



## **LIMITED KINGSHIP, WAR STORIES:**

### **CHAPTER 6: AISEKI 1999**

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

"Hey, what are you doing?!"

Screaming, Shiotsu Gen ran down the river slope.

It all started when he saw boys his own age gathered at the foot of the bridge. If it was just a fight between baddies, he would have left it unattended. Shiotsu wasn't free enough to stick his nose in a fool's fight. Still, he ran out because, of course, they were hitting a person in a group.

It was the nature of a boy named Gen Shiotsu that he couldn't ignore such things.

"Ah? What, you idiot!"

He turned and tossed his Boston bag at the menacing regent. The guy fell back as he took a cannonball-like impulse bag into his face, sliding off the side, and Shiotsu clung to his brown hair.

"Let's go!"

With a flash of energy, he slammed his forehead against the other person's nose.

The brown haired one spurted blood from his nose, and Shiotsu exhaled.

"What's up, idiot?"

They hit him from behind.

He didn't lose consciousness, but he staggered. He must have been hit by some kind of weapon, be it a square wood or an iron bat. Shiotsu stuck his hand out of his side, and almost instinctively rolled sideways. The sound of something hitting the wet ground could be heard just inches from the ear.

"Lock it up, lock it up!"

"Do that all the time!"

He did not regret it, but he thought he had made a mistake. The amount of enemies he saw just before hitting was 5 or 6 or even if the first ruler didn't get up, there were still more than 3 enemies left. And unless he had supernatural power, he couldn't defeat three people properly.

As he endured the rain, the fists and the kicks that fell, Shiotsu looked at them.

"What?!"

One of the enemies hit him while he screamed.

When asked what he was, the boy who was in the bag for them first got up and was ready. What he held in his hand was the same Kendo Shinai that Shiotsu always held.

A bullish buzz cut off a skinhead. The small body was slightly bent forward.

When he saw that figure, something came to mind.

But the bad guys didn't care about that. Stopping from hurting Shiotsu, they turned to the boy.

The regent, who was first hit by Shiotsu, also stood up and turned his hostile gaze towards the boy.

"Ah?"

Shiotsu hit his torso from behind.

Fainted in agony, the regent rolled across the riverside meadow. Looking at him, Shiotsu turned to other enemies.

In his hand was a wood stolen from the enemy. The "grip" was reinforced with bandages. It was an abominable weapon to touch, but he couldn't tell.

The boy looked at Shiotsu. The color of understanding lived in his eyes. There must have been something that came to mind.

But that story would be later.

At that time, the first decision was to beat them.

"Ooooooh!"

At the scream that escaped from the throats of Shiotsu and the boy at the same time, the enemy visibly stood up.

"You are Shiotsu."

Five minutes after the bad students escaped from the river bank with their bodies crawling, Shiotsu and the boy were on their way home.

They both had swollen faces and traces of blood that stained their faces red. They couldn't blame the people who passed each other, for being visibly scared.

"You are Takamuro, right?"

"Did you know?"

"Can you forget it? Thanks to you, I..."

Remembering that moment, Shiotsu sighed.

Shiotsu first saw Takamuro Kunikatsu in the kendo room he attended.

That day, Takamuro stood out in the middle of an exchange game with other dojos, where both adults and children were present. A small body that looked like an elementary school student was made to bounce in all directions, and even if it were an adult, it would be a challenge. The line of the sword was not flattering, but Takamuro was so strong that he could easily defeat him if he was a two-level opponent.

"Brother Gen, he looks like a monkey."

It was Akio, a childhood friend who was two years younger than Shiotsu, who attended the same kendo hall as Shiotsu.

"It's fine. Do you want to try it?"

Seeing Akio who stood up with a smile, Shiotsu got caught up in an unpleasant premonition. At times like these, things that don't usually happen happened.

And that premonition was correct.

The first match ended with a victory for Takamuro. However, Akio, unable to stay behind due to her heavy defeat, requested a rematch and launched a surprise attack to win. Takamuro requested a rematch, he won and Akio requested a rematch.

Finally, when an unprecedented incident occurred in which bamboo swords were thrown and began to hit each other, the game of the other style of the day was opened.

After that, apart from Akio, for some reason Shiotsu was scolded by his master. It seems that Shiotsu's role was to tighten Akio's reins.

