mouth and looked at Kamamoto.

"I'm going to get Anna back."

"Do you know where she is?!"

Yata showed the map that was projected in the air to Kamamoto.

"Nanakamado... Mihashira Tower...? Fushimi did this?"

Yata took the skateboard. With that, deciding that a single fist would suffice as a weapon, he grabbed Kamamoto's shoulder.

"I'll take Anna home. You should do something about that wound."

"Yata-san...!"

Looking directly into Kamamoto's trembling eyes, Yata nodded and ran with all his might from him.

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The moment he saw the number on the PDA, Fushimi felt an indescribable emotion.

He deleted the record never to be contacted again. However, Fushimi's mind recalled to what the PDA had the list of numbers recorded.

Stopping in the middle of the grand staircase in the entrance hall of the military post, Fushimi pondered for a moment whether or not to respond to the call.

But in the end, he couldn't ignore it. As he accepted the call and gently put the PDA to his ear, a painfully tense voice asked, "Are you Saruhiko?"

It was difficult for him to analyze his feelings for Yata. However, to some extent, he was aware that Yata was the only person who could touch his heart and influence his emotions.

His position as Yata's best friend and partner was once torn to pieces with his bare hands. Fushimi discarded Yata, who had settled in "Homura", and was happy to be in a position similar to Suoh's dog, and cherished the existence of him being friends with stupid people. He could no longer find his own place next to Yata.

He deliberately hurt Yata's pride as "Homura" and acquired that hatred. The only thing that lifted Fushimi's heart was fighting with Yata as if they were killing each other. Only at that moment there was excitement and a certain kind of fun.

However, after Suoh Mikoto's death, Fushimi lost sight of where to put his feelings for Yata.

Yata, on the other side of the PDA, let out an urgent voice. Fushimi provoked Yata by choosing words that would provoke Yata with just his mouth, as if by inertia.

"Hey, don't make me equal to others! My only clan is "Homura"!"

Easily provoked, Yata reflexively raised an angry voice. A sneer emerged from Yata, who continued to say such things even at that stage.

"Hah, isn't that "Homura" almost disbanded already?"

A weak sigh was heard.

In Fushimi's mind, an image of Yata, whom he had seen while working on "Scepter 4", appeared in his mind.

With no friends around, he was a skateboarder's back with his shoulders down. He was an unsightly figure who caught the wheel and fell into the middle of nowhere. He averted his eyes from the sight of the figure he saw from the moving car, feeling indescribable.

After Suoh Mikoto's death, he felt that "Homura" was slowly dying. A natural process because, it was precisely because of Suoh Mikoto's existence that "Homura" was able to become "Homura".

It was nothing more than an illusion brought on by the euphoria of meeting under absolute existence, like a bond that was thicker than blood. A bunch of aimless idiots, like "Homura" who had lost their centripetal strength. No, it wasn't even a group anymore.

He could have scoffed and laughed, but something heavy had settled on Fushimi's chest.

"That happens because you lean on something like a comrade."

The words spilled out.

For a moment there was silence. It was so quiet that he started to feel that the call had been dropped, when he heard Yata's low and tense voice coming from the other end of the PDA.

"...Listen to me, Saruhiko. Anna was kidnapped. According to Kamamoto's story, it was the work of Mishakuji of the Green Clan. But I don't know where they took her. Don't you have any information? If you know anything, please tell me."

Fushimi heard the pleading voice of "please", with an indescribable mixture of irritation and frustration.

"Mikoto-san or Totsuka-san... Kusanagi-san either. I can't think of anything. I have no choice but you...! You don't hold a grudge against Anna, right?"

Fushimi put down the PDA that he had on his ear.

For a few seconds, he looked at the PDA, which was connected to Yata, with whom he thought he would never connect again.

In the end, he hung up without saying a word.

Fushimi remained in his thoughts for a few more seconds.

"Tsk..."

He clicked his tongue and headed up the stairs.

Fushimi had returned to the camp to coordinate with the ministries and agencies related to the attack on Mihashira Tower and gather information on the Green Clan. The content of the call from just now, while annoying, also contained useful information.

After doing some research in the information room of the military post, he was able to easily confirm that "Scepter 4" was the central figure in the project he had been working on since last night.

Fushimi pulled out his PDA again.

"This is just a reward for giving me a hint.", he murmured in his mind as if it was an excuse to send.

Fushimi clicked his tongue once more after confirming that it had been sent, and then turned around to change.

He left the briefing room and headed for Munakata's office.

As soon as he knocked and opened the door, Munakata was working on a puzzle at his office desk. He wondered if he was joking about that emergency situation, but he was so familiar that Fushimi began to report without rushing.

"I learned the true identity of the member of "Jungle" who attacked Mihashira Tower. Mishakuji Yukari, who was previously a close aide to the previous "Colorless King" Ichigen Miwa."

From the beginning, he remembered the name "Mishakuji" that he heard from Yata. A person who was Miwa Ichigen's number one disciple and also worked as his assistant. There was a record that Ichigen Miwa, at the request of the "Golden King", was accompanied by Mishakuji Yukari to mediate.

About ten years ago, he abandoned Ichigen Miwa and disappeared, but for some reason he became a member of the Green Clan.

The tall swordsman proudly showing his true face, caught by the Mihashira Tower's surveillance camera, matched the image of Mishakuji Yukari, who was a member of the Colorless Clan who was barely registered in the records.

It seems there was a story that Mishakuji Yukari was a clansman with fearsome swordsmanship, to the extent that he could rival the "King", but the attack that time strangely made it clear that the story was not exaggerated.

Tackling "Tokijikuin", which should be impossible to compete with a half-baked force, it was thought that only Mishakuji Yukari defeated all the "rabbit" fighters, each possessing the power of an executive class, and seized control of Mihashira Tower.

Munakata listened to Fushimi's report as he played with puzzle pieces.

"Colorless and green... he's wearing two colors just like you, right? You were able to discover so much in such a short time."

"There was a request for support from another avenue, when I did some research on it, the signs just matched up."

The part he didn't want to step on was scratched, and there was a trace of irritation in his voice. Fushimi changed the subject as he operated the tablet in his hand.

"The Green Clan, "Jungle" is a special clan that is sparsely and widely connected via the Internet. By having a PDA download an application, we have an unspecified number of clan members, but take a look."

An aerial hologram screen was projected from Fushimi's tablet. It was a picture from a surveillance camera from Mihashira Tower a few minutes ago.

