

匿名使いは死と踊る

Anonymous Dance with Death.

1

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Novels

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OVERLAP



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Illustration

1

音使いは死と踊る

Anonymous dance with death.

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Ototsukai wa Shi to Odoru

– Anonymous dance with death –

**- Book 1 -
Sound**

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– SYNOPSIS –

One day, a normal young boy who gave up on developing a special ability had a sudden manifestation.

His ability's name was "Sound Control (Dominant)".

This boy was the first person in the entire world who manifested the ability to control sounds.

However, because of the dangers this ability posed, the young boy was acknowledged as an elimination target, therefore he was almost killed by the "Self-Defense Force", an administrative organ that maintains public order in the human society.

At that point, it was the evil organization "Anonymous" that offered this young boy a hand.

And in order to continue living, the young boy took that hand.





Shion
「……………あれは、
俺の兄貴だよ」

Hibiki
「厄介なのが来たわね」



Hibiki
「そこままでだ。
アノニマス」

CHAPTER 1

THE SOUND OF THE BEGINNING

“Sigh”

I let out a sentimental sigh and continued walking with heavy steps on my way to school.

It was only natural. Today was Monday after all.

For some reason, I looked up at the sky and caught sight of another student who was flying towards school. I immediately turned away and looked at something else.

Ah! It’s such a good thing to have a floating ability.

While thinking about these things, I quickened my pace a little bit.

At that moment, I heard someone call my name from behind.

“Oi, Kazato!”

Kamiya Kazato. This is my name.

And the one who called out to me is Midou Tsurugi .

“Tsurugi?.....”

“Today you look even worse than usual.”

“Because it’s Monday.”

He’s an old friend of mine. One of the reasons we got along was the fact that both of us were *normals*, a very small group of people who haven’t manifested any ability. However, there was a fundamental difference between us.

“Tsu – rugi ~!”

A girl called out and started running towards us.

Her name is Oohashi Hitomi .

She is a beauty, to such a degree that she is believed to be able to make anyone fall for

her at first sight. She's also the school's madonna.

This girl is Tsurugi's childhood friend. He doesn't realize.....or maybe he doesn't want to (at least that's what I'd like to think), but she is in love with him.

"Morning."

"Morning, Hitomi."

After she ran all the way here, Oohashi immediately started to cling onto Tsurugi's arm.

Watching these flirty scenes so early in the morning was bitter, to be honest.

"Oh! Morning to you too, Kamiya-kun."

She said to me, like she just realized I was there as well.

".....Morning."

I answered. Just after that, I heard someone calling out from behind us again.

"Morning, Tsurugi!"

I turned around and, at the same time, I saw Furuya Rin , who was already clinging onto Tsurugi's free arm.

"Morning, Rin."

"Meh, Hitomi.....!"

".....Rin-chan, morning."

Instantly, the Tsurugi contest started to unfold right in front of my eyes.

Rin is actually my childhood friend, but she is in love with Tsurugi.

I'd like to tell her that she should be more devoted to me, since I'm her childhood friend, but unfortunately, Rin and I don't get along that well.

It's like an undesirable but inseparable relationship.

"Hey Kazato, you were here?"

Rin asked me as well, as if she just realized I was around.

“.....”

Yes, this is the difference between me and him. The popular one and the unpopular one.

Tsurugi is extremely popular.

The two girls are in fact only a small fraction of Tsurugi’s followers – called the Tsurugi Harem.

During these moments I really want him to rot away, but it actually can’t be helped.

Ah! Only if I was also blessed with good looks...

When I think about this, I always get the urge of punching some holes in my old friend’s face.

“If we don’t hurry, we’ll be late.”



I was looking outside the far away window, from my lonely seat in the middle of the classroom.

I caught sight of a Self-Defense Force soldier who was flying about in the sky; he was patrolling.

The Self-Defense Force is the so-called supporter of justice.

It’s an organization mainly composed of ability users.

From a *normal’s* point of view like myself, their existence is much appreciated. They are the ones who always eliminate the demonic beasts that show up in our city from time to time.

And, they also protect us from the evil organization “Anonymous”, the SDF’s main opposing force.

Even though I called it an evil organization, I actually have no idea what their objective is. According to rumors, it’s something about world domination.

There are all sorts of groups that think about stupid things, but with the SDF around, everyone feels safe.

“Eh, abilities are divided into two major categories, namely the manipulation type and

the enhancement type; however there are many abilities that don't fit in any of the two groups. The ones that don't match any type of categorization are.....”

I ignored the lesson.

It's no use to listen to stories about abilities I'll never be able to use anyway, and this common knowledge level story is annoying to begin with. That's because the possibility that I will manifest an ability now is already zero.

Most people manifest their abilities until the age of 10; 15 at most, in case one has a late manifestation.

I'll be 17 soon. I already surpassed the period when I thought about how cool it'd be to control the wind or such.

To be honest, I do have an inferiority complex.

I will obediently aspire to become a government worker; that's what I've decided.

“So, about Kazato's birthday.....”

“Yeah, we should leave it to Tsurugi. Uhihi, I'm sure Kamiya-*kun* will be surprised.”

“However, throwing a party for that guy sure is annoying.”

“Rin, it was you who suggested it after all.”

Despite their conversation was taking place during the lesson, I heard it as if they were talking right behind me, so I looked over my shoulder.

Having done that, I caught sight of Tsurugi and his followers whispering in the back of the classroom. They even brought their desks together.

However, they somehow realized I turned around and stopped talking.

Come to think of it, tomorrow is my birthday.

Are they throwing a party for me? If that's the case, isn't it bad for me to hear about it?

Anyway, I'll just make sure to be free tomorrow after school.

I decided and turned to look again outside the window.



The next morning, I left home earlier than usual.

It didn't really mean anything, I just woke up early.

I thought that the road leading to my school might have fewer people than usual, if it's this early in the morning.

So I left the house and walked towards school, choosing the streets that had as low a pedestrian traffic as possible.

Mornings are rather chilly.

I was about to return home for my blazer, but it'll get warmer around noon, so I changed my mind.

I left the shopping district and crossed the main road.

And then, I chose another empty street and continued on my way.

A detour isn't really that bad, right? I thought about it and turned the next corner only to find myself bumping into someone.

I was pushed away. It was a man.

".....Sorry."

"..... Be careful."

It was the only thing the tall man said to me, and I continued on my way.

There was another person behind (her face was covered by food, but probably a woman), accompanying that man.

"....."

This pair was giving off a very bizarre aura.

I looked at their retreating figures for a moment, but the man turned around and glared back, so I panicked and averted my eyes.

".....Just now?"

"It could be. However, it can also be wrong. The Observer doesn't always get it right, after all."

What? Why are they talking so loud?

Was it about me.....? I don't really get it, but I shouldn't get involved in this.

I started walking faster.

I was planning to take a detour and arrive at school at the usual time, but in the end, after this incident I abandoned my initial plan and hurried straight to school, until I

got inside the classroom.

I placed my bag on my desk and sat down.

“Sight.....”

I like it when it’s quiet.

The only present sound was the creaking of my chair.

In a few dozen minutes, however, it will get pretty noisy.

I looked up at the ceiling. I heard someone’s steps down the corridor.

And then the classroom door opened.

I turned around, but the door was still closed.

It seems that the sound came from the next classroom.

Hmm. I really felt it like the sound was pretty close though.

Well, it doesn’t matter.

I felt somewhat sleepy. I was not made for early mornings.

So, I rested my head on the desk and closed my eyes.

Before one knew, I fell asleep.

OOOOOoooooooo!!

Some noise made me jump up to my feet.

It was so sudden, my heart was beating violently.

What is this? What kind of sound is this?

It was far from loud. I felt I was at a concert or something.

Sweating, I turned to look around me restlessly, but nothing was out of the ordinary.

The same old classroom.

Almost everyone was present now since the lesson was due to start any minute.

Hmm?

The noise started to settle down gradually.

“Morning, Kazato.”

“Ah, Tsurugi? Morning.”

“What’s wrong? You’re drenched in sweat, you know?.”

I wiped away the sweat on my forehead and told him it was nothing. It happened because I was half asleep, maybe?

That or my ears behaved *buggily*.

“By the way, are you free today after school?

Everyone is gathering at my place. Feel like joining us?”

Such an awful way to invite someone over.

“Who’s everyone? It’s only Hitomi and Rin after all, am I right?”

“W...well, you are. Want to invite someone else?”

“Nope, it’s okay. I’m coming since I’m free anyway.”

“.....All right. Then, see you after school.”

“Right. Still, I wanna go back home for a moment first.”

“Yea. That’s great for us too actually.”

Tsurugi returned to his seat right when the door opened and the home room teacher entered.

The classroom fell silent and everyone took their seats.

“Rise. Bow. Good morning!”

With this, another peaceful day at school began.



I went straight home after the classes ended.
For some reason, I was feeling more tired than usual today.

I threw myself down on the sofa in the living room.
Not a single member of my family was at home. They said something about being late today, if I remember correctly.
Since I'll go to Tsurugi's place, my house will be empty.

A ringtone.
I checked the email I got on my phone. It was from Rin.

'Don't come until 7. Having said so, you would've been late anyway.'

That's what she said. I'll be there earlier.
I thought, and after I drank a glass of water, I laid down on the sofa again.
I fell asleep the next minute.

The sound of a ringtone woke me up.

"Too damn noisy."

The sound of the ringtone was reverberating inside my head so much that it annoyed me. I grabbed my phone roughly and looked at its screen.
I was too late to answer.
However, I was startled to see I had 32 missed calls.

.....What time is it?

It was 8.

I hurriedly changed my clothes. I grabbed my phone that started to ring again. It was Rin.

"Hello!"

'Hello? What the heck are you doing?'

"Sorry, I slept!"

'What? Come here already!'

She let me hear her long sigh then hung up.

I hurriedly changed my school uniform for some random plain clothes and rushed out of my house.

It's been a long time since I was in such a hurry. I never imagined I would fall asleep. Precisely when they prepared a birthday party for me, how comes I did such a thing... I stepped strongly on my bicycle's pedals.

Tsurugi's house is at a 5 minute distance from mine.
I'll be there soon.

At that moment, I heard a loud buzzing in my ears.

"Wh.....!"

I tumbled down vigorously.

"It hurts.....What the...."

I was used to ear buzzings, but this time was different. It was the first time they got this loud.

.....Leaving this aside, I must hurry!

I grabbed my bike and started pedaling again.



"I'm really sorry."

"Really now, it's not normal for the main guest to be this late."

After Rin scolded me for an entire year's share, my birthday party was about to start, even though I was already feeling exhausted.

“The food got cold.....”

“.....Sorry.”

Still, you both made this food for Tsurugi anyway. Why should I even bother?
I put these thoughts away and lowered my head.

“Well, it’s all right. I was worried he got himself in an accident or something.
Now, let’s eat.”

You little bastard.....You chose to display your good guy abilities with such a nice timing.....

“Yea, let’s eat.”

“Itadakimasu. ”

As I looked at the three of them starting eating, I stretched my hand and grabbed something too.

“Oh, it’s actually good.”

“How is it, Tsurugi?”

“It’s tasty.”

“What about mine!?”

“Yea. A bit disappointing.”

“Huh? Disappointing?”

It seems it’d be okay for me not to express my thoughts.
I was eating silently while trying to digest all these flirty scenes spreading around me.

This is my birthday party, right?

After a short time, we finished all the food and ate some cake together.

“So, what about presents?”

“There aren’t any.”

So it seems.

Well, this is already good enough.

After that, we played some TV games and, before one knew, the clock was pointing towards 11.

“It’s already this late?”

“Seems so. We should probably go, Hitomi and Rin are here too, so.....”

“Should I stay for the night?”

“Then I’ll stay too.”

“What are you two talking about?”

Actually, it’s the same as usual.

“After all, it’s dangerous for *normal* girls to go out at such a late hour.”

By the way, everyone here was a *normal*. We have no special abilities whatsoever.

No, actually Rin is not a *normal*.

However, she has such a useless ability that calling her a *normal* would not make for a big difference.

“Then, I’ll send you both off.”

“ “Heee?” “

Just do it somewhere else.

I restrained my feelings and put on my jacket.

“Well, I’ll be going home ahead then. Thanks for today. It made me happy.”

I thanked them and quickly left Tsurugi's house behind.



On the way back home, I ended up dragging my bicycle along.

Yes, I got a flat tire.

Even though it was my birthday, I was pretty unlucky today.

Inside my head, I was using all sorts of abusive words against the gods, but kept on dragging my bicycle along nonetheless.

However, this evening was awfully noisy.

And it happened right at that moment.

Giiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiin.

A sound so loud, that made my head feel like breaking apart, was shaking my brains.

“Ha.....! Ugh.....What.....the.....hell.....is this?”

I couldn't put up with it, so I cowered down on the ground pressing onto my ears with my both hands.

I felt something dripping from my ears.

What's this? Blood?

“Ughh.....!”

A painful noise that didn't go away.

My eyeballs felt like jumping out.

‘That bakery looks rather tasty.’ ‘That’s right.’ ‘Yes, I’m sorry.....Yes.....Yes, I’ll make sure to finish by tomorrow.....’ ‘I want another ramen!’ ‘Sure thing!’ ‘Ah, I don’t wanna do my homework.’ ‘I wanna die.’ ‘Because you are here.’ ‘Listen to me.’ ‘Go to sleep!’ ‘The bath is ready.’ ‘Don’t you wanna eat!?’

Too loud.

Too loud, TOO LOUD. What's going on? Shut up.....!

“.....Hey you, are you alright?”

A middle-aged man poked my shoulder lightly.

“SHUT UP ALREADY!!”

Giiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiin.

An echoing sound.

All the glass windows in the area broke apart in an instant.

The guy touching my shoulder fell on the ground, blood oozing from his ears.

Then, the sound of a siren echoed.

‘Emergency manifestation warning. Emergency manifestation warning.

The manifestation of an ability user is confirmed at point B-56.

Danger level = Above the norm. Therefore, the target is to be eliminated.

Self-Defense Force sub-lieutenants and above are requested to promptly exterminate the target and rescue the citizens.

To the citizens living here, please don’t go out of your houses no matter the reason.

I repeat.....’

CHAPTER 2

THE SOUND OF NEWLY BORN EVIL

The awful ringing in my ears didn't settle down.

My vision was distorted, but I could still see people walking the streets moments ago, then collapsing towards the ground.

I propped my body on a street light pole that was close to me, as I was trying to stand up.

With all those terrific sounds, I could still barely hear and comprehend the contents of the warning announcement.

It seems an ability user manifested their power.

Most likely, this awful ringing is that ability user's fault.

A subject of forceful elimination, above the norm.....It's the first time I'm hearing this.....

I must leave this place fast.....!

Staggering and covering my ears, I was walking towards my house.

This buzzing in my ears started to loosen up a bit.

However, at this point, I realized I could hear that someone was approaching me from the sky. It was the sound of flying.

I looked up and saw a SDF soldier flying towards me.

Did they come to save those citizens who couldn't find shelter yet?

I thought and waved my hand in order to make my presence known.

The ringing was completely gone now, but I didn't know when it'd start again.

Having done so, the soldier noticed me and flew down to stand in front of me. On his chest he had a second-lieutenant badge.

"Gr.....great..... Please, save me.....What is going on?....."

With staggering steps, I walked towards the second-lieutenant.

Then, I got blown away by a mysterious shock wave.
I hit my back on something and felt a sharp pain.
It all happened too sudden.

“What!? !?”

What? What just happened?

Eh? It hurts.

I realized that I was slapped into a wall and finally understood.

I was attacked.

Because I also hit my head, my vision was swaying.

I started to cough.

Despite my head being in a state of chaos, I desperately tried to think.

Why? Why did he attack me?

“.....Sorry kid, but your manifestation just now poses too much danger to us all.

It’s also because we don’t want to inflict even more damage on the citizens. You have to be eliminated.....”

The second-lieutenant really seemed to feel sorry about it.

His words were pretty clear though.

“What are you saying.....”

I started to speak, but shut my mouth the next instant.

I could clearly see the sign now.

‘Point B-56’

It was said in the warning.

That at point B-56 the manifestation of an ability user was confirmed.

That the danger level was above the norm. And that a forceful elimination is to take place.

And then, I was attacked by the second-lieutenant in front of me.

He also gave me the finishing blow with his words.

The ear buzzing.....When I think about it, it might have been a sign.

The manifestation of an ability user.....Was it me?

Becoming aware of this, the first thing that assaulted me was fear.

The second-lieutenant in front of me was scary.

Normally, they're the supporters of justice, the SDF that I deeply admired. But now they're frightening me.

Thinking about it, for the SDF I simply got switched from a protection target to an elimination target.

"It....can't...be....."

I looked around me and caught sight of the great number of collapsed people.

"This is all your doing, kid.

When an above the norm ability manifests lately, like in your case, it can't be controlled anymore and things like this happen. It's a certainty that people will die.

The SDF prefers to save the lives of the many against the life of a single individual.

I'm sorry....."

The second-lieutenant was drawing near me. I let out a short scream.

Then, I started running, trying to get away from him.

The tears piled up in the corner of my eyes, started to pour out.

I don't want this. I don't want to die.....

Why? Why do I have to pay for this.....?

Giiiiiiiiin.

I heard another ear buzzing and felt an excruciating pain in my head, like something was breaking my skull apart.

I fell down on the ground.

"Argh....."

And yet, I started to crawl on the ground.

I could hear the footsteps of the second-lieutenant, walking at a leisurely pace, steadily approaching me.

There were sounds in the air too.

When I tried to stand up and look above me, I could see the other SDF soldiers, who were flying towards me.

What? You're all joining forces against me? No, I don't want to die.....

It's unreasonable..... I gave up the idea of being an ability user a long time ago.....

If all it brings is death, no one would want such a power.

The second-lieutenant's footsteps got closer.

I don't want to die, stay away from me.....

“STAY AWAY FROM ME!!”

A thunderous sound shock.

With me as the epicenter, all the concreted ground surrounding me had a great number of cracks in it.

The buildings' walls were heavily impacted too, with huge cracks in them. The concrete fences were damaged as well, and started to crumble down.

The second lieutenant in front of me fell down, blood spouting out of his ears.

The other people of the Self-Defense Forces were falling head over heels into the ground, hitting it with a really nasty sound.

“.....Eh?”

Did I.....do this?

I cautiously approached the second-lieutenant in order to check him out, but I couldn't hear his heart beating.

He was dead.

“.....Ah, ah.....”

This wasn't intentional.

I thought I was about to get killed.....

I didn't do this.....!

I didn't plan to.....

I didn't do.....anything wrong. It was legitimate self-defense.

Wrong. I was saved. I am still alive.....

I haven't died yet.

“.....!”

Suddenly, I heard the sound of someone else approaching me. Such incredible speed.

If they find me, I'll surely get killed this time.....!

I have to hurry and run away!

I stood up and forced my aching body to walk.

My house is really close from here.

I'll run home. No, it's no good. They'll find me.....

If it's the abandoned building close to my house, maybe.....

When I was pondering on where I should hide, I felt something grazing my cheek.

This 'something' directly hit a private house's shutter; a pebble, which made a huge hole in that shutter.

“Found you.”

It was a man's voice.

I turned around, and saw a man wearing the SDF uniform, standing in the place where I fell down, moments ago.

I can't see his face properly.

The street lights were shining on this man and I could see that he was surrounded by countless little stones, or something like that, floating in the air around him.

“I'm SDF's lieutenant-colonel Nakai. I'm sorry, but I'll have you dead.

If you don't want to suffer, it's better if you don't struggle pointlessly. Reinforcements are coming anyway, and they'll be here soon.”

The SDF man pointed at me.

Then, the stones floating around him came flying towards me at a tremendous speed.

No, if I were to be precise, I couldn't see them at all.

I only heard the sound of them charging at me.

“Aaaargh!”

I lied down on the ground, desperately trying to avoid the attack.
Having done so, the stones flew right above my head.
However, I heard another sound coming from behind me.
They come from behind too.....!
Right at this point, my worn-out body stopped listening to my command.
Helpless to avoid it, I got my back hit by a stone.

“Gaah.....!”

I felt an awful pain, like the skin on my back got split open.
At the moment of the impact, I hit my head on the ground and my forehead was now shedding blood.

I could barely maintain my consciousness, but I didn't have the power to stand up anymore.
A violent pain was running all throughout my body.

Lying with my face on the ground, I rested my head on its surface and listened to the footsteps of lieutenant-colonel Nakai.

“Even though I don't know your name nor your face, you were the one who manifested your powers moments back.
You stole the lives of many citizens, even my comrades.
In order to stop you from inflicting any more damage.....in order to make you pay for your crimes, you have to die.”

Pay for my crimes?
I felt great absurdity towards these words.
It's not like I've done all this because I wanted to.

This is irrational.
It.....it just can't be.
You're too cruel to say such words.....You're terribly cruel!

I realized that I was too worn-out; my tears fell on the ground.

Ah, so this is the moment I die?
Despite today being my birthday.
My birthday became my death anniversary.....Such a ridiculous situation.....

Will my family.....feel sad, I wonder.
My father, my mother....
After all, we've never done anything family oriented.....

Is there anyone else?Did someone else ever died a death such as mine?.....

I resent them.....
I curse them all, I hate them all, I curse them all.

How can you call yourselves the Self-Defense Forces.....?
Protect me too.....!

“Even I.....even I want to keep living!!”

Right after I spoke that, lieutenant-colonel Nakai got blown away at great speed by a shockwave.

“Huh.....Ha.....”

I could still hear the sound of lieutenant-colonel Nakai's respiration.
Why can I even hear the sound of his breathing.....?

My head hurt. And I felt sick.
If I don't run away quickly, someone else will show up.

“Gah, haa.....huh.....ha.....”

I somehow managed to stand up, leaned on the buildings' walls, and walked out of the shopping street.
My forehead and my back were leaving behind trails of blood.

I have to run away.
My head was filled with determination.

Even so, I realized I had no place to hide.
Still, I averted my eyes.
Because that reality was irrational.
I was desperate to escape with my life.

The defenders of justice....such a downright lie. They won't save just anyone.....
I just wanted them to think about me too!

I ran the silent back alley.
Once I came out, I would see my house.

“.....!”

However, it was all over.

Once I got there, I've been discovered.
I could hear sounds in front of me.
Not mentioning his face, I couldn't even see his shape. He couldn't see me either.
Still, I was sure I heard the sound of someone's breathing.

“.....Haa, Haaa.....Haa.....”

“I am the SDF colonel Shikijima.
Stay put. It's regrettable.....but you must die tonight.”

I heard this death sentence coming from the dark.
I can't escape.

“Haaa....huh.....”

At this point, all that was left for me was to desperately try to fight back.
The enemy is a colonel. I have no chances of winning.

But still.....even though I don't know how to use my powers, it's better than quietly
waiting to be done for.
I might as well struggle with all my might.....!