Saying that, Takamuro was absurd.

"Ah. There was such a thing. How are you?"

"I'm fine. More than necessary."

He imagines Akio was in that river and Shiotsu felt chills. The bad guys couldn't have escaped. Everyone would have been beaten until they could not stand up.

Suddenly, Takamuro looked directly at Shiotsu and...

"Why did you help me?"

"Why? It's natural. You don't abandon someone who gets beaten up by too many people."

Takamuro's eyes widened and then he laughed again.

"Hahahahaha! It's natural to help! You're serious, Shiotsu-kun!"

Shiotsu was angry. He didn't say anything to make him laugh. However, Takamuro laughed, that was not the first time he did that. It seemed like the other party should laugh at what Shiotsu meant seriously.

That was annoying, and Shiotsu asked as if he was half-hearted.

"Why were you entwined in such a place? Was it Katsuage?"

"Ah. It's revenge."

Shrugging, Takamuro laughed again.

"Some time ago, I hit one of them. They had a grudge against me, gathered his friends and took revenge. Haha."

The smile had a malicious color different from before.

Shiotsu narrowed his eyes. After all, it was an extension of the fights between the bad guys. He thought it would have been better not to get involved, but he didn't start at the point he just made.

As if Takamuro was in a hurry, he might have read Shiotsu's expression.

"No, I'm small! Even then, did you have a connection from the other side? I wonder if it's a bit or something, I guess they decided to wait for me!"

"I don't know why they think it's okay to use violence carelessly."

"Uh."

Takamuro fell silent with a bored expression.

Looking at the profile, Shiotsu remembered another reason why he remembered Takamuro.

"Takamuro. Can I ask you something?"

"What?"

"Is it true that you left the dojo?"

Takamuro's expression trembled.

He immediately averted his eyes and fell silent. After opening his lips and trying to say something, Takamuro closed his mouth.

Shiotsu had many questions.

"I heard that rumor during the trading game during this time. I am sorry for your teacher. You are very talented."

"You are loud."

There was a strained expression in his voice.

"I don't care. I'm tired of it, Kendo."

"....."

Shiotsu looked at Takamuro's back. There he hung a bamboo bag for swords.

He wanted to tell him a better lie, but he stopped. Like Takamuro said, it didn't matter.

Shiotsu was not friends with Takamuro. He might not even have been an acquaintance. He just remembered the name for something. Maybe he will forget what happened that day in a few months, and they would even forget about each other in a few years.

Both Shiotsu and Takamuro knew that they were originally unrelated people.

The two of them stopped as they approached the intersection. They looked at each other.

"I'm going this way. And you?"

Shiotsu showed the left to Takamuro, who showed the right.

"This is it. See you."

That boy would no longer be found. With that in mind, Shiotsu took a step forward.

".....?"

He pulled out the Boston bag and stopped.

It was Takamuro. As he looked at Shiotsu on top, scratching his shaved head.

"You helped me. I haven't thanked you yet."

"I do not like that."

"Even if you don't need it, I'm not satisfied. Come on."

Then Takamuro pulled Shiotsu and started walking.

He wondered what it was, but Shiotsu followed him probably because he wanted to delay his time to go home as much as possible. Looking at his swollen face, he thought his serious parents would make a fuss. He wanted to delay that time as long as possible. Gen Shiotsu was still a 13-year-old boy.

While he was attracted to Takamuro, Shiotsu walked down the road at the end of the night.

"Itadakimasu!"

With their hands clasped happily, Takamuro began to swing his chopsticks fiercely.

"Itadakimasu!"

Shiotsu thanked the food even though the situation was still unknown. It was the education he had received so far, that he would make him do that if they served him food.

The popular coffee shop where Takamuro entered with Shiotsu was full of students. Most of them were returning from athletic club activities, and the shaved-headed baseball members and the gyoza-eared judo members scooped up the white rice with all their might. When a person offered him a refill, Shiotsu, who pushed the empty bowl in a chain reaction, felt half ill and saw such a scene.

"Hey, eat fast."

