

~新入社員立志編~

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悪の組織の 求人広告

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喜友名トト



The Evil Organization's Recruitment Ad

- Aku no Soshiki no Kyuujinkoukoku -

- Volume 1 -

New Employees Set Their Goals

~ Dylan ~

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– SYNOPSIS –

Komori Neito decides to leave his NEET lifestyle behind and tries applying for jobs.

He finds a recruitment ad for the premier evil organization that is always fighting against super sentai heroes, and decides to go for the job interview.

Having no skills apart from the right attitude of hating the current world, Komori starts off as a low-level minion and works his way up the corporate ladder of Metallica, the world's greatest evil organization.

CHAPTER 1

DO YOU WANT TO CHANGE THE WORLD?

TL: The tricky thing about this one is that it switches back and forth between first and third person, which is completely fine in Japanese. To make it more coherent, some of the firsts will be turned to thirds. The MC does get better. It's quite a... peculiar piece where the developments are purposely as forceful as one would find in a super sentai show. Let me say I... don't actually expect this one to be popular. I just want to translate it.

The help wanted ad was quite a strange one.

Company Name: Metallica

Industry: World Domination

Expected Salary: A regular position 700,000¥ per month. A general position 140,000¥ a month. (TL: Around 6250.00 USD and 1250.00 USD)

Qualifications: None (But experience is appreciated)

Numbers recruiting: A few

We are an evil organization with our sights on world domination! Our bright and lively workplace is awaiting your determination!

Employment: A written exam, and an interview. (We have confirmed your completion of the preliminary examination online)

An examination date and meeting place were kindly laid out.

“... The hell’s this?”

Neito unintentionally opened his mouth.

He thought it was about time for him to get a job or something like that.

With a name like Komori Neito, he thought it would be too much for him to remain a hikkikomori NEET.

So from around two hours ago, Neito had been looking through applications on the internet.

He had found himself on quite a strange site. A questionnaire, and several peculiar quiz questions were put out. And strange as it was, he couldn’t bring himself to close the tab. It had a certain intrigue to it.

What do you think about a protagonist standing against the forces of evil, who’d sacrifice the life of a single woman to save the world?

Are you happy right now?

What do you think about Oda Nobunaga and Cesare Borgia?

What is your opinion on taking hostages to attain victory?

If you had a goal you had to accomplish, would you be able to die for it?

What would you do if the boss you respected was killed?

Do you think an alien race trying to invade the earth deserves to be wiped out?

Looking at the battlefield below, please fill in the appropriate choices.

Of the following list of enemies, please select the correct order in which to defeat them.

It must have been made by someone with a lot of time on their hands. That on his mind, Neito continued filling out one answer after the next. And in the end, a question popped up.

Do you want to change the world?

Hmmm. Let's see. It doesn't look too good out there, and there wars and things like that going on in other countries, and I'm a NEET, and unpopular and a virgin, and poor and all. I do get the feeling I've lived being looked down on for a long time. When I see a radiant existence, I am sometimes pained by how far my hand falls from reaching. He thought.

And so...

YES

He answered.

The next question popped up immediately.

Are you sure?

Well it looks like they're intent on it. If you go that far, then let's give it a bit more serious thought.

Is the world really fine as it is? Everything in it remaining the same?

No, right, it isn't, right?

I had my inhibitions. The student life I had lived until last year wasn't anything decent, and it's doubtful anything good will happen from here on either. It was my own fault, I'm sure. But there are plenty of people like me out there. This world is suffocating for them to live in. Yep. As I thought, at the very least, *I* want to change the world. So I'll answer once more.

YES

He was suddenly redirected to a recruitment site. Metallica's recruitment site. He had too much on his mind for shock. Neito took his eyes off the screen, and tried to calm down.



I think the first time the evil organization came onto the stage was around twenty years ago.

The organization called Metallica was known to implement modified humans, and commit many a misdeed.

Their modified soldiers held monster-like appearances, and they were extremely strong, it seems. Even the police were unable to cope with them. For a period of time, the world had been thrown into disorder. Just what could Metallica's goal have been. Wasn't it simple world domination? That was the popular theory, and with the impact behind those words, their exploits took up the news every day.

Right after, the existence known as Dylan became the talk of urban legend. Similarly, Dylan couldn't be thought of as human, but unlike the modified beings of Metallica, he was a heroic existence, and quite a strong one at that. He prevented all of their evil doings, and was regarded as a hero.

But the populace had grown accustomed to evil organizations, and to Metallica. By the time the news report had grown tired and given up on them, quite a few different organizations had popped up. They eventually started turning to the power of mysterious beings, but instead of containing humans changed through science, they were usually some revived ancient warrior race, or aliens or beings that underwent sudden mutations, or something like that. Anyways, there were many varieties. Sabbath, Megadeath, Crimson and a number more.

Those evil organizations were in essence some suspicious urban legends or credible political organizations, or curious scientific minds. Anyways, there were a lot.

But as of yet, the world has not been dominated. The police and armies have been active, for arguments sake, but it was mostly the doing of mysterious heroes like Dylan. Existences much like his own; The Beatle, Rex, Ramone, and many more have been confirmed as individual cases, and they fought off the evil organizations. Eventually from their peculiar appearances, and their common characteristics, they were often referred to as the Rocks.