It was at that time.
I could suddenly hear another sound.

“Wha?.....You are.....the Anonymous! Why are you he.....Gaaaah!”

And then, after I heard someone’s shriek coming from the dark, one breathing sound and heartbeat disappeared.

“This is unexpected.....It seems it got it right this time.”

“The Observer gets it right once in a while, it seems.”

An Anonymous masks wearing pair showed up from the darkness, talking to themselves.

The evil organization, Anonymous.

The Anonymous masks are this organization’s trademark.

In short, these two people in front of me are Anonymous’ members.

They stopped before my eyes and I stood there not saying a word.

I could not hear the colonel’s breathing sound anymore.

The mask of the man walking in the front was soaked in blood.

He killed the colonel in an instant.

I took a step back.

A mysterious feeling of oppression made my heart pound.

Still.....!

Even if this guy tries to kill me, I’ll resist him.

I want to keep on living.....And for that.....

I glared at him, and I could see his eyes through the Anonymous mask, looking down at me.

From behind that mask, his eyes entrapped me.

“.....Hmm.”

The Anonymous woman, hidden in the man’s shadow, let out that sound.

“I like those eyes, kid.”

The man took a step towards me.

I wanted to step back so badly, but I somehow managed to stay still.

If I were to step back, I would give up my life.

That’s the feeling I got.

I must fight.

I could hear the loud beating of my heart.

“Huh.....Haa.....”

My breathing was wild.

I tried to endure the small ringing in my ears, manifesting at fixed intervals, while still glaring at the enemy in front of me.

My feet were staggering.....

He could hit me any time.

Suddenly, he stopped in place and thrust his hand inside his jacket’s interior pocket and took something out.

It was an Anonymous mask.

I looked at him vigilantly.

Doing so, the man held the Anonymous mask out to me.

“.....Sound kid, won’t you become our comrade?”

“Eh?”

I’m certain he asked me to become their comrade.

.....I see. Because my powers are strong, the Anonymous would pretty much want to use them.

And if I turn them down, they’ll abandon me. In that case, the SDF will surely dispose of me.

“They are getting closer.
However, this is not a threat.
Even if you turn us down, I still intend to save you this time.
If you want to be our comrade, take that mask.”

.....Comrade. Their comrade?
An evil organization.
What do I

“Tell me.....What are you lot fighting for?”

The answer came immediately after I asked the question.
“The SDF will kill one man for the sake of the many.
However, we will kill the many for the sake of one man.
We’re evil, there’s no mistaking it.”

I thought I saw the man smile behind his mask.

Then, I took that mask in front of me.



CHAPTER 3

THE SOUND OF A NEW ENCOUNTER

Midou Tsurugi was dashing through the night sky.

He was as late as he could've been. And it wasn't because of his best friend's birthday party.

If it were not for the fact that he had to go grab his uniform from the headquarters, he would've been one of the first persons to arrive at the crime scene and exterminate the target.

No matter whether it it's a state of emergency or not, the SDF has a general rule: the soldiers must only take action when wearing the SDF uniform.

It could be said that it was his own misfortune that he had the day off and, therefore, left his uniform at the headquarters.

Because he also had his student life, it was difficult for him to act quickly in case of emergencies during weekdays.

Tsurugi approached the location where the manifestation took place and where the SDF personnel assembled.

When he found Rin, who was writing down various things in some documents, he walked towards her.

"This is awful..... For the time being, inform me about the damage the 'target' has done."

"It's as you can see....."

Lieutenant colonel Nakai is unconscious and in a critical state. Second lieutenant Miyaki and colonel Shikijima are most likely.....

The number of citizens who fell victims to this incident is unfathomable.....

The 'target' is currently missing. And there are no eye witnesses."

Rin said, her eyes cast down. However, she didn't let her emotions show on her face.

"I see....."

There was a huge fissure in the ground right in front of his eyes. Although it was an above the norm manifestation, the damage it inflicted could not be compared to anything from the past. It was utterly huge.

Suddenly, his phone started to vibrate. He took out his work phone from his pocket and answered. The name displayed on the screen was major Oohashi.

“Hello, Hitomi.”

‘Tsurugi?’

After doing some investigations, it seems that Anonymous interfered. There’s a high possibility that the ‘target’ is being protected by them, so the higher-ups ordered you to pull off for now.’

“Understood. Thanks.”



He hung up and put his phone in one of his white uniform's pockets.

He walked towards the huge fissure in the ground.

In case Anonymous is really offering protection to the 'target', then chasing him further will only result in even more damage taken.

With all the evidence collected and sent to the SDF headquarters, Hitomi's work load would only continue to grow.

Still, is there even a meaning in protecting an ability user who had such a manifestation?

Tsurugi questioned himself, as he touched the fissure in the ground.

".....I wonder what ability was it."

A research division staff, working close to Tsurugi, spoke out.

".....Wave motion type.....? No, I actually have no idea....."

With no eye witnesses, finding out the precise ability of the 'target' was too difficult.

First lieutenant Nakai, the only eye-witness still alive, was unconscious.

However, it was very clear that this manifestation was indeed above the norm.

As well as the fact that joining Anonymous and becoming the SDF's enemy would make this person a very troublesome individual.

Suddenly, Tsurugi remembered his best friend, Kazato.

His house was close to this place, but it should have just barely avoided the damage.

He was most likely safe..... That's what Tsurugi was hoping.

He sent a message to Kazato from his private phone, and returned back to work.

His lieutenant general 3-stared silver badge was shining suspiciously.



The elevator was going down towards the basement, making a monotonous sound.

I looked at the Boss, who was sitting next to me.

I never expected that this man was in fact Anonymous' leader.

I was thinking about that when I realized that my phone suddenly rang, so I looked at its screen.

It was a message from Tsurugi.

'Are you all right? What just happened was terrible.'

I answered his message with: *'I'm ok. I'm at home, sitting still.'*

At any rate, I was amazed that I could get a phone signal here.

I was currently led by the Boss to where Anonymous' hideout was located.

The place was the background of an outskirts café.

The SDF could never imagine that Anonymous' hideout would be located in such a place.

There are several entrances that lead to the secret base, and they change at fixed intervals.

My body was hurting.

However, I received some first-aid treatment and my wounds were, for the time being, bearable.

The Boss said that once we got to the hideout, a healing ability user would cure me. Therefore, I had to endure it a little longer.

The other Anonymous woman who came here together with us, left some time ago.

It seems that she left to make arrangements so that my identity won't be revealed. It mainly meant disposing of bloodstain trails and altering information.

As for how will she do that, I have no idea.

"Kid, do you know what your ability is?"

The Boss' voice suddenly resounded inside the elevator.

I was surprised, but I answered him.

“.....I do, sir, but only vaguely.”

“You don’t have to humble yourself this much. I don’t mind you talking casually.”

Now that I was informed that this man was in fact Anonymous’ leader, could I really do that?

Nay, I couldn’t.

He’s also the person who saved my life.

“I cannot do that.”

“I see.....Well, never mind then.

Leaving this aside, your ability...”

I gently rubbed the ring I now had on my middle finger. Maybe because I wasn’t used to this sensation of pressure on my finger, I was feeling uncomfortable.

This ability restraining ring was a trial product developed in secrecy by Anonymous’ researchers.

I regained my composure considerably, but since we didn’t know when my ability could run wild again, I was told I had to wear this ring until I would be able to control my own ability.

But since this ring was classified as a trial product, its desired effect was rather weak.

My ability. I understand it clearly now.

“My ability is....., maybe, the sound.”

“Yes. Your ability is the sound.

You are the first person in the world to manifest a Dominant ability, Sound Control.

This is a super high-class ability even among the natural types manipulators.”

I, as well, have never heard of a person being able to control sounds.

Is it really such a great ability? I was getting pretty excited.

I wonder what ability the Boss has.

I tried to ask him that, but he interrupted me.

“Now that I think of it, I still haven’t heard your name, kid.”

“It’s Kamiya, Kazato.”

“I see. That’s a good name.

However, Anonymous members are prohibited to use their real names. As a matter of fact, I am the only one who deals with members’ personal information.

In short, I will be the only person who knows your real name.

Therefore, I shall give you a new code-name.”

And then the Boss continued.

“From now on your name will be Shion.”

Shion . Simultaneously with me hearing my new name, the elevator announced its arrival with a ding.

The elevator door opened.

“Let’s go, Shion.”

“Roger that, Boss.”

I gave a rather cheeky answer and stepped forward.



After I received medical treatment, I went to the Boss’ room.

Now that the Boss took off his mask, he looked like a man in his latter 20s, but in reality he was older than that. Obviously, he didn’t inform me about his real age.

“Well, for the time being, welcome to Anonymous. It’s good to have you here.”

He said, sitting in an extravagant swivel chair.

“Now that you’re a member of Anonymous, naturally, you’ll have to work for us too, Shion.

However, you must first learn to control your ability.”

“Yes, sir.”

“So, I will appoint you a partner.
Here, take this.”

The Boss turned to face me and threw something at me.
I caught that with one hand and immediately realized it was a key.

“It’s the key to your room. You’ll share a room with your partner.
They’re quite selfish, but strong. Their age is similar to yours, but they were longer in
this world than you.”

“Please wait a second. Do I have to live here?”

“Oh! Did I confuse you?

No, you don’t.

I’ll have you go to school, Shion. But, certainly, you must hide your ability.

“Since you’ll be working for us, you’ll also receive a salary. For the time being, you’ll
get 450,000 a month.

It actually won’t stop at that, if you accept missions that offer individual rewards.”

450,000 a month.....

This is much higher than my father’s salary.....

“Do you have any questions? There are many questions I can’t answer, but if I can, I
will, so speak up.”

I do have questions, and a lot of them.

About the source of their funds or about their true goals.

But it was actually enough for this occasion.

I was already an Anonymous member.

In order to keep on living, I decided that I will start fighting. Since I already killed a lot
of people, I can’t possibly wish for the same life style I had before.

If it all comes to light, I will have to take the blame after all.....

I don’t want such an unreasonable death.

I could feel a light buzzing in my ears again.
Maybe my ability goes on a rampage more easily when I'm excited or agitated.
Calm down, me!

"I don't have any particular questions."

I said.
The Boss lifted up the corners of his mouth a bit.

"I see. If there's something you don't understand, you should ask your partner."

"Yes.
Then, excuse me."

I said and left the Boss' room behind.



The Anonymous hideout was quite big. At least, it was big enough for someone to get lost in it.

It also contained various facilities and it really felt like a secret base of operations.

And so, I was now standing in front of my room, holding the key that the Boss gave me.
It seems I somehow made it here.

I could hear sounds coming from inside.
Most likely, my partner was inside the room.

I gulped down my saliva.
I wonder what kind of person my partner is?!
I was a little nervous.

Since there was no point in sitting there looking at the door, I used the key and entered the room.

First, I was shocked by the scenery unfolding right in front of my eyes.
Even though the room looked rather simple, it had too much a feeling of liveliness.
And, similarly to Rin's room, a girlish scent was tickling my nostrils.

“Hey, who’s that!?”

I heard a voice coming from somewhere inside.

The one who came running with rather heavy steps was a blond-haired girl.

“Who the hell are you?..... Why do you have a key to this room!?”

The blond girl was glaring at me.

Her hair is dyed?.....It sure doesn’t look like that’s the case. Is that her real hair then?

At any rate, her face is rather cute.

Even though she’s short.

She’s supposed to be the same age as me.

“The Boss told me to come here..... Aren’t you my partner?”

“What? That guy, he did it his way again..... I don’t need a partner.”

The door closed with a thud.

This is troublesome. What should I do?

Moreover, my partner’s a woman.....Will this turn out all right?

And, honestly, I don’t want a partner like her.

It seems like she wasn’t informed about becoming my partner anyway, so maybe the Boss made a mistake or something.

While thinking about that, I heard the sound of a ringing phone from inside the room. And the sound of answering. Most likely she had a call.

“Hello.

Will you please stop doing selfish things?”

“That’s impossible, I definitely can’t do that.”

“T...that’s.....”

“Ah! Understood. It can’t be helped.....”

Nevertheless, my hearing got considerably better.

Even though I was wearing this ring, if I were to concentrate, I could pick up various sounds.

Isn't it really suited for doing espionage activities!?

"Yes, yes, I understand.
I understand already!"

The sound of hanging up.
It appears that the Boss' phone call has ended.

After a short time, the room's door opened.

"You can enter.
Since I have no other choice, I'll become your partner."

It appears that a rather troublesome person is now my partner.



CHAPTER 4

THE SOUND OF GROWTH

I got permission to enter the room then made a general self-introduction. It's true that her room was in a disorder, but it also had a somewhat girlish feeling. The blond girl sat down on her bed, constantly flapping her legs. She made me sit on a chair right in front of her. It appeared like we were truly facing each other.

"Hmmm, so you're Shion.
How should I put it? That guy's naming sense is the same as always."

".....Err, what's your name?"

"Roll"

Roll?
Since using your real name was prohibited, this was most likely a code name. But it also felt like it was her real name, since she was clearly a half .

"Nice meeting you. Roll is a code name, right?"

"Ha? Isn't it obvious!?
Still, I don't have any other names but this one."

She doesn't have any other names?
Does that mean she doesn't have a real name?

Anyway, this wasn't the type of talk that you could get to the core of on the first meeting.
Therefore, I changed the subject.

"Do you live here, Roll?"

"Yes."

“I see.....”

Since she’s living here, does that mean she doesn’t have a.....family?

“For the time being, we’ll go to the training room.

As you are now, you’re like a bomb. And since I’m in charge of you, my body is in danger too.

If you go on a rampage here, at the very least I will most certainly die.

That’s why this is also a request from my part.”

Roll stood up and said.

I first thought that this was too sudden, but it appeared that she was willing to act like a real partner.

As Roll said, we didn’t know when I could lose control over my ability. I have to concentrate more.

I wonder why the Boss picked up someone as dangerous as me.....

I looked at my phone to verify the time; the clock hand pointed a little past 12.

Are we gonna train at this time?..... But I have school tomorrow.

If we do this now, I won’t be able to be at school in time. I wonder when can I go back home?

I knew it wasn’t the time to think about such things, but, in all honesty, I was really tired after going through all these events. And getting some rest was my real motive.

“Hey, what are you doing? Let’s go already!”

“.....Are we really doing it now?”

In the end, I revealed my complaint.

I thought she would get angry at me, but her words were in fact calm and steady.

“If you don’t get accustomed to your ability right after your manifestation, it will take you a lot more time to learn to control it.

I am doing this especially for you, so shut up and follow me.

Or, how should I put it, you must become aware of the strength of your ability asap.”

“Yea, yeah.....”

I gave a vague answer as I stood up as well.

It was an unexpected realization that she might actually be an honest person.



'How is it? Can you hear me?'

"Yes, I can. I think that even without you using the microphone I can still pick up your voice."

I was inside a completely white room that was locked from the outside. This was the training room; and it was enhanced with sturdy walls.

I took off the control ring for this training. I also left my phone back in Roll's room.

I could see Roll, holding the microphone, on the other side of the ultra-strong glass window.

Her face looked a bit displeased.

She put the microphone away then moved her lips.

"This good-for-nothing fool.

So? This place is completely soundproofed. There's no way you can hear me, right?"

".....I can hear you."

What's with that 'good-for-nothing fool'? She has a nasty tongue, this girl.

'Then repeat what I just said.'

"Good-for-nothing fool. That's not really nice, you know?"

'Oh wow, that's amazing. But it feels out-of-place so I'll keep using the mic.'

She said calmly.

I answered with "Roger".

'Do you feel anything now?'

Roll was operating the machines inside the observation room.

“At certain frequencies I get ear buzzings. Also, I can hear all sorts of sounds.”

The noise and buzzing are really annoying.

I hope that once I learn to control my ability I'll get rid of them.

'Hmmm. Well then, try doing something.'

In case she would've asked this earlier, I would've most certainly thought that she was asking the impossible.

I might've told her to stop talking nonsense.

However, as I feel now, I somehow understand. I can instinctively feel how my powers work; I can feel it flow into me.

I manipulate.....sounds.

Yes, I use the sound.

It's unrealistic, but I can picture it just fine.

In an instant, the locked room shook with the sound of an explosion.

Fine cracks appeared in the ultra-strong glass window.

When I heard the glass crack, I panicked and restrained my ability.

'Power level A+.....you're a monster, aren't you?'

'Since this training room can't be used anymore, we'll go next door.'

“Are you serious.....?”

Did I really manifest such an unthinkable ability.....?

We exited that training room and entered the other one right next to it.

This room appears even sturdier than the previous one, and seemingly it can't be broken easily.

I entered once again the white room.

This white room was two times larger than the other one.

Once I entered it, the door closed and locked by itself.

Why has it to be locked, I wonder?

I had a bad feeling about it and looked towards Roll, who was sitting on the other side of the glass screen.

'Normally, if you have a trigger-type ability, you must at least learn to switch it on and off, otherwise you won't be able to live properly.

When it comes to sound, you are always in contact with it, so I personally think that you'll get used to it rather fast.....

And after seeing you earlier, it seems that it's actually better for me not to instruct you. It's better to not let other people know too much about your ability in the first place. Things like what you can do and to what extent, you know? And also, when you have to inform others about your ability, if the situation allows you, you lie. You'll be underestimated.

Then the other party will think "He has this ability so he can't actually do that"; they will make light of you.

Nothing good comes out of people knowing about your ability.

In your case however, because of the possibility of you harming us, it is necessary for us to know your ability.

.....And so you have it. For the time being, try spending an entire day here. While trying all sorts of uses for your ability, all right?

If you press that button in the back of the room, food and the like will be delivered to you. Well then, good night.'

She's the worst partner ever.

She only said what she wanted to say and was about to leave the observation room when I hurried to stop her.

"Hey, an entire day? What about school!?"

'Skip it?'

I don't know whether there are classes tomorrow or not, but on the surface Kamiya Kazato is missing.

Also, they are still chasing the guy with the above the norm manifestation: me.

If I end up exposed, it'll be awful.....

'Ah, I know what you want to say.

You fear being exposed and lose the right to live on the surface, am I right?’

“Yeah, that’s right……”

*‘If that really happens, you’ll just have to cast away everything.
School, friends, family included.’*

“What are you……”

*‘If your secret identity leaks out and the SDF comes after your life, I will risk my own life to come rescue you. Everyone here will do the same.
Here, in Anonymous, we will risk our lives even for the lowliest underlings.
Anyway, that guy or Shido-san will do something about your circumstances on the surface, like school and everything.’*

What’s wrong with this girl!?

Isn’t her way of thinking strange? She’s actually serious.

My first impression of her is not really that good, and she’s short.

But she’s still living here, with such a strong resolution.

‘Lastly, even though it might be a little too early for you, who lived in such a half-hearted world.

For example, let’s suppose I have a close friend for about 10 years.

If I’m told that I can only save either you or my friend, I will unmistakably choose you.

What about you in this case? Can you still choose me, you partner, assuming you’re in the same position? Impossible, right?

Hurry up and come to where I’m standing, buddy!’

Roll declared, with an excessively oppressive attitude, and disappeared behind the automatic door.

Someway or other, Roll seemed to actually think about me.

Or maybe it was only my desire to see it like that.

Still, I somehow felt motivated after our exchange.



This happened about 12 hours since then.

I was concentrating on my training, when a man entered the observation room.
It was the Boss.

He picked up the mic and sat on a chair inside the observation room.

'How are you feeling, Shion?'

The Boss' low but steady voice resounded inside the white room.

"I got considerably used to it. I don't think I will lose control again if I'm wearing the ring."

'Oh! In such a short time? That's amazing.'

"However, I still can't control my ability.

I mean, I can't seem to be able to go easy on my target.....It just won't do the way I want it to."

'That's inevitable. If you give yourself a little more time, you'll manage to handle it. I'd rather say that it's already amazing you managed to get this far in such a short period of time.'

Is that really true?

Aren't you overrating me a little, Boss?

As I am now, if I must fight alongside other members, I will only end up involving them too.

'Now, it seems that Roll abandoned you. However, we finished with your school and home arrangements.'

"Th...thank you."

I wonder what they did and how.....

As my expression started to stiffen, Boss' voice resounded once again.

'Well then, let's get down to business. I'd like to measure up your current fighting

strength, so are you up to it, Shion?'

"Yeah, I don't mind. But how do you intend to measure it?"

If he says something like fighting against him, then I'll have to refuse.

I can't possibly win against him, considering that he killed a colonel class fighter in an instant.

However, I was already aware that my ability was fairly strong too.

It's certain that I now have a little more self-confidence.

'You will fight this guy.'

I heard something in the back of the room and turned around.

Having done so, I saw a hole gradually opening in the back wall of the white room, and I could hear some sort of sound coming from inside.

roar.....

Was that a roar?

And then, the owner of that roaring voice showed up from inside the hole.

'I shall make the introductions. This is my pet, Wolff.'

What was unfolding in front of me now was a beast with silver fur that shined so brightly, illuminated by the lights coming from the observation room.....it was a wolf, five times bigger than me.

"A magical beast.....!"

'It's a Silver Wolf with a danger level of 5.

A C Rank ability user should be able to somehow defeat it.

Wolff is a little stronger than that though.

But you can rest assured since he obeys my words.'

I looked at Wolff, who seemed to want to attack me at any time, and I swallowed my saliva.

'If it gets dangerous, I'll stop him. So what do you say? Wanna give it a try?'

.....Honestly, I'm scared.

But the other party is an animal with ears.

This will probably be a one hit match. If those fangs reach me, it'll be over, so I must attack first. If I manage to do that, I might have a chance.

".....I want to try."

The Boss grinned broadly.

'It's been a long time since a newcomer accepted to do this.

Most of them get frozen in place when confronted with such an immediate huge threat, no matter how strong their powers actually are.

I'm looking forward to your growth, Shion.'

The Boss continued.

'<Get it> Wolff.'

What am I, his treat.....!?

"Rooooooar!!"

In an instant, Wolff made an assault, his fangs incredibly sharp.

And then, I snapped my finger.

That pleasant sound transformed into an explosion.

Wolff was shocked by that sound and ran back to the hole, yelping like a puppy.

In short, the match finished in an instant.

I could hear the applause coming from beyond the glass screen.

'This is more than I expected, Shion.

Why did you limit the power of that explosion sound?'

"I thought that I shouldn't kill the Boss' pet."

'What the heck!?'

The Boss' laughter resounded in the white room.

And then, he told me to get some rest, and released me from the training room.

CHAPTER 5

THE SOUND OF A DIFFERENT EVERYDAY

The next day, I got out of bed.
It was my own bed.

Yesterday, after the Boss released me from that white room, I returned straight home and fell asleep the next instant. I got home at about 3.

Like the Boss said, they pulled some strings and solved the problem of my parents and the school.