Prompted by Takamuro, Shiotsu looked at the plate in front of him. Fried dish Mega MIX. It is said that fried chili, fried shrimp, minced meat cutlet, heaped cabbage, white rice, and miso soup can be freely filled. Shiotsu's belly sounded with a large number of fragrant fried foods. No matter what he thought in his head, his body was honest and he was looking for the calories that had been used up in training and fighting.

It was frustrating to sprinkle the sauce on that, and Shiotsu held onto the chili fry. Along with the crisp, crisp sound, the runny and fat from the fish spread all over the place.

"Uh!"

Shiotsu involuntarily pressed his mouth. Perhaps he cut his mouth when they hit him and the hot broth stained the wound. Takamuro laughed when he saw it.

"I said so too. If you eat rice, it will be better."

Shiotsu obediently followed the advice. He threw the amount of white rice, about the size of a baby's fist, into his mouth at one time. The strong flavor of the fried food intertwined with the white rice and pain doubled. As things stood, Shiotsu and Takamuro turned into creatures that simply ate rice in silence, just like other students.

After eating the last grain of white rice and the last drop of miso soup, Shiotsu took a breath.

"It was delicious."

To be honest, Takamuro cheered with pride.

"And it's cheap so you don't spend a lot of money."

In response, he poured barley tea into his and Shiotsu's glass. He drank and Shiotsu asked.

"Is this your parents' house?"

"No. I'm working here. When this is over, I'll have to go to the dishwasher."

Takamuro looked towards the kitchen. The employee was busy working there. Some were running into the upper room, but he was drinking tea without worrying about it.

"At home there is no money. I will work and make things easier with my pocket."

Shiotsu took Takamuro's muttered words very seriously.

Shiotsu did not know the home environment of Takamuro. However, the fact that he, a high school student, has to work can be very difficult. Shiotsu stopped thinking when it occurred to him the reason why he left the kendo room, or maybe he was there.

"I see."

He said just that and drank the barley tea.

Takamuro told Shiotsu to keep his wallet.

"It's a thank you. I'll pay the food."

"....."

Takamuro, who was by no means rich, still said that he invited the food. Shiotsu couldn't turn it down, he just bowed firmly and...

"It was delicious."

Saying that, Takamuro smiled. Since he was small, he was like an innocent child.

"Come again. I will serve you."

Shiotsu nodded and stood up.

Takamuro stood up in the same way. When he was about to go to the kitchen and Shiotsu to the exit, he suddenly stopped and looked at Takamuro.

"Hey. Are you always there?"

"Eh?"

Shiotsu asked Takamuro, who listened as he put on his apron.

"That river bank is your practice place?"

Takamuro, who should have left the kendo room, was still holding a bamboo sword. The reason may be that the sword was not yet abandoned.

Takamuro fell silent at Shiotsu's point. His eyes were hostile. He maybe he didn't want to touch on that subject. Especially with people who were neither friends nor acquaintances.

Still, Shiotsu touched it.

"If I want to practice with you, should I go there too?"

Could it be because the food in that coffee shop was delicious?

Perhaps because Takamuro's innocent smile was dazzling.

At least it wasn't sympathy or pity. That seemed to have been correctly communicated to Takamuro. After breathing a bit, Takamuro quickly blushed and walked away.

After that, with a little voice that could be mistaken for the screams from the coffee shop.

"Do what you want."

Shiozu laughed at that attitude this time.

"See you."

With that said, Takamuro turned his back on him and fluttered.

"Ah."

He said that when he realized what he had just said.

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Ten years have passed since then.

He met Takamuro many times after that. They weren't meeting each other at the rate of several times a week, but when they met at the river, they practiced. He ate rice when he found it in the popular coffee shop. When he came to the store with Akio yelling, it was a bit tricky. That was because Akio, who was not convinced by the outcome of the previous game, drew the bamboo sword and requested a match with Takamuro.



From that moment on, Akio began to mix with the practice on the river.

Takamuro and Akio had a fight as a matter of course. The testimony lessons of the two seemed like just an extension of that. The two always insisted that they were the winners, but Shiotsu did not compete. He was tired of being refereed and protested by the loser every time he declared victory.

The relationship was completely severed when Shiotsu and Takamuro graduated from high school.

Shiotsu decided to go to college, but Takamuro decided to go to work in the city. Takamuro, who had a sick mother and was supposed to take care of the household budget, only laughed at the end.

"This is the end of the club swing."