A person wearing a strangely designed powered suit and mask was shown carrying a large piece of luggage and sliding through the tower wall as if submerged in water. The moment

he broke through the wall, the part of the wall where the masked person's body touched glowed green.

Munakata watched the video and narrowed his eyes with interest.

"Hey, that's..."

"When you become a high-ranking clan member, you use the Green Clan attribute, 'Modification', to change the laws of physics and wield powers that surpass ordinary people, but this particular masked clan member..."

"He's a ninja. Interesting."

That struck a chord, Munakata's eyes twinkling with joy.

Fushimi frowned slightly and continued with his report.

"This masked clansman uses his tampering ability to make walls transparent so he can pass through them anyway. With that he doesn't care about the safety of Mihashira Tower."

"This is a ninja's escape from the wall."

For some reason, Munakata seemed happy and spoke in a slightly booming voice. Sensing that a troublesome switch had been thrown, Fushimi opened his mouth to ignore it.

"This masked..."

"This ninja..."

"This masked clansman, he also considers himself a very skilled person next to Mishakuji."

"No, this is ninjutsu."

"Whatever! Here's the problem."

With a strong tone, Fushimi silenced his boss, who was getting excited about the ninja's existence, and enlarged a point of the displayed image.

Looking closely at the red cloth-wrapped luggage carried by the masked member, it could be seen that she was a little girl wearing a red cloak.

"Member of the Red Clan, that is to say former member of the Red Clan, Anna Kushina. I'm not sure what the purpose of the kidnapping was, but it's not good."

Munakata returned to his serious expression and lowered his gaze slightly.

"Anna Kushina... is it a memory of Suoh?"

"Something like that."

Fushimi vaguely claimed that she wasn't his biological daughter, but he probably wasn't wrong either.

"I see."

Munakata changed his face from the boy, who had been playing with the ninjas until a while ago, to the face of a perfect boss.

"What about coordination with related ministries and agencies?"

"It's over."

"Ok, then. Shall we go out soon?"

Fushimi straightened up and saluted like a subordinate.

When he was following Munakata down the stairs of the military camp to go to Mihashira Tower again, Munakata suddenly said.

"By the way, where did the support request you received come from?"

Fushimi looked away bitterly and clicked his tongue as he entered a place he did not want to enter.

"Do I have an obligation to report?"

"No. I trust your work."

Munakata said that, but he must have seen it anyway.

Swallowing his bitterness, Fushimi turned his mouth into a square.

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Just as he reached Tokyo station and got off the limited express train onto the platform, Kusanagi's PDA beeped briefly.

After taking it out of his pocket and checking the message that arrived, Kusanagi stopped suddenly. In the midst of the crowd, his tall figure suddenly stopped, and the people behind him bumped into him and avoided him in annoyance.

Kusanagi couldn't care less for them, and stared at the PDA in his hand.

The sender of the message was Awashima.

"Report. Anna Kushina was kidnapped by members of the Green Clan and imprisoned in Mihashira Tower."

After rereading the short sentence twice, Kusanagi closed his mouth and began to walk with long strides.

He pushed through the crowd and moved quickly as he operated his PDA. Awashima was probably busy with minimal contact. When he called out to Kamamoto, who was in charge of Anna, he received an immediate response.

"Kamamoto. What is happening now?"

"Kuh, Kusanagi-san! Why...?"

"I'll explain later. What about Anna?"

"Sorry! I couldn't protect Anna... I'm..."

"Apologize and reflect on everything later, so let me know now."

He calmly called out to Kamamoto, who let out a hoarse voice. From the other side of the PDA, Kamamoto swallowed his tears and could hear his breathing as if to suppress his emotions.

"Anna has been kidnapped. The culprits are a ninja-like guy from the Green Clan and an oddly strong swordsman named Mishakuji. We received information that she was taken to Mihashira Tower, so Yata-san is heading there now."

Kusanagi nodded upon hearing Kamamoto's voice, who had regained some composure despite being trembling.

"What is the reason for the kidnapping?"

"He said that he needed Anna's sentience ability to find the "Silver King". The Black Dog that was present at the scene chased them, and I think they're probably in the direction of Mihashira Tower. I'll go there as soon as I've given myself first aid...!"

"If you're injured, don't overdo it. You should wait."

He noted that Kamamoto's breathing was shallow and painful. During the attack, he was probably injured while trying to protect Anna.

Kusanagi tried his best to talk cheerfully to Kamamoto, who was trying to contain himself.

"I just got back to Japan. I'm going there. And Yata-chan is heading there, right? Then, don't worry. He's the kind of person who shows his strength at times like this."

Kamamoto held his breath for a moment and replied in a tearful voice.

"Yes."

As soon as he hung up the PDA, the slight smile that had appeared on Kusanagi's face to calm down Kamamoto disappeared.

Anna was taken to the Mihashira Tower. Especially to that place.

In the Mihashira Tower, the "Slate" that selects the "King" and gives power to the "King" is stored.

Kusanagi touched a bag containing materials related to the "Dresden Slate" that he got from Germany.

Knowing that it was unreasonable, he wandered around Germany for half a year and fought. As a result, he was able to obtain materials that could lead to what he was looking for.

But...

Kusanagi bit his lip and jumped from the station building into a taxi.

"To Mihashira Tower. I'll take the limited express."

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Kuro was looking in the direction of Mihashira Tower from the rooftop of the building in Nanakamado.

After chasing after Mishakuji and the others who kidnapped Anna, relying on Neko's cat-like senses, they finally reached Mihashira Tower.

The surroundings of the tower were restricted so that ordinary people couldn't get close there, and the blue clothed ones were in disarray, setting up a siege net. It didn't make it to the mainstream news, but it seemed like a lot of serious things had happened without his knowledge.

"I didn't expect this to happen..."

Next to Kuro, Neko was blowing comfortably in the wind with an expressionless face that had nothing to do with any sense of danger.

"Kurosuke, the guy from a while ago is there. Aren't you going?"

"No, wait. Let's gather some more information and think about the infiltration methods properly."

"Ah, why?"

"Not only the Blue Clan is there waiting, but also the Green Clan inside the building."

"Hmm." Neko snorted slightly in admiration.

Kuro tightly gripped the "Kotowari" scabbard. What he told Neko was true, but behind the scenes, there was also a feeling of fear of Mishakuji in his heart.