They contacted my school and told them that I wasn't feeling well. Concerning my parents, they somehow made it look like I never left the house. I wondered how though.....I couldn't help but feel a little scared, but when they told me how they did it, it wasn't really as difficult as I imagined.

Both my parents leave the house early in the morning, and we don't usually get much into contact by that time anyway. Because of the incident from two days ago one would expect something from my parents' part, but everything was pretty normal after they came back from work. My bicycle's flat tyre was also repaired, and when my parents saw it in the usual spot they didn't think of anything suspicious.

Anyway, Anonymous cleaned up pretty well after that incident, that I had nothing to complain about. Rather, I felt gratitude towards them.

Also, I got a message yesterday from my best friend Tsurugi, who was worried because of the so-called illness, but I replied to him that I was in fact skipping school out of laziness, and acted like my true self.

With this, it was flawless.

.....However, now that I'm part of an evil organization, I must think more about my everyday life and how I spend it.

I chewed some toasted bread while thinking about that.
I always ate breakfast alone.

I finished eating then took my bag.
I have to leave any moment now, otherwise I'd be late.

I put back on the suppression ring.
Thanks to this ring, I can live my life almost the same way as before.
Still, if I manage to restrain my powers on my own and invoke them whenever I want,
I wouldn't need this suppression ring anymore.
Right now, with my own restraint and the ring it feels just right.

I left the house and locked the door.
Wait a second...If I start wearing a ring all of a sudden, everyone at school will think
that I got carried away or something. The teachers will more likely get angry too.
Could I wear this ring on my toe? Will it work then?

.....For today, I'll try as much as possible to keep my hand in the pocket.

I thought about a useless counter-plan as I walked towards the school.
I saw an abandoned building on the right. There's an entrance to our secret base
underneath it as well.
However, unless it's an emergency, I was told to always enter the secret base from the
outskirts café.

"Ooi, Kazato!"

Right then, someone called my name from behind and started running towards me. Of
course, it was Tsurugi.
I stopped in place and turned around.

"Hey."

"So you came today."

"Well, yeah. I just couldn't wake up in time yesterday."

I actually couldn't return in time.

"Wake up next time!

Oh yeah, by the way, there's a transfer student coming today. That's what the teacher said yesterday."

"Eh? Really? In our class?"

"Yeah."

A transfer student?

That's quite unusual. I wonder if it's a girl. Or maybe it's a guy.

I actually hope it's a guy.

If it's a girl, she can't escape the Tsurugi harem.

"Tsu~rugi!"

As always, Oohashi showed up suddenly and hugged Tsurugi from behind.

And only after that, she *realized* I was around too and greeted me, at which I, as always, answered her, then we started walking again.

We entered the classroom and everyone was already talking about the new transfer student. It was a hot topic.

The words flying about in the classroom were something along this line.

Blond hair. Foreigner. Slender figure. Cute. Slant-eyes.

It appears that someone saw the transfer student inside the staff room.

Honestly, at this point I tilted my head to the side.

For a very short moment I had a *déjà vu*.

"Everyone, be quiet!"

The classroom door burst open and the homeroom teacher entered.

The class grew quiet instantly.

“Good. Then, I introduce you today your new colleague.
Please come in.”

Again, the door burst open.

The one who entered was a lovely girl with blond hair that stretched to her chest area and smart looking, emerald eyes.

But never mind that! As I thought, the transfer student was Roll.

A slight cheer could be heard.

‘This might be dangerous even for Oohashi Hitomi, the school’s madonna’ and similar voices could be heard too.

Roll turned her back on us for a moment to write her name on the blackboard then she introduced herself.

“I’m Shinjou Roll. I’m a half, born and raised in Japan.
Please treat me well.”

She made a quick bow and her golden hair hanged down. When she raised her head back up, she elegantly combed it upwards with her hand.

Her extremely polite greeting astonished me.
It seems she’s really good when it comes to this.
And her gestures are, somehow, refined.....

“Then, Shinjou, go sit in the back seat over there.
Everyone, make sure to get along well with her.”

I was still staring at her in mute amazement, and didn’t even realize that the homeroom teacher had left the classroom.

Even though the class was due to start soon, everyone gathered immediately around Roll.

Why did she even come here?

I glanced at her for a short moment, but I couldn’t meet her eyes.

Roll answered all the barrage of questions coming from her neighborhood with a smile on her face.

Really now, why is she here.....?

While I was thinking about that, Tsurugi started talking to me.

“She’s cute, isn’t she? It’s really rare for you to be so captivated.”

“Oh, well.....”

I’m not captivated.

And I also don’t think it’s that rare.....

“So cute..... She’s my new rival.....”

“Yup.....”

Hitomi and Rin were talking too.

“I’ll support you, Kazato, and your love.”

You.....Don’t you even remember how many relationships you already destroyed.....?

Also, I’m sorry to say, but I’m not in love.

It’s true that I think that Roll is cute, but she doesn’t make my heart flutter.

Maybe it’s because my first impression of her was a bad one.

The homeroom teacher returned and everyone went to their seats.

The lesson started.



Roll came into contact with me during lunch break.

But her way of doing that was fairly wicked.

Actually, it was extremely evil.

As for what exactly happened, the answer is we knocked into each other.

But that was still all right. We would’ve drawn the attention of few others, but with an apology from my part, everything would’ve been resolved.

However, at that time, Roll intentionally left her lunch box fall on the floor.

'Ah!' Everyone turned to look towards me.

'He bumped into her and she dropped her lunch box'I'm sure you can imagine how I was abused by their cold looks.

Furthermore, she was the new transfer student.

'What are you going to do about this?'The classroom was filled with an oppressive atmosphere.

At such times, it's a burden to be able to accurately hear all the whispered conversations around you.

"Ah! S...sorry....."

Inside my mind I muttered '*You framed me*'

However, I know that she intentionally bumped into me.

And why is that? It's because I saw her smile right before it happened.

The classroom fell silent, all the attention gathered on us.

Roll stood dumbfounded for a moment (she was most likely acting), and when she seemed to realize the reactions of everyone around us, she started to pick up the scattered contents of her lunch.

"It's all right. I wasn't paying attention.....! It is I who should say sorry!"

She said with a smile on her face.

I see. She plans to go with this character while she's at school.

I hurried to clean the floor too. I couldn't allow myself to stand upright at this moment.

That's because I started to hear everyone around us talking about how "Roll-chan seems such a good girl....."

Anyway, because it's now *my fault* for bumping into Roll and ruining her lunch, I must apology to her in some way.

Then I gradually started to see what Roll's aim was.

Her plan was to create a chance for us to come in contact with each other in a natural

manner.

Because I was flustered, I didn't realize this earlier.

In this case, I have to join her play.

She was really evil, to harass me in such a manner.

"I'm really sorry, Shinjou-san....."

"Don't say that! It was my carelessness! I wasn't look ahead....."

Because I knew the real Roll, the way she talked now was a little uncomfortable.

Well, even though I said I knew the real Roll, in reality I only knew a little about her.

"No, it's my fault. I'll treat you to lunch in the cafeteria.

Or maybe you want some bread or pastries."

"This is too much.....! I can buy my own lunch anyway"

We continued the farce for a little while, but in the end it was decided that I would treat Roll to lunch in the cafeteria.

My male colleagues stared at me with envy looks.

They will most likely tell me later that it wasn't fair to steal a march on them in such a way.

We were now eating our lunch. Roll ordered a fried chicken set menu and I bought a bento box from the convenience store.

Since Roll was staying next to me, not on the opposite side, I could smell a slightly pleasant scent coming from her.

I paid attention to my surroundings and continued the farce as I sat down. The first thing I said then was this.

"So you're still growing!"

Nobody could hear what I said, for I gently whispered it.
However, Roll's face stiffened for a moment.

That's when two guys from my class approached us and sat down on the opposite side,
in order to check on my attitude or something.
The farce had to start again.

"I somehow feel bad..... You ended up paying for my lunch....."

"It's all right."

"Errr.....Will you tell me your name.....?"

"Kamiya Kazato"

"Kamiya-san. I look forward to working with you."

"Ah.....Me too."

Roll's last sentence was referred to our partnership most likely.



After school, Roll managed to skillfully avoid being trapped by the club joining
invitations, and returned home very quickly.

After I saw that, I too returned home for a moment.

And now, I am going towards the hideout.

I don't have the obligation to go to the hideout every day, but since Roll didn't explain
me anything after all, I had to go see her.

I showed the café's shop manager the 'signal' and walked towards the elevator that
went underground.

After I arrived at the secret base, I walked straight to Roll's room.

The Anonymous members who passed by me sent me strange looks.

Most of the times I nodded, but in case they started talking to me, I made a short self-
introduction.

Some of them ignored me completely.

I finally got to Roll's room.
I unlocked the door and hurried inside the room.

"Roll!"

"Wha.....! Hey!"

What I saw was Roll's transparent, white skin.
And some pink silk cloth.

She was changing clothes.
I froze then uttered a short "Sorry". I closed the door after that.

I heard her speaking from inside.

"Next time knock, okay? I'll forgive you this once."

"You can come in now."

After a short time, I heard her voice again. I opened the door slowly.

"Here, catch this."

Right when I entered the room, Roll threw something at me. I caught it and realized it was a cell phone, and a latest model one.

"This is your work phone. The mail addresses of almost all Anonymous members are already registered in it."

"Ah, thank you."

"I have to give you my personal address too. You might need it from now on."

"By the way, Roll.....!"

I recalled my real goal and approached her.

She stopped me with her hand.

“I know already. I’ll explain you now.”

Explain.

As I thought, she came to my school for a reason.

“For now, consider this our first mission as a pair.
We were assigned to a long term mission.”

“A long term mission.....What kind?”

“From now on, you will slowly start to manifest your ability, and after 1 year and a half you will enlist in the SDF. I will mainly act as your support.”

“Eh? What do you mean?”

To begin with, I already manifested my ability.

“To make it easy to understand, you will make things look like your ability gradually bloomed in the last 1 year and a half.

In short, you will deceive everyone.

Your ability will not be sound, but something derived from it. It’s up to you precisely what it’ll be like. Your ability’s scope is pretty vast so I’m not sure what you can actually do, but we’ll decide upon something little by little.”

Oh, I see.

And then, they want me to enter the SDF as a spy.

My school.....Or perhaps I should say pretty much all schools have a recommendation board for the SDF.

Only the highest ranking ability users in the school ever manage to get a recommendation.

I nodded to her in sign of understanding, and Roll continued.

“You get it now, right?”

For this long mission, your enlistment in the SDF is very meaningful.

I know that 1 year and a half is a short period of time for all this, but with me by your

side, things won't get too complicated.

But.....”

“Entering the SDF as a spy is a difficult job, right?”

“Right.

Well, we still have 1 and a half year for you to manage to handle your ability fair and square.

And I think that the job of a spy will not be too difficult for you with your ability.”

Indeed.

However, isn't this job dangerous for her?

Wait? I don't even know her ability.

“By the way, Roll, what ability do you have?”

“You'll see it eventually.

Anyway, we must polish our team work too during this 1 year and a half. I'm planning to take on a lot of normal and long term missions for us to complete, so make sure to not drag me down, all right?”

“Roger.”

She didn't tell me about her powers.

Well, it's true that I'll sooner or later see her use them anyway. Other than that, I really have to work hard not to drag her down.

“Still, when I think about it.

Why didn't you tell me this beforehand? I was astonished to see you as a transfer student.”

“Ha? That's because I wanted to surprise you, ain't it obvious?

But well, your ad lib was quite good. I praise you for that.”

Roll smiled slightly and she looked like a little devil.

“It wasn't pleasant at all. When you dropped your lunch box my heart really started to jump up and down.

For the time being, I asked what I wanted to ask, so I'll go back now.”

The third day after my manifestation, my everyday life changed completely.
Will I be able to make a living like this?
No, I will have to.

Thinking about that, I walked towards the room's entranceway, when Roll called out to me from behind.

“Shion!”

“What?”

“Errr.....Is it really obvious that I am still growing?”

Ah! As I thought, she does care about her height.
I answered with “Pretty much” and left Roll's room.

CHAPTER 6

THE SOUND OF MOVING IN THE SHADOWS

Two days later after that, on Friday, I received an email on my Anonymous mobile phone. It was passed midnight.

The sender was called 'Kuroinu' .

Who's that?

I thought while I opened the email.

'How about joining me for a job tonight?

I understand that you don't know us yet, but Hakunetsu will be there too.'

This was the content of the email.

In short, it was a job invitation.

In Anonymous, you usually do missions together with a partner whom you're compatible with, and you polish your combos in order to raise the missions' success rate. That's the usual policy, but, like now, there are times when you do missions with other members apart from your partner.

In Anonymous, these kinds of invitations are called 'shades'.

Roll said that I won't be shaded since I'm a newcomer.

As for the reason why, obviously it's because the mission's success rate would drop.

And yet, what does this mean then?

It's been only 5 days since I joined Anonymous.

On every member's work phone a new contact address with the characters 'Shion' appeared, so I bet that everyone in the organization is aware of my existence.

And there was also the incident on the surface too.

Also, everyone should already know that my ability is beyond my control at this point.

There's that too, but it might be actually normal to be shaded after 5 days. Who knows!?

Even though I haven't done any one shot mission before...

At such a late time as well?

I have many doubts.

At any rate, I'll send Roll an email at once to ask her about this. She might be asleep though.

'I was shaded.'

I sent her this email and took one breath.

Since I was sweating, I thought about taking a shower.

I considered whether or not to do it when my phone vibrated. Not even one minute passed since I've sent that email.

I thought it was an email, but, in fact, it was a phone call. Obviously from Roll.

I answered the phone.

'Hello'

Her cracked voice could be heard. As I thought, she was asleep.

"Hello. Sorry, did I wake you up?"

'Ain't that obvious!/? What time do you think it is? It's 1, you know?

.....Well, leaving that aside, who shaded you? I bet it was Kemuri or someone of his level.'

She had such a fast reaction even though she was asleep less than 1 minute ago? If I were to send that email on her private phone, not the work one, she probably wouldn't have responded that quickly.

"Nope, it's someone called Kuroinu."

'Aah, that guy? Then Hakunetsu is there too.

Decline them. Or better, ignore them completely.'

I see. Well, even if I were to go, I would only be a hindrance to them, so it's only natural to refuse. My ability is the only thing strong about me.

However, I really thought that she would say "Why not give it a try?" or something.

“Understood. See yah.”

I said, and was about to hang up when Roll continued talking.

‘Since I thought it wouldn’t happen, I haven’t warned you yet, but you must not accept any shading. It’s too early for you. And it’s dangerous.

You’ll be free to accept shade missions only after we’ve done a few regular missions together and you develop your skills to a certain extent.

Until then, I prohibit you from doing that.’

It seems this is the reason I can’t join shade missions yet. Does she really think about my wellbeing?

For the time being, it would be better not to go against her.

I thought and answered.

“Roger that.”

‘Good. Good night.’

She hung up.

Well now, since they went to the trouble to invite me, I would feel bad to ignore them as Roll suggested, so I’ll just call Kuroinu-san and refuse him politely.

I looked up for Kuroinu-san in my work phone’s contacts and made the call.

I feel a little nervous to be honest.

I hope he won’t get angry after I refuse him.

After a short while, my call was answered.

‘Yo. It’s a great evening, above-the-norm boy! You coming!?! You’re coming, right!?!’

A loud voice resounded all of a sudden, so much so that I had to keep my cell phone away, at a considerable distance from my ear.

It seems that when talking with this man on the phone it is better not to keep it close to your ear.

Nevertheless, how will I refuse him.....

“No, I will have to refuse for today. I’m really sorry.”

‘Whaaaa! Did you hear that, Hakunetsu? He dared to refuse us!’

“I’m sorry.....”

I heard the voice of the so-called Hakunetsu from the other side of the call. He said ‘Give me the phone’.

‘Hey, this is Hakunetsu.

Will you tell me the reason for turning us down.....No, I will guess it.

Roll told you to, am I right? She told you to decline.’

“Well, yeah.....”

‘Haha, ahahaha.

AhahahaHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!! You are completely under her thumb! You’ll do everything that woman says! Stuuupid, stuuupid!!’

“.....”

.....What’s with this guy?

‘I checked you up, you know!

Virgin! No girlfriend! Even though your face isn’t that bad, you’ve never had anyone confess to you!

Kuhahakahaha!! What are you living for!?! Ahahahahaha!!’

I could hear their laughter clearly. Kuroinu-san is laughing too, it seems.

Their unpleasant laughter continued to resound.

They were not making fun of me, rather, they were trying to make me angry. I understood that.

I was about to hand up without saying anything.

As Roll said, maybe it would've been better to ignore them.

'Stooooooooooooop! You were about to hang up just now, right!?
Haha, AHAHA, to be honest, I haven't checked you up at all!! HAHAHA.....Fuhihi.
Anyhow! You are lacking in passion! Just violate Roll's orders!
What? Even if you make a mistake during the mission, we won't blame you!
Besides, this time's mission is like a walk in the park at night!'

What should I do?

After these last words, I, just a little tiny bit, felt like wanting to go on mission with them. It kinda seemed like fun.

And then, leaving their provocations aside, would it be really all right to stay like this, after what they said?

To be honest, I didn't really feel much restraining force coming from Roll's order. Until this very day she hasn't told me about her ability, and perhaps she's even weaker than me.

To put things bluntly, Roll is not too scary.

.....

'Ooh! I can feel the waves of hesitation coming from your way!
You're coming!?! Are you coming!?!
How is it, my man, Shion! Come on! Come on, baby!
You comin'!?!'

And then I gave my answer.

".....I accept. Where should I go?"

'Yeeeeeeeeeah! He's comiiiiing!!
Café, no. 10! The password is <A I U E O>!
We'll be waiting! Good bye!'



“No. 10, please.”

Currently, I am at the Café directly managed by Anonymous.

Yes, it’s the usual entrance.

This is where you can trade for important information.

No. 10 is used for information that is too sensitive and cannot be transmitted openly, so the café master manages it.

“The password?”

“.....A I U E O”

I said the mysterious password.

“Point A-12. Knock 2 times the 5 shutter.”

After I received this info, I left the café and went towards the indicated place.

Of course, I walked.

Everyone in Anonymous is very strict in handling information about their ‘whereabouts’.

It’s a little annoying, but this kind of thoroughness is somewhat cool.

Point A-12 was a parking lot.

I confirmed the 5 shutter two times then knocked twice.

Having done so, the shutter opened vigorously.

“Thanks for coming, Shion! I’m Kuroinu!”

“And my name is Hakunetsu!”

The lights got switched on, illuminating the dark insides of the warehouse.

The first thing that came into view was an extremely fast-looking car (I’m not very knowledgeable when it comes to cars, so I don’t know its brand).

Its black body was illuminated and it started to shine bewitchingly.

Hakunetsu-san sat down on the car’s bonnet, bringing his hand to his bright red sun

glasses.

He was wearing a white suit, and was looking like a dangerous person.

And, behind him was Kuroinu-san, standing with his arms crossed at his chest. He was wearing a black suit and black sun glasses.

Kuroinu-san had a solid build. Hakunetsu-san had a tall and slender figure.

“.....It’s nice meeting you. I’m Shion.”

“Yo! Yo! Thanks for coming, Shion-kun.”

“It’s thanks to Hakunetsu!”

“Ah! It’s thanks to me!”

This is bad. These two are extremely noisy.

“Well now, there’s something we must warn you about at once.”

Hakunetsu-san ended his pose and started walking towards me. When he arrived next to me, he grasped my shoulder firmly.

He raised his sun glasses a little and looked me in the eye.

Then he started talking.

“You must definitely not tell Roll anything about this, all right!?”

“Yeah, that’s also a request from my part.”

Kuroinu-san agreed as well.

.....In spite of everything, maybe it would’ve been better to obey Roll’s order. Looking at these guys’ attitudes, Roll must really be dangerous.....

“Well, if Roll finds out about this, it won’t be easy for you either, so I don’t think you’ll tell her.”

“.....As I thought, Roll is really amazing, right?”

“Well, yeah! Her overall evaluation is ‘all S’! She’s a monster!”

Are you for real?.....Is she really that strong?!

I don't actually understand what an overall evaluation means, but I'm kinda scared now.....

"In terms of power, Roll is Anonymous' no. 6, you know!

Anyhow! Roll must not find out about this!

She must absolutely not find out!"

I got cold feet and nodded vehemently.

I regret not listening to her and coming here.

"If you knew that you'll be in trouble if she finds out, why did you shade me?"

Kuroinu grinned broadly.

Hakunetsu smirked too, and put his sun glasses back in place.

"Well, that's....."

"It's for the thrill and enthusiasm! We wanted to go on a mission with you! C'mon baby!"

They said, then got into the car and started the engine.

Kuroinu-san sat on the driver's seat, Hakunetsu-san on the passenger's seat.

Before I noticed, the rear seat door got opened too.

However, I was quickly and completely frozen in place, dumbfounded.

"Get up, noobie!"

I was taken aback by those words and rushed inside the car.

The car took off with great speed.

I knocked my head against the window with all my might.

"It huuurts....."

"Weeeell, let's go!!"

“Wait, what kind of mission is this!?”

We departed without even finding out about the details of the mission.
I got in the car, so there was nothing I could do anymore.
There was no turning back now.

“I’ll only say it once, so listen closely!

This mission requires driving to the neighboring town!

There’s an underground casino there, where a certain ‘product’ washed away! It appears that a comrade from a branch division made a mistake!

He must retrieve that and BAAN! Destroy it! Most likely, the SDF will be there too!

According to the situation, combat engaging is probable!

The degree of difficulty for this mission is between C and A!”

“Oh! Approximately! However, well, for us, the degree of difficulty has no meaning-
inu!!”

I listened to them then put on the seat belt.

I had my work phone inside the pocket.

I hesitated whether to ask Roll for help or not, but, in the end, I decided not to.

I sighed softly.

The car ran at a speed that clearly violated the law, and the roar of the engine resounded as we hurried on the highway.

The flowing landscape.

My town was rapidly going further away.

If I could send a message to the me from one hour ago, I would write something like
“You must listen to what Roll said”.

“When will we reach the neighboring town?”

I asked, my voice drained of strength.

“We’ll get there soon! In about one hour or so!?”

“I see.”

I gave up and decided to do my best for this mission, then closed my eyes. Seemingly wanting to interfere with my determination, the roaring engine and the loud music resonated inside the car.

CHAPTER 7

THE CLOSEST SOUND

Will the mission go well with these people?
I decided to stop worrying about it right away.

Kuroinu-san used some connections to let us enter the town easily.
After we walked the streets for a bit, we were now inside the underground casino.

Once we entered the underground casino, the two men's aura changed completely.
With a sharp expression they checked our surroundings, and there was nothing left
from those foolish attitudes from before.
Actually, they were like two different people.

“Kid, this is work.”

They realized I was quite surprised by the pressure and tension they now gave off, so
Kuroinu-san explained me.