And with that trend, the people were completely used to evil organizations. The existence of heroes to fight them was now common sense.

Since such events carried out in reality, the superheroes of the studios stopped airing, but even now, children looked up to real heroes. A certain Neito looked up to them as well.

Sacrificing their own wellbeing, the warriors who fought to protect anyone. How cool must they have been? How wondrous? He respected them. The weaker and more helpless he got, the more imprisoned by society, the more he looked up to them. And on that line, he felt the groups calling themselves evil organizations were far and absurd beings.

So while he was surprised, he laughed the recruitment site off as nothing but a joke



“Or so I thought, but...”

On the interview date, he had ended up coming to the specified location.

Unthinkable for the headquarters of an organization of evil, it was in the middle of an urban business district, in a perfectly normal building. The hell.

If he was to give an excuse, it was half pure curiosity. If someone went through such lengths to give a user a shock, then perhaps some elaborate event was in store, he thought. Yep, that was all.

He hesitated to enter. He ended up loitering in front of the building a while. It was cold. As the site had indicated, he had even worn a black necktie to distinguish himself, yet he couldn't help wonder why he was even there to begin with.

Am I an idiot? He thought, as he began walking the way home.

As he turned he noticed a girl pass him by. Her silky hair cut neatly at her shoulders swayed. A slightly slim build, and porcelain white skin. Her chest was on the lacking side, but her pink and shapely lips alongside her gentle eyes made her quite a beauty. His sights were caught in the illusion of pure wind blowing past her.

Ah, how cute. Not that she has any relation to my life.

He thought to himself, as he continued walking past; but there Neito noticed a certain characteristic, causing his body to stiffen.

A black... scarf...!?

A black scarf for women, and a black necktie for men. That was what had been written on the site. And that scarf stood out quite a bit from the standard formal wear she clad over her body.

Was this child reeled in by that site? Does that make her an idiot too?

What to do. Should I try calling out? No, that ain't gonna work. Let's just stop there.

Neito's internal conflict ended in futility. Unexpectedly, it was the girl to call out first.

"Ah, good day."

Unthinkable of one who had come to take an evil organization's examination, a polite and sweet voice.

"G-good day."

He replied as such with all his might. But the girl paid no mind to that, and continued.

"... You've come to take Metallica's employment examination, haven't you?"

Her smaller build leaned in, as if to get closer to the answer. By inevitability, her eyes were upturned.

Dammit that's cute. Please stop. Ah, she asked something, right? I have to answer.

"... Yes."

He wrung out that answer.

And receiving those words, her face lit up. A radiant smile. He began to realize why the people of old had decided to describe a smile as such.

“Thank god! Me too!! I didn’t see you at the preliminary examinations in America, so I was a little worried.”

Huh? America? Preliminary exams? What’s this girl saying?

“Yes... well... pleasure to meet you.”

“If it’s okay with you, would you go with me to the meeting room? Being alone is a little... worrisome...”

He had no idea what was going on.

Maybe it was an elaborate fraud. That’s why they hired a girl of her appearance.

He felt compelled to think that.

“Ah, I’m Mayuzumi Maki. Pleasure meeting you.”

The etiquette in her bow were enough to make him think he heard a dramatic sound effect. Along with that, her cuticles rustled. A peach-like smell entered his nose. He didn’t know if it was shampoo, or perfume, or perhaps even her original scent.

Ah, I don’t care anymore. It’s not like I have anything to lose. Yep, let’s try following the cutie. I don’t even have enough money for fraud to be effective.

And since he had first seen that recruitment site, the words had remained on his mind.

Do you want to change the world?

He had answered YES.

Perhaps it had been foolish, but in some part of him, he had always felt that way. That's why he had answered.

"Yeah. L-let's go."

The girl called Maki received those words, and grinned. And she let some outrageous words from her own mouth.

"Yes! I hope we both get a position! Let's work together to conquer the world!"

Yep. This might be a little bit bad.

CHAPTER 2

AH, YES

Together with the girl, who had named herself as Mayuzumi Maki, Neito headed for the employment interview meeting hall of the Evil Organization Metallica.

“... Hey, um...”

The situation was just too strange, and he couldn't help but open his mouth.

“? What is it?”

Maki tilted her head a bit to the side.

Don't you find it strange Metallica is conducting an interview in such a normal business district?

In the first place, should they really be putting out help-wanted ads like a standard corporation?

I was tested online, but you said something about a preliminary examination in America right? And also... what exactly are you supposed to do after joining an Evil Organization?

He had too many things to ask, that on the contrary, the words wouldn't come out at all.

“Ah~ no, it's nothing.”

“? Oh, you're nervous, aren't you! That's alright... I'm the same. Let's do our best.”

Likely misunderstanding something, Maki made a clenched fist, and held it up in an encouraging pose.

“Ah, yes. You’re right.”

He could only answer as such. And he headed into the building set for the examination. A normal building on a normal street. Metallica LLC wasn’t written anywhere on it.