Could he face him again and win? That fear made Kuro shy.

"Nya?"

When Neko noticed something, she raised her hand over her eyes like a canopy and looked down.

"Uaaaahhhh!"

Riding on the wind, he could hear a voice that sounded like a roar, all the way to where Kuro was.

The owner of the roar soon caught his eye. He was a young man in a cap, riding a skateboard and racing like a bullet towards the front of Mihashira Tower. Misaki Yata, the leader of the vanguard "Homura", who was a familiar person to Kuro.

"Make way!"

Yata leaped over the siege net of the restless "Scepter 4" with a single jump on his skateboard, smashed through the glass-enclosed entrance of Mihashira Tower, and ran inside.

"....."

"....."

Kuro and Neko watched the scene in silence for a while. With a shocked face, Neko pointed to the crystal of the Mihashira Tower that Yata destroyed and bowed her head.

"Is that where the stupidity went?"

"Kuh." Kuro gritted his teeth and immediately stood up.

"It can't be helped! Come on!"

As Kuro stood up, Neko shouted happily, "That's what we have to do!" and she clung to Kuro's neck.

Kuro pointed his right arm towards Mihashira Tower and concentrated his powers. With Miwa's "connect" power, he stretched out his invisible hand and grabbed a window frame at an appropriate place in Mihashira Tower, grabbed Neko's body and jumped off the rooftop.

He used his invisible hands as ropes and flew through the air like Tarzan through the jungle. Neko showed no sign of flinching from moving high and let out a happy voice.

When they landed in front of Mihashira Tower, they ignored the "Scepter 4" members who were showing signs of flinching around them and rushed towards the tower through a hole in the glass wall that Yata had broken.

"Don't chase them! Hold the blocking line!"

Hearing Awashima's voice behind them giving orders to the members who were in disarray, Kuro and Neko ran after the man who was carrying out the foolish plan.

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After deciding where to go, Yata's ardor and hesitation disappeared, and he sprinted with only fiery determination.

The place that Fushimi showed him, the area around Mihashira Tower was blocked by "Scepter 4", but he went through it anyway, and with a kick on a skateboard with a supernatural ability, he broke through the glass and ran towards the tower.

"Anna!"

Shouting her name from the bottom of his stomach, Yata skateboarded into the entrance hall of Mihashira Tower.

In the entrance hall, he could see dozens of humans wearing full-face helmets beaming with green light. They must be the henchmen of the Green Clan that kidnapped Anna.

Each of them had a weapon in hand. From simple items like iron pipes and metal bats to firearms.

Yata punched several people who got in his way and broke through.

The designer of that building must have been stupid, since he traversed a wide hallway with screeching acceleration.

While showing agitation at the sudden intruder, some of the helmet-clad boys fired attacks with their super powers towards Yata. It was an electric shock with a green light. The air vibrated and green lightning struck the eighth direction. Yata rode his skateboard to dodge the horizontal beams and jumped again to dodge them easily. Yata's nerves sharpened and he could see the thunder running freely through the air.

"What's that?!"

He broke through the lightning attack and rushed towards the group of the Green Clan who were frozen at the back of the hall.

"Is it an intruder?!"

"The remains of "Homura"!"

A confused voice rose from a corner of the group of helmets that still didn't seem to have grasped the situation. Of course, there was no obligation to wait for the interception preparations to be ready, Yata jumped into the group of helmets trying to intercept him with a nervous demeanor, and with a burst of flames gushing out from his entire body, he without hesitation blew the annoying people.

The bloodthirsty group readied their weapons. One of them, a man with a helmet and a sword, slashed at Yata as if he had made up his mind. However, it was a tepid sword movement that couldn't be compared to the sword technique of "Scepter 4". Yata jumped

over his head on his skateboard and kicked the side of his helmet as he spun his skateboard in the air.

"Don't call the little fish!"

In the noisy group of helmets, a person holding a gun pointed the muzzle at Yata, but another person suppressed it with a hasty voice: "Enough, you will hit an ally!" It was like a voracious group of people who couldn't take any leadership and were reeling.

"Heh! Don't be afraid!"

He easily dispersed a group that had neither warmth like "Homura" nor leadership like "Scepter 4", and Yata laughed at people who were scared by his impulse.

At this rate, it would be easier than he thought, and when he turned his gaze, something met Yata's eyes.

They were boobs.

Breasts wrapped in light pink cloth. Huge breasts stood up like a wall, depriving Yata of his gaze and thoughts.

When he calmed down, it was just a big billboard that constantly displayed pictures, and it turned out to be an underwear or swimsuit CM, but Yata's face suddenly fluttered at the exhilarating sight that jumped out without hesitation. His body trembled and he lost his balance.

"Whoah!"

The skateboard, which was running at considerable speed, had considerable momentum to fall.

The skateboard flew out from under his feet and Yata rolled on the ground.

Just when he was going crazy, he suddenly fell into the middle of nowhere.

"Ugh... Kuuh!"

Yata, who fell face down on the ground, groaned in embarrassment and raised his head.

The skateboard that flew stopped at someone's feet. Yata fixed his eyes on the shoes, then looked up and widened his eyes.

"Hey, you are...!"

A young man with long black hair and a sword at his waist.

Yatogami Kuro. A young man named Black Dog was standing there.

"Think a bit about the future. Misaki Yata."

Kuro picked up the skateboard that had fallen under his feet and casually tossed it towards Yata.

Yata immediately jumped up and landed on his skateboard, raising an eyebrow.

"Ah? You're not the one to call me that, you damn dog!"

"Damn dog...?"

Kuro was speechless for a moment, shaking his fists.

The group of helmets around him seemed to see it as an opportunity, though they were still in shock.

The light clung to Kuro's trembling hand and the space around him distorted into the shape of a giant hand. Kuro flicked his otherworldly hand to the side. The slowly approaching Green clansmen were struck down by Kuro's supernatural powers. Kuro barked at Yata without even looking at the direction in which he had attacked.

"Don't say vulgar things!"

Kuro's attack destroyed the pillars and the surrounding floor, kicking up dust. Many of the helmeted men flew and fell, and those who barely escaped the attack were left in a daze.

He was an annoying guy, but his strength increased Yata's tension, his rivalry flared up and he concentrated his flame power into his fists.

"Heh, unfortunately I was raised badly!"

With his gaze still directed at Kuro, he danced around and scattered the flames wrapped in his fists around him, causing them to explode. The helmets flew in an interesting way.