With a hardened fist, he lightly struck Shiotsu's chest.

"Go on. There is a university and a kendo club."

"....."

Shiotsu didn't reply anything and just silently nodded.

After all, they stopped contacting. Akio complained a lot. When she became a high school girl, she didn't grow up at all, and when she got mad, she was like a tantrum child.

"Who should I hit if Gen and Katsu are gone?"

Perhaps in the beginning, what Akio complained of was a lonely expression.

Anyway, as soon as she graduated from high school and entered college, she brought her fiancé. Surprisingly a decent man. Akio Minato, who entered Hayatoshi Minato's registry, became a mother a year later.

Shiotsu continued his life steadily, glancing at Akio, who was living very fast. He entered inspection school and safely graduated there.

At that moment, Gen Shiotsu met with Kunikatsu Takamuro.

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It was a damp spring night after work.

It was mainly because of Akio that she was unprecedentedly drunk. After a graduation celebration with a fellow from the police academy and a private celebration of the tribe, she was looking forward to a drinking party with the Minato family. To be precise, Akio, the main driving force, was drawn in saying, "It's a job search celebration! Let's drink!"

At first, it was peaceful and started out as a mix with the Minato family. Every time he saw the happy smile of Akio, who was babysitting and drinking alcohol, Shiotsu seemed to share her happiness.

It wasn't until she sent Hayato out saying "Come slow." that he began to suspect. As if the happy act of the Minato family was nothing more than a prologue, Akio first went to a stand-up bar and drank heavily. She then she toured the taverns, the sandwiches, the karaoke, the bars and went out to drink more.

Akio, who was drunk and reeling, ran into a man.

"That's right, be careful!"

The two of them cut the tanker truck at exactly the same time. The other man was a perfect bully, in a striking patterned shirt that relaxed across the chest, a shaved blonde head, and ear piercings.

At those times, Akio's initial run was really fast. She quickly grabbed onto the opponent's chest and looked from a close distance in the form of lifting her small body. The demon appearance did not seem to belong to the mother of two children.

Shiotsu had a headache and thought about how to make the place easier.

"Akio?"

Suddenly, the man muttered that.

Akio, who was looking at the man with Prajna's face, blinked. From that expression, the slope gradually disappeared.

"Are you Katsu-chan?"

Shiotsu saw the moment when the bomb, which was about to explode, thawed in a second.

"Oh, really, you're Akio! It's a lie, in a place like this!"

"Yes, Katsu-chan? What are you doing in this place?"

Holding hands holding their breasts, Akio and Takamuro began to spin on the spot as if they were dancing. No matter how long they were on the streets of a bar, he didn't want them to do those kinds of eccentricities. Shiotsu led them to the corner of the street.

"Shiotsu too! How are you?"

"Oh... you too."

"I'm not tall though!"

"Huh?! It doesn't make sense to you, you idiot!"

"Ah?! What are you playing with people's heads?"

Takamuro kneaded Akio's hair, and Akio put a hook in Takamuro's side. Shiotsu smiled at the flirtation of the two people, who were the same as 10 years ago.

"What the hell?! You're really hitting him with that!"

"Ah! I'm not serious at all, I guess that was first!"

"Wait, wait, wait!"

He hastily interrupted between the two who were about to start working on it. Maybe it hadn't changed or it just wasn't growing.

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"Well, to commemorate the meeting, Kampai!"

"Kanpai!"

Shiotsu slightly raised the glass as Takamuro and Akio, sitting left and right, happily raised the glass.

Development was quick after Akio said that they should drink together. The three of them sat at the counter after rushing into a tavern where Takamuro resided. Takamuro and Akio were on either side of Shiotsu, if you put Takamuro and Akio next to each other they will start fighting.

"Today was a celebration of Gen's employment. So we were drinking and walking together."

Akio spoke to Takamuro through Shiotsu. Takamuro laughed happily and looked at Shiotsu for a moment.

"Hey, yeah, congratulations on that! Where did you end up working?"

"Well... cop, that's correct."

Takamuro's expression trembled for a moment.

However, the confusion soon disappeared. To revive the friendly smile, Takamuro lightly tapped the tall glass against Shiotsu's glass that was left in his place.

"That's it! Looks like you are. You've always been a serious guy."