But he noticed one peculiar thing about it. While it was a weekday in a standard office district, there was no one around but Maki.

Strange. That was quite clearly strange.

When he entered the building, there was an arrow guiding to ‘M Corp’s’ employment examination. The clean and tidy office was the very definition of a major corporation.

“For real?”

After showing the receptionist-esque person the admission ticket and proper identification papers, they were let through to the waiting room.

By the way, the receptionist was, for argument’s sake, a large breasted older woman.

On her chest area was a stylized name tag. It was enclosed by a flower-like design with wings, making it look like quite an official company badge.

The woman smiled, and spoke.

“Welcome to Metallica. Please do your best in today’s examination. We’re always waiting for comrades to fight alongside us.”

The waiting room was already filled with several tens of people.

Neito himself had just become twenty, but the rest were quite varied.

A gangster-ish old man who clearly didn't come from a respectable business.

A punk rocker whose ears were pierced wherever space would permit.

An intelligent-looking young man in glasses.

A skin headed giant noticeably a foreigner.

A young handsome man who could pull off quite a dashing suit.

"Yeah, I'm done."

He whispered that quietly. Perhaps it was shock, or maybe something else.

He decided not to make remarks on any of the finer details. While he didn't really get what was going on, at the very least, he knew that some sort of interviewing was going to be going on for some sort of corporation.

He had thought it would be a joke. But a little, in just a very small part of his mind, he did consider that it was the real deal. That's why he had come all the way here. In that case, shouldn't the current situation have been just as he had hoped for?

It was his chance to escape NEET life. The income was also quite nice.

Of course it was. Can you not call this a first-rate business known worldwide as best in the field?

It's a little questionable with it being an Evil Organization and all, but it's not likely to get any worse than this. Probably.

Hey, I'm home~ Daddy's home.

Oh my, welcome home dear. How was work today?

No~ well, we were doing a little bit of demolition around the prime minister's office, and it was quite a hard job, you see. Well, I can't go against the department chief's orders after all.

Right. That must have been tough. The bath's been drawn already, if you want to use it.

D-dad, welcome home~ um, you see! Next birthday, I want a PS4!

(TL: This was released before PS4 was, as in this being a vision of the future)

Yeah~. How about that. I'll get a bonus if the Oceania oppression plan succeeds, so I'll consider it.

Wow! Yay! It's a home run!

Hahaha, ya' little squirt.

It's not like he wasn't able to fathom such a household situation.

Neito thought about it, and decided to spend his day on the first examination.



The morning was occupied by a written exam. He was first put to solving mathematical puzzles, of which he couldn't really do. Next he was to read a text, and give his answers to word problems.

Fitting of an evil organization, the contents were all over the place. Something like this even popped up.

Circumstance has led to you fighting with a heavyweight boxing champion in the room pictured below. How would you carry out this battle? Please look closely at the picture. But please understand that if the champion has not been killed, you will die.

The picture contained a man of color absolutely brimming with motivation, and behind him were machine guns and knives, and various other things that could be used as weapons. Yep.

He answered it as follows.

The probability of victory is low, and it doesn't look like I'll be able to run, so I'll give up. Because no matter what I try, one hit, and it'll be down for me, and I won't be able to stand for a while. So for now let's count that bout in the room my loss. Then the next day, use the cover of night, or poison to kill him off.

Now I understand that may not really answer the question. Perhaps the champion has to be beaten in that room for it to count. But look here, if a killing match took place in that specific room, then I'm definitely going to be the one dead. So there's no helping it.

When it all comes down to it, isn't it fine as long as the champion is dead in the end?

The questions were all like that.

He had no idea how he was doing on those ones, but he just wrote down whatever came to mind, and filled them all in.

Next was the interview. It was a group interview, it seems, and he was set to wait in the waiting room a while. There, he managed to get a seat beside Maki.

Yeah~. I have to say something, don't I. The reason such thoughts came to mind was because it had been quite a while since Neito had last conversed with a woman, and it goes without saying he sucked at it.

This is bad. What do I do? She isn't reviewing or anything, and she's just sitting and sipping tea with an uneasy face as she waits her turn. Is it that, you know that, she

wants to hear something considerate. I... I have to think of that something first...! I don't think I'm hated yet! If I give her a good impression of myself here, then maybe...!

“M-Mayuzumi-san! I-I don't think yyyyou have to be so nervous!”

The voice he finally got out had completely turned coat on him.

Maki opened her eyes wide, and after a while...

“... Pwa, ahahahaha. Aren't you the nervous one here, Komori-san? That was quite a voice you put out there, you know?”

Bitch, do you know how hard I worked to put out the voice you laughed at...

Wasn't on Neito's mind at all. From his point of view, that was a successful conversation in itself. He had gotten her to smile, so he was satisfied for the time being.

“No... well... yes, I'm also nervous, but...”

“Yeah. I am as well... but thank you! Because of that, I think I've calmed down a little. Let's do our best.”

When she said that, his spine suddenly straightened. Small as she was, she gave off quite a dignified air.

“Ah, come to think of it, I'd prefer it you called me Maki. I'm not that used to people calling out my surname.”