The two looked at each other as they approached in the middle of the pile of corpses.

If he gets a weapon, he turns it back on. It's Yata's style to buy right away when someone sells a fight.

Yata and Kuro exchanged sharp glances at point blank range and tried to meet their foreheads.

"Nyaaa!"

A girl's voice broke out and Yata's face was pushed away with a gentle hand.

Stepping between Yata and Kuro, the one separating the faces of the two men who were approaching uneasily was another member of the Silver Clan, a girl named Neko.

"Listen to Wagahai's strategy!"

Neko roared and glared at the two of them with the strangely large, glowing eyes of hers.

"First of all, stop fighting! We'll all cooperate to save Anna! That's it! Let's go!"

Brilliantly and confidently stating a strategy that couldn't even be called strategy, Neko wrapped her arms around Kuro and Yata's necks and pulled them together.

Yata felt a part of Neko's soft and elastic body press into Yata's upper arm.

"Hey! What the hell are you doing giving orders?"

He was about to say something, but he felt a presence around him and kept his mouth shut. When his gaze swept over it, a group of people in helmets who seemed to have run from somewhere else were approaching with their weapons at the ready.

"Here they come again!"

Small fish, but they were many. Like an endless stream of small insects, Yata frowned and looked at the bodies that wore green helmets.

This was not the time to be trapped in a place like this. He had to go see Anna as soon as possible.

"Neko!"

With a voice without hesitation, Kuro called out to his companion. Neko smiled fearlessly with a face that understood everything.

"Leave it to me, nya!"

A jingle was heard.

"Special Technique~ Cat Mountain!"

With a loud voice, Neko raised both arms.

Just as he felt Neko engulf him, a huge object appeared from the hallway floor like a mountain rising up from under his feet and stretching upwards.

Yata looked at it, which rose almost to the ceiling, and opened his mouth.

What appeared was a beckoning monster-sized cat. Three beckoning giant cats staring into space with huge illuminated eyes and raising their left hand to invite good fortune.

Neko who made them appear was sitting cross-legged on the cat's head, which was beckoning in the middle, laughing happily.

"Nyah!"

Yata and the helmeted guys were speechless at the unrealistic sight.

"Come on."

Only Kuro remained motionless on the spot, he said that briefly and started to run. Yata quickly slid his skateboard and followed Kuro.

Now that he thought about it, that girl who is a member of the Silver Clan has the power of hallucinations called perception manipulation ability. In other words, that giant beckoning cat was an illusion that she created. So...

"Hey, will that woman be okay on her own?"

Yata lowered his voice and said that to Kuro, who was running next to him.

He was terrified for a moment, but that was just an illusion. Could she compete against a large number of people with a silly hallucination that has no substance?

Yata had no reason to worry about other clans, but it was hard to ignore the situation when a woman might get hurt.

However, Kuro didn't care about that and ran with his eyes straight ahead.

From behind, one could hear the low, horrifying sound of a giant cat moving beckoningly, the screams of people wearing helmets, and Neko's lively laughter.

Kuro relaxed his mouth a bit and said.

"Don't underestimate the Silver Clansman."

Looking back, a small beckoning mountain-like cat moved across the ground, rumbled on the ground, and mercilessly rushed at the Green Clansmen.

The people who were run over passed out on the ground. Some had lost their helmets and you could see their faces making bubbles. Actually, it was an illusion, so they didn't die or get hurt, but it is assumed that they had a vivid pseudo-experience of being crushed by that mass. The hooves that escaped showed signs of screaming.

Yata turned his gaze to Kuro running next to him. Without hesitation, he entrusted his back to his comrades and went his own way.

He wasn't going to say that he envied him.

However, Yata clicked his tongue with a slight sense of frustration and a feeling of loneliness from being alone.

"You and that woman, everyone and this, uh, I'm so upset!"

He turned the tingling sensation in his chest into momentum and kicked the ground hard.

Just in time, he could see the members of the Green Clan waiting in front of him. He clenched his fists to ease his worries and ran towards the group of people who were trying to block his way.

He brandished a fist that emitted flames, knocking down the opponent without even giving him a chance to take a counter stance. Next to him, Kuro also knocked down people who got in his way with his light movements.

Even while fighting, Yata and Kuro never slowed down.

"Don't say that."

Breaking through the enemy wall, Kuro smiled slightly, took out a voice recorder from his pocket and pointed it at Yata.

"If we walk together through the mountain pass, there is no fear."

From the recorder, he could hear the strangely good voice of a man he didn't know, composing something like a strange haiku.

For some reason, Kuro dyed his cheeks pink and looked at Yata with proud and sparkling eyes.

"What do you think?!"

"Ah? That's disgusting."

Yata raised his eyebrows in confusion and expressed his frank impressions in front of Kuro, who snorted wildly with a flushed face.

"What...?! You bastard!"

Yata kicked the ground hard to increase the speed of his skateboard.

"This is not the time to be joking!"

"I'm not kidding! It's a sentence that contains a grateful teaching that values each other's mutual help, saying that even on a rough road, if you have a partner with you, you will have the strength of a hundred people."

He listened to Kuro's vague words and ignored them.

However, despite Yata's reluctance, he knew that he was running there because he was saved.

Fushimi showed him where to go and of course Kuro and Neko helped pave the way so he could run straight to get Anna back.

"I won't thank you. I didn't ask you or the others."

As he said that looking ahead, he heard Kuro exhale suddenly next to him.

"I don't need your thanks. I'm here by destiny."

"Ah?"

Yata instinctively turned his gaze to Kuro at the thoughtful voice. Kuro had a wistful look on his face as he bragged about the strange phrase on the recorder.

"Mishakuji Yukari. I'll take care of the other side's ability. In the meantime, I can't afford to worry about anything else. You should save Anna Kushina."

"....."

Kamamoto said it. The man named Mishakuji Yukari seemed to be Kuro's older brother. He didn't know the details of what happened between the two.

Yata said, "Heh!" and laughed briefly.

"It doesn't even need to be said!"

The power was transmitted to the foot on the skateboard. The wheel raised flames and accelerated.

+++++

The members of the Green Clan, which abounded like insects on the lower floors, dwindled as they went up, and the upper floors were almost deserted.

Yata and Kuro rushed through a vast space that was unclear if it was a corridor or a hall.