"From now on, I have to be careful when I hit people in front of Gen. They will arrest me."

Shiotsu turned his displeased eyes towards Akio,

"Don't feel free to hit in the first place. Even today, if the other party hadn't been Takamuro, you would just hit him."

"There is no such thing. You are saying something that makes me angry."

Akio drank sake after saying it. Takamuro turned the glass.

"What about you Akio? Are you still a college student?"

"I went to college, but now I graduated and I am a mother."

"What did you say?"

"Now I am a mother. Besides, they are twins. I am incredibly busy every day."

Takamuro looked at Shiotsu and Akio alternately with an incredible gaze,

"Seriously...! If you're married, say so first!"

Shiotsu, who was drinking beer, was about to let out a scream. Akio actually screamed, turned around and started laughing. Shiotsu coughed for a moment, then looked at Takamuro with a determined expression.

"It's not me! Akio's husband is another guy!"

"Hahahaha! Okay, Brother Gen is a nice guy! I don't like him, so don't make that face!"

Akio laughed with his whole body and slapped Shiotsu's back for a while seeing what was funny. On the other hand, speaking of Takamuro, he felt relieved and stroked his chest.

"Well, no, I'm glad."

"What was good?"

"If you get attached to something, I think Shiotsu's stomach will be full of holes in less than half a year. No matter what you think, is it better not to have a relationship other than "distant relatives"?!"

"It's none of your business, stupid!"

Akio quickly reached out and threw cold at Takamuro. Of course, Shiotsu was also splashed, but he didn't complain. There is no idiot to oil the fire. Shiotsu drank silently, leaving the two people who started arguing again.

After interacting for a while, he notices that they made up, laughed, and poured sake on each other. He wasn't sure of the niceties of starting and ending the fight, but now they were both pretty good at it.

"So? What about Katsu-chan?"

"Hmm? What about me?"

"What are you doing now? That parenthesis doesn't mean you're going to school, does it?"

Takamuro's expression trembled again.

He lost his eyes on the counter. After looking through edamame, yakitori, motsuni, etc.

"Well, I'm that... I'm the one who doesn't have an earthmoving building..."

"What is it, are you a yakuza after all?"

Takamuro shrugged to the point of being easily guessed by Akio.

Shiotsu silently threw the edamame into his mouth. Truth be told, Shiotsu knew. At first glance, anyone could understand it because it is a chimp style very easy to understand.

Takamuro dropped a weak voice as he pushed the motsuni away.

"Sorry."

"What? Why are you apologizing?"

Akio had a clean face and asked. Takamuro looked uncomfortable.

"Because Shiotsu became a police officer. If it were known that he was drinking with a yakuza, it would not be a reminder. I knew from the beginning."

Then Takamuro laughed helplessly.

"It was nostalgic, so I put it behind me. I'm leaving. At least to apologize, let me pay here."

Then he reached for the paper.

Right before his finger reached, Shiotsu quickly reached over and picked up the paper.

Takamuro looked at Shiotsu with surprised eyes. Shiotsu smiled back at Takamuro and smiled.

"It's my job search celebration. I still don't have enough to drink."

Takamuro opened his eyes, Akio laughed out loud and hit Shiotsu's back again.

"That's Brother Gen! That's right, Katsu-chan, I haven't had a drink yet! Let's go!"

Akio raised her hand and called for a clerk to order a surprisingly large amount of food and sake. As he glanced sideways, Shiotsu silently tipped the glass, and Takamuro again calmed his floating waist and inevitably laughed.

"Wow. Are you going to go crazy for me?"

"That's right. There is no better sake than free sake! Look, order something you like!"

With a big smile, Akio offered the menu. Takamuro's expression when he received it looked happy.

After that, there was a lot of noise.

Akio just drank, drank, drank, ate and drank. Is it because it was literally gratuitous love or for the joy of finding ancient wisdom? The same happened with Takamuro, who continued to drink at the same rate as her. Only Shiotsu was able to maintain his sanity around midnight.

Thus, Shiotsu was the only one who heard the story.

"My bag is dead."

Akio was snoring on the counter like a roar. The clerk looked at her like she was in trouble, but the reason he didn't complain was probably because Takamuro "left".

Takamuro also put a cheek on the counter, and while he was about to collapse, he talked about himself like shit.