Oh, if it's that pattern, then the response is...

"U~m... un derstood. Maki-san. Then I'm fine with Neito as well."

"NEET? ... That's quite a strange name you have."

"It's Neito."

"O-of course. It was a joke. I knew that already, okay?"

Her face was a little pink. Yeah~. How nice. Neito couldn't help but think that. At that moment, the door opened, and a person that looked to be a Metallica staff member called out.

"Komori-san, Mayuzumi-san, Ikeno-san, Suzuki-san, Smith-san, please step in."

It seems the time had come. Come to think of it, he was still in the middle of an evil organization's exam, wasn't he?

"Yes!"

Maki gave a spirit-full reply as she stood from her seat.

"I hope we pass together!"

The girl said that with straight-forward eyes. Now if I just think of this as an airline or media company, and think of this exam as something perfectly normal, then...

“Y-yeah.”

For now, that’s all he could answer.

The interview hall had two middle-aged men, one elderly man, and one woman. They were probably on management.

Of the men, one was wearing a lab coat-ish uniform and an eye patch. Perhaps he was representing the mad scientist side of things.

The other middle-aged one was in good physical shape, with his long hair tied up behind. A trench coat, and even gloves. Was he a fighter?

The old man had white hair, and it was as if he was audibly giving off the aura of a mild mannered grandfather. Is he a bigshot? No, is he purposely misleading?

For some odd reason, the woman looked like a sexualized secretary.

Neito had never undergone an interview, even for part-time work. HE couldn’t help but feel nervous.

By the time it had started, he couldn’t tell what was going where. It took all his might for him just to listen to the exchanges of the other interviewees.

“Ikeno-san, would you please state your aspirations in entering our company?”

It seems that handsome one’s going first. Do even evil organizations respect them? His head turned around such pointless things, as the man called Ikeno fluidly gave his reply.

“Yes! As long as I can remember, I’ve held interest in your organization’s business policy! While working in an industry with much competition, you have continued to

be the top of the market since your founding, and I'd very much like to partake in that vigor! While the goal of world domination may be a grand and distant one, I think the profits that can be reaped from the processes now will prove necessary for your company when it comes time for the twenty second century. I wish to apply to become a part of that driving force for the future!"

Oy, oy, what the hell.

"I see. You have quite some motivation there. Then please state your PR and the department you're hoping to enlist in."

"Yes! In my father's company, I've worked in France from a young... (text omitted) where I went to college overseas, and majored in modern warfare (text omitted), and in my high school years, I went to the nationals for kendo, and..."

The self-advertisement continued.

Is that guy for real? Neito found himself on the verge of clicking his tongue. So he's a rich kid from a nice place, handsome, a sportsman, and a scholar? Go die. Why the hell are you applying to Metallica? Go apply to an advertising firm already.

"I plan to contribute no matter what department I'm stationed in, but I want to join the planning department to draft up invasion plans involving mysterious creatures!"

Oh~ I see. Now isn't that nice. Go die.

Ikeno finished talking, and next up was Maki's turn.

"I want to triumph over your industry's rival-like existence, the Rocks. I wanted to aid whatever plans you have against them, and that is why I have applied."

Rocks... ah, those heroes, right. She sure is a strange one. Aren't heroes supposed to be everyone's aspirations? She's cute, but as I thought, she's a bit strange. I mean of course she is. She's applying to an Evil Organization after all.

"I skipped grades, and graduated from America's MIT, and I hold two PhDs. I think I will be useful to the maintenance and improvement of your company's resident mysterious creatures."

But she sure is cute~. And smart too. Amazing. Even so, cute.

In a situation so far-removed from reality, all little Neito could do was send his mind to some far-off land.

"Well then, Komori Neito-san. Please state your reasons for applying."

He was suddenly snapped back to reality. His first interview. A large company, and evil at that. The expansive personal records of the other candidates. While he was a timid and incompetent NEET. All the conditions were assembled for well-deserved panic.

"I was d-deeply impressed by your company's ideals..."

"And of what ideals do you speak of?"

"That is, um... well..."

"Do you have a hobby or specialty?"

"... My hobby is the internet, and specialty... well... I'm level three at the abacus."

"... I see. That's enough."

It's all over. It wasn't just Neito, the other applicants thought the same.

Maki was taking some fleeting glances at him, and Ikeno was enduring his urge to grin.

Yep. Interview over. Even for evil organizations, finding a job is hard if it's a major enterprise.

In the first place, me being here was already out of place. Yes, let's just have some curry on the way home. It was at the moment when Neito had finished changing his train of thought.

The old man who had remained silent up to now opened his mouth.

"I believe you came from the public offering, right?"

The old man's question seemed to generate quite a stir.

The public offering likely meant that website. Based on his way of speech, that meant the others present were different. And based on this clamor, that must be quite a strange thing.

"I saw it on the net... and..."

"I see, I see. Then I have my own question for you."

The old man's words were gentle and kind. As if to put you at ease as you listened to them. But that in itself was scary.

"You want to change the world. You answered that online, did you not?"

The words not coming out, Neito could only nod.