A white suit and a black suit.
Compared to before, their huge backs looked rather cool now.
Hakunetsu-san was *eating* cigarettes.
He held a largish attache case in one hand. What does he carry inside, I wonder.
I thought about that, as we heard some noise coming from the casino.

Kuroinu-san leaned on the handrail and started to talk.

“Well, according to the informant we passed by a moment ago, the goods are inside
the VIP room, where a gamble is taking place.
It seems the SDF is already here.
Since they have to follow this place's rules, it means there's a reason they can't
forcefully steal them.
At any rate, we must hurry.”
Hakunetsu-san let out the cigarette smoke and changed his attitude.

Unlike Kuroinu-san, he rested his back against the handrail.

“For the time being, how will we destroy the goods? Should we be fast and violent or use some other quiet means?”

Since the SDF is here to collect the goods, they most likely sent men from the colonel class and above.

It is extremely annoying to deal with this type of guys.

As for the quiet means I was referring to, that would be to try to collect the goods by following this place’s rules. With Shion-kun here, we can cheat as much as we want. However.....”

Hakunetsu-san grinned broadly.

Kuroinu-san was most likely grinning as well. It felt like he was about to say something nihilistic.

“Right... However, we are Anonymous.

Even though they are gambling inside the VIP room, it’s not like the goods are there too.

Should we infiltrate without them finding out and destroy the goods right away?”

Kuroinu-san took out an anonymous mask from his inner chest pocket.

“Ain’t that thrilling!?”



Our only source of light was the flashlight that Kuroinu-san carried.

Anonymous’ members.

Me. Kuroinu-san. Hakunetsu-san.

Inside the darkness, there were three anonymous masks.

No one complained about how narrow this place was.

It was inevitably so, since it was not a passage meant for humans.

We concealed our breaths as we slowly crawled into the ventilation above the ceiling.

“How is it?”

Kuroinu-san turned the flashlight towards us.

Its light illuminated the map we had.

Kuroinu-san paid a large amount of money to that informant in order to buy a map of this place.

I looked at the map, as I listened to various sounds and tried to confirm their location and distance.

The map included everything up to this floor.

“.....I can hear some sort of dispute going on nearby the VIP room. Perhaps, between the casino people and the SDF.

Something about cheating.”

“Hmm. Did you find the location of the goods?”

“Yes. They’re on a lower floor. They are a lot of men gathered, strictly guarding something.

We might have to use the elevator.”

“In that case, we have to get off this place.”

“There is no one around at this moment, so we can go down now.

But there are about two men close to the elevator, so we might engage them in combat.”

“Then, let’s get out of here.

Nevertheless, it’s not that thrilling anymore with Shion’s all-purpose scouting skills.”

“.....Sorry.”

“No, it’s all right. We’re only getting started now.”

We were now in a place where no ordinary people could enter.

I searched for the enemy and avoided all possible battles up to this point, so Kuroinu-san and Hakunetsu-san were kind of bored.

However, even so they didn’t unnecessarily invite trouble.

These guys were seeking the very best of thrills after all.

Kuroinu-san, who was in the lead, removed the ventilation entrance and jumped down on the pathway below.

It was quite high.

I hesitated a bit, but Hakunetsu-san pushed me from behind.

I landed on the pathway as well and Hakunetsu-san followed.

Kuroinu-san winked at me and I placed one hand on the wall and listened closely.

“.....It’s all right. They didn’t notice us.”

It would have been great if I could nullify sounds, but I couldn’t do that at the moment. I didn’t even know if that was possible in the first place.

I figured that because it’s about sound, there are surely a lot of things I could do, but I can’t even control my ability properly at this time.

I needed more practice.

However, spying for enemies was quite tiring.

I must restrict the sounds I’m hearing after all.

Since I couldn’t lose control, I decided to wear the restraint ring just in case. It might get more or less comfortable if I take it off, but I’ll keep it on just to be sure.

I was now walking in the lead as I constantly listened to the enemies’ movements.

When we got close to the elevator, I made a sign and Hakunetsu-san took the lead instead.

If we turn that corner, the elevator should be right in the front.

As well as two men. Most likely guards. They were gossiping.

Kuroinu-san raised two fingers and bend them towards that corner.

Hakunetsu-san saw that sign and nodded.

He then sneaked a look at what was waiting for us if we took that corner.
The next instant, he retreated and looked towards us.

Then he took the map I was carrying and crumpled it. The moment Hakunetsu-san opened his palm, the map turned into ash.
The ashes fell down on the floor.

“Wonderful. We bought a fake map.
There’s no elevator.”

I was startled by Hakunetsu-san’s normal tone.
The guards will find us.....!

“Who’s there?”

Just as I thought, I could now hear the steps of those two guards getting closer.
I hurried and took my stance, not knowing that their lives would come to an end right at the moment they turned around that corner.

I could hear a sharp sound and looked at the two guards, who had knives stuck on their foreheads now.
Most likely, Kuroinu-san threw them from behind us.

Hakunetsu-san caught hold of those men’s heads, as they were about to fall down, and he slowly and noiselessly placed them on the floor.

I never imagined that knives get implanted so easily into people’s heads.....
I looked on in mute amazement, but Kuroinu-san moved in front of me and stepped on the map that was now nothing more than ashes.

“Did they sneak up fake maps too?
But it seems it wasn’t completely fake after all.”

“What did those two guard then?”
“Maybe it’s a safe that looks like a room.”

For the time being, Shion-kun, is anyone approaching us now?”

I listened carefully.

There was no one approaching us.

“Hm?”

I noticed a sound from below that suddenly started to go far off.

This was the sound of.....

“.....The elevator, I found it.”

“Good job.”

“Great. Take us there.”

Kuroinu-san beat me on the shoulder.

I went in front of Hakunetsu-san and was about to guide them to the elevator. However, it was then that I realized something.

Before I knew it, I couldn't hear the quarrel anymore.

I stopped in place and listened closely one more time.

I concentrated my sensitivity towards the VIP room.

Having done so, I was able to pick up these words.

‘I made one of my subordinates go bring that thing.’

‘The negotiations are complete. We will close our eyes for this time’s incident.’

‘What about the money?’

‘They’re inside here.’

.....I see. This is bad.

“.....What’s wrong Shion? Did something happen?”

“This is bad. The SDF will soon get their hands on our goods.”

“.....What?”

“They concluded their negotiations with the casino people.”

Hakunetsu-san fixed his mask.

“We must hurry.”



We walked along the hoisted wall of the elevator, cautiously descending. Kuroinu-san and Hakunetsu-san were quite experienced at this and I couldn’t keep up with them.

We looked down but there was nothing but complete darkness. The elevator was not moving.

Kuroinu-san helped me and I, somehow, managed to arrive just above the elevator.

“Well, this is where things should get interesting.”

We concealed our breathing. I could hear the sound of footsteps. They were.....three people? I raised three fingers and told them.

“Three people are coming.”

“Three guys? That’s an easy victory.”

The elevator’s door opened.
Then it closed.

.....They’re here.

Then, the elevator started to move.

“Shion. I’ll show you my ability. Hold this for a moment.”

“Eh?”

Kuroinu-san entrusted me with his anonymous mask.

I thought it was a bit strange and looked over at his face, but all I could see now was a glossy, black fur.

My eyes turned round.

Is this Kuroinu-san’s ability.....!?

“Enhancement type, the Assassination Hound.
This is Kuroinu’s ability.”

Hakunetsu-san said.

He was a pitch black werewolf.
That was the impression he gave.
However, I could not admire that appearance any longer.
That’s because Kuroinu-san started to move.

Now that he changed into the Assassination Hound, Kuroinu-san ripped off the elevator’s ceiling with his sharp claw.
Then, he jumped down inside the elevator, and the next instant a splat could be heard as those three men inside stopped breathing.

“Finished. I also got the goods.”

We heard Kuroinu-san’s voice from beneath.
I took a quick look inside and saw three dead bodies and Kuroinu-san, who returned to his normal appearance, standing next to them.

He held in one hand a box the size of a fist.

Hakunetsu-san saw that, then took the anonymous mask I was holding and threw it at Kuroinu-san.

He caught it and put it back on his face.

“It was much easier than expected.”

I looked up and saw that the elevator was reaching the top.

Hakunetsu-san jumped down inside the elevator and I followed his example.

“Well now, I’ll destroy this as we still have the time.”

Kuroinu-san said and opened the box.

Inside was a ring.

I knew exactly what it was the moment I saw it.

Yes, it was the restraint ring’s first prototype.

It had a different design than the one I was wearing, but its efficacy was mostly the same.

If this was to fall into the SDF’s hands, the “ability restraining” technology that Anonymous developed would have been stolen.

Kuroinu-san handed the first generation restraint ring to Hakunetsu-san.

Then, Hakunetsu-san grasped that ring tightly.

A short time later, Hakunetsu-san opened his palm in order to show me the result.

What I saw on his palm was a completely melted former ring.

Hakunetsu-san took out a transparent case from his pocket and inserted the muddled ring inside.

Then, he said.

“Mission complete.

Now, all that’s left is to go back.”

Right at that moment, the elevator arrived at the top.

We got out of the elevator and started walking calmly towards the casino's exit. Leaving this place without anyone noticing was already something extremely easy to do.

Everyone inside the VIP room was still foolishly waiting for "the thing" to be brought to them.

They will probably realize it was already destroyed by the time we left the town.

They will find the anonymous mask that Hakunetsu-san left behind inside the elevator and lament about their defeat.

Hakunetsu-san made sure to bring a spare anonymous musk just for the sake of making that happen.

I concentrated all my nerves and picked up the sounds.

"There are two guards at the next corner."

I couldn't be negligent when scouting for enemies.

I let my two companions know about the enemies' positions anytime there was a need for that, and so we got close to the exit.

Since crawling inside the ventilation was most likely going to take some time, we decided to walk the normal pathway.

These two guards as well are about to get killed by Kuroinu-san.

I thought and left him in the lead.

Kuroinu-san went ahead and turned around the corner.

Hakunetsu-san and I stopped right before it.

With a small shriek, the two guard's breathing started to fade.....No, one was still alive?

"Hiii, please save me.....! I, I will do anything.....!"

"Shut up. Next time you speak, you're dead."

We could hear Kuroinu-san's yakuza-like voice from the other side of the corner. The other guard was already dead. I couldn't hear his breathing anymore.

However, for some reason, one guard was still alive.

Up until now Kuroinu-san killed them in the blink of an eye without any hint of hesitation.....So why?

I thought it was strange so I turned to look at Hakunetsu-san.

Why? I asked him with a questioning look, but he answered me with silence.

I could not see any emotion in his eyes.

Then, a voice could be heard again.

"Shion. Come here."

Me?

I didn't understand what was going on, but I turned around the corner and walked towards Kuroinu-san.

He was standing up there.

In front of him, the guard was sitting down, frozen in place.

An expression of terror covered all his face and his nether region was completely wet.

Next to him was the other guard who was nothing more than a piece of meat now.

I stood up there without understand the situation, when Kuroinu-san threw a knife at my feet.

"To tell you the truth, we more or less had a reason for shading you tonight."

Kuroinu-san turned half of his body towards me and started to talk.

"It's about Roll.

That girl always refused pairing up with anyone, so we were curious as to what turn of events made her team up with you."

What's this about all of a sudden?

"....."

On the other side of the anonymous mask Kuroinu-san had a serious expression.

“This guard.

He’s an ordinary person working at this casino. He’s an innocent person.

He’s a normal man living a normal life.

Shion, you’ll be the one to kill him.”

“.....”

I see. I understand what you’re trying to say.

“What we fear the most is that an ordinary high schooler like you will make Roll go through some really unfortunate and stupid events that otherwise she’d avoid.

Roll is strong, but she’s still a kid. And there are things that only adults can teach you about.

We are part of an evil organization.

We sacrifice many for the sake of one. And among those many people we sacrifice, they are also a lot of innocent, harmless people.”

“.....I understand what you’re trying to say.”

I said, but Kuroinu-san continued nonetheless.

“We kill many for the sake of one.

Now that you got tricked by this inviting sentence and ended up joining Anonymous, this is the road you must walk on.

Even though it’s not for anyone’s sake.

A kill that has no meaning at all, this is something you will have to do from now on.

There’s no need for a reason.

Kill him.”

I focused my eyes on the trembling guard.

I could hear the sound of smoking cigarettes from the other side of the corner.

“Is it all right to have a reason though?”

“Let’s hear it.”

“Killing people in order to survive, for my own sake.
That’s what I’d like to think now.”

I picked up the knife at my feet.

“You pass.”

Kuroinu-san said.

I strongly grasped the knife and stepped forward.

Tears were overflowing from the guard’s eyes as he started to desperately rub his head against the ground, trying to silently beg me for his life.

Does my heart ache?

Of course it does.

However, I already killed a lot of innocent people during my manifestation.

And I also knew about Anonymous’ wrongdoings.

Thus, I always thought about it since the moment I joined Anonymous.

I didn’t expect, however, to be demanded an answer this quickly, but I must find it right away.

The answer is yes, no matter what twisted reasons I have.

I’m sorry but you will have to die for my sake.

I approached the base of the guard’s neck and cut through it without hesitation.



That day, I got the first spurts of blood all over my anonymous mask.
Hakunetsu-san let out a word that I will probably never forget:
“Congrats”

Still, if I were to tell my thoughts.

Killing a person was much easier than I expected.



“Iyaaa, hwaaaaaaaaaooooooo!!! Shiiiiiiiiiiiiion-kun! I never imagined we would finish up this mission so early!”

The car was roaring.

“Aaah! I love this feeling of liberation after a completed mission!! Should we go drinking!?”

“Oooh! That’s genius! Shion-kun will come too, right!?”

After we completed the mission, these two had a sudden change.
Even though I just killed someone, for some reason I too felt refreshed as I gazed at the night scenery.

“I can hear those SDF fools’ angry roars!!”

“Ha ha! Go faster!! Wooohoo!!”

We could already see our town.
We were driving way too fast.

“Oioioi! You should try shouting too, Shion-kun!!”

I was about to decline this invitation when my phone started to vibrate.
Of course, it was the work phone. I left my private phone at home.

When I looked at its screen and saw who was calling me, my back froze completely.

'Roll'

“Wait! Roll is calling me! Please, be quiet!”

“Wha!?”

“You’re joking, right!?”

“What should I do!?”

Should I ignore her? Will I make the right call if I ignore this now?
But she’s calling on my work phone.

“Hakunetsu! Drop the speed!”

“I know that already!”

The sound of a sudden break could be heard and the car’s speed dropped considerably. Hakunetsu-san put an end to the roaring sound of the engine and immediately returned the interior of the car to silence.

We were safe driving now.

With a speed not exceeding 40km/h.

“.....Good, you can answer now.”

Kuroinu-san gave me the ok.

My heart was thumping as I answered the phone.

“.....Hello.”

'Hello, Shion. Where are you now?'

“.....I was sleeping.”

I imitated an annoyed tone as if I just got my sleep disturbed.
However, her next words left me speechless.

'Hmmm. For the time being, I must punish you for not following my instructions. I checked up your mission log, you know. Even though you made it private.'

I could hear the sound of my beating heart.
This was bad.

I somehow managed to regain my composure when Hakunetsu-san said those words.
"Ah, it's over."

What Hakunetsu-san was looking at was a street. That street was leading towards the town.

Or.....was it the shadow of a person?

Roll was standing right there.

'At this range you can clearly hear me without using the phone, right, Shion?'

She hung up.

"This is bad, this is bad, this is bad, this is bad, this is bad! What do we do now, Hakunetsu!?"

"This is over. Checkmate. Let's resign and receive our punishment.
We are already inside the *Stray Cat's* range of attack."

Hakunetsu-san's voice was shivering.

"I see.....It's hopeless."

We stopped the car close to Roll.
Next to her, a motorcycle was parked. Did she ride it here?

"All of you, get off."

Roll's voice echoed and we got off the car.

We were now standing in front of her.

The two rather tall men tried to look down on Roll, who was releasing an intimidating aura, but they eventually ended up kneeling down on the ground.

I was already kneeling.

“First of all, Hakunetsu and Kuroinu.

Show me your hands.”

They both looked downward. There was nothing left of that coolness that surrounded them during the mission.

“Hurry up and show me your hands.”

Unwillingly, both of them raised one of their hands.

I thought about what she was going to do to them and looked at Roll as she touched those two's hands.

A painful sound could be heard as their hands got bent in a weird direction.

“!?”

What the heck was that!?

“Gaaaaaaaaah!”

“Guuuuuuuuuh!!”

Their shrieks resounded on the main road.

“Once you return to the hideout, go ask Chiaku-san to fix you up.”

Roll said, then she turned around to look at me.

So this is what the frog feels like when the snake glares at it!?

I couldn't move at all.

After having seen that, there's no way I wouldn't get cold feet.

Those two were groaning in agony somewhere inside my field of vision.

“Shion”

“Y, yes!”

“Don’t be so nervous.

It’s your first time so I’ll forgive you with just this.”

Roll held her hand aloft.

I closed my eyes.

Not knowing what was about to happen, I was quite scared, when my face got slapped.

It was quite a strong slap in the face, but in the end it was only that.

I rubbed my hurting face. The pain was sharp.

“That’s.....! Shiooon.....!”

“Damn it.....! We’re guilty of the same crime, you knooooow!?”

Kuroinu-san and Hakunetsu-san complained.

However, when Roll sent them a short glance, they immediately held their hands and started to moan.

It appears that I will be forgiven with only this.

“Don’t you have anything to say? I was quite worried about you.”

Roll said.

I raised my head and looked her in the eye.

“.....Sorry.”

I lowered my head and apologized.

It was clear to me that Roll was actually worried about me.

I, too, felt honestly sorry.

Instead of feeling relief that my punishment was light, the remorse I felt was slightly stronger.

“I was really looking forward to our first mission as partners, but you selfishly spoiled it for me.”

When she told me that, my chest started to ache.

“.....I’m sorry, really.”

“Hmm.....!

.....Let’s go back. Get behind me.”

Roll straddled the motorcycle then threw a helmet towards me. I caught it.

Then, seemingly telling me to get on right away, Roll roared her motorcycle.

I looked over at Hakunetsu-san and Kuroinu-san, and even though their hands were broken, Hakunetsu-san made a sign with two fingers.

It was the sign for “Go”.

CHAPTER 8

THE SOUND OF FUTURE

The Anonymous' boss.
His code name is Hyde.
Still, only a few call him by that name.

Because in Anonymous, his identity as the boss is just too strong.

He clads himself in a black coat, so that when he slips into darkness he can spot the enemies easily.

Even though he wears a mask, the boss' presence is hanging in the air.
That SDF man that hid in the darkness believed that Hyde was the Anonymous' boss judging only by his 'aura'.
That was it.

The two men didn't move, measuring their situations.

"Shido"

Hyde murmured his partner's name, at which point the woman who stood next to him started to move, without saying a word.

The other man who hid himself in darkness couldn't follow the woman with his eyes. At any rate, he decided he wouldn't chase her.

Then, the man convinced himself that he could handle the situation by himself when he remembered a few things.

Even among the major generals, he was one of the best in terms of true strength. Depending on the opponent and their affinity with their ability, he would overwhelm most of the other major generals during their practice fights.

And, he captured and killed countless Anonymous members up to this point. No matter if he was to fight against the boss and his partner, he was still convinced he could kill them with his ability. That's what the man thought.

However, it never turned into a two against one fight. That's because the Anonymous' boss didn't find any worth in doing that. If he's the Anonymous' boss, then he must at least be able to judge and understand his enemies' strength by the pressure they release. Having done so, he decided he alone would be more than enough.

It's not like the SDF man was overconfident. He achieved a lot of things, got acknowledged and became a major general. He didn't remember how many times he vomited blood since he's joined the SDF.

It was a categorical self-confidence from his part.

After Shido's presence disappeared completely, Hyde started to move. He removed his mask and exposed his face. Then, he sent a nihilistic smile into the darkness and turned his coat around, facing his enemy with his back.

The man saw this and grew very excited. However, he didn't take any step. It was clearly a provocation.

At that point, as an important member of the SDF, what the man wanted was to retreat. He saw the face of the enemy's boss, after all. He grasped his features too.

Still, maybe he could bring him down right there. The man had such confidence.

The man instantly made his decision and stepped outside the darkness into the moonlight, exposing himself. He, then, declared.

“Count your sins, Anonymous.”

The man already used his ability.

But, Hyde was nowhere to be found.

The man didn't become impatient. He sharpened his senses and was cautious of his surroundings.

All there was to it was that he could not see the boss. There were guys like him in SDF too.

“Now, I have one more sin to count.”

Suddenly, a voice could be heard behind the man's back.

The man didn't turn around.

The moment he heard the voice, his brain thought of a few patterns of what should be his next move.

And the answer was defeat.

The man gave up on his life on the spot. It was the first time he felt his life completely depended on another. He understood the boss' ability.

And that he could've never defeated him.

Ah, it would've been so much better if he retreated at that time.

His regrets resounded in the empty space.

But it was too late.

At the end, the man wanted to say something, but he kept silent.

On a street, at night, a man's life scattered silently.



It was Sunday.

I returned home from the morning jogging, and took a shower.

I decided to temper myself starting today. I don't know for how long it would last, but if I'm on the verge of giving up, Roll will force me to continue.

Leaving that aside, I immediately started to walk towards the secret base. Since, before all this, I didn't use to do anything special on weekends, this unusualness was kind of a good change.

I arrived at the secret base and walked straight toward Roll's room. However, before I could get there, I met with someone.

"Oh my, it's Shion-kun."

When I passed by someone on the corridor and nodded at her, she called out to me. She had black hair and was as tall as me. It was the first time I saw her.....So who was she?

"Errr....."

"I'm Shido."

Ah, so this is the boss' partner, Shido-san? We only met like two times.

"It's been a long time."

"How do you feel? Are you getting along well with Roll?"

"Yes, so-so."

"I'm glad to hear that. Then, I have to leave, I'm in a hurry. Let's have some tea together sometime."

"Yes. Goodbye."

Shido-san's verbal expressions were similar to Roll's. Or maybe Roll is similar to Shido-san? I have the feeling she told me that Shido-san taught her how to live or something. She passed on her talking style too, it seems.

Thinking about that, I saw Shido-san off. Oops, I must hurry to Roll's room. She told me to be there until 10.

When I got to her room, Roll greeted me in high spirits.
There were some boxes in her room that were not here yesterday.
Is this why Roll is in such a great mood?

Before I asked her that, she explained me.

“The weapons arrived.”

“Weapons?”

“Yup, our weapons. Partners use the same type of weapons.”

Come to think of it, Hakunetsu-san and Kuroinu-san carried many knives that looked the same.

Weapons, huh? Honestly, I don't think I would need any, but they could also come in handy. At this point, I can't really attack using my ability.

“What will we use?”

“I ordered lots of them, so we'll decide now.”