In the distance, he saw what looked like a giant, brightly colored fusuma. Mihashira Tower is a building with a unique presence that blends a high-tech feel with a traditional Japanese atmosphere.

"Black Dog! That's..."

Yata yelled at Kuro running next to him. Kuro nodded, "Ah."

"Looks like we've reached the top floor... where the Slate is located."

As they approached, the majestic giant sliding door seemed to be an automatic door, and it opened smoothly.

"Anna!"

Yata ran inside while calling out her name.

The floor of the great room, which could have been used for a baseball game, was transparent, and in the center below that, was what appeared to be the "Slate".

However, what caught Yata's attention was not the Slate, but the figure of a girl who was stuck in a small cage that seemed to be a bird cage in the middle of the corridor.

"Anna...!"

Anna, who had been sitting in a cage with her head down, slowly raised her head at the sound of Yata's voice.

Yata was overcome with a sense of relief at seeing her safe, as well as the fact that Anna was locked in a cage.

"Damn... what are you doing to Anna?"

To the left and right of Anna's cage, there was a man with a striking face who carried a sword, and a person wrapped in something resembling a ninja costume.

It matched the characteristics of the two who kidnapped Anna that Kamamoto said.

A man with a striking face, probably the man named Mishakuji Yukari, said with a laugh.

"Oh, a cheerful boy has come. Fufu, I'm not doing anything. I was just asking a cute little bird for a small favor."

A parrot perched on top of Anna's cage called out, "Little bird!"

"What?!"

At the same time as he howled, Yata blew out flames of supernatural ability from him and rushed forward. He tried to hit Mishakuji with his red-hot fists, but he dodged Yata with a light step.

"I entrust the hot-blooded one to you."

"I understand."

The ninja responded to Mishakuji's words and disappeared as he sank into the ground. The ground in front of Yata, who was about to turn around on his skateboard and prepare for another attack, glowed green, and the ninja who should have disappeared turned slimy from there.

"What?!"

A ninja hand grabbed Yata's head, and he started and shuddered slightly. He braced himself to be thrown to the ground, but what hit Yata was more than just the impact of hitting his back and neck on the ground.

With a bang, Yata's body passed through the ground as if he was submerged in water.

The ground, which was supposed to be hard on whichever side he touched, turned to loose jelly and he could slide across it. Yata frowned in disgust. His vision was surrounded by green light and the cross section of the floor was visible.

Passing through the ground, the ninja tossed Yata's head into the air. He somersaulted and landed soundlessly.

Yata managed to regain his balance and avoided being unceremoniously thrown to the ground.

He apparently fell through the floor to the floor below. It looked like a very large reception room or conference room. Looking up at the ceiling, a chandelier that looked like a piece of art was hung. He had to get back there quickly and help Anna.

Feeling murderous, Yata turned his gaze to the ninja. Several kunai flew towards Yata.

Yata kicked the ground to avoid it, but the ninja magically took out kunais one after another and kept throwing them. Fushimi's skill in wielding dark weapons would be a good match.

Yata picked up a large ancient table and used it as a shield. Ka-ka-ka, the sound of the kunais nailed to the top of the table.

The next moment, a large blade slid across the table that was used as a shield.

"Gah!"

Yata leaned back and almost avoided him.

Not just the sword, but the entire body of the ninja appeared through the table that was used as a shield. The ninja wielded a blade that protruded from both ends of the handle and cut Yata. The table that the ninja passed through was not cut or destroyed. He surely used the same technique as when he broke through the ground.

"You are using a mysterious technique!"

Yata clicked his tongue forcefully, causing flames to burn from his entire body.

He rushed forward as he destroyed obstacles like tables with the flames he emitted and attacked the ninja. However, that figure disappeared as if it had suddenly fallen. When he realized that he had sunk back to the ground, he appeared behind Yata and swung his sword at him. Dodging with almost animal reflexes, he counter-kicked, but the ninja spun back and plummeted to the ground.

"I'll squash a mole!"

While howling, Yata fiercely attacked the ninja who repeatedly disappeared and reappeared as a mole. The ninja's ridiculous movements sent blood rushing to his head and the blade smashed into his side.

The warding didn't arrive in time, but it prevented him from being cut by concentrating his super powers. Blown up and rolling on the ground.

(Calm down. You're not being nice to me.)

Saying that to himself, Yata took a deep breath and woke up.

Yata had only one purpose: to rescue Anna. He didn't have time to be playing with that ninja.

Yata looked up at the ceiling, which had been under his feet until now, and got up to reach the girl he needed to rescue once more.

+++++

Yata was dunked downward by the ninja whose alter ability allowed him to pass through walls. Kuro, who was standing close to the Slate, came face to face with Mishakuji, tensing his entire body.

"Kotosaka-chan, go look downstairs."

"Kwah! I understand! I understand!"

The parrot responded to Mishakuji's words and flew away.

Mishakuji made his glossy lips form a smile.

"I will teach my cute little brother a splendid lesson."

"Don't fuck with me, Mishakuji Yukari...!"

Kuro let out a plaintive voice and put his hand on the handle of "Kotowari".

Mishakuji grabbed the edge of his black leather gloves and put them back on.

"First of all, it's about manners, Kuro-chan. Call me "Onii-sama"!"

Mishakuji kicked the ground as he turned around as if he was dancing.

Kuro tried to stop Mishakuji, who was approaching at such a speed that he couldn't even blink, with his supernatural power, but Mishukaji's momentum didn't stop. The outstretched hand of superpower was countered by the supernatural power that Mishakuji emitted and he was pushed back with a crack.

"Gah!"

He managed to dodge as he closed in on him and rolled on the ground to avoid him. Even though Mishakuji hadn't even drawn his sword yet, his entire body was overwhelmed with a sense of danger that made his body shudder just by getting close to him.

Kuro knelt on the ground, straightened up and drew his sword as if holding on to his master's sword.

Seeing that, Mishakuji looked down.

"You are not ready to draw your sword."

He said that with a cold voice, and his body stiffened.

He wielded his sword as if he was playing, but even Kuro knew that his sword was always determined.

It was the same when he pointed his sword at Ichigen Miwa who was his master.

Kuro didn't understand at all why Mishakuji did that, but from his look and demeanor, it was clear that he was prepared to risk everything the moment he crossed swords with Ichigen Miwa.

(On the other hand, what about me?)

Involuntarily, Kuro thought so.