“You want to change the world. Even if that means to destroy the current one?”

? This man sure says some strange things. Now isn't that obvious. Damn realers, damn conglomerates, damn elites, damn handsome guys. Each and everyone one of them can go get Hyahhah'd and drop dead. After a little while, Neito gave his answer.

(TL: The term go get Hyahhah'd, refers to the standard laughing sound thugs in the wasteland make before they meet, and try to fight a certain master of the Hokuto Shinken. I really don't know how to translate this one.)



Maki felt a little relieved as her turn to speak game to an end.

But that feeling was quite a fleeting one indeed.

The boy she had just met today, Neito-kun.

The responses he gave were simply too terrible. To be blunt here, he didn't look like someone who should be there to take the Metallica exam at all. An exam outside the knowledge of the common man, and where only the greatest of elites in every field and other special people were offered listings. It's not like she was looking down on him, she just found it all quite strange.

As his interview continued to go downhill, she struggled to contain her restlessness.

But after that, she found herself a little surprised. Of all things, he had passed the public offering's criteria, and come all the way to the final interview point. She had heard of it in rumor. That unlike those that had to take a number of difficult examinations to reach this stage, there was an unspecified number targeted online that could take a back-door route.

What was needed to find the public offering was a large amount of luck. And to pass the public examination, it seems there was but a single quality that had to be in abundance. There was only ever a single person to be chosen through the public offering. This is only the talk of rumor, but the online examination was said to be one personally written by Metallica's big boss.

Just a single quality. Evil. That was all.

Neito didn't look like a villain. If she had to say, he was reserved, and shy, and a little awkward. That's how she had been looking at him, and she did have a bit of a favorable impression

So learning he had passed the public offering evaluation, and come all the way here was truly a surprise.

After that, the only elderly person in the room asked Neito his question.

If he wanted to change the world, even if it meant destroying the current one.

Maki felt a shiver run down her spine as she heard the interviewer's question.

Everyone out there had their own dissatisfactions with the world. Doesn't that mean they want to change it to some extent?

But even at the cost of the current world? Was there anyone out there who could give an immediate reply from the bottom of their hearts?

It was something different than just answering everyone should die! With lighthearted feeling. Right?

The old man interviewer's voice had something in it that drew out the true intentions of its listeners. She knew Neito wouldn't tell a lie.

Even if Maki had been given the very same question, she thought that she would have to answer, 'I don't know.'

Ikeno san sitting beside her would likely answer, 'of course,' with it being an interview and all. Or so he'd try, but with this amount of pressure, she doubted he'd be able to say anything at all.

Neito-kun... Even with it being her interview as well, Maki ended up looking his way. He raised his face, and answered. Much too plainly, too naturally.

"Ah, yes."

And at that moment, his expression was simply too natural. But around the boy who looked a little unreliable, for just a brief moment, she thought she saw a jet black flame. It was weak, and faint, but definitely there.

She felt she was being drawn into the depths of his eyes.

Hm... huh...? Why am I... huh?

A moment late, Maki noticed the heightened beating in her chest.

The moment the interview ended, Neito immediately went on his way home. Embarrassed, he didn't want to remain there any longer. It's over. I've failed.

At first, I thought it was a joke, or a scam of an employment exam, but for me to fail so miserably at the real thing... Anyone'd get depressed. Let's go get that curry. He thought as he walked down the hallway.

"U-um! Neito-kun!"

If you call out to me, I'll turn around. My social ability isn't that low, though it isn't high enough to pass interviews. He couldn't help but beat himself up inside, but it's not like Maki had done anything wrong. So while that was going on in his head, he made sure to greet her as calmly as he could.

"Good work back there... Do your best in Metallica. I'll be cheering for you."

When he answered like that, Maki looked down, and fidgeted. She grabbed the hem of her skirt.

? Does she have to use the restroom?

"N-Neito-san, aren't you entering the company too..."

A kind person. Feeling Maki's kindness, his despair and shock only increased.

Perhaps this girl would have been my coworker had I passed... he thought.

"Haha... nope, not happening. There's no way that one would get me through."

"Please don't say something like that."

Neito thought a bit. About why this person would say such things.

Ah, I see. She feels sorry because she's the one getting the position.

Oh don't worry~ you don't have to pay mind to something like that. I can't think of you as a person joining an evil organization. Please marry me.

“Then, I’ll be off.”

He felt apologetic for making her so mindful. Neito spoke curtly before walking away.

On that day, in the main underground headquarters of Metallica, a meeting was being held.

“So we can take on Ikeno-kun and Mayuzumi-san, right?”

“Right. Ikeno is qualified enough, and Mayuzumi is... cute, after all.”

“You always bring it to that. Mayuzumi-san is also more than qualified. Just look at her history.”

“Come to think of it, what are we doing about that Komori kid?”

“I mean, it’s just the standard, we deeply apologize, but we are unable to... shtick, right?”

“Wait.”

“Ah! ... What are *you* here?”

“Oh, I just thought I’d put my mouth into the employment meeting a bit.”

“Something wrong?”

