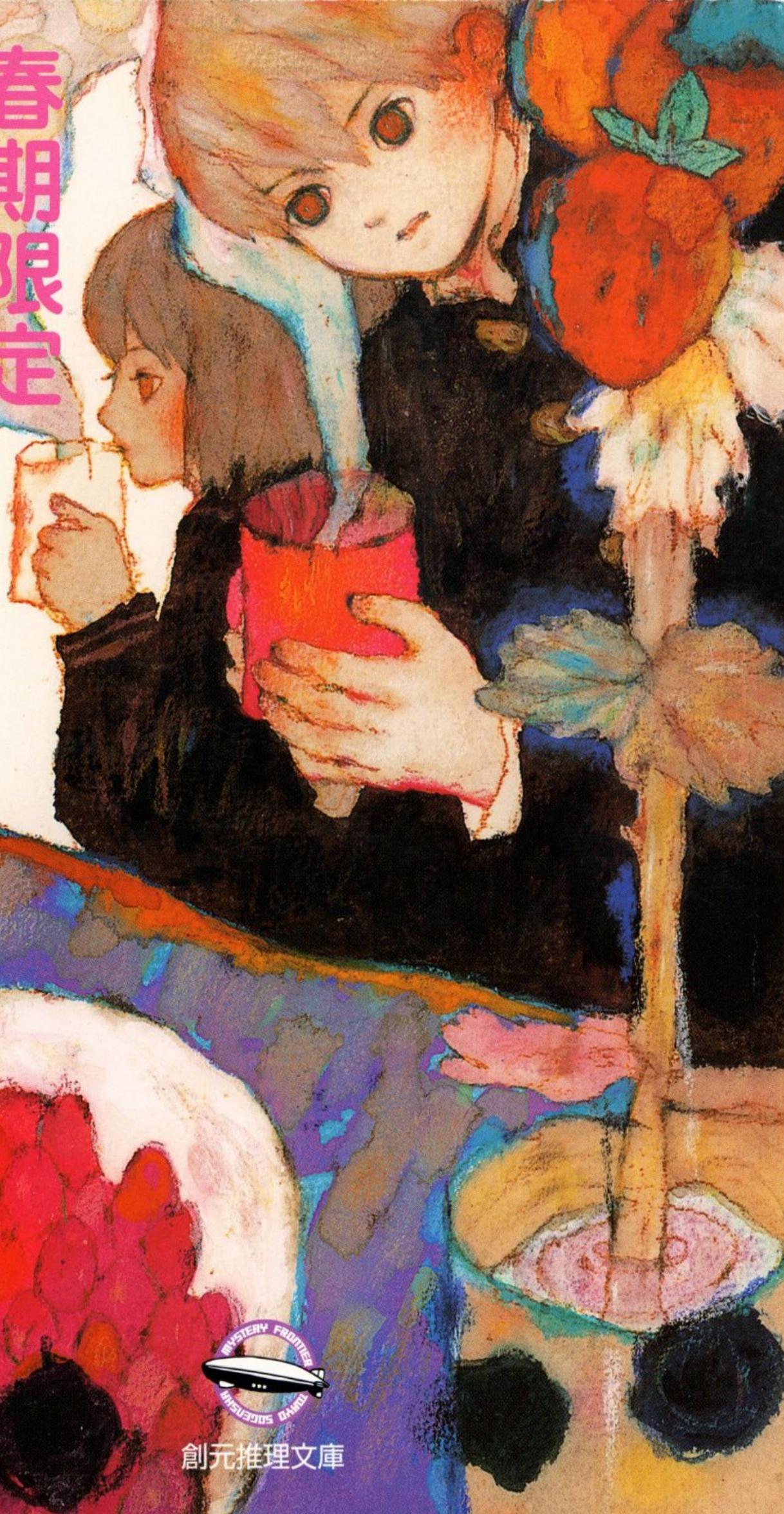


春期限定  
いちごタルト事件  
米澤穂信



創元推理文庫



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# Shoushimin Series - Volume 01 Chapter 00

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# 1 - Prologue

## Prologue[[edit](#)]

Talking about the contents of the dream from the very start might be boring, but after thinking about it for a bit, it's probably best if I start from there anyways. It's infinitely better than ending on it after all.