Roll took a knife from her desk's drawer and opened all the boxes.

Inside them, a lot of weapons were wrapped in a thick sac. They were mostly small type edged tools.

Roll's eyes sparkled.

“How about this one?”

What Roll was holding in her hand was a thin, sharp blade with a handle that could be used as a claw.

“What's that?”

“It's a jamadhar . You stab with it.”

Roll practiced with it in front of me and pushed the handle towards me.

Yeah, it could be useful.

“But maybe it’s a little inconvenient to carry around.”

“Maybe. But it’s pretty cool.

It was a joke, you know, but I didn’t think you’ll take it seriously. Stupid.”

“A joke?”

Nevertheless, this was Roll when she was in high spirits.

A girl who gets extremely excited by weapons is quite fiendish.

“By the way, it’s not really a weapon, but, the truth is, I wanted to show you a tool that we will definitely use.”

“What?”

I asked, and Roll opened her desk’s drawer and took something out.

“This. I made an order to the Development Department to create this for me.

It were quite expensive.....

Of course, I have one for you too, Shion.”

What Roll took out and showed me was a pair of something like black tubes.

They were thin enough to be firmly held by Roll’s hand, and when I looked closely I saw that the handle was especially made for a firm grip.

“What are those?”

“Carbon nanofiber wire emitters . They have 100 meters of wire stored inside them.”

“That’s awesome.....!”

“Right?”

Roll handed me the other wire emitter.

I observed it in detail.

It was rather small, but it could do things.

It was a really amazing tool.

“If you press this button hard with your thumb, it shoots the wire at great speed. It

shoots for as long as you press the button. So, you adjust the shooting amount by pressing the thumb button.”

“What about the pinky finger button?”

“If you press that button, you can cut the already shot wire.

But when you cut once, there’s a lag of 1 minute in order for the wire’s anchor-like tip to recharge.”

“I see.”

“Look at this too.”

Roll took something else out of the drawer and handed over to me.

It was a pair of black gloves.

“You’ll get injured if you touch the wire directly.”

“Thanks.

By the way, can you return the already shot wire?”

“Of course you can. By pressing the release button lightly.

However, it doesn’t have the strength to pull up a human being.”

I see.

I got it mostly.

I thought that it might be useful for movement too, but in order to make it happen, we need training.

I might want to use this thing as a weapon. Still, it has lots of other uses too, making it an extremely useful item.

I really want to try this out now.

Roll said something, and she seemed to have read my thoughts.

“Wanna go to the training room?”

“Let’s go.”



I'm practicing shooting with the wire emitter inside the training room, but it isn't working very well.

When I press the release button with my thumb, the wire gets shot at great speed. And if I loosen my press just a tiny bit, the wire returns inside the emitter at great speed.

Still, making it shoot the wire at an aimed spot is difficult.

Roll can successfully shoot the wire and twine it around a crowbar that she set up 10 meters in the front.

Roll's gloves, which were the same as mine, showed signs of sweat.

"I can't use this thing properly."

"You're not used to the pressing modes.

When the wire gets close to your target, you do.....like this and you loosen the button for an instant."

Even after I listened to Roll's explanation, I still couldn't really do it.

Roll started her training with the wire emitter yesterday, but she can already use it this well.

As expected from Roll-san; I wasn't indifferent though to the difference in our abilities.

"Hmm.....Why can't I do it?"

"Shion, let's return to my room. We should probably get something to eat."

The watch behind the enhanced glass pointed towards 1 p.m.

It's already this late?

Even though the shooting practice didn't go very well, it was still quite fun, which made me forget about the time.

"You're right."

I decided to leave the training for later, and left the training room together.

We returned to Roll's room, and she started preparing the food.

"I'll make something especially for you" So she said.

Even though she said that, it's not like it was the first time. This was in fact the second time she cooked especially for me.

I picked up a weapon among all the weapons scattered on Roll's bed.

Even after I looked through all of them, I still felt that I didn't need a weapon.

If I have the time to train with a weapon, I'd rather use it in order to train my ability.

But the wire emitter is a different matter.

At any rate, according to Roll, there are not many people in Anonymous who have great mobility abilities.

Having only a few ability users who could float is quite inconvenient for us.

I'm also one of those people who don't have much mobility and can't fly.

Still, overall, Anonymous seems to have a lot of fire ability users.

Well, even though they have a fire type ability, each of them has a different affinity to it. And that affinity makes for the difference in power not to count too much in an actual fight.

The Anonymous ranks are given in the form of a tournament where you fight for your title. Roll is rank 6, so there are other people who are stronger than her.

It seems that Anonymous even holds this type of tournaments.

"Look."

A short time later, Roll placed the food on the table.

She made pork fried with ginger and rice, miso soup and a large cabbage salad.

She also placed the leftovers from yesterday as side dishes.

"Oh, itadakimasu."

I said and started to eat.

Roll's cooking was delicious in general. The seasoning was perfect for my taste.

As expected from a partner.

Anyway, I complimented her cooking lavishly.

Still, it seemed like she was used to having her cooking skills praised and made an expression which said 'It's only natural'.

If Tsurugi was to compliment her, I wonder if she would blush and feel happy about it?

.....No, she's not like that.

"So, did you find anything good?"

I guess she was referring to weapons.

"Yeah. I think we could also use a knife, similarly to Kuroinu-san and his partner."

"There are many types of knives.

Those two use a large type of daggers for throwing, which have remodeled grips.

Those types of knives aren't suited for us.

Having said that, we also don't need a knife that is used in close combat.

In my case, if I get to touch my target I can certainly kill it, and you don't even need to get close to your target.

Besides, with your scouting skills no one will be able to approach us anyway."

"Eh? Then, do we even need weapons?"

"When you'll be able to fully control your ability, you won't need them anymore. I won't use any either, when we get to that point.

.....Well, it's gonna take a while because you had a delayed manifestation, so we do need weapons for now.

Besides, it's rather uncool not to be able to use at least one type of weapon. There are some who got sent to a subdivision and got embarrassed because of this."

Sent to a subdivision? They have subdivisions too?

"Hmm"

I started to eat again.

Roll saw that and continued to eat too; she finished a short time after.

"What about a small type throwing knife?

We won't be able to kill the target in one hit, but they could be useful for blinding them or slowing them down. We can carry a few of them too."

"Throwing knives? Sounds difficult."

Throwing a knife. I heard that, depending on the distance, you must adjust the rotation speed of the knife as well.

“No weapon is easy to handle.”

“Thanks for the food.

In this case, teach me how to throw knives.”

I said to her, as I cleared the table and brought the tableware in the kitchen.

“All right. But I’ll decide which knives we’ll use, okay?”

“Good.”

Roll will surely choose the most adequate ones.

And anyway, I have no idea which are the perfect ones for us.

In any case, we decided that our weapons will be the throwing knives and the wire emitter.

CHAPTER 9

THE SOUND OF DISCORD

It was Monday morning.
I rested my aching body on top of my desk.

“Morning, Kamiya-kun.”

I raised my head and saw Ohashi standing next to me. I returned the greeting, then retook my position on the desk.

Hm? Where’s Tsurugi?

Leaving Rin aside, Ohashi is always coming to school together with Tsurugi.

It picked my interest and I raised my head again to ask Ohashi about it.

“Where’s Tsurugi?”

“He said he was going to be late today.”

“Hmm, again?”

For some reason, that guy often comes to school late.
When he’s not around, the people from Tsurugi Harem are quite docile.

I looked at Roll in the corner of the classroom.
Shinjou Roll-san was chatting with a newly made friend.
When I looked at her, Roll noticed my glance and turned towards me with a smile.
My heart skipped a beat.
If she can smile as sweetly as that, I’d like her to do it regularly.

I turned away and, again, let my body rest on the desk.

At any rate, yesterday was a terrible day.
I never expected the throwing knives training to be so difficult.

I closed my eyes. Maybe I’ll just stay like this for the rest of the day.

“Oi, wake up, Kamiya.”

I heard someone calling out to me, so I raised my head. Before I realized it, the teacher was already standing on the platform.

The first class for the day was about to start.

“Starting today, you have one week left until the tests. I will stick the test schedule on the blackboard. You should seriously study for these tests, okay?”

Is it already that time of the year?

I always kept my test scores high, but this time, it doesn't seem like I would be able to get good marks.

I sent Roll a glancing look, then let out an affected sigh.

Once the homeroom class ended, the teachers changed and the lesson started.

I sank deeper into my desk.



Tsurugi arrived at school before the third period started; it was now the lunch break.

As a matter of fact, Tsurugi never carries a bento with him.

That's because Ohashi and Rin take turns to prepare him his lunch and bring it to school.

I am envious. However, I don't really mind it that much.

It's just that, I'd like them to stop gathering at my desk every single lunch break.

But thanks to that, I also have access to his lunch box, even though it feels a bit futile.

“What? You brought a bento today as well, Kazato? That's rare. Moreover, it's quite the healthy bento you got there.”

Tsurugi looked at my lunch box.

To tell you the truth, Roll was the one who prepared this for me. She was unable to be indifferent to my poor, daily eating habits, like convenience store lunch boxes or bread, which were bad for my body, so she decided to cook for me. She stealthily hands the bento over in the morning.

However, unlike Ohashi and Rin's bentos, mine was not made with loving care.

Roll is basically feeding me in order to strengthen my body.
Well, I went a little too far. Honestly, I'm kind of happy about this.

Roll was eating her lunch in another group of girls.
Her acting is so all-encompassing; even when no one is watching, as long as she's on school grounds, she's playing that character.

As expected of her, she doesn't do mistakes. It's been only a few days since we first met, but I'm witnessing more and more about Roll's greatness.
I got a bad first impression of her, but it is starting to change.

"Does Roll-chan bother you this much?"

"As I thought, you're in love."

"Kamiya-kun finally has a girl he likes now."

I let these guys selfishly assume whatever they wanted.



It happened after school.
I went straight to the secret base.
Tsurugi asked me to go have fun with them, but I refused him, since I wanted to prioritize my training.
I knew that this was only ruining my friendship, but even so, sometimes you have to do other things than playing around.

Now, I arrived in front of Roll's room.
When I entered, Roll welcomed me in a bad mood.

"Sit down there for a second."

She said to me and I sat on the chair in front of the table.
Why is she angry?
I really have no clue.
However, I already knew that Roll didn't usually get angry unreasonably.
Maybe I made some sort of mistake.

While I searched for a reason, Roll took out a sheet of loose-leaf paper from her student bag and wrote something on it.
Then, she put it on the table, in front of me.

“This is what we’ve learned today. Try to solve it.”

What was written on that piece of loose-leaf paper was a math problem.
Even though we learned about this today, it was only an application problem.
Obviously, since I fell asleep during class, I can’t solve it.

All I could do was sink into silence.
Roll’s huge sigh was extremely audible.

“Why did you sleep during class?”

Because I was tired due to yesterday’s difficult training. Of course, that’s not really an excuse.

I cast my eyes down and Roll started to lecture me.

“If you want a recommendation, you need good grades, you know?
In the first place, you don’t understand the value of receiving teachings from people.
And, what’s more…….”

Roll’s lecture continued for a little longer.
Finally, after she made me promise that I would enter the school’s top twenty with the results for the upcoming tests, the lecture ended.

And now, she made me study.
Roll seemed to be quite smart, so she explained me all the parts I didn’t understand.
Her hand-writing is pretty too; I really must find some sort of fault to her.

I came to the secret base today, very much in the mood for training, but I never thought that I would get stuck with studying.

The sound of the running pencil got mixed with the sound of my sigh.
I sent Roll a glance, seemingly saying that I wanted to train, but she glared at me and I

calmed down.

She observed all my progress, so I couldn't skip anything.

It was then when it happened.

I heard someone knocking on the door.

“Roll, my angel! I came back! Please open the door!”

It was a man's voice. Who's that?

I thought and looked at Roll. She frowned, clearly displeased with that voice.

“Who's that?”

“It's Getsuri . A really annoying guy has returned home. I honestly hoped he would rot in that branch office.....”

“Won't you open the door?”

“He'll enter anyway.”

It happened the moment Roll said that. The door's lock opened with a clank.

Does he have a key to this room? No, he doesn't; why would he ask Roll to open the door if he had the key?

He did something.

Roll let out a sigh.

The one who entered the room was a blond man. He wasn't naturally blond like Roll, he clearly dyed his hair.

He seemed a little older than us. He was also tall and looked exactly like a host.

The man came inside the room and looked straight at Roll.

He then took her hand and knelt down.

“Mademoiselle, have you been well?”

I spent my every night thinking about you!”

“.....It’s been a long time, Getsuri. I heard from the boss that it would take even longer.”

“For Roll’s sake, I finished the mission with double speed!”

“I didn’t ask for it. Anyway, it’s good you’re safe.

Now, since you’re in the way of Shion’s study session, could you just leave?”

In that instant, Getsuri-san fell silent.

He sent me a glance, then hit the table.

It was all too sudden and my heart jumped up and down.

“Why didn’t you choose me!? I’ve worked really hard in order for you to accept me as your partner! This time too, I easily handled a difficult mission all by myself! Yes, just like the sweet and beautiful you always do!

However, your heart remained unlocked!

On the contrary, when I came back this time, I found you opened it to some other guy!

Didn’t you say that you will never accept a partner!?”

What’s this all of a sudden.....

All I could do was change my look from Roll to Getsuri-san and back.

“Ah, I apologize for that.

I ended up choosing a partner.”

“.....Until now, no matter how much Hyde-san insisted, or how many other people invited you, you would always stubbornly say that you wouldn’t accept any partner. However, this time you easily approved.....! Why?”

I was quite interested in hearing the answer too. I am being helped by Roll, but I don’t know the reason why she chose me.

Because the boss told her to?

Yet, she refused all the other offers up until now.....I wonder why.

I looked at Roll and our eyes met. However, she quickly averted her look.

“This has nothing to do with you, Getsuri. I’m free to group with whoever I want.”

Getsuri-san cast his eyes down.

Maybe it was a bit cruel of her to say that it had nothing to do with him. Well, this was not a situation in which I could intervene.

“.....Was it out of pity.....? Maybe it reminded you of your past self.....”

“I’m getting angry, you know.”

Roll spoke with a threatening voice making Getsuri-san to fall silent again.

I don’t really understand what’s happening, but it seems that Getsuri-san said something he shouldn’t have.

Pity?

Well, I am actually aware that I was found in a pitiable situation.

Suddenly, Getsuri-san’s look moved onto me.

“Shion, was it?

Why did she choose a potato like you.....”

It’s not like I’m here because I really wanted to be.

If I hadn’t manifested my ability, I was supposed to still continue living my happy daily life.

And yet, saying this at such a late hour makes no sense.

It’s not like I’m unhappy with my current situation anyway.

I got a little insecure about my future now though.

I didn’t know what answer I was supposed to give to Getsuri-san.

I couldn’t bear his look so I turned away, when I heard Getsuri-san mutter.

“.....I have no choice but to kill you.

Yes, I’ll just kill you.”

His attack was too sudden.

The knife that drew near to me was kicked aside by Roll; before I became aware of it, a battle unfolded right in front of my eyes.

Getsuri-san danced in midair, releasing kicks aimed at Roll’s face.

Roll countered those kicks with her arms.

She then twined her arms around his leg and invited him to meet the ground, as she knocked him down.

But Roll's attack didn't end there.

She silently ripped off both his arms and legs, leaving Getsuri-san unable to fight in the blink of an eye.

I was dumbfounded by her bloodlust and energy.

Getsuri-san's shrieks resounded in the room, as Roll collected his limbs and dragged him out, asking some nearby members to deal with him, then returned to the room, closed the door and walked towards me.

"That was dangerous.

I never thought he would lose his head like that because I chose a partner."

"It surprised me....."

It was mostly Roll's movements that surprised me however.

Still, with that guy around, I can't let my guard down even inside the secret base.

"When he's calm, Getsuri can be quite decent. And he's fairly strong too.

This can't happen again, so I'll have to inform the old man."

She's such a reliable partner.

However, as long as I'm standing in the range of her hands, it could be said that she has a grasp on my life.

In a close-range fight, Roll's ability is too overpowered.

"Now, continue with your studying."

"Roger."

The learning session restarted.

She allowed me to train after I finished studying; it was already past eleven when I returned home.

I told my parents that I was working part-time, but, even so, I should maybe avoid leaving the house every day.



The next day, after school. Today, as well, I came to the secret base. I was now walking the corridors together with Roll.

I heard about Getsuri-san's ability from Roll. His ability is called 'Perfect Key'. It seems that he can freely lock and unlock all sorts of things.

His range of attack changes according to his mood. It's not like he can alter the range of his attack, it just changes by itself.

Even though I said he can lock and unlock things, it's more like he can open and shut them freely, like making someone close their eyes or force them open their fist or such. However, because Getsuri-san doesn't want to use his ability on Roll, she always beats him.

The reason why he doesn't want to use it on her is because he wants Roll to unlock her heart to him by herself.

The best use of Getsuri-san's ability is the fact that he can temporarily lock his opponent's ability.

Using this technique called 'Skill Lock' together with unlocking the restrictions in his own brain, he can basically bring down his opponent quite easily.

In this case, how can I even defeat Getsuri-san? I have to finish him off before he gets near me.

"Listen. You have to finish him in one blow, all right? If he gets close to you, it's all over. Fight him with the intent to kill."

".....Can I even win?"

"You can, if you seriously want to. Or, maybe I should say it more clearly. Go there and win!"

Well now, as for why we had this kind of conversation, that's because I was challenged to a duel by Getsuri-san some time ago.

Yes, Roll was the bet.

Obviously, I refused. But Getsuri-san asked the boss to intermedicate the duel, and the boss ordered me to fight.

It seems that all the quarrels inside the organization are solved in this way.

Not even Roll's opposing opinion changed anything this time.

".....I'm nervous."

"I should be the one who feels nervous. Is it really true that he won't kill me?"

"If he intends to kill you, I'll jump in right away to stop him."

We talked about it some more, as we arrived in front of the training room.

Several people from the organization gathered inside the observation room, with Kuroinu-san and Hakunetsu-san among them.

There were many people there I've never met before.

"You came."

Getsuri-san said and showed up in front of me.

".....Hello."

I felt overwhelmed by his aura, which announced an attack at any time.

Getsuri-san enter the training room first and stopped in a predetermined position.

He then turned his head and glared at me.

.....To be honest, I was quite scared.

".....Shion, I'm relying on you."

Roll grabbed my hand and squeezed it tightly.

Getsuri-san kept on starring at me, so this whole scene was a little troubling.

I panicked and rejected her grasp.

“.....I’ll be going now.”

I said, then entered the training room.

CHAPTER 10

A FEROCIOUS SOUND

The audience inside the observation room was standing still. I could hear Kuroinu-san and Hakunetsu-san cheering for me from behind the enhanced glass.

Getsuri-san stood 5 meters in front of me, and he was already prepared for battle. The boss's voice resounded in the training room.

'Shion, Getsuri.

I'll explain now the rules for this duel with Roll at stake.

The first to incapacitate his opponent wins. Neither of you is allowed to use weapons. Killing is prohibited.

As a handicap, Getsuri is not allowed to use attacks stronger than C ranked ones. Nor is he allowed to unlock his restrictions.'

Getsuri-san nodded.

They gave him a handicap.

Well, it has nothing to do with me. If I don't end this in one blow, I will surely lose.

'Roll will give you the start signal.'

'What? Me?All right.'

The boss handed over the mic to Roll.

I gulped down my saliva.

Then stared at Getsuri-san.

'.....Start!'

It was Roll's voice.

I used her signal, and changed it into a roaring explosion sound.

Still, the moment before that, Getsuri-san covered his ears.

“Wha……!”

Getsuri-san kicked the ground and arrived before my eyes in an instant, then he seized my head.

My vision got distorted as he slammed me to the ground on my back.

In that moment, all the sounds I was hearing vanished.

I couldn't hear Kuroinu-san's cheering anymore, nor the sounds outside the training room.

All I could hear now was the sound of my breathing.

“Skill Lock.

I took the liberty to lock your ability.

You have no way of winning this.”

Is this for real?

He beat me this easily……

“If it weren't for Roll's voice, my eardrums would've been destroyed by now.

You're too obsessed with speed, you know.”

“No way……”

I stood up and stepped back.

When will my ability come back…… I didn't know.

At any rate, all I can do now is running around……

“I'm sorry to say but I won't let you run away.”

My vision turned dark.

I actually closed my eyes. No, I was forced to close them.

And I can't open them either.

He locked my eyes……!

I could hear a heavy step.

Immediately after, I felt an impact at the back of my head.

Before I could realize, I was crawling on the ground. Something was dripping. I had a nosebleed.

Did I hit my nose on the ground just now?

All I can do is give in.....

“Why in the world is this guy Roll’s partner!?”

“Guh!”

He kicked me in the stomach. For a moment, I could not breathe, but I somehow staggered and managed to stand up.

Normally, it’s easy to stand up with your eyes closed.

But now, for some reason, I felt it really difficult.

Was standing up always this difficult?

When I managed to finally stand, he punched me again and I fell on my buttocks.

The attacks didn’t stop.

With my eyes closed, all I could do was groan as I continued to receive Getsuri-san’s strikes.

When I stood up, he kicked me to the ground again; when I crawled around, he trampled me down.

“Fuahahahahahaha!! Be disillusioned by Roll!”

I was panting.

I can’t open my eyes but I can feel that they’re swollen.

He punched me in the pit of my stomach and I tumbled down, unable to breathe.

“.....You’re such an uninteresting man. Why did Roll.....Why.....”

This is no good. On a second thought, I’ll just kill you.”

“.....!”

Kill me.....? I'm sure that the boss said killing wasn't allowed.....!

This is foul play!?

“Die now!”

The moment I heard those last words, something like an electric shock ran through my body.

I bent back my body as I dodged Getsuri-san's attack, then stood up again.

Immediately after that I took off my restraint ring.

Thump, thump.

I could hear this sound.

.....It was the sound of a heartbeat.

I can hear now. My ability is back.....

My eyes were still locked.

But I could hear things.

I could hear everything around me. Even without my vision, I could *see* things.

Calm down..... Calm down, myself.....

—— Calm down and kill.

“You dodged it well, didn't you?”

“.....I can hear sounds.....coming from you. The sound of your heart,the sound of your breathing.”

I detest death.....

To prevent it, all I can do is kill my opponent.

“You're bluffing.

There's no way my Skill Lock would wear out this quickly.”

I crouched down to dodge his mighty kick, as I got close to Getsuri-san.

I couldn't see him, but I imagined that his expression was one of surprise, even shock.

I held my left hand in front of Getsuri-san's face and snapped my fingers.

"Gaaaah!"

I destroyed his eardrums.....Did I leave him unconscious too?
I grabbed Getsuri-san by his hair and pushed him down.
He didn't fight back, so I knew that he lost his senses. He fainted.