“That man called Komori. He’s quite an interesting one. You’d be hard pressed to find a loser aura of that extent. The losing team, or something like that? Right now he’s just a brat sulking at the world, but if you polish him up, you might find a gemstone in him. Can’t you put him in with respect to me?”

The meeting lasted two hours.

And another two hours after that, a single letter was delivered to Neito’s doorstep.

“How rare. Mail for me... hm... eh? Huh? Fo realz? Let’s just look over the contents again and.... Whooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooh!!!!”

From April onwards, I’ll be an Evil Organization’s new hire.

It was a phrase that he felt would make him burst into laughter if he said it aloud, so he decided to whisper it in his heart.

CHAPTER 3

APPOINTED POSITION

After the employment notice had arrived, a few months had gone by. Naturally enough, Neito had spent them quite restlessly. He tried loitering around the insides of his house, suddenly took up weight training as he watched anime, and thought to tell one of his few acquaintances about his employment, but the latter was a bit too great a hurdle. It was an evil organization, after all.

Come to think of it, what would I even be doing at work? Probably something like planning out and drafting criminal acts.

Right after I had gotten the acceptance letter, I had sent in a positive reply at the prospects of employment, but looking back, I never really confirmed the specifics of my duties, or my standing or anything like that.

Let's look over the documents again. No, perhaps muscle training first? And so he spent his time, and eventually the day of his formal entry came upon him.

The designated location was a building in the same district as the interview hall. Perhaps this was their public guise. Is it a separate enterprise Metallica made as a dummy?

The receptionist was the same large-breasted woman from the interview. I was too nervous back then to pay much attention, but looking closely, she's quite something. Waved chestnut hair, and kind eyes. An older sister character.

Does it feel good here? Oh, me? I could imagine the words from her mouth.

“Welcome to Metallica. Please make your way to the conference room♪. You will be undergoing guidance there today.”

Her voice was quite comforting on the ears. Maybe it would be best if she wasn't assigned to receptionist work, and was transferred to honey trap some influential politician. Or so Neito began to boorishly fantasize.

This goes without saying, but there were new hires apart from him. It's not like he was skilled at dealing with people, and he didn't have fond memories of his classmates, or peers. So what he was really hoping for at the moment, was that his fellow new recruits were nice people.

Due to the peculiar nature of the company, he knew he was praying for a contradiction. Come to think of it, was Maki there? The thought crossed his mind.

“Ah.”

But when he entered the room, the one there wasn't Maki. A slender and tall figure, of refined features, in an expensive suit.

It's that guy. The one who was with him in the interview. The high-spec handsome one.

“Um~...”

The handsome man also sent him a glance.

“Huh? So you were accepted?”

It was a tone that spoke lengths in itself of how surprised he was. But Neito himself felt the same, so he could understand the sentiment.

“Eh, ah, yeah.”

The man stared at him intently.

He had mentally told him to die a few times in the interview, but they were going to be working together from here on. If possible, Neito wanted to be able to get along.

“... Hmm~. Well. Good for you, I guess. Regular? General?”

Metallica’s employees were largely divided into regular posts, and general posts.

“Yes, general for me.”

“Ah~ yes, yes. I see. That’s nice.”

The wage prospects of the two were quite a ways apart. They were just about as separated as a pilot and a taxi driver.

The air turned a little uncomfortable.

And with that timing, the door opened.

“Good day... Ah! Neito-kun! You were accepted! That’s great~!”

The one who entered was Maki. Her hair had grown a little since he’d last seen her at the interview, and its flaxen sheen made it look even more appealing. The tension of the room somehow cleared a bit.

“T-thank you, so you also got in Maki-s”

“Oh, so you were hired as well. I was sure you would be.”

The handsome face was the faster of the two to call out to her.

“Thank you, u~m, likewise, Hotokeno-san!”

“I’m Ikeno.”

Halleluiah. She totally remembered me. Neito rejoiced inside, but didn’t show it on the surface.

That aside, it looked to be that the three gathered were the only ones who made it. After a while, the same receptionist from before entered with a man who looked to be an official.

“Everyone’s gathered. Then we will be moving on to announcing assignments, and guidance.”

Neito hadn’t found employment since he graduated. Of course, it was the first time he would have his assignment decided for him.

The fact he was employed to begin with means they had evaluated some ability of his, and they were sure to send him to a job suited for that. He himself hadn’t the slightest idea what he could do, but still, he couldn’t contain his excitement. The official man started listing off in a low voice.

“Ikeno Reiji. You have been assigned to the planning department’s first planning division.”

“Yes.”

Oh~. So he had a name like Reiji? What did the planning department do again? He does look quite smart after all. Amazing~.

Is it that? Does he plan the assassination of VIPs, and the strategic points to blow up?

“Mayuzumi Maki. You have been assigned to the General Affairs Department’s General Affairs Division.”

“Yes!”

“By the way, I’m also on general affairs. I’ll be sure to guide you kindly.”

So Maki-san’s in general affairs? She said she wanted to improve the mysterious buildings, so I think she wanted to be in the R&D department. But still, for her to be in the same branch as the receptionist... Isn’t that just perfect? General affairs~. Is it a place the pretties are deployed to? Maybe it’s the place I’m supposed to drop by to turn in a receipt.