"I have a bad head, but I thought that if I worked hard, I wouldn't let my bag entertain me."

Then Takamuro laughed with a rumor.

"It was sweet. High school graduates are not treated like human beings by decent company. Still, I went to a guy who looked like shit and worked with the idea of dying every day, and then I was finally able to get into a good hospital, and at the tip of the arrow, my purse was missing."

"....."

"I look stupid. I don't know what I was working for. Then, I went to work the day after the funeral, and my shitty boss guy said something like shit like always. At that point, I got ready."

He takes a sip of whiskey directly.

"I won't tell you what I did. If I say that, you'll have to catch me. Well, there were so many things that I joined the current 'company'."

With sick eyes, Takamuro looked at Shiotsu.

"It's a good thing. There are many types of shit, but the wings are messy. There seems to be a bonus for those who are good at it, Shiotsu. Listen. Hey, are you listening?"

"Ah..."

"I started with the sword again. This time, it's a practical type... hehe."

Takamuro laughed with a melted face.

Shiotsu felt an instinctive disqualification in his smile. He knew what he meant Takamuro. He said that he chose what he once united them as a means of violence, not a sword as a martial art.

However, Shiotsu had no right to say anything.

His ways were already different. Shiotsu chose order and Takamuro chose violence. Whatever he said now, he wasn't going to change his way of life.

So, he thought it was useless to say it.

In regards to regretting that thought, he didn't think at the time.

Takamuro muttered, almost falling into unconsciousness.

"Someday, let's play again. Like we did in that river, Akio, you and me. I'll decide who is the strongest."

"That's how it is."

When answering, Shiotsu knew. Definitely, that opportunity should come. Only that night were the two roads divided into policemen and gangsters. Perhaps Takamuro, who was saying that, should have known.

They would never see each other again.

Shiotsu brought rum to his mouth, feeling a slight pain in it.

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Ten years have passed since then.

He never met Takamuro. Shiotsu constantly continued his career as a police officer, and Akio worked diligently as a mother. Neither of them cared about what Takamuro was doing, and they didn't even talk about it. It seems ruthless, but they couldn't afford to worry about the aftermath of his old friend, whom they first met 10 years ago.

Meanwhile, Shiotsu and Akio's lives reached a turning point.

They met Jin Habari, the "Blue King".

"King", different ability, member of the clan. Shiotsu discovered many wonders that he had never seen before.

He joined the "Scepter 4" clan created by Habari, because he knew that he had talent and aptitude for different abilities. It was quite natural for Shiotsu to hone and exercise his abilities to maintain the order that he believed in.

However, there were two uncalculated events.

One is that the Minato family found aptitudes for different abilities. In particular, Akio displayed outstanding qualities, and they both became members of "Scepter 4".

And the other thing was the emergence of "Purgatory".

A clan of "violence" led by the "Red King", Kagutsu Genji. It has been a long time before "Purgatory", which spreads murder and destruction at will, and "Scepter 4", which tries to maintain "Order" with different abilities, entered a state of war without any restrictions. It was not necessary.

Limited royalty war.

Many things changed in that whirlpool.

Many things were lost.

It was painful to remember. Thus, Shiotsu tried not to look back at the past as much as possible, but only to look forward. Towards the future.

However, if the "Red King" is left as he is, even his future will be lost. It was already common sense not only for "Scepter 4", but for all humans involved in the different abilities.

The war between the kings to kill Kagutsu was about to enter the final stage.

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"Scepter 4" and "Purgatory" were in a state of immediate action.

The beginning is that Kagutsu Genji, who appeared suddenly, wore many black clothes and began to invade the gray clan "Cathedral". The "Gray King" Seigo Otori tried to negotiate with Kagutsu and take responsibility, but of course he failed. It was like trying to stop the erupting magma with words.

Shiotsu did not know if any arrangement was made between Otori and Habari, the two "Kings". However, it was decided that "Scepter 4" would do it. Destroy "Purgatory" to protect innocent people. That policy had never changed. Chasing "Purgatory", "Scepter 4" began to advance towards "Cathedral" territory.

That night, Shiotsu was given a short time off.