However, I could still hear his heartbeat.
.....I must kill him.
This person is dangerous.

My vision was still dark. Even so, my senses were so sharp that I could clearly see everything.

I removed a knife from my waist holder and grabbed Getsuri-san's hair again.

I could hear the door to the training room opening from behind me.
And then, the sound of people rushing towards me.

This is bad, I gotta kill him fast!

My knife was about to reach his neck, when my right hand was firmly seized by something.
I dropped the knife.
Without a moment's delay, I was about to take out another knife with my left hand but I couldn't move it either.

'That's enough, Shion. You won.'

It was the boss's voice.
I opened my eyes and saw that several people, Roll included, were restraining me.
All of them were ready for battle, and if I were to move again, they would suppress me in an instant.

".....Why are you stopping me? You didn't stop Getsuri-san when he was about to kill me."

*‘That’s because I believed you could handle it.
From the very beginning I thought that you would win.’*

That’s not it.

“Since he tried to kill me, I bet that this guy won’t complain if I kill him instead.....”

‘I said no killing.’

“I don’t get it.”

All my joints were aching. He seriously beat me.

“Shion, you won, so it’s all right. Control yourself. Because of this, Getsuri-san will be sent to a branch agency again.”

Roll said. But I didn’t turn my eyes away from Getsuri-san.

“Calm down, Shion. Why are you so furious?”

“.....I am calm. And I’m not furious at all.”

“.....I understand what you’re feeling, but there will be many times when you’ll be on the verge of dying from now on. You will kill many people too.”

Roll said to me in a kind voice.

But it’s not really about that.

“I came to this place precisely because I didn’t want to die!”

I pressed my middle finger against my thumb and clicked them.

A thunderous roar. I refrained from using my full power though.

Those who restrained me faltered, and I took that moment to grab a knife and swung it down towards Getsuri-san’s neck.

However, before the edge could reach it, I felt a shock running through my body. Right after that, I got slammed onto the wall and lost consciousness.



When I woke up, I found myself in Roll's bed. Her nice scent tickled my nostrils. My body wasn't hurting anymore. Most likely Chiyaku-san healed me. I then started to remember the incidents from some moments ago.

Maybe it's something like a trauma for me.

I am too obsessed with living. I can't forgive those who try to kill me.

No...Actually, I don't understand it anymore.

When he attacked me yesterday, it was nothing like this. Maybe because Roll was there too.

"Did you calm down?"

"Sorry. I kinda lost myself."

I stood up and looked at Roll, who was sitting on a chair.

At that moment, I realized that the restraint ring was back on my finger.

"It can't be helped."

The mattress sheets got a little wet because of my sweat. The pillow as well.

"Sorry, your sheets are drenched with sweat. You should maybe wash them."

"Don't worry about that. Do you want some water?"

"Yeah, thanks."

I got out of the bed and fetched my phone from inside my schoolbag.

It was past eight.

Was it already this late?

"Here"

I drank up the glass of water she placed for me on the table, then thanked her and sat down on a chair.

I took out my school stuff.

“Hey, will you help me study now?”

Roll made a happy expression and brought her chair closer to mine.



It seems that my partner is quite a nice person.
She's sometimes wild and scary but, some way or another, she's kind.

To be honest, it's about time I fell for her.

Leaving the jokes aside, four days passed since my duel with Getsuri-san; it was a Saturday now.

Today, I went to the secret base again; I haven't gone there since the duel.
During these four days that I haven't visited the hideout, I did nothing but study and train.

Thanks to this, I am quite confident in the upcoming tests.
And, because I declared this, Roll told me she will take me on a mission with her today.
In truth, this was our first mission together.

The mission's content is *'Suppressing a buried dragon'*.

Even though it's a dragon suppression mission, the buried dragon is a magical beast, smaller and weaker than all the other dragons.

The bones of a buried dragon don't burn out, so the Development Department requested some, since the ones they used until now broke off. And Roll accepted this mission.

Almost all the magical beasts hunting requests come from the Development Department.

There are times when the boss brings some in from underground routes.

“How far do we have to go?”

“To the Tshara Plateau.”

The Tshara Plateau? That's quite far away.
The elevator made a short ding as we arrived to the café.
Roll went to talk to the café's owner and I walked towards the exit.

“Master, No. 8. Stray Arrow.”

“C-47. It’s the third truck from left.”

“Thanks.”

Roll finished her exchange with the café owner and walked towards the exit.

There were many people inside the café today. Usually, there are mostly people who go to the hideout around here, but it seems that this place is often used as a normal café too.

“Well, let’s go now.”

We left the hideout.

When we arrived at point C-47, we found out that it was a restaurant’s parking lot. Roll did as she was told, and got into the third truck from the left. She started the engine.

I got into the truck too and sat on the passenger’s seat.

“Can you even drive this thing?”

“You might say so.”

A short time later, the truck took off; we soon left the town.



Rolling Cat.

That’s the name of Roll’s ability.

Roll was a chosen human being.

There were very few people in this world who had ‘something like that’.

Yes, a Skill Repeat.

Roll has two abilities.

Together, they make the Rolling Cat.

Her first ability is a manipulation type, called 'Only Roulette'.

Roll can 'one-time rotate' all the things she touches.

She can freely control the speed of the rotation, but it has an upper limit. It doesn't have a lower limit though.

The range for this ability is 'everything that Roll can touch'.

Roll can freely control the direction of the rotation as well. However, just by touching the ground, she can't rotate the people who stand on it.

There are a few other restrictions to this ability, but it also has many practical uses; no wonder that Roll is the organization's no. 6.

And then, she has another ability.

An enhancement-type one, called 'Stray Cat'.

This is similar to Kuroinu-san's ability, a physical changing enhancing type.

This ability has a unique use; all the people who enter its range will be pulled towards Roll by a strange psychological gravity.

Roll is not really too willing to use this ability since it is stamina consuming, and, therefore, hard to maintain.

Also, according to rumors, she grows cat ears and changes her figure into something extremely charming.

I haven't seen this form of hers yet, but, in all honesty, I'm dying to see it.

Anyway, this reconfirmed Roll's awesomeness.

And yes, the mission finished without me being able to do anything.

"It was an easy victory."

Roll said, as she drove the truck.

We were carrying the corpse of a buried dragon, with its twisted neck, on the roof rack.

"Was there even a meaning in me coming here?"

“Nope, there wasn’t. Once we’re back, you’ll have to continue studying.”

The truck roared noisily on the plateau.
Roll was driving quite dangerously too.

At that moment, I suddenly heard a noise coming from behind our back.
A listened carefully.

.....What sound is this?

“What’s wrong?”

I opened the window and peeked behind us.

“!? What the hell is that!?”

I looked at it and drew my head back inside the car.

“Roll! Something is flying towards us!”

“What?”

That thing unexpectedly reflected in the rearview mirror.
It was a huge dragon, that couldn’t even be compared to the one we carried on the truck’s roof rack.

“It’s an edged dragon.....! We sure are unlucky!
I’m gonna use the rocket engine! Shion, hold on tight!”

“Wait! Are you serious?”

Right after I took an anti-shock position, I got held in the passenger seat with a thud.
The truck was making a thunderous roar, as the scenery seemed like it was flowing.

“Shion! Check if it’s still following us!”

The edged dragon wasn’t showing in the rearview mirror anymore.
I could neither hear its roar because of the engine’s noise.

I looked again behind us.

It wasn't there.

ROOOOOOOAAAARRR!!

A roar.

I looked up at the sky and saw the edged dragon.

"This is bad! It's still chasing us!"

"Wha! I'll go out! Shion! Continue to drive!"

"Wait! Eh!?"

Roll opened the window and got out.

I hurried to move to the driver's seat and seized the steering wheel.

"Go full throttle!"

I heard her voice coming from above, and I stepped on the pedal with all I got.

CHAPTER 11

A ROTATING SOUND

Roll is probably on top of the car.

Just what in the world is she planning to do against that gigantic dragon?

As I thought about that, I heard a 'baam' from above.

Don't tell me she just jumped?

Unbelievable!

The only thing I can do, since I can't take my hands off the steering wheel, is to pay attention ahead with all I have.

Because of the severe force feedback, I must hold the steering wheel strongly.

The road was rough and the truck shock violently.

However, I didn't slow down at all, instead, I pushed the acceleration even more recklessly.

I didn't have time to listen to the sounds outside.

It happened right then.

The dragon descended from above, right in front of me.

It was the same edged dragon.

It made a terrible sound as it fell on the ground. It took me by surprise but I stepped on the break with all my strength and stopped the car before running over it.

The windscreen was now obstructed by the huge body of the edged dragon.

“.....You gotta be kidding me!”

I got off the truck, muttering those words.

The edged dragon died with its neck twisted, its tongue and eyes popped out. Its legs were still moving.

Did Roll do this?

“At any rate, this thing sure is huge.....”

I approached the fierce dragon and touched its blade-like scales.

Its scales were sharper than I thought and I ended up cutting my finger a little.

But where did Roll go?

I focused on my hearing and I heard Roll’s heartbeat on the other side of the dragon’s corpse.

I walked to the other side of the corpse. At which point, I heard Roll’s footsteps moving in the opposite direction, as to avoid me.

“.....?”

Is she in the mood for hide and seek or something!?

As I chased after her, I circled the edged dragon’s body once.

This girl.....What is she doing?

“Roll! What are you doing?”

I faced Roll, who was separated from me by the dragon’s corpse, and asked her.

However, she didn’t answer.

With stealthy steps, I tried walking towards Roll again. But she escaped again.

Was she always this playfull.....or better say, tiresome?

“Really now, what are you doing!? Cut it out!”

I raised my voice, at which point a faint answer could be heard from the other side, her voice so weak that only I could hear it.

“I used the ‘Stay Cat’..... It takes 10 minutes to change back.....”

I see.

In short, Roll is supposed to have cat ears now.

And the reason why she didn’t show me this until now is because she’s truly embarrassed.

It seems that she can’t change back instantly like Kuroinu-san.

“Hmm.....”

I dashed off with all my might.

I must see it no matter what!

“Why are you coming this way!?”

Roll started to run too.

“Because I want to see!”

“It won’t be decent!”

I chased after her for a while but I couldn’t catch her. I couldn’t even see her shadow.

I felt rather humiliated because I couldn’t keep up with a girl, but Roll was using an enhancing ability right now, so it was inevitable.

She’s just way too fast.

I already circled around the edged dragon a couple of times.

As I went out of breath, I thought of a great idea.

All I have to do is create a chasing sound.

The moment I thought of this idea, I began to put it in practice.

I took cover behind the truck, as I created a sound that sounded like me chasing Roll.

It's not like I neglected my ability training these past days.

I silenced my breathing as much as I could, and I waited for Roll to be caught in my trap and run towards me.

I leaped in front of her right when Roll got close to the truck.

“Wha! You.....!”

This time it was Roll who quickly took cover behind the truck.

She looked just like a cat.....I mean, she WAS a cat.

Yes, it was only for an instant but I saw her.

Beside cat ears, I saw a tail too.

“.....It's better not to see me.”

“I already did. Come out now.”

To be honest, I didn't clearly see her. But since I already saw this much, there's no reason she wouldn't come out and show me herself.

And so, Roll came out from the shadow of the truck, while holding down her ears and tail.

But her hands couldn't hide them completely, and I managed to sneak a look at her.



“.....Haa”

“This is.....”

After a complete look at her from upfront, it was impossible not to feel a shock.

How should I put it? She was just too cute.....

How comes cat ears and a tail change a person this much? No, it's not that. Most likely this is the Stray Cat's ability.

So this is the so-called psychological gravity?

In fact, my feet moved towards Roll, like she was sucking me in.

She's too adorable.

I truly felt like I couldn't abandon this stray cat.

I want to pet her. I want to love her. I want to rub my cheek against her.

“Roll....., this is really bad.....”

“See? I told you that it won't be decent!

You are truly mean.....”

Roll sighed.

“Take your hands away.”

“That won't happen. You want to pet me, right?

Being petted is.....you know....”

Is what?

Still, she's way too adorable.

I can't endure it anymore. I'll forcibly hug her.

"This is really bad!"

"I'll hit you if you get any closer. This is a bit too effective on you. It's abnormal."

"Damn it! Let me hug you!!"

I jumped at Roll, ready for a honourable defeat. She threw her fist into my stomach, sadly, and I crumbled down on the spot.



I regained a bit of composure, as I sat in the passenger's seat and pretended to look at the passing scenery. I was rather more concerned about the cat eared and tailed person beside me.

The truck advanced uninterrupted.

We reported to the secret base about the edged dragon and it was decided to retrieve its body as well.

Since you could extract some rare materials from it, it would be wasteful to leave it there to rot.

".....Why are you looking at me like that?"

"Because, you know.....I'm curious."

10 minutes is a long time. Still, the ability should wear off pretty soon.

"It would've been much better if I brought my hat."

"Won't you let me pet you at least once?"

"No."

That's when Roll's cat ears bounced a little.

She was like a small animal.

Roll normally keeps her cat ears low, it seems, but when she looks at me, her ears stand up, focused.

“.....That really is adorable, you know?
I guess that since you’re a cat, you’re quite curious too.”

“It can’t be helped. There are cases when enhancement type animal abilities come together with instincts and traits.
But well, it’s already time-out.”

When Roll said that, her cat ears and tail drew back inside her body.
It appears that 10 minutes have already passed.

“Nooo.....! The tail! The cat ears!”

I stretched my arm towards Roll but she repelled it.
Now that Roll’s ability wore off completely, I too began to gradually regain my composure.

“Ah, I’m tired.
That’s why I don’t really want to use the Stray Cat too often.
It’s tiring and it sexually excites you, Shion.”

“.....It didn’t sexually excite me!
It’s just that, you looked more adorable than I expected. That’s foul play, you know?
You were almost too adorable.”

“Will you.....stop calling me adorable now? It kind of annoys me.....”

“Don’t tell me you feel embarrassed.”

“I’m not.”
“You do feel a little embarrassed. Admit it.”

“.....Well, it does make me happy when I’m told to be adorable.”

To be honest, even without her cat ears Roll was rather cute.
The kindness and girliness she shows sometimes make my heart throb.
It’s just a matter of time until I fall in love with her.

“Shion, hurry up and show me your cool side too.”

After receiving this counter blow, I kept silent.
It will take some time for me to be able to stand next to Roll.
However, I can feel that we are opening our hearts to each other little by little.

A short time later the city finally came in sight.
At the end of the highway, the evening sun illuminated the city.

We entered the city and drove to the same restaurant's parking lot we used earlier today, where Roll stopped the car. She left the driver's seat and got off the truck. Piled up on the truck's roof rack, the buried dragon and the edged dragon were covered up with a cloth.

If we parked the truck here, someone from the organization would come and collect it.

That's why, our mission finished at this point.

"There's some time left."

She looked at her watch and said.
The watch was pointing a little bit past 5.

"You're right."

"Are you sure you're all right with the tests?"

"Well yeah. I did study long enough."

"Hmm.
Then, what about having some fun together?
After we eat something over there."

Roll pointed at a restaurant and suggested, wearing a mischievous smile.
I was planning to study after I got back home, but I couldn't bring myself to refuse her.

"All right."

"Let's go then."

We didn't expect to meet the persons we did when we entered the restaurant. Tsurugi, Ohashi and Rin were there.

Recently, the other members of Tsurugi's harem can't seem to keep up with Ohashi and Rin's fierce attacks, so the liveliness surrounding him grew dim, compared to before.

Well, I didn't really care about that anyway. But we did stumble across these three's study meeting.

When Roll noticed them inside, she looked quite unhappy about it.

It's not like she hated Tsurugi and the others. What she found annoying was the fact that she had to act again.

Besides, if they were to find out that Roll and I went to a restaurant together in the town's outskirts, things would probably get troublesome.

Still, the question is why did they choose this remote place for a study meeting!?

Well, anyway, we were planning to leave the restaurant before they became aware of our presence.

However, before we could do that, Tsurugi and the others noticed us.

We couldn't leave the restaurant anymore.

And so.

We took the seats right next to Tsurugi's group and Roll started to splendidly answer the barrage of questions.

That's how the reason for me and her being here turned out to be a 'date'.

"Kamiya-kun, you are not to be underestimated."

"I'm shocked.....I didn't believe that Kazato was a man of action."

"Kazato, as I thought, you did fall in love.

Congrats."

It seems that these three easily accepted the idea that Roll and I were going out.

This will probably get troublesome at school.
Miss Roll already boasts a lot of popularity inside our school.

I wanted to insist on the fact that we were not going out, but Roll said to them before I could say anything.

“Urm.....Will you please keep the fact that we’re going out secret for now?”

Since Roll said this, it was decided for us to go with the dating setup at school. This way, there would be no obstacles to us being together.
Even though she said to keep it a secret, rumors will still spread.
But this will certainly make things easier for us working together.

I might have to endure the other male students’ looks of envy and light harassment from now on.

“Of course. We won’t tell anyone.
Since we’re in your way, we should probably leave now.”

When Tsurugi said this, Ohashi and Rin stood up.
It seems that they’re considerate of us.

We tried to stop them, but well, our real intention was for them to leave us alone already.

The three of them saw right through us, so they paid their check and left the restaurant.

“My plan went astray.”

A short time after Tsurugi’s group left the restaurant, Roll said.

“How comes?”

“I wanted our getting together to proceed a little slower.
It appears that we’re already going out now.”

She’s talking about school.

It seems that Roll had various plans.

“Is there a problem with that?”

“I wanted to proceed with caution and discretion. But well, it’s all right anyway.”

“Hmmm.

For now, let’s just order something.”

I opened the menu and said to her.

“I already know what I want.

Omuraisu and melon soda. What about you, Kazato?”

“Hm? Kazato?”

“This is a private meeting after all. But well, you can only call me Roll either way.”

I see. There’s no need to use code names during our private meetings.

At any rate, she wants to order *omuraisu* and melon soda. She’s normally cooking food that is good for the body so this choice is unbelievable.

“Then I’ll also have an *omuraisu* and melon soda.”

“Why are you ordering the same thing?”

“In our private lives we’re a couple, aren’t we?”

“You’re right. Still, you need nutritious food so I’ll order for you.

This is more girlfriend-like anyway, right?”



After we finished our food, we ended up chatting for a short while, then we left the restaurant.

It was already past 7.

At Roll’s suggestion, we entered the nearby department store for a light shopping session, then we returned to the secret base.

It was past 10 now.

Roll bought a lot of clothes so both my hands were now full of shopping bags.

“This will look good on you.”

She said, and ended up choosing some clothes for me too.

No matter how much money Roll had, I still couldn't let her pay for me since it would've hurt my dignity as a man.

Thanks to the reward I received for the mission I did with Kuroinu-san and Hakunetsu-san, I already had a surplus of money. I was troubled about how I should use it but now was just the right chance for it.

Still, at the end of the month I'll received a huge load of money; 450000 yen.

My money sense is getting confused.

“Good night then.”

“Good night.”

I escorted Roll back to her room and left her luggage there, then informed her of my leave.

I decided to leave the clothes Roll chose for me in her room.

“Ah, wait a second.”

I was on my way down the corridor when Roll detained me.

I looked over my shoulder and saw her standing in front of her door.

“What?”

“Come back for a second.”

She told me and I walked towards her. Roll started to quickly measure my back and arms with a tailoring meter.

“.....What are you doing?”

“I must place an order for your tuxedo. You wear it during infiltration missions or

suppression missions since it's easy to move in it.”

“Ehh? There's such a thing too...”

A tuxedo, huh? It's kind of embarrassing.

After a while, Roll finished her measuring and said.

“Good, I'm done. Good night then. Be sure to study, all right?”

“Yeah yeah.....”

I gave her an inarticulate answer, and so, our day together finished.

CHAPTER 12

THE SOUND OF THE SEA

The test results were tolerable.

For now, let me just say that entering the top 20 was not as easy as I thought.

But still, I managed to get the 27 place.

Even the teachers were astonished by the sudden rise in my results.

It is now the period when we must think about our future careers, so my classmates started to feel a little pressed by my sudden improvement in grades.

But well, when I realized that I got the 27 place instead of entering the top 20, I received quite a shock.

I thought that Roll would get angry at me.

However, she didn't get angry; she, instead, congratulated me.

It seems that Roll considered my entering the top 20 to be a little too extreme.

This made me want to enter the top 20 even more, just in spite of Roll, but well, truth be told, it was a bit extreme.

And by the way, Roll took the 3 place. As one would expect of her.

Anyway, a month and a half passed since I entered the Anonymous.

It's the summer vacation now.

My most recent activities include lots of field training.

My skills with the wire emitter are getting better and better, but I am far beyond Roll.

There's a difference in our abilities. Since she can use rotations, she can control the wire emitter half freely.

It was a bit unfair, but well, it's the privilege of her abilities.

Now, what the two of us were doing at the moment was the summer vacation homework.

In Roll's air-conditioned room, all you could hear was the crisp sound of pencils running on top of paper.

However, my pencil stopped unexpectedly.

Roll noticed this and looked at me. Our eyes met naturally.

“Huh, another problem you can’t solve?
Which one?”

Roll was sitting on the opposite side of the desk, but now she moved next to me.
Her nice scent tickled my nostrils.

“This one.....”

“Ah, this one. Here, you do like this and then.....”

Roll explained me the problem that I couldn’t solve in an easy to understand manner.
My eyes moved from Roll’s fingertip to her arm, then, before one knows, I was looking
at the side of her face.

Roll’s pure white skin was a little sunburnt, making it look darker.

During these midsummer field trainings, no matter how much sunblock lotion you
use, your skin still gets sunburnt anyway.

I moved my eyes on my arm.

I am quite roasted too.

And since my muscles are already starting to show, I’m turning into quite a handsome
young man, am I not?

As I thought about this, my vision caught sight of Roll’s hand, and she pinched my arm
rather strongly.

“Ouch! Hey, that hurt!”

“You didn’t listen at all, right?”

Damn it, I didn’t listen at all.

“I....I was charmed by you.....”

I uttered an excuse that was in part true.

The fault lies in the difficulty of the summer vacation homework in the first place.

“Stop saying stuff like that.

I’ll explain again so you better pay attention, all right?”

We have to finish this today by all means. We're going on a mission tomorrow."

Roll sighed and told me.

"Ro....roger that."

We worked on our homework until 3 in the morning and managed to finish half of it.



The sunlight blazed down on us and the breeze coming from the sea was comfortable. A boat was floating on the horizon, fishing boats were lined up in the harbor and seagulls were crying all around us.

"It's hot!"

Roll said as she walked along the coast, feeling refreshed. She wore a pair of sweltering jeans and a rough shirt that exposed her shoulder. The straw hat looked good on her.

We were in Dealbell, a city facing the sea.

Roll drove for about 3 and a half hours to get here from our town. Since it was the summer vacation, I predicted that the road would be more crowded, but we arrived unexpectedly early and we had too much free time now.