Now then, it was Neito’s turn next. From what he could remember, it had been quite a while since his heart had danced so much.

“Komori Neito. You have been assigned to the General Affairs Department’s affiliate Misc. Division.”

“Y-yes.”

?? Miscellaneous? What’s that supposed to be again? Neito tried to recall all the company documents he had read through.

He got the feeling they were written of in the smallest corner of a page.

“That is all. Ikeno, Mayuzumi, proceed to the new employee training course at once!”

“Yes!”

?? Training course? It’s been bothering me for a while, but Ikeno and Maki both had trunk cases with them. Large ones at that, as if they were going off on a trip.

“While your destination may be Hawaii, please remember that your purpose is training. Don’t get too lively.”

Hawaii? To Neito, it was a bolt from the blue. He hadn’t prepared for that at all. And wait, he didn’t even have a passport. Was anything like that in the pamphlet? Crap, a huge mistake right off the bat? Before he could fly into a panic, he decided to be upfront about it.

“Um... my preparations... are...”

The official showed off a questioning expression as he continued.

“Its standard for the Misc. Division to proceed straight to the work site.”

“Hah?”

“Do you understand the Miscellaneous Division’s purpose?”

“... No. I’m sorry.”

“Well, to be direct, they’re combatants. Though they’re in charge of handling odd jobs as well. Haven’t you ever seen them on TV?”

Yep. I sure have. Those ones wearing black-ish clothes and peculiar masks, those guys. They appear alongside the mysterious beings, and get beaten black and blue by the Hero, those guys. Those guys that more often than not take on the police.

Those guys that make the children burst into tears. So those were normal people doing that?

Well damn. This is quite bad. Neito's tension dropped off all at once.

I don't mean to brag, but I don't have any fighting experience. Being sent off to the work site without any training at all? For realz?

"Ah, I see. You have it rough. You general workers. Well, have at it. Mayuzumi-san, shall we be off?"

Ikeno no longer seemed to think anything of young Neito.

Maki nervously called out.

"D-don't worry about it! Neito-kun! Well... um... they say that work is experience over theory, don't they!"

This girl reminds me a bit of a loyal dog. Or so an irrelevant thought flew across his mind.

"Komori. Your post will be..."

The contents weren't entering his head.

Komori Neito

Metallica LLC, Miscellaneous Division General Worker (Monthly Salary 135,000¥)

CHAPTER 4

HEY YOU GUYS, LET ME HIT YOU

The day after the welcoming ceremony. As instructed, Neito proceeded directly to his station at the Miscellaneous Division.

To be more precise, it was one of the many Miscellaneous Division branches spread out across the country. In an area on the outskirts of town overflowing with arehouses, it was a place that gave off the feeling of a backstreet workshop.

He had slowly started to understand it, but the facilities and people of the Evil Organization Metallica all had separate titles for public eyes.

There were ten people stationed at his worksite. The highest ranked was the supervisor. The members there were all wearing work clothes, and it didn't look to be that they were doing any work.

“I will be in your care from today onwards. My name is Komori. Please treat me well!”

Neito had put quite a bit of effort into his self-introduction on his own part, but the reactions to it were questionable. An atmosphere as if to say, well good for you.

“Komori-kun, it's exceedingly rare for a general worker to be taken on by the main branch. Um, how should we handle this...”

In that atmosphere, the supervisor looked around, and called out to a young and stour man.

“Oy~. Eda-kun. Can you look after young Komori-kun?”

The man called Eda painstakingly clicked his tongue, before standing.

“Eh? Me~... tsk, I understand. Oy, fresh meat. Come o’er here.”

Eda lit a cigarette, and sluggishly called over to Neito.

What’s with this guy? Can he act as a combatant with that weight of his? And wait, is it really fine to smoke normally at work?

A word that had been coming up a lot lately ran across his mind.

Sweatshop.

Come to think of it, everyone in the Misc. Division was a general worker, it seems. A dangerous job with low wages, and in the first place, they were something of sacrificial pawns to the Evil Organization. There’s no way their work environment would be a good one. Is there even a concept of morals?

Will it just be those guys who couldn’t even become thugs or gangsters, so they though, oh well, let’s go off and join Metallica, then?

He didn’t have a regular position like Maki or Ikeno. With its vast power, Metallica committed its heinous acts on a global scale. They were the elites to manage the grand task. While a commoner like Neito wasn’t aware of it, the organization only hired those sorts from the zenith of every field, and up there, its existence and operation as a company was common sense. They were a major enterprise with world-level

influence. While the contents of their business were a bit special, it was understandable why so many elites gathered.

Even so... there was too much a gap, was there not?

“Oy, fresh meat! What’re you standin’ around there for?”

The jeers of the fatty came my way.

“Y-yes! My apologies!”

“Can ya’ use a gun?”

“Eh? No, I cannot.”

“Well ‘n, you do any martial arts er somethin’?”

“No... not really.”

“Can ya’ at least make explosives?”

“...”

After the series of questions, Eda loudly scratched his head as he muttered.

“... Useless...”