Long ago, Kuro considered that the famous sword "Kotowari", entrusted to him by Ichigen Miwa, should never be drawn except for Miwa's request to "Defeat the evil King". When he drew it, he was prepared to put a single thought into it.

However, the "Colorless King", who was hatching an evil plan, was defeated by Isana Yashiro and Suoh Mikoto, and Isana Yashiro disappeared. Worried about looking for him, whether he might be alive or not, he wandered as if he were walking on wobbly scaffolding.

And now, just as Mishukaji said, Kuro casually drew his sword just to escape the threat in front of him. Even though he took it out, he had no vision of winning against the man in front of him.

With a face that seemed to read Kuro's feelings, Mishakuji snorted.

The next moment, Mishakuji was in front of Kuro. Thin for a moment. A purple palm pierced Kuro's chest. The strong impact made him catch his breath, and Kuro's body was thrown backwards.

He didn't even have time to wield "Kotowari". Kuro aimlessly drew his sword and was pushed by Mishukaji, who hadn't even drawn his sword, and was smashed into a glass window from behind. Kuro's body, which received a mighty blow with extraordinary power, broke through the tempered glass and was thrown outside.

It was the top floor of the Mihashira Tower, a skyscraper. If he falls to the ground from there, he won't retain his original form. Kuro reached out his extraordinary hand and clung to the window frame.

Kuro narrowed his eyes and looked up at the sky as the glass shards scattered like rain. From the broken window, Mishakuji flew lightly like a great bird and landed on the wall. He leaned vertically against the wall of the glass tower as if he were standing on the ground. It was as if the world had turned ninety degrees to follow him.

Mishakuji's entire body was enveloped in a transparent light. It was the power of a member of the Colorless Clan, the same type as Kuro. The power to connect with something.

Kuro manifested that power in the image of an "invisible hand", and even at that moment, Kuro's supernatural hand was clinging to a window frame a few meters above him, leaving him dangling.

However, Mishakuji was able to harness that power instead of limiting it, wrapping it around his body, slightly manipulating and controlling how he connected to the world. He connected the soles of his feet to the wall with his supernatural power, but when he walked on the wall, it separated without any unnaturalness, creating the illusion that it was a normal floor.

With his hair blowing in the wind blowing from above, Mishakuji walked along the wall until he could meet Kuro's eyes.

"As usual, Kuro-chan. You're always trying to hold on to something. But if you don't let go of that hand, you can't go anywhere."

Mishakuji finally drew the sword that he carried on his back. A leaf was revealed that emitted a unique purple glow that was neither colorless nor green.

Kuro gritted his teeth and stood up with his supernatural hand, imitating his appearance and enveloping his entire body with his power like Yukari. He ran with the image of instantly connecting his feet and the tower wall.

"It's slippery!"

He leaned forward and ran through the glass wall, slashing at Mishakuji, who had good posture. Mishakuji took Kuro's sword with a relaxed expression. One strike, two strikes, the blades met.

Kuro rushed to take a position directly over his opponent, who had an advantage, and swung his sword desperately, but Mishakuji danced and defeated Kuro's sword, and before he knew it, he was in a position farther away. high.

Concentrating on the sword, he neglected his feet, and Kuro's legs would sometimes slide down the wall, giving in to gravity and cramping his back. On the other hand, Mishakuji took a light step on the wall, boldly slashed, and when Kuro avoided him, he jumped high on Kuro's head. Kuro swung his sword at the landing spot, but Mishakuji also jumped slightly to avoid it and landed straight up as he somersaulted. Gravity seemed to go crazy only around Mishakuji.

Kuro gritted his teeth and ran with all his might. Mishakuji laughed.

"Yes, this way."

"I'll cut you down with your sword!"

Mishakuji judged Kuro's movements with playful gestures.

The sharp sound of swords clashing against each other resounded over and over again.

As they crossed swords, his positions were also exchanged, and the landscape reflected in his field of vision became a night sky and terrifyingly distant ground, making him feel dizzy.

"Kuh... I'm at a disadvantage here!"

He reached out his extraordinary hand between the sword fight, grabbed the window frame on the upper floor and stood up. Thus, he immediately turned his back and ran up the wall at full speed aiming for the ceiling.

He kicked off the top of the wall and jumped onto the rooftop. It was a heliport. When he landed on the concrete of the helipad and looked up, there was a Japanese garden with a large pond in the center.

"That's right, Kuro-chan, that's the way it is!"

He listened Mishukaji's laughter behind him. He could have praised Kuro, who had managed to overcome the battle on the wall, even if he seemed to be watching.

Kuro tried to reposition his sword, but his legs suddenly withered away. Finally achieving a decent footing, the fatigue and damage from the unreasonable battle came at once, and he involuntarily fell to his knees. He was completely out of breath and his shoulders were going up and down.

"Oh, even though I praised you, you're still down on your knees. Hurry up and get ready."

He still couldn't breathe. Using only his mind to reconstruct his body, Kuro jumped onto the roof garden.

"Come on!"

"Fufu, really, a loving child."

Mishakuji followed Kuro with a strange smile that seemed to be a mixture of mockery and affection.

He ran over the rocks around the pond for footholds. Unlike Mishakuji, who effortlessly put on the best performance anywhere, Kuro was exhausted from the battle on the wall. He wanted a place with a solid base where he could run and take time to recover from the damage.

"Ah, is it a game of tag this time?"

With a laughing voice, Mishakuji followed him. He jumped through the garden that smelled of grass and water even though it was on top of a skyscraper.

They faced each other again in front of the high-story mansion overlooking the pool and matched swords. The sharp sounds of metals colliding with each other resounded repeatedly, and the colors of his special abilities burst out and light flickered.

"Kuh... how about this?!"

He jumped and swung down with all of his might, the sword being repelled by Mishakuji.

Undaunted, Kuro stepped forward and launched several attacks. Mishakuji chuckled and turned to the side as he inspected Kuro's movements.

"Yes, yes! Do more, Kuro-chan!"

Responding to Kuro's fierce attacks, Mishakuji let out a happy voice. He couldn't imagine him in the middle of a serious confrontation.

Mishakuji jumped up to imitate Kuro's full body attack earlier and swung his sword down from above.

"Cut like that!"

Kuro's leg fell with a heavy thud. However, he managed to accept it and continued to wield his sword.

"Are you still going to practice?"

