



MEMORY STORIES: THE CURTAIN CLOSES, THE CURTAIN OPENS

TRANSLATION: NARU-KUN / K-PROJECT WORLD

Neko stepped into the mansion to shelter from the heavy rain and lightning. There was an atmosphere where ghosts seemed to appear at any moment in a western-style building with a strict and intimidating feeling that you normally wouldn't want to get too close.

However, every time she tried to take shelter from the lightning and the cascading drops on the eaves, the entire area would turn bright yellow, and the shaky night atmosphere was scary, and Neko desperately snuck into the building through the small open bathroom window and she stepped deeper into the mansion.

At first she thought it was an empty house. There weren't many signs of people. However, admitting that a dim light was pouring in from a room on the second floor, she approached softly, speaking and cautiously.

And at that moment, she was called.

"Oh, something strange has come to pick me up from the other world. Are you a cat or a human girl?"

Neko was shocked and stopped. The lady said with an annoyed voice.

"I don't like it. I'm asking a question. Yeah, but hey, that's fine. Just answer."

Succumbing to the power of only those who were used to commanding, Neko stormed into the room.

"Fuwah, you are selfish..."

When she said that...

"Yes. I don't know what you're saying, but you look like Beppin-san. Come on."

As told, Neko obediently approached the lady's voice. Neko was invited by an old woman who got out of bed and looked to be in her eighties. She was wearing a red nightgown, stretched out her back and put her hands on her knees, but she had an oxygen cannula in her nose and an IV drip in her arm. A medical device that Neko did not understand was installed on the side of the bed and digital numbers were displayed.

"Do you understand, Wagahai?"

Neko had been conducting reconnaissance operations the entire time. However, this old woman saw Neko as a "human girl".

The old woman gave a stifled laugh.

"I've always had a keen intuition. It's like building this mansion with that intuition. Besides, I've been almost blind these days. You don't have to fool me with anything extra."

If she looked closely, the old woman's eyes trembled gray. She must have been a terrifying beauty when she was young and she had a clean face. Neko was intrigued and irresistibly asked...

"Grandma, what are you doing here?"

The old woman gave a high-pitched laugh like a witch. She then cleared her throat a little, and after coughing painfully over and over again,

"Greetings. Did you break in? But that's okay. I like being alone but I don't hate clients. What are you doing? That's right. I mean... I'm dying."

She smiled and said that. That was the meeting between Neko and Madame Fuyuko.

Madame Fuyuko seemed to like Neko for some reason.

"Lives here for a while and talks with me."

At those words, she decided to stay at the mansion. Neko who was tired from long trips was also thankful for the fact that she didn't have to hide her identity and she could eat rice three times without worrying about the night dew or being chased by dogs. Also, she could sleep on a futon and take a bath.

Neko spent most of the day in the room where Madame Fuyuko was, leaving her seat and acknowledging when the medical staff and caretakers arrived. And in the process, Madame Fuyuko realized that, as she put it, she really was "dying".

Although she was in a good mood talking to Neko, she would suddenly turn pale and sometimes painfully call the medical staff of the place. By the way, the staff were sometimes in the waiting room on the first floor, but in most cases they only came for regular visits every four hours. As a result, Neko would sometimes hold her hand and cheer her on until medical staff rushed inside.

"I'm going to die in this loving house that my last selfish mother designed herself. Because she made a lot of money for it."

Madame Fuyuko laughed and replied to Neko that she asked if she would go to the hospital.

Madame Fuyuko then told Neko about the various things that she had experienced. She was an actress at one point and wrote a novel. It was starred twice as a movie. The novel had won a famous award that every expert would know. She once ran a tourism company in Bali and was assigned to an international organization as a diplomatic adviser to a certain country. She spoke six languages, was familiar with art, and had a collection of paintings.

"I can't play it anymore, but I really liked the violin."

She said she in a mischievous way.

"In the end, I didn't have any children or husbands, but I got a lot of different types and nicknames. It was fun."

The name Madame Fuyuko seems to be a stage name when she was a fortune teller using her peculiar intuition. It seems to be the one he liked the most.

And when Madame Fuyuko finished telling her memories, one day she suddenly became serious and said to Neko:

"You should go now. Yes. I don't want to get in the way. I'll probably die in a few days. I know. So I don't want you to see it."

Neko had a feeling that one day she would leave, so she obediently accepted it. Still, the tears naturally spilled over. For a short time, she became fond of that proud old woman. Neko asked:

"Aren't you lonely, Grandma?"

Madame Fuyuko laughed.

"I have lived the way I really wanted to. I enjoyed being alone, having fun, being strong and living. I will never forget those days. And the last option is to die alone. Well, the hands of the doctors will be annoying. I will compensate them with money."

And for the first time she strokes Neko's hair.

"Feel proud and free. That is the most important thing to me. Do you understand?"

Neko blew her nose and looked back at her forehead. The old woman had a sweet voice.

"But you're different from me. Okay? Go find something important just for yourself. I'm sure you'll find it one day."

At that moment, Madame Fuyuko coughed violently. When Neko tried to help her in a hurry, she waved her hand with frightening eyes, saying "Come on! Go away!" She turned around slightly like a real cat and jumped out of the room, knowing that this was the last action to respond to Madame Fuyuko's thoughts.

Madame Fuyuko was laughing with her thumbs up.

She finally sent that message, to whom was old enough to be like her granddaughter. The two never met again.

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When she was looking at the heavy rain hitting the window pane, she suddenly remembered Madame Fuyuko. The noble and beautiful demeanor that she had. The toughness she was showing when her death was imminent.

And the last piece of advice she received.

"Go find your own important thing."

At that moment, they called her from behind her.

"Neko. It's almost like rice. Today is Kuro's special okonomiyaki."

"I added as many dried bonito toppings as you requested."

Shiro holding chopsticks and a plate and Kuro in an apron was standing there. A big smile spread across Neko's cheeks.

Neko had traveled all the way since then and finally found him.

Things that seem to be important from the bottom of her heart.