“Eh?”

What an unbelievable workplace. Neito had yet to do anything, but he already wanted to turn and go home.

“List’n here. Make sure you’re able ta do somethin’ by tomorrow. I’m busy, so go try ‘n pick somethin’ up on yer own. Weapons besides guns are o’er in that there locker. You’ll need ta submit an application if ya wanna handle guns er expolsives.”

Putting out the cigarette that had burned close to the base, Eda spread out a sports newspaper, and the conversation was over. Or at least, that’s what his attitude stated.

Astonished as he was, there’s no way Neito could oppose. For starters, he went and opened up the locker, and tried following orders.

From there, a few hours passed, but in that timeframe, the only words Eda sent over were, ‘can you go buy me a juice?’ alone.

A little later, regardless of work hours, Eda pulled out his phone.

“Oh? Ya’ done now? Eh? For real? For really real!? How many were ya’ up against? Ooh, nice. Reeaaal nice~. OK, the bar ‘n front of the station, right? Well ‘n, seeya there.”

“Um... Eda-san...?”

“Yeah, nice work.”

Eda left quite naturally.

For reals... that fatty... went and left. They what exactly do you expect me to do? There should be some sort of limit to evil, shouldn’t there?

Besides being at a loss, there’s nothing a NEET could do here.

The same situation continued on to the next day as well. On the third day, Eda made a proposal, as if he had just remembered it all at that moment.

“Come ta think of it, did you get to be able ta use ‘t? Have a practice battle with me next week.”

“Hah?”

That was quite a sudden utterance there. What’s that supposed to be. A practice battle?

“Practice battle... in what exactly?”

“Huh? I said it, didn’t I? It’s something the Misc. Division does with its new recruits. If you end up no good, it’s the pink slip. I’m going home here, but make sure ya clean up before ya call it a day.”

The scene before Neito’s eyes went pitch black. Well, he understood the rule. There’s no helping it if a rule like that was made. If anything else, this was the lowest tier that actually did the active work. There’s no helping it if you turn out to be no use at all. If you went off to battle like that, there’d be no helping death. It would be something like a final examination after a trial period.

Yes, I get that part. But.

Then what exactly am I supposed to do? Since I got assigned here, I haven’t been told to do anything but get juice, and clean up.

Even if he looks like that, Eda’s worked for Metallica’s Miscellaneous Division for two years. And even if that was his first venture into the world of crime, his battle prowess was, at the very least, over mine.

Rather than that, perhaps Eda anticipated all of that, and therefore didn't train me at all.

This is bad. Way too bad. At this rate, I'm going to be beaten left and right, sustain serious injuries, and get cut to top it all off.

"... Maybe it's over for me."

Left behind, Neito couldn't help but mutter.

Fine. I don't care, I'll just quite a company like this. With such thoughts running through his mind, he went and took a mop in hand, and began to clean. The company had shown him a small ray of hope after all. He'd pay it back at the very least.

"Still so young. You can go home for the day."

To Neito, one of the workers. A middle-aged man he hadn't talked with much before. Neito got the feeling his name was something along the lines of Manaka Toshio.

"No, but cleaning's still..."

"You don't have to worry about something like that. It's not too dirty to begin with, right? You just cleaned it up yesterday after all."

How surprising. He was sure no one had paid the slightest mind to how he cleaned the place.

"You haven't eaten anything today, have you? I'll treat you, so keep me company for a drink."

This is that. That workplace bonding thing. Neito hesitated a bit. He had, for argument's sake, reached the legal drinking age, but he had yet to go out drinking with another human being, let alone a coworker from the same company.

"Sure..."

He gave a powerless reply. Manaka was different from Eda. He looked like a decent person. Since he was going to quit the place anyways, it would be best to pick up some experience. Or so he determined.

The place he was taken to was a slightly-aged oden stand. It was a little dirty, but its prices were cheap, and the variety of its oden was plentiful.

Manaka sparingly drank a dilute shochu, as he munched on some daikon. It looked quite appetizing. Neito hadn't the slightest idea on the proper etiquette to drinking with a senior worker, so he just stared at him a while.

(TL: Shochu is an alcohol usually around 50 proof distilled from various Japanese ingredients. I can't tell you any more, really. I'm a minor after all. Daikon is a variety of radish. Oden is just various ingredients stewed in a soup stock.)

"Oh, go ahead and eat. Not that it's anything special."

"... Okay."

The oden that entered his mouth was warm. He exchanged some unskillful conversation as he filled his stomach.

“You’re sure an unlucky one. Accepted by the main company, then suddenly sent off to Misc.”

Manaka spoke bit by bit.

“Not really...”

“Hey be honest here. Is this really how Metallica is gonna treat me, you must’ve thought.”

Getting a little more comfortable, Neito let out his true feelings.

“... Yes, a little...”

“Haha. A little, is it? I think it year round. Those guys up there don’t even know how it feels to be on the site, and they just keep on setting up their unreasonable goals.

I can’t deal with it. My salary’s less’n half the regular posts. And despite that, it’s always, your deployment was slow, or your costs are too high... I don’t think there’s any helping it when people like Eda lose their