When he was young, Kuro often pestered Mishukaji, who was his older brother, into giving him lessons. On the rare occasions when he played with him, Mishakuji would say things like, "I can't help it, so I'll play with you.", and by playing Kuro with his ever-changing swordsmanship, he brought out Kuro's strength.

It was nothing but humiliation to remember such a thing at that moment, but Mishakuji's appearance in front of him looked the same as when he was "playing with" the young Kuro.

A cut was repelled by Mishakuji, and his torso was split open. He kicked him in the side as if he was scolding him. He held his breath, but raised his sword ready for a follow up attack. He barely managed to land the blow, he landed on his sword, but couldn't stop the momentum and went flying. He crashed into the parapet and blood dripped from his cut mouth.

"It's a show I've seen before."

Mishakuji looked at Kuro and smiled slightly.

He many times he challenged Mishukaji and many times he was defeated.

(Am I still the same as back then? Even if my body grows, even if I think I've honed my sword skills, even if my feelings for this person change from respect to anger, will I be able to reach this person with my sword?)

Kuro wiped the blood from his mouth.

Mishakuji looked at Kuro with clear eyes and returned to reverse his 'mistakes'.

+++++

Neko was in a good mood.

Due to the special move "Cat Mountain" (she had just thought of the name of the move), which made a giant beckoning cat appear, all the enemies screamed and ran away.

Neko sat cross-legged on the beckoning cat's head, looking down at the escaping rats and laughing out loud.

"Nyahahahaha! Where are you?"

(Neko is strong and amazing. She helps the unreliable ones like Kurosuke and Gusaku, he rescues Anna and finds Shiro. When he finds Shiro, he will praise me for doing a good job.)

Remembering that moment, Neko became so moved that he let out a sigh of relief.

"I found you! Stupid cat! Stupid cat!"

A shrill voice was heard from above. When Neko looked up, a large green parrot was flying overhead and cursing Neko.

Annoyed, Neko raised both her hands into fists.

"Nyaa! What an idiot!"

The parrot, as if amused by Neko's anger, circled above her head, repeating "Stupid cat! Stupid cat!" and spread its wings.

The parrot's body glowed green.

"Thunder!"

At the same time as the parrot screamed, its wings sent a green electric discharge that rained down on the entire room. Neko reflexively turned into a kitten and used the springs in his body to jump higher than the parrot to avoid electric shocks.

The electrical discharge that poured out melted and obliterated the beckoning giant cat made by Neko, like cotton candy in hot water.

Neko kicked the parrot in the back, which laughed triumphantly: "Ah, ah, ah!"

It would be a shame if a cat lost to a bird. She had to show him who was stronger.

Neko grabbed the parrot and they both fell down and fought. She punched him powerfully with her paws and ripped out many feathers.

Cats are dominant in close combat, but parrots have the advantage of being able to fly. Taking advantage of Neko's gap that was taking the mount, he jumped and rose to a height where Neko's claws couldn't reach him.

Above the menacing Neko, the parrot's body was again filled with green electricity.

"Kotosaka Thunder!"

"Nyah!"

Electricity rained down on Neko's body without even avoiding it this time.

The electrical discharge that Kotosaka emitted had the power to cancel out her supernatural powers. The Green Clan is characterized by the "modification" skill, but Kotosaka's technique is to "modify what has been modified to its original state", and the skill that was being demonstrated was instantly nullified.

But of course Neko didn't know. However, she wondered if it wouldn't hurt to be exposed to lightning, and then she looked at her body and realized that she had gone from being a kitten to a human girl.

A disturbing air rose around Neko.

"This woman!"

"Shit!"

The people who had been shaken by the gigantic beckoning cat raised angry voices and surrounded Neko.

"Nyahahaha..."

In the bloodthirsty atmosphere, Neko tried to fake a smile.

Furthermore, even if she wanted to use a special move, Kotosaka was flying in the sky as she braced herself for the electric shock that canceled her extraordinary ability.

One of them in a green helmet swung the wooden sword he was holding. Neko cowered to escape.

However, before the wooden sword swung and before Neko kicked the ground, flames rose up.

"Nya?!"

A bright red flame suddenly appeared and ran around Neko.

Neko bristled, but the flames didn't try to burn her. Instead, it spread as if protecting Neko and burned the surrounding green helmets. Unable to bear the heat of the fire, the helmeted men withdrew.

"Dammit, what is it this time?!"

"Wow! It's bad to be here!"

The flames burned more and more violently, and thick whips of flame that moved like living creatures spread out and attacked the surroundings, like a series of large snakes raising their heads. The helmeted people panicked again, screamed and ran away.

"Another intruder! Another intruder!"

Kotosaka yelled that and flew away into the flames to somehow avoid turning into a grilled chicken.

Neko stared. In the place where Neko was, it was not hot at all, it was warm and cozy. In that warm place, she saw people running with their butts literally on fire. When the flames died down, the room was empty and silent.

Neko snorted. Amid the lingering odors of the burning fire, she caught another scent. She didn't like that smell; it smelled like "tobacco".

"Who?"

Neko's nose sniffed that it was coming from behind the hall's pillars and she stared at him with her multicolored eyes.

+++++

Anna put her hand to her chest. In order to suppress the existence of the things that made noise in her, she thickened the shell that surrounded her. Rejecting the interference from the outside, she directed all of her response abilities inward and monitored the small flame left by Suoh inside her so that it wouldn't change.

At that moment, before the Slate, Anna was left alone, trapped in a cage that looked like a bird cage. Of the Green Clan members who kidnapped Anna, one disappeared under the ground with Yata, while the other broke the window and jumped out with Kuro. Anna bit her lip thinking about them, who were probably still fighting.

Broken glass, part of the destroyed building, and weapons that might have belonged to the Gold Clan members who defended themselves during the attack were scattered. The "Slate" stored under the floor continued to exist with a sense of presence in a world different from the human conflicts that were taking place above it.

Perhaps because she was brought to that place, the shock that shook Anna became so strong that it was hard to ignore.

Anna remembered the words that she had exchanged with Kusanagi before leaving for Germany.

Kusanagi got into an argument with Yata for stating that the bar would be temporarily closed, and that night Kusanagi was drinking bourbon alone in Suoh's room.

Kusanagi said as she sipped the bourbon that Suoh and Totsuka used to drink together to celebrate the new opening of the bar.

"Anna. I'm still overwhelmed with sentimentality. That's why I'm going to leave this liquor here as well."

"Are you ready to go?"

"Oh. It's time to walk. However..."