So why did we come here in the first place, you ask?

To put it in one word, it's a date.

That's just my wishful thinking. In fact, we came to this town for a mission.

It's an easy one. In terms of difficulty, this is a D rank mission.

All we had to do was to take a certain 'luggage' from our branch office here and transport it to our headquarters.

Tonight at 9, the luggage will be moved to a specified location.

The SDF's net is already untied, so the transfer is supposed to be safe.

That's why the degree of difficulty for this mission is so low.

Anyway, all we got to do is take that luggage and go back home, but it's only 1 in the afternoon.

I haven't even had my lunch.

We planned to eat the lunch inside the car, but since we had enough time, we walked along the coast in order to search for a great spot to have our lunch outside.

By the way, when I say lunch I refer to the sandwiches that Roll prepared for today. The basket was rather heavy as I held it in one hand.

Just how many did you make, Roll?

I thought about this right when we arrived at our destination, near the lighthouse.

The lighthouse was standing on a breakwater structure.

The scenery up there was as wonderful as expected.

The cloudless sky, the south wind.

Still, it's too damn hot.....

Honestly, I actually preferred to have our lunch inside the car where we had air conditioning.

Even my appetite is boiling inside this scorching heat.

Roll sat down on the side of the breakwater and stretched her legs towards the sea. The lighthouse provided us with its shade, and I sat down next to Roll.

"Let's eat now."

"Yeah"

We opened the basket and started eating the sandwiches.

The taste was as delicious as always.

If I am to force myself to say something, they were a bit too healthy for my taste.

"The wind feels really good.....**yawn** It makes me sleepy....."

After we ate all the sandwiches, Roll said this and stretched her body.

“Really? Even when it’s this hot?”

“I wish you could feel what my body feels like after the long drive.....”

Roll pressed her fingers against her forehead as she said.

Come to think of it, I slept in the passenger’s seat the entire road trip.

I’m sorry, kind of.

Because of the homework, we almost pulled an all-nighter yesterday.

I looked beside me and saw Roll desperately trying to fight the sleepiness, as she dozed off repeatedly.

“Wanna go back to the car and sleep? We do have time.”

“Hm.....Let’s do that then.”

She said, but she was rather reluctant to stand up, so I stretched out my hand.

“It can’t be helped. I’ll carry you on my back.”

“It’s okay. I can walk by myself.”

Because of the drowsiness, Roll had a low tension.

I half-forcibly made Roll stand up and was about to carry her on my back.

However, I realized too late that a sluggish person is unexpectedly heavier than usual, so I lost my balance and fell off the breakwater, together with Roll.

The sound of a splash could be heard accompanied by the roar of waves.



“Really now, what the heck are you doing?”

“I’m truly sorry.”

“Haa, my hair is all sticky.”

“Sorry, really.”

“It’s all right.”

We brought a change of clothes just in case, so we changed into them, and were now sitting inside the car, cooling ourselves.

The air conditioning was a bit too effective as I got a little chilly.

“Now, I’ll be sleeping until 7.

You should sleep too, Shion.”

“I might do just that.”

Just in case, I set my phone alarm to go off at 7.

I’m so grateful that today’s mission is a quiet one.

I looked at Roll and she wasn’t tense at all.

It appears like it really is an easy mission.

Anonymous’ private car no. 162. The Sadinta model .

Since we ended up using this car, which has a spacious interior, it means that the luggage is quite large too.

What is this luggage, I wonder?

Since the mission’s difficulty grade doesn’t reflect the importance of the luggage, perhaps we’ll transport some terrible thing.

They didn’t tell us anything about the contents and I probably won’t find out about it anyway.....

Maybe Roll knows.

I moved my eyes on Roll. She was sleeping on the side, with her back facing me. I listened to her quiet breathing.

She was covered with a blanket up to her lower back.

She fell asleep so fast.

Because we stopped the car at the beach’s parking lot, playful voices could be heard coming from the seashore.

Listening to them, I gradually started to doze off as well; before one knows, my consciousness got interrupted.

CHAPTER 13

THE SOUND OF A SUDDEN CHANGE

Roll and I woke up before the alarm rang at 7 o'clock.
We both woke up in good spirits.
It was a great afternoon nap.

I looked outside the window and realized that the sun was about to set soon from the dim light surrounding us.
The voices coming from the beach were clearly fewer now.

As soon as we woke up, we silently returned the seats to their original positions and waited quietly.

“Want some? It’s gum.”
Roll took out some chewing gum from somewhere and held it out for me.

“Thanks.”

I took one, then started to make fine arrangements to the passenger’s seat.
I changed the position of my seat so that the rear seat would have enough space for the luggage we had to carry.
Roll got out of the car in order to supply it with gasoline, which was loaded in the car from the start.

“Good. Let’s go now.”

She returned to the driver’s seat and said.

“Yeah”

She waited for my answer then took off.



A little away from the beach, a megalopolis townscape formed by countless skyscrapers could be seen.

One of these skyscrapers, the Dealbell Building, boasted an outstanding height.

We were currently eating lunch in a family restaurant situated on this building's 32 floor.

The clock hand indicated towards 8.

I kept on looking at the already dark sea as I enjoyed my meal.

By looking through the big glass window, we could see the Sadinta we parked in the parking lot.

At 9 o'clock, someone from the organization will place the 'luggage' in the car.

Once we confirmed it, we will leave this place and get into the car, then drive straight to the headquarters.

This was the normal flow of the current mission.

It was a very easy mission, so much so that it made you yawn, but still, we could not show negligence.

"The food here isn't that good."

"It's cheap, so it's inevitable."

This restaurant had cheap prices but offered a great view, therefore it was a popular family restaurant among common people.

Many people come this restaurant, together with their families or their loved ones, and almost all the seats are occupied most of the times.

Roll would have preferred to go to the high-class restaurant at the 48 floor, but, as one would expect, there was no way for the two of us, this young and dressed like we were, to go there.

During missions we are supposed to hide ourselves and strictly observe, so we can't do anything that stands out too much.

"Hey Roll, this mission's degree of difficulty is D, right?"

"Right. Frankly, it's like doing an errand.

There's no info indicating the SDF's presence either."

“Hmmm”

“What? Did you want a harder mission?”

“No, it’s not that.”

“I see. Well, anyway, we mustn’t be careless.

It has no meaning if we can’t complete it flawlessly.”

“I already know this.

Anyway, Roll, do you know what’s in the package we have to transport?”

“I’ve been told a little about it. It seems that this missions occurs at fixed intervals. This is the first time I took it though. Still, they said something about being careful while carrying the package since it’s ‘fragile’ or something.”

“Fragile? Like tableware or the sort?”

“Obviously not.

You’ll figure it out anyway, once you see it, right?

It appears that this package is rather big, so you can listen to the sounds inside it, can’t you?”

“Is it all right to listen to it?”

“If it wasn’t, they wouldn’t have accepted you for this mission, Shion.”

“.....It does make sense.”

At any rate, fragile items?

Well, it’s safe as long as we don’t drop it, but even so, it still bothers me.

We chatted for a while longer and finished our meals, when we saw a car parking next to the Sadinta.

Two men dressed in black got off the car and opened the Sadinta’s trunk.

“Is that it?”

“Yeah, that’s it.

Let's go."

We paid our bill at the cash register, then used the elevator to descend on ground level.



Once we arrived at the parking lot, a huge package was already placed on the back seat of the Sadinta.

The two men vanished by the time we got here.

The package had the form of a cube.

Its size was rather big, but perfect for occupying the entire surface of the back seat.

At any rate, this cube was made of somewhat sturdy materials so I couldn't hear any sound coming from it at this distance.

The cube had a pretty tough appearance as well.

It seems that it is made of some very strong materials, so much that if you throw a punch at it you will break your fist.

Anyway, I stuck my ear to this black cubic box and listened to the sounds coming from its inside.

I swallowed my saliva and closed my eyes.

And then, I could capture that sound.

".....!"

"Did you hear anything?"

Roll asked and I moved my eyes on her.

".....I heard the sound of breathing and a heartbeat....."

I also heard groans."

"I see now.

Well, let's go."

To put it simply, Roll started the engine.

I caught hold of Roll's shoulders.

“Wait. How can you consent to this so easily?
It’s obvious that there’s a human inside this box.....”

There was a human being inside this solid box, which had no visible openings.
It was a hermetically sealed box that didn’t even have air holes.

I felt strangely frightened by this fact.
Therefore, I couldn’t believe Roll who easily consented to it.

“Well, I more or less understood what it was about.
This is a broken ‘thing’ , right?”

“A broken thing..... What does it even mean?.....”

“It’s better you don’t know about this for now.”

“No. Please tell me.”

“Hmmm. I’ll tell you if you promise you won’t peep too much.”

“I won’t.”

I said and Roll approached her face to mine, double checking on me.

“You sure?”

“Uh huh.....”

“I’ll tell you then. What’s inside this box is most likely human ‘scraps’.
Since someone does this mission at fixed intervals, it means that a request is made
whenever there’re scraps to dispose of.”

As one would expect, I was lost for words.

Scraps?

Is there even such a thing for humans?

“Human scraps?..... How can you even make that happen?”

“Ain’t this because they do ability experiments on living humans at our branch offices?”

And most of the times the headquarters is responsible for cleaning up.”

“.....For real?”

Is something like this allowed..... No, it's not like that.

What am I even talking about at this point.....

I am part of an evil organization that easily kills SDF soldiers and civilians alike.

It isn't strange at all that they also do something like human experiments.

This was the image I had about Anonymous in the first place anyway.

Did I already forget the mission I've done with Kuroinu-san and Hakunetsu-san?

Or what?

Did I get mentally slow because of the recent peaceful days?

I almost got killed by the SDF.

I also killed SDF's soldiers and ordinary people myself.

I have no right to say anything about this, since I decided I will continue to live even if

I have to kill other people.

Anyway, this was an ordinary event.

It was normal.

“I thought you'd say something more about this, but it seems you won't.”

“.....Well”

I forced myself to calm down, and, after I thought about it, I consented as well. I put on the seatbelt and looked in the front.

“Well, you don't have to worry about this, Shion.

I believe that they don't use ordinary people for human experiments after all.”

“Yeah, I figured.”

“Anyhow, let's hurry and go back.”

“Roger that.”

The car took off as soon as I returned my answer.

After that, we drove for a while inside the megalopolis townscape, as we faced towards the town's gates.

However, that's when a problem arose.

The SDF sealed the gates.

The white uniforms were visible from far away, and we realized that the SDF soldiers took positions in front of the town's gates.

If we were to continue on our way, we would definitely make contact with them, so we stopped the Sadinta somewhere near the main road.

"What's this all about?"

"I don't know. Maybe something happened.

Let me check."

Roll said and stretched her arm to get the phone that was attached to the car.

But the phone started to ring before Roll could touch it.

Roll then pressed the answering button.

'Headquarters to mission number 567.

Please confirm.'

A mechanical voice came out from the car's speakers, and Roll replied to it.

"You got it right."

Together with Roll's confirmation, the call linked to the headquarters.

'Roll, can you hear me?'

This time, the boss's voice came out of the speakers.

"Yeah, I hear you. What?"

'Most likely the SDF locked down Dealbell.'

"I was about to call and inquire about this.
Did something happen?"

*'Yeah. A comrade from that branch office from over there was captured by one SDF guy.
Because of this, information about your mission's contents leaked out.'*

"What? The branch offices are full of useless people."

With these words, Roll gripped the steering wheel and made a U-turn.
Behind us, the gates that looked far away were getting even further away.

'Don't say that.'

*Precisely for times like this, I made the branch offices' configuration superficial.
The one who got caught this time was nothing but a bottom chain person. There's no
problem with it.'*

"But there is a problem after all! What do we do with the package!?"

'About that. Will you dispose of it in my place?'

"Dispose of it? What are you talking about?"

*'Inside that box is a human being, exhausted and broken from all the ability exploitation
and ability strengthening experiments.
And, as a matter of course, he can't be controlled.'*

I see. That's why he's locked up inside such a sturdy box.

*'Therefore, anytime the branch office collects experiments' scraps, they send them to the
headquarters, so that me or Tameiki could personally get rid of them inside the training
room.'*

But this time we can't do that, now can we?

*However, in case you can break through the SDF's siege together with the package, that's
a different story.'*

That's obviously impossible.

We didn't know how much the SDF's net expanded, but judging from the boss's voice,

it spread far enough for us not to be able to escape by car.

“In short, the two of us must dispose of the contents of this package, then return to the base, right?”

‘Well, since you’re already there, you can take the opportunity to finish off some SDFs as well.

Anyway, there shouldn’t be higher ranks than colonels around. You can do it without problems.’

“What about additional payment?”

‘You’ll get an A remuneration.’

“That’s too few!”

‘What are you talking about? It’s more than enough. Then, I pray for your safety.’

“I’ll come later to get my additional payment!”

‘Oops.

I almost forgot. That Sadinta was already modified, so you have to be careful. You should also change your clothes quickly so that your faces aren’t exposed.’

“What!?”

The call already ended by the time Roll said that.

“Errr.....

Did this just become an extermination mission?”

“Indeed. As always, this is just too crazy.

I assume this mission has an A+ difficulty degree now.

Besides, the package behind us is more troublesome than the annihilation order.”

“Is that so?”

I thought that getting rid of this box was an easy victory for someone like Roll.

I made a dubious expression, at which point Roll said.

“They’re going to great lengths to send this package to the headquarters so that the boss or Tameiki-san could dispose of it, you know?

Whatever the circumstances, this is not something to be transported with a D rank mission.”

Tameiki-san.

As the rumors say, this person is Anonymous’ no. 2.

I heard that they have more or less the same power level as the boss.

They seem like a dangerous person in various ways.

“For now, we must call for reinforcements.

What the hell was that boss thinking when he decided that the two of us could handle this situation.....?”

“Call for reinforcements?”

“When you conclude that a mission is too difficult to complete, you can call the headquarters for reinforcements.

But in this case, you must pay for the expenses yourself.”

I see.

However, there are not many people present there at this time.

Because everyone seemed to be busy, we ended up accepting this mission.

Besides, for the reinforcements to get from the headquarters to Dealbell would take at least 1 hour, and that’s only if they hurry.

Before my doubts could surface, Roll already picked up the phone, as she continued to drive.

The call connected rather quickly and Roll started to talk.

“Mission number 567 to Missions Office.”

‘Confirming. Mission number 567 to Missions Office.

Please wait.’

The same mechanical voice from before resounded inside the car.

The surrounding scenery was flowing.

Roll handled the steering wheel with vivid gestures, smoothly driving the car around

the tall buildings.

We probably had no destination whatsoever.

A short time later, the mechanical voice could be heard again.

'The call can be linked to the Missions Office in 5 seconds.'

"Do it."

'This is the head manager of the Missions Office. Code name <Shugyou >'

Instead of the mechanical voice, this time, the clear voice of a woman came out of the speakers.

"This is Roll."

'Roll? You're calling again because you have too much free time during a mission?

That's good. I have some free time now too so I can keep you company!

Ah, by the way, you're with your partner now, aren't you? Shion-kun, was it?

Are you there?'

"Sorry Shugyou. I didn't call you for this. Now, do your job properly.

We have 40 minutes to kill.

The difficulty degree changed from D to A+"

'Understood. I more or less heard about your circumstances. The boss is pretty much crazy.

Hmm, Dealbell.

There are only three people within a 20km radius from point H-33.

Two of them are during a mission, so it's impossible for them to reach you.

The other one is on vacation.'

"The one that's on vacation is Tameiki-san, right?....."

'It might get quite expensive, but I could dispatch a helicopter for you.

There are now about five people inside the headquarters who are free. You've got 50 minutes to kill though.'

"Do it then. Put the helicopter's charge on the boss's name."

'Roger that.'

“Later then.”

After Roll said that, the call with the headquarters ended.

Roll stopped the car in the shadow of a building, let the driver's seat down and stretched her hand towards the back seat.

She then took out two attache cases.

She handed one over to me.

“Change your clothes.”

Our first extermination mission just started.

CHAPTER 14

AN INVISIBLE SOUND

Let's reconfirm this mission's details.
There are two big tasks we got to handle.

The first one is to destroy the huge box sitting on the Sadinta's back seat. Inside this solid box there's a 'broken thing' imprisoned, the result of human experimentations. Moreover, this is a 'broken thing' that normally the boss or Tameiki-san would dispose of in person. For us to destroy this thing is rather difficult.

And the other task is to exterminate the SDF troops dispatched here, in this town. The boss said that no higher ranks than colonels are coming here, but even so we can't let our guard down. Or, how should I put it, for the boss these colonels are nothing but small fry. However, for me they're more than formidable enemies. Well, depending on the battle circumstances, I am confident that I can kill my opponent with my ability.

Our strategy meeting was fairly simple.
Roll and I both told our plans then we searched for flaws.

We gave up the plan to throw the box into the sea for the SDF might find and retrieve it. We also thought about forming two groups, with Roll getting rid of the box and me getting rid of the SDFs, but because it was too dangerous and our team coordination was not yet complete, we abandoned this plan too.

Our strategy meeting ended in less than 5 minutes.

And the conclusion was that we had to continue escaping in this modified Sadinta. With this flight, we had to buy time, about 50 minutes, until the reinforcements arrived. We also gave up changing cars because transferring the box would take too much time

and effort.

And because the SDF might have gained control of the branch office here, we could not hide in one of the bases spread in various parts of the town.

Since we didn't know how much of an end chain was the guy who got captured, we also didn't know how much information the SDF had.

The boss said not to worry about it since an end chain guy got captured, but I wonder how much of the organization's functions in this town has been lost already.

In case the locations of the bases were really compromised, this would be a substantial blow to us.

.....But well, these are just my thoughts.

At any rate, we chose the escape plan since it was the safest one.

Completing the mission was our utmost priority.

We were yet incomplete as partners in order to stick to quality.

That's why Roll made the appropriate decision and opted for running away until the reinforcements arrived.

"Next, turn left."

"Roger that."

The jet black Sadinta. The Anonymous masks.

Both of us wore identical garments as we drove the Sadinta on the night streets.

An evacuation order was already officially announced so there were not many people on the streets at this point.

Abandoned cars obstructed our way.

The SDF's net was slowly chasing after us, but we managed to somehow evade them and hold on thanks to my sound mapping.

Because I managed to pin down where and how the SDF was moving, even in this trapped state, we avoided contact and, therefore, combat.

However, the SDF was getting faster at blocking the roads.

I wonder if they found out about my ability. In order to prevent being led outside the city area, Roll occasionally scattered the SDF troops with a rotation.

It was just a matter of time until the battle started. If they come at us, we can't avoid

combat.

Still, they want to attack us in the perfect circumstances. We also want to hold back as much as possible from damaging civilians.

A little bit over 30 minutes were left.

It would be great if we could buy all this time.....

It happened right at that moment.

Roll's ears bounced up in an instant.

I also turned my head to look behind us.

A sound.

The sound of cutting through the wind.

Something is approaching us at great speed.

“They’re coming at us.”

Roll said and gripped the steering wheel.

She stepped on the acceleration even more.

My body started to suddenly shake.

“We’ll blow them off like this!

Shion, listen to the sounds!”

“Roger!”

My reply stuttered a bit.

These circumstances and the high speed made my heart pound violently.

“Combat is our last resort!

30 more minutes! We’ll hold on!”

If we engaged in battle now, we had to stop the Sadinta.

And if we stopped it, we would get trapped before long and they will open fire at us.

We would not resist the battle until the reinforcements arrive.

Besides, 50 minutes of buying time is a general estimation.

The reinforcements might be delayed for all I know.

I guided Roll through the enemies’ movements.

When the intersection with the main road came into sight something was shot at the Sadinta.

The car shook violently.

“What the!”

The sound of tires screeching.

Roll stepped on the break.

The Sadinta stopped very close to bumping into a skyscraper.

“Shion! Get off!”

I was shocked by the suddenness but Roll’s voice woke me up.

I unfastened the seat belt and quickly got off from the opposite side of the car.

As soon as I stepped on the ground, I listened closely to the sounds in our surrounding.

Two sounds were approaching us.

The floating ability user who chased after us was approaching from behind.

And the other one was coming from the opposite direction. He’s most likely the one who attacked the Sadinta.

At this short distance, even Roll could hear them.

Furthermore, I could also hear the SDF troops assembling in groups somewhere in the distance.

“The worst case scenario.

We have a bit over 20 minutes left.

We can’t fight and protect the box during this time.

These guys are so unmindful, attacking in the town area. This means they’re serious.”

“.....That... that’s right.”

My shivering reply made Roll turn over.

“What, Shion? Are you nervous by any chance?”

That’s obvious. We might die after all.

To begin with, my ability is not suited for one to one close range combat, and in case of a non-ability close range fight, I’m inferior even to a private.

However, I can’t admit being nervous for I would be embarrassed.

But I'm also worried about disillusioning Roll.

That I don't have the confidence I could fight against an excited, wild assault from a colonel class.

Without answering Roll's question, I alternately glared at the directions these guys were coming from.

"You're not too honest.

It's all right for you to stand aside, Shion. I'll take on the two of them in the vanguard."

"I'm good. I can fight."

"It's not a good plan for you to stand out here, Shion.

I want you to use *that* when the troops are closing in on us."

Roll said and stepped in the front.

All I could do was keep quiet and step back.

It's not like Roll was considerate of me, but I still could not be pleased with her protecting me like this.

However, if someone lacking skill like me would butt in, it would mean more trouble for Roll.

Kuroinu-san and the others would get mad at me.

For now, I'll hide behind Roll's shadow.

Still, I want to get strong enough to be able to protect her one day.

But I can't even imagine getting stronger than Roll.

As my thoughts quickly floated inside my head, the two assassins coming from two opposing directions got close enough for us to see them with the naked eye.

Both of them were dashing through the sky, flying towards us.

Two SDF white uniforms.

Roll took her stance, waiting for the two.

Her golden cat ears bounced up, her position was low.

Roll stood right between them, alert, preparing herself to counter.

These two attackers had a shiny silver badge of a hawk on their chests.

They were colonels.

Both of them were wary of me as they approached Roll.

The battle that seemed to start with the encounter was quietly waiting for the curtain to rise.

Tension ran through all my body when one of the colonels opened his mouth quietly.

“Surrender.....”

Roll didn't wait for him to continue. Quickly, her nails scratched the colonel's throat open and petals of blood bloomed in the air.

Before his body could collapse, she turned around.

Roll moved her target to the other colonel and seized his face, moving with such a speed that the sound could barely pick it up.

The next instant, the colonel's head got removed from his body.

Instant death.

Roll threw away the twisted head of the colonel.

Then she finished off the first colonel, who was bathing in a sea of blood at her feet, with a knife. After that, Roll took out a handkerchief from her pocket and started to wipe away the blood from her mask and hands.

When she finished, she slowly returned to where I was standing.