Most of the members, not just Shiotsu, were allowed to move freely within the range that did not interfere with the change. That is, the "final battle" will occur in the near future. Reaffirm family, lovers, friends, and what they should protect, and when the "time" came, they expected to die without remorse.

Shiotsu smiled and thought it was his own organization. He didn't know if he was benevolent or cruel.

Shiotsu went to a strange city.



He didn't have any important people. Speaking of strength, he would be dealing with those twins. However, the suicide note addressed to them was already written. Even if Shiotsu died, the right people and the right institutions should guide them. Shiotsu could only hope for that.

It was July, but it was hot and humid, or maybe it was because that man was not far away. No wonder they told Shiotsu that the "Red King", like "Purgatory" himself who appeared in this world, raised the temperature in the area where they were.

To escape the heat, Shiotsu entered a bar that he noticed.

The doorbell rang and the waiter looked at Shiotsu. It was because Shiotsu had an elongated bamboo sword bag that he narrowed his eyes slightly. He was not wearing his uniform, but members of "Scepter 4" were told to take their extraordinary control saber with them when they left.

Sitting on the counter stool, Shiotsu ordered a drink.

"Martini."

"Understood."

With a slight bow, the bartender picked up the liquor.

Shiotsu didn't miss the slight tremor of his fingertips.

He looked inside the store again, frowning. There was no other client other than Shiotsu. However, there was a glass of whiskey two seats from his eyes. Maybe he hadn't cleaned it yet, or that person was standing in the bathroom.

As soon as he thought about it, the sound of water echoed and the back door swung open.

And from there came a man in black clothes.

"....."

Reflectively, Shiotsu loosened the straps on the bamboo sword bag. Even if he took out the saber from inside, as long as it was in the bag, there would be a gap. How would he overcome that? The enemy had to be beheaded before he could activate his abilities.

The guy in black clothes also seemed to instantly understand who the human in front of him was. As he distorted his half-burned face with haste and hostility, he placed his finger on the Koiguchi of the Japanese sword in his hand.

It was a blond, shaved head.

For a second, if he had been slow to realize it, the inside of the store would have been a sea of fire. It wouldn't be known if Shiotsu was also alive.

However, Shiotsu noticed.

Before thinking of anything, the name came out.

"Takamuro?"

The one in black clothes opened one eye. The other eye was covered in burns and blocked by a patch.

Takamuro muttered in a weak voice as he was drawing his sword out of his black clothing.

"Shiotsu?"

Then a time that seemed eternal passed.

"This..."

It was the bartender's trembling voice that broke the two's stalemate.

"Client. If it's a disaster, please come out."

Then, as if to take a breath, Takamuro relaxed his body.

He returned to his seat with the Japanese sword. Shiotsu still couldn't drop the saber. It took him a long time to understand it, and to relax from the hand that held the saber.

Before the bartender who was comparing the two people in a confused way, Takamuro said in a rough voice...

"Rather, do it right for that guy."

The bartender blinked hastily and then took the shaker glass.

When the martini was placed in front of Shiotsu, Takamuro looked at it with a complicated expression. When Shiotsu picked him up, Takamuro also raised his glass without saying anything.

"Long time not see you."

It took him a long time to say that.

After moistening his lips with a red liquid, Takamuro replied.

"Oh, isn't this the first time in 10 years?"

"Since then."

The words he tried to speak didn't come out of his throat.

There was no such thing. As you could see, Takamuro had turned into a human from the underworld. Then, he ran into Kagutsu. One of them had become a member of the "Purgatory" clan that he should kill.

Takamuro must have thought the same. A police officer becoming a member of "Scepter 4" is as natural as a gangster becoming a member of "Purgatory".

"....."

The martini was so painful that it was difficult to swallow. The bartender's skill was not bad. It was a hint of regret that swirled around his chest.

At that time. If he had stopped him that night, 10 years ago.

He wouldn't use a sword for that. For example, he dyed himself in the underworld. If Shiotsu had said so, perhaps something could have changed.

Of course, it was more likely that he hadn't changed. Takamuro had already set foot in the world behind him. He was familiar with it. If he could change his way of life with just one word from his old friend, he wouldn't have chosen such a fierce life in the first place.

But still, he should have said something.

"I know what you are thinking, Shiotsu."

Shiotsu raised his face.

Takamuro's smile was kind.

"Because you are serious."