Kusanagi stared at the bottle with the deep amber color of sake in his eyes, filled with soft determination.

"When things calm down, I'll sip this bourbon slowly until morning. In this bar where they made a racket like fools."

Kusanagi decided to walk and left. It was mostly because of Anna.

But Anna stayed still.

"Mikoto..."

She said the name of someone who was no longer with her.

For Anna, Suoh's red was the only color that colored Anna's colorless world, and more than anything, it was a beautiful sign for Anna.

Anna, who had lost him, lost her way. Kusanagi left for her, Kamamoto got injured, Yata fought and even Kuro and his friends, who shouldn't have anything to do with her, got involved.

Anna's eyes, which could see through everything, now saw nothing.

Suddenly there was a roar.

The door between the silent slabs was blown up, and the body of Yata, which seemed to have been attacked by the enemy, flew into the air.

Yata, together with the destroyed door, flew out several meters, spectacularly rolled on the ground and reached Anna's cage.

"Misaki!"

When Anna raised her voice, Yata, frowning in pain, smiled tightly and stood up. He quickly grabbed a stick-like weapon next to him that he believed belonged to a Gold Clan member, and used it as a staff to stand up.

"Hehe... Don't worry. It's just a handicap."

"Then go to hell with that handicap."

A person dressed as a ninja appeared from the ground behind Yata and said that.

"Misaki!"

Anna yelled in a small, shrill voice. Yata had already taken a lot of damage. With "King" Suoh gone, the flames inside Yata are no longer as strong as before.

The ninja wielded a sword. Yata turned around and tried to defend himself, but it was too late.

At that rate, he would lose.

The flames that were flickering unsteadily inside Anna flared up a lot for a moment.

Then came the flames.

The ninja, who was about to attack Yata, was attacked by a fireball, and the ninja immediately backed away from the attack and jumped back.

The fireballs flew one after another, and the ninja managed to dodge them with his ninja agility.

"Who are you?!"

Right after the ninja yelled, Kotosaka jumped between the flagstones as he avoided the flying flames.

"Kwah! Another intruder! Another "Homura" intruder!"

Just as he was about to say that, the flames attacked him again, and Kotosaka, who was about to be burned, yelled "Kwah!" and fled to heaven.

Certainly, Anna directed her gaze to the source of the flame.

Leaning against the wall between the flagstones, a tall man was standing.

He deftly twisted the zippo around with one hand and played with it, observing the situation between the flagstones through his sunglasses with calm eyes.

Seeing him for the first time in half a year, Anna's eyes moistened slightly.

"Kusanagi-san...!"

"Hi. Long time no see."

Yata's wide-eyed voice called out to Kusanagi, who responded calmly. With a relaxed gesture, he took a cigar to his mouth and lit it with his zippo. He took a deep breath and placed his pistol-shaped right index finger in front of the still burning zippo.

"Bang!"

Along with a playful voice, the zippo's flames immediately swelled and flew like countless fire bullets.

The ninja fled from the incoming flaming bullets, or repelled them, and as if cornered, he descended to the edge of the hallway and landed on top of the corner pillar.

Yata looked at Kusanagi with a dumbfounded face.

"Why are you here...?"

After saying that, Yata hurriedly frowned, as if he remembered how angry he was with Kusanagi.

"Why are you here now?"

Kusanagi walked towards him, stopped next to Yata and smiled.

"Just like you, I came for the princess."

Yata showed doubts whether he would get angry or not, and after all, his face broke as if he had lost his strength.

"What are you saying?"

"Glasses! Sexy glasses! Oh, it won't open!"

Before he was aware of it, Neko walked over to Anna's bird cage, she grabbed the grate and shook it to let Anna out.

"I won't give you that girl!"

The ninja clinging to the top of the pillar lunged at Neko. He approached with a swift, insect-like movement that defied gravity, wriggling through the air and swinging its blades.

Neko jumped back in a hurry and Yata slid into her place as if to replace her.

A loud sound rang out, and the ninja's blade and Yata's staff collided. Yata repelled the ninja with all his strength with a staff loaded with supernatural powers.

"That's my line!"

Barking, Yata launched a lunge. Although it was impromptu, the fact that he had obtained a weapon and the arrival of a reassuring comrade gave him momentum and pushed back the inferiority he had before.

The ninja somersaulted like an acrobat, flying far from Yata and landing on the rubble.

"Since 'Homura' Number 2 came out, you are nothing anymore."

"Yata-chan, can you give me a little time?"

Kusanagi interrupted Yata's words with a light tone and turned his foot towards the cage where Anna was locked up. "Eh?" Yata's eyes widened.

"Hey, Kusanagi-san!"

"This is an important talk. Please, Yatagarasu."

Kusanagi smiled at Yata, who was dumbfounded for a moment, but immediately a fearless smile appeared on his face.

Yatagarasu. Yata is proud of his name as the vanguard of "Homura".

"Heh, if you call me by that name, I can't fail."

Yata raised his voice as his fighting spirit burst into flames all over his body.

"Come on cosplay ninja! The Yatagarasu from "Homura" will blow your mind!"

Yata's angry voice, the sound of erupting flames, and the sound of weapons hitting each other resounded.

However, Anna was no longer able to even watch the Yata battle.

She held onto her chest and crouched down in the cage.

It was disconcerting. The flames swayed inside her body. The flame left behind by Suoh. Although Suoh left, the "Homura" flame inside Anna still had a fever. It was something very important, but it threatened to change at any moment.

A while ago, when she saw Yata in crisis, her heart shuddered and for a moment she opened the shell she had wrapped herself in. Perhaps because of that, the power that was shaking Anna became stronger.

What shook Anna kept calling to Anna.

Still, Anna couldn't make up her mind and she was cowering.

A shadow fell over Anna, who trembled with her head bowed.

When she looked up, Kusanagi was looking at Anna with his arms resting on the lattice. Kusanagi's expression was calm, but the anguish could be seen beneath it.

"I can't stand it. I wanted to do something about it, so I went to Germany to do some research, but it seems I didn't make it in time."

"Izumo..."

When he found out about Anna's situation, it was Kusanagi who told her to fight. Kusanagi kept running trying to find a way out for the bewildered Anna.

However, Kusanagi's eyes held a painful determination that he could only fight so far.

"Even if I keep looking away from you, nothing will come of it. Anna... no..."

Kusanagi's lips moved slowly and he called Anna by a name that wasn't Anna.