In this dream, I stood at the center of a large crowd, accusing one of my classmates of some crime. It was that kind of dream.

“In other words XXXXXX-kun, as is shown by the evidence, the truth is as clear as day. Just as I had initially expected, everything was easily solved in due time.

“If you still refuse to accept the fact that you have no defense, feel free to present us with some proof, if you can of course. You no longer have anywhere to run. I wouldn't say that the inclusion of the inline skates in your alibi was particularly creative, but it wasn't a bad idea either. Unfortunately, your partner dashed those plans.

“The Case of the Missing Bassist... when was that again, I wonder. The one who solved that was me, you know. Were you aware of what happened after that? A single incident regarding a flower vase falling from the music room. I was also the one who figured out that it wasn't a simple accident. And above all, the one who brought the entirety of the Sakawa Group into custody and had them meet their miserable fates was, of course, none other than I.

“And now I declare my verdict; the one who falsely accused her was you. Now then, will you accept your defeat? Or will you continue to waste everyone's time with your useless prattle?”

XXXXXX-kun dejectedly lowered his head. For a split second I wondered who he even was again, but because this was a dream, I couldn't discern anything about his outer appearance aside from his role as a criminal on trial. As I looked down upon him, I skillfully declared the case closed.

“In the end, it's not too late to repent. If you have even an ounce of sincerity left, I suggest you abide by it.”

I then turned to the crowd. As expected, I couldn't make out any of their faces, but a thunderous applause congratulated my conclusion regardless.

"Incredible!"

"I would've never imagined that!"

"To think he was the culprit after all!"

"Fantastic work like always!"

"This could only be expected of Jougorou Kobato!"

"Brilliant, brilliant!"

I raised both of my hands in response to their endless praise. I felt triumphant. He thought that he could trick someone like me with a scheme of that caliber? That line of thinking couldn't even be called shallow anymore; it was more as if a monkey had devised it. Wasn't there anyone out there that could challenge me to even a minor extent?

Well at any rate, it caused me, the actual person dreaming this, a great deal of suffering as I watched the me inside of my dream become increasingly insufferable. Almost as if acting on that feeling of mine, a single person stepped forward from the crowd as everyone continued to shout their praises.

Who was that person, I wonder. I knew so many people in my life that might have potentially said something like that to me. He, or perhaps she, had smiled and said this.

"Truly a magnificent job. Your line of reasoning was vivid, and your proof was flawless. Except, um, well, how can I put this... It's a bit difficult to say, but please bear with me as I try.

"You're kind of irritating."

Really, what an absolutely terrible dream that was. When I opened my eyes, I could feel my heart beating profusely for a good while after, so much so that it almost made me think I should go to a cardiac center.

Fortunately, it was a dream, so the impression it had initially left with me was

already beginning to fade. The various details were also beginning to disappear from my memory alongside it. Just as I had all but entirely forgotten everything about it, I suddenly began to feel like I had had another dream as well. This time however, the main character wasn't me but rather a very small girl. But in the end, I'd completely forgotten what it was about. Not even a fragment remained in my memory.

I pulled my body up from the bed. White light was shining from behind the curtains. I looked at the clock on the wall and saw that it was still early. My eyes, however, were already wide open, so I just decided to stay awake. I sat on the edge of the bed and thought about the dream I was already beginning to forget.

It's alright. The me sitting here right now is different from anything that existed in that dream. If I continue to hold my ideal image close to my heart and use a smiling face to my advantage, I should be able to attain my desired way of life. Even if it feels like I'll lose hope at some point, I still have a kindred soul at my side. A reliable friend that shares my goal.

When the time comes, I'll be leaving for high school. That said, it wasn't my high school yet. I was going to see if I had passed the entrance test, and if I did with no problems, I would start in April.

The change from middle school to high school. From what I hear, when those who are quiet in middle school finally enter high school and become wild and mischievous, that's what's called the high school debut.

There were some slight differences in our interpretation of it, but the both of us aimed for this high school debut regardless. The room around me was dimly lit. I didn't stir an inch.

That's right. Once my environment changes around me, I'll definitely be able to change myself.