“.....”

Because the battle finished in an instant, all I could do was gap, my mouth wide open. Roll didn't even break a sweat.

“It's good they were newbies.

The SDF's ranks are as unreliable as ever.”

Roll said this with a cheerful voice when she came back.

“Weren't you just too strong for them.....?”

“That’s not true.

The SDF rank examination is solely dependent on the strength of the ability, so training and combat experience are not really taken into consideration. That’s why people like these are born.

Especially the wind ability users, the floaters, there are many easy marks among colonels.”

“I see.”

I’ll remember this, for the future battles with the SDF.

“Anyway, it’s not too good to make decisions based on their ranks. There are many strong fighters who are lower in rank than those colonels. This is nothing but reference for us.

There are various exceptions, so you can’t fit them all in one category.”

“Understood, master.”

“Good.”

Roll said this and opened the Sadinta’s bonnet.

The approaching sounds were still far enough.

“Roll, don’t we have enough time to take off again?”

“It’s impossible. They damaged the tires.

All we can do is wait for them here in an ambush.

For now, Shion, can you give me the water flask that’s inside the car?”

She told me and I brought it to her.

“Will you help me?”

I see. She wants to wash the blood off.

I did as she told me and slowly poured some water from the flask on her hands.

Roll washed her hands then she snatched the flask from me and brought it at her mouth.

“Thanks. Want some too, Shion?”

“I do.”

“You can drink it all.”

I drank all the water that was left and threw the empty flask inside the car.

“Well, it’s about time.

Now it’s your turn, Shion.”

A short time later Roll said this and stopped leaning on the Sadinta.

I strode past the dead body and through the sea of blood and slowly walked to the middle of the main street.

The SDF was going to be here any moment.

They were approaching from behind a tall building, from four directions on the main road and from the air.

I can already confirm those in the air by sight.

I guess I am a nice target.

However, I attracted them enough to enter my range.

Victory goes to the one who makes the first move.

I glanced at Roll.

She noticed my signal, covered her ears and opened her mouth widely.

Then, I used my ability.

140 decibels.

If you hear this volume directly, you’ll faint.

Naturally, it was a huge roar.

I can not produce this volume alone, but I can probably amplify the sound even more than this.

The greatest output that I managed to produce was a sound so violent that it released

a shock wave.

I didn't give my all, but it was a huge sound in itself.
The skyscraper's windows broke and started to fall down.
Roll already took shelter inside the Sadinta.

The floating ability users in the air fell on the ground, making an unpleasant sound.
The SDF was almost.....annihilated.

I can't kill people with this level of power. At the least, they'll die from shock.
However, if almost all of them are knocked out, they shouldn't continue to attack us.

This way, if we wait for the reinforcements and bring the box back to the headquarters
our mission will be complete.

Must we destroy the box here by ourselves?

Not necessarily. The boss said that if we can bring the box back, then it's the same.

What!? Now that we're doing it, this mission is easier than expected.
I smiled behind the mask as I walked towards Roll.

.....No, wait.

Almost annihilated?

Doesn't this mean that some of them are still alive and conscious?

This wasn't a sound that they could resist because of luck or physical constitution.

This means.....

"You're the rumored above the norm boy, right?"

So, Anonymous collected you after all."

My heart jumped up and down.

Without any warning, a man appeared behind my back.

I took out a knife from the holder at my waist right away and was about to turn around
to thrust it into this man.

However, before I could do it, he gripped my wrist and I was down on the ground before
I knew it.

A late shock ran through my body.

I don't know what he did to me.
All I know is that he threw me to the ground.

“Gaah.....”

I had trouble breathing.
With a passive attitude, he slapped me onto the concrete ground.
I somehow span my neck to see that man's appearance.
What I saw there was the smile of a rather old man and the silver badge with three stars, shining on his chest.

“It is my style to name myself even to villains.
I am lieutenant general Shiranui from the SDF.”

CHAPTER 15

THE SOUND OF RESCUE

The one who moved next was Roll.

She shortened the distance between her and Shiranui in several seconds. However, when she was on the verge of touching his face, Shiranui 'disappeared'.

Then, his voice materialized somewhere behind our backs.

"The Rolling Cat, huh? If I'm not mistaken, if you get to touch someone it's over. You have such a dreadful ability."

As I thought, it's not the sound that moves.

It's some sort of ability.

Teleportation or something?

It's impossible for me not to follow a sound.

"Well, well, I came to help and found such an unthinkable harvest.

The Rolling Cat and the above-the-norm boy. Two blessings at once, isn't it?"

Damn it. So, the SDF called for reinforcements as well.....!

There's won't be higher classes than colonels, how much of a bullshit could you utter, Boss.....!

"Shion, can you stand?"

"Ah, yeah....."

I somehow managed to raise my hurting body and I stood up.

".....Trouble arrived.

I don't know if I can win."

".....You're joking, right?"

"I'm not. Lieutenant general Shiranui is an outstanding Teleporter, famous in the

entire world.
Don't look away.
You only listen to the sound."

Roll didn't afford to look away either.
As I thought, he's a Teleporter.
I have no idea how to deal with a Teleporter, and I guess there is no way to deal with it in the first place.
At any rate, it was the worst situation possible.

Shiranui didn't move and looked at us as he let out a faint laugh.
I couldn't move carelessly either.
If I were to distance myself even a tiny bit from Roll, who is invincible in close range combat, he would hunt me down.
The reason why he isn't attacking me right now is thanks to Roll's presence.
And because Roll knows that, she's intentionally creating a space between us and him.

"Shion. If it gets extremely dangerous, don't mind me and use your full power!"

Roll didn't take her eyes off Shiranui.
She's checking him out.

"Un...understood."

The moment I answered this, Shiranui opened his mouth.

"Hmm. If you don't come at me..... For the time being, let me collect that box of yours."

".....!!"

Shiranui's laughter disappeared into the night sky.
I hurriedly turned around towards the Sadinta, where the box was stacked.

"Roll!"

The box is in danger.

"Shion, hold on tight!"

However, Roll said this and grabbed me.

Then, she started running in the exact opposite direction of the Sadinta.

“Where are you going!? The box!”

“The mission is a failure! For the time being, think only about getting away from this guy!”

Roll entered a back alley from the main road, running through a dim street.

She was sprinting at full speed.

She ran in zig-zag through the back alleys.

A full power dash. I was shaking violently, holding on Roll’s shoulder.

After we ran through the back alleys for a while, we finally stopped and she let me down on the ground.

“Haa.....haaa..... for now, we must blow up the Sadinta.....
Shion, you pay attention to our surroundings.”

As Roll tried to steady her breathing, she took out the car phone from her pocket and touched its screen.

Instantly, the sound of an explosion echoed from far away.

She blew up the Sadinta. That’s because there was various info about our organization left in there.

But, leaving that aside.....

“.....Roll, did we fail our mission?”

I timidly asked her, as she stared at the terminal phone.

“Yeah. Since that guy came, all we can do is run.

What mustn’t happen now is us getting caught by them.”

These words shocked me.

“Missions failed.....?”

I bet they'll get angry.

How should I put it..... I didn't really have any feelings towards doing missions..... but, experiencing failure and knowing the current situation was quite shocking.

More than shocking, I was afraid we did something that cannot be undone.

Which reminds me that the box contained a 'broken thing', the Anonymous' Development Department's secret clump.

Now that this thing is in the SDF's hands, they'll be more than pissed off.

We did it.

"There's nothing for you to worry about, Shion.

This time, it was the Boss' judgement error, or, better say, it was the fault of the branch office guy who got caught.

From now on we have to be able to cover for ourselves.

At any rate, don't think about this now. We better concentrate on running away."

Roll gripped the terminal phone as she spoke.

Her voice was clear but I wondered what her innermost thoughts were.

I can't grasp her facial expression behind the mask.

".....Yeah."

"I conveyed the current situation to the reinforcement team.

Since we can't escape this town on ourselves, I requested a rescue team.

They said they'll arrive in about 10 minutes."

"Understood."

After I replied, I noticed a sound that seemed to be getting close to us.

It was him.....!

"Roll, he's approaching us.....!"

The sound was irregular and scattered, but without any doubt it was getting closer to us.

Our location was exposed.

I guess they have an ability user with scouting powers in their logistical support team.

“That was fast. Let’s run away.”

Roll grabbed me quickly and started running again.
She cut the wind, running through the alleys.

She jumped over a blue garbage box, kicked the wall and changed directions.
Her speed was tremendous.

The enhancement type Stray Cat.

This kind of terrain was Roll’s playground.

Now, the sounds coming from that guy were going far off..... Or so was supposed to be.

“Yo!”

“Wha!?”

All of a sudden, Shiranui appeared in front of us and Roll immediately turned around.
However, at that speed she couldn’t turn around fast enough and Shiranui closed the distance between us in an instant.

“Kuh!”

Roll couldn’t fight with me in her arms.

She kicked the ground with great power and jumped over Shiranui’s head.
She changed directions again.

Then, she continued to run uninterruptedly.

We passed through an alley and got out on the illuminated main street.
At the exact same moment, Roll let out a shriek.

“Gaah!”

Roll tumbled down and dropped me.

“Roll!”

I stood up instantly and rushed over to Roll.

Having done so, I saw a knife stuck into her back.
Her delicate back started to pour out blood.

“Hey! Roll! Are you okay? Hey!”

“.....Guh... This isn't much for me, so I'm all right.....! Run away first!”

“Damn it!”

I somehow managed to grab the injured Roll and started to run, while carrying her along.

Still, Shiranui immediately blocked my way.

“Who would've thought that the Rolling Kitten will be brought down so easily. It's thanks to you.”

“.....!”

I thought about turning around and running away again.

But it was no good.

Even Roll got caught by him. There's no way I'm getting away.

Damn it..... What should I do!?

“Shion..... Don't mind me and use your power!”

Roll said, her breathing rough.

Yet, that was truly our last resort.

Because that would end up killing Roll.

And that is.....no good.

Damn, what should I do.....!?

I know, I have to buy some time.

I decided to buy time. When the comrades from the headquarters arrive, we still have a chance of winning.

However, how do I buy time?

As I thought about that, Shiranui's body blurred. He disappeared.

The next moment, the scenery I was looking at changed completely.
Roll's weight vanished.
And I felt a strange floating sensation.

I discovered Roll about 10 meters ahead, laying on the ground.
Down was the ground.
And a sound behind my back.

I understood in an instant.
My position was changed.

“Well now, above-the-norm boy. Let's talk a bit.”

Coincident with the beginning of our fall, I heard this coming from Shiranui, from behind my back.
When we were close to the ground, the scenery changed again.

This time, we went higher than before.

“As a result of our analysis, we found out that you manifested a dominant ability. It's a magnificent ability you have there.”

After the fall, we changed places again.
He was rising higher and higher.

“Offensive ability, spying ability, high perception. No matter how you look at it, you have a top-class ability. If you train it, you'll become an unbelievable ability user. It's rather dreadful, since you're an enemy.”

The scenery was changing, changing, changing.
He moved places repeatedly, and I ascending rapidly together with Shiranui.
Before one knows, I saw Roll standing up and starting to chase after us, climbing a skyscraper's wall.
However, she couldn't catch up with Shiranui's teleportation speed.

“Now. I'm thinking about giving you the chance to atone for your sins. You must take the extenuating circumstances into consideration.
After taking your situation into account, I understand that you didn't have anything else to do but join the Anonymous.

The SDF must've dealt with you differently too, maybe try to protect you by any means."

I saw the skyscraper's rooftop.
An unthinkable altitude.
If I fall down from this height, I'll certainly die.

"Do you want to join the SDF?
Depending on your answer, I'll decide whether your life ends or starts anew."

The annoying noise coming from Shiranui from a while ago.
A very convenient mumbo jumbo.
The reason why I'm alive right now is thanks to the Boss.
You tried to kill me, remember!?

I guess I can survive if I switch sides to the SDF.
Speaking of my real intention, I would've liked to do so if possible.
But that was before that incident.
Being able to live is enough for me.
This manner of thinking hasn't changed, but I still have my pride.
I could also lie in order to continue living.
But, instead of living because of that, I'd rather break myself down in this situation.

"Let me hear your answer."

I answered Shiranui's question.

"Bite me."

"I see. Then, you'll have to die."

He trampled down my back strongly and I started to fall at great speed.
Roll was running up the skyscraper when she entered my view.
However, Shiranui teleported right next to her.

I see. Because there was nothing I could do right now, he went to hold her down. The end, huh?

Impossible. I'll do something myself.

I took out the wire emitter from a side holder and held it firmly.

I took a deep breath.

Then, I shot the wire.

The shot wire got stuck in a fence on the skyscraper's rooftop.

Good.

I can do it!

I pressed the emitter's button lightly and stopped the reeling wire.

All that's left for me now is to somehow stick to the building's wall.

However, without warning, a knife was thrown and hit me directly in the hand.

Together with a small blood splash, I was separated from my wire emitter.

"Damn it.....!"

I turned my head around.

I saw Shiranui fighting Roll. He most likely threw a knife towards me during their fight.

"Fuck!"

It's useless.

I'm falling down.....!

I closed my eyes, halfway to giving up.

My life.... I spent it while living in vain.....

As I thought about this, I took a small breath and heard Roll's voice.

"Shion! Shion!"

I turned around and saw her running up the skyscraper's wall, while dodging all the knives coming at her.

She's already up there.

Roll kicked the wall powerfully and jumped towards my falling self.

She then splendidly caught me.

However, the ground was getting closer.

It's great that she caught me, but how does she intend to get over this critical situation!?

She dodged the oncoming knives by twisting her body.

“Shion! Get ready for the impact!”

Roll's shout made me realize how close the ground was now.

Roll fixed me in her embrace, and prepared for landing.

Don't tell she's trying to.....!

“Oi!! Stop.....! Don't do it!!”

My cry came late, because we already landed.

Still, calling that a landing was doubtful.

It felt like I landed on one cushion as I stroke the ground.

But the sound I heard at that moment wasn't the sound of my own body receiving the impact.

The detestable creaking sound came from Roll's legs.

She vomited blood and collapsed to the ground.

Because of the impact, I couldn't find my voice, but I dragged my body and crawled to where Roll fell senseless.

“.....O...i,.....Ro.....ll.....!”

Roll held me in her arms and undertook all the impact of our fall.

There's no way she's all right.

However, I can still hear her heartbeat.

She's unconscious.

The bones all throughout her body are most likely shattered.

“Futile struggle. You're going to die anyway.”

“Da....mn.....it.....”

Shiranui looked down on us, and I barely managed to voice those words.

I realized that more of the SDF's reinforcements arrived there.

There was nothing more that could be done.

Our best chance was for me to use my ability.

But that would kill Roll.

Roll would die and I would survive.

This was the best strategy as partners as well.

But there's no meaning to it if I can't save Roll.

I can still stand, right?

"Oh. That's amazing. You still want to continue, huh?

You're such a regrettable man of talent. Yet, you don't get a second chance.

Be quiet and die now."

Shiranui gripped the knife lightly.

It happened the next instant.

"Haaa....."

A person appeared together with that sigh.

A black suit.

Their frank face exposed, and an Anonymous mask in one of their black gloved hands.

At any rate, with a listless expression that person approached us.

Perhaps.....That person is the aforementioned Tameiki-san.

They coincide with the description I heard from Roll.

That presence, walking slowly but imposingly right in the middle of the main street, was approaching us.



“.....It seems that your comrades arrived.
And in addition to that, it's 'Gravity' ”

Tameiki-san was releasing an overwhelming intimidating air, making even lieutenant general Shiranui become extremely vigilant.

The battle was bound to start immediately.

One SDF soldier concealed himself behind a building.

I didn't know his rank, but he was someone who managed to survive my previous attack, so he was rather skilled. He was about to attack Tameiki-san.

However, the battle didn't start.

Or, more accurately, it already ended.

In an instant.

He couldn't even touch Tameiki-san because he turned into a cherry tomato crushed underfoot before he could realize it. He decorated the ground in a beautiful shade of red.

He was crushed flat.

“It seems that if I don't get serious right now it might get rather dangerous.....”

After Shiranui's muttering, I heard another sigh.

“Haaa.....”

The next instant. The sound of a splat!

Blood splashed on my Anonymous mask.

Timidly, I turned around to look next to me.

Having done so, I saw a bloodbath spreading far away.

“Eh?”

If I'm not mistaken, that's where Shiranui was standing a moment ago.

I was in a state of confusion when I heard another long sigh. I looked up and Tameiki-san turned around.

It's.....it's over.....?

Flabbergasted, I couldn't comprehend what just happened, when one woman appeared right next to me all of a sudden.

This woman was Shidou-san.

"Shion-kun, you did great."

I was astonished by her sudden appearance, but then I remembered Shidou-san's ability.

'Distancer'

Shidou-san can temporarily put under her control the very notion of distance.

Shidou-san brushed my head gently.

"Shidou.....san.....Ro, Roll....."

"I know that. Poor thing.

This is awful..... But we can still save her.

Chiyaku is in the helicopter, so let's return there as quickly as possible."

We can still save her.

Those words brought me relief, and I lost consciousness the next instant.



And so, our missions ended with the word 'failure'.

CHAPTER 16

THE SOUND OF CONTINUATION

I woke up in a bed inside the headquarter's medical facility.
The room was filled with the smell of drugs.

I stood there absent-minded for a few moments, then I raised my body.
What first came into my mind was questions about Roll's well-being.

What happened to Roll after that?

I quickly got out of bed and left the room.
The corridors of the medical facility were pure white. Since the air conditioning was used everywhere in the organization, it felt pretty refreshing.

I listened carefully, searching for Roll's presence.
I heard two sounds in the next room on the right.
All the other rooms were empty.

I stood in front of that room.
Is it all right to simply enter, I wonder.....?

When I thought about that, the door in front of me opened and Chiyaku-san showed up.
Chiyaku-san is a tall woman with brown hair.
She's always clad in a white rob. Her glasses are always slightly off, and she has a terrible bed hair today as well.

"Oh, Shion-kun. You woke up.
Do you feel any pain?"

I just realized that all my wounds were healed. Did Chiyaku-san heal me?
My clothes were changed too and I was wearing now something that looked like white pajamas.

"Thanks to you, Chiyaku-san, I don't feel any pain."

“Because there was an emergency with Roll, I only treated you lightly. If there are places I didn’t heal properly, please tell me.”

“It’s all right. Nothing hurts now anymore. Thank you.
.....Leaving this aside, is Roll inside?”

Chiyaku-san looked at me as I tried to peek inside the room, she smiled and repositioned her glasses.

“Yeah, she is inside. I somehow managed to save her life. It was a truly dangerous situation.

She’s already awake so you can go see her. All she did was worry about you too. Then, I’ll be off since I got work to do.
Tell Roll to earnestly rest her body.”

Chiyaku-san only said this much, then turned her back at me and started walking. Without seeing her off, I quickly opened the door in front of me.

“Roll!”

There was a bed in a corner of the room.
Roll was sitting in it, reading a book.

“Oh, it’s you, Shion. Is your body all right now?”

Roll closed the book and said this, as I approached her with unsteady feet.

“What about you, Roll, are you all right.....?”

“All my external wounds are healed. I’m quite lively now.
But my spinal cord was damaged and the lower half of my body is currently paralyzed. Even with Chiyaku-san’s powers, it will take a month to completely recover.”

Then, this means her life is not in danger anymore..... The paralysis will heal too in a month.

“Tha-that’s great.....”

“No, it’s not. This way our summer vacation will come to nothing.
sigh And there were so many things I wanted to do with you, Shion.....”

As I watched the lively Roll in front of me, I almost started crying because of relief. I somehow managed to stop the tears, which accumulated in the corner of my eyes, from overflowing.

“Why are you about to cry now!?
Geez. Someday, you’ll receive this sort of injury too, so this overreaction is kind of bothering me.”

Roll said this, trying to pretend to be tough, but I reflexively embraced her. I couldn’t hold back, no matter how deplorable this looked. Because all she did was to save me, Roll ended up in this awful situation.

“I’m sorry....., I’m so sorry.....Because of me.....”

Roll gently brushed my hair. Her hands showed kindness. And she smelled really good.

“.....It was inevitable. It wasn’t your fault, Shion.”

I had the impression that Roll’s heart was beating faster than usual. Did I surprise her with my sudden embrace?

Because not letting her go for such a long time was kind of embarrassing, a short time later I separated from her.

Since I did it reflexively, now that I thought about this embrace, I felt a little embarrassed and my face became hot.

Roll too, maybe in a lack of prudence, showed a slightly red face.

“A-ahem.”

Roll coughed once, then started to talk again.

“For the time being, while I’m not around, we can’t have you do nothing as well, so, if you receive any shade requests, you can take them.

Also, you can’t ignore your training just because I can’t see you.

As for me, I’ll devote myself to getting better.”

“Understood.”

“Also, I’ll have a lot of free time, so come visit me once in a while.”

Roll joked a little with her last words, but I answered her with a serious expression.

“I’ll visit you every day.”

“Still, you don’t have to visit every single day.”

She laughed as she replied to me, but I, nonetheless, decided to visit her on a daily basis.

I was also hospitalized in the past, so I know that staying in a hospital is really boring. All you can do is watch TV or read books.

Anyway, I have a debt to Roll that is impossible to pay back.



After that, I chatted a little longer with Roll, and she also told me about our mission’s report.

The mission ended in failure, but the Boss didn’t blame us. Moreover, he personally came to Roll to apologize.

It seems that he completely miscalculated the SDF’s reinforcements.

The box was collected by the SDF, but because we reduced their battle potential quite a bit, the Boss said we were even.

I don’t really know whether we were even or not though.

I must become stronger.

This time, I was nothing but a burden.

Supposing that Roll did this mission alone, she would’ve finished it successfully as always.

Now this Roll can’t move for an entire month.

There are many challenges I must pass.

For now, since I got permission for shade missions, I will do as many of them as I can.

I looked at my Anonymous phone terminal.

There were more than 100 mails in my inbox, inviting me for shade missions.

Until now, I refused all of them because Roll ordered me to, but I'll accept as many of them as I can from now on.

I must gather actual combat experience.

As Roll told me, I won't neglect my training, but I also want to get used to actual fighting.

Also, this user-unfriendly ability of mine.

I must learn to properly control it.

I left Roll's hospital room, and I started to walk towards the training quarters.

The time indicated on my phone terminal was 9pm.

I decided to go train for a while.

My motivation pierced through the ceiling.

I must at least become strong enough not to hold Roll back, I won't even consider otherwise.

I thought about this, as I walked towards the training room.

That's when my phone terminal's ringtone resounded.

A message.

I thought about who could've sent it, and I looked at the sender's name.

Doing so, the screen showed the characters for *'Tameiki'* next to the sender. The subject box was left empty.

A message from Tameiki-san?

I was first surprised by this, but, then, I opened it.

All that was written in the body of the message was the word *'Come'*.