Unable to look directly at the smile, Shiotsu looked towards the bar counter.

There was still about half the martini left. It would come out when he finished drinking it. Shiotsu so decided. There was no word to interchange with "Purgatory". Even if he was an old friend.

Takamuro suddenly remembered when he raised the glass.

"By the way, how is Akio?"

That said.

Regrets swirled around his chest, cracking and changing color.

Akio, his childhood friend. Takamuro's old friend. She was...

"She died."

His voice, which was as hard and cold as steel, opened his eye, which was the only one in Takamuro.

As he looked at him, Shiotsu spat out those words.

"She was killed by 'Purgatory'."

Like blood gushing from the wound she was closing. A red-black anger surged in Shiotsu's heart.

Unpleasant. He probably wasn't blocked at all. He just kept Shiotsu out of sight.

Akio and Hayatoshi's corpses were connected. The twins, looking at themselves, asked: Why did our parents have to die? What were you doing at the time? Was it really impossible to stop it?

Shiotsu turned away from that question. He cut it because it was the past and he only look ahead. He thought that he couldn't step any other way. He had to stop Kagutsu and "Purgatory". Whether or not he was persecuted for that duty, Shiotsu had escaped that duty.

And now, an answer to his question was right in front of him.

It was for "Purgatory".

His anger, his hateful fingers, gripped the handle of the saber, which was half exposed from the sword's bamboo pouch.

Takamuro narrowed his eyes sadly.

Shiotsu thought. He has to catch Takamuro. It does not matter if it is ancient knowledge. Shiotsu had witnessed what would happen if "Purgatory" was left unattended. A mother who cries when she gets caught in a child who has stopped moving. A boy looking at a burning house with sunken eyes. The despair of the twins whose parents were murdered and only two were left behind in the world.

If he left him alone, he would be the same again.

Immediately before trying to get out of captivity, Takamuro silently opened his mouth and...

"Hey. By the way, Shiotsu. Do you remember?"

He threw a glass of whiskey at Shiotsu's face.

Shiotsu didn't feel cowardly when he was shocked in the middle of the conversation. The fight between "Scepter 4" and "Purgatory" is a bet for the life of the other. There all the tactics are affirmed. Because you can't swear to the dead.

Thus, Shiotsu predicted the attack. With the handle of the saber he produced, he played with the glass.

By this time, Takamuro had already kicked the stool and jumped up.

He opened his one eye to the limit and put out the flames from the burned half of him. The flame focused on the Japanese sword that was drawn. He slammed the flame-covered blade against Shiotsu with his whole body.

The right hand holding the sword was cut off with his arm.

Shiotsu didn't see Takamuro's shocked face. At the same time, he drew his saber, he threw his body forward and launched a round. The blade had sliced through Takamuro's right arm without fail.

Around the same time as Takamuro, who landed while spewing blood from his shoulder, he looked back.

Shiotsu's saber pierced through his chest.

"Kah..."

With a bloody cough, Takamuro staggered and leaned against the counter.

Shiotsu pushed the saber further while he remained expressionless.

"Uh... I see... I remembered..."

With his bloodstained lips laughing, Takamuro weakly looked at Shiotsu.

"Shiotsu... Subcommander of 'Scepter 4', that is..."

"....."

"The lower end like me can win... Hey..."

Takamuro gently caressed the saber that penetrated him.

"But I was able to keep my promise."

That said, he smiled innocently.

Takamuro's body was about to slowly collapse. Shiotsu dropped the saber and hugged Takamuro. The corpse of an old friend who had died.

Shiotsu looked up at the sky with bitten lips.

After doing it for a while, he suddenly felt a look. He saw the bartender shivering behind the counter. It was a natural reaction because customers suddenly started killing each other.

After knocking Takamuro to the ground, Shiotsu contacted "Scepter 4".

"This is Shiotsu. On the way, I ran into a member of the 'Purgatory' clan and neutralized him. Send the transport vehicle to the place I'm about to say."

After finishing the proper arrangements, Shiotsu sat down.

He only had one drink left for the martini.

After holding the glass, he noticed that his hands were wet with Takamuro's blood. Shiotsu didn't clean it up. He tipped his glass and took the last drink.

The clock hands on the wall reached barely midnight, announcing that it was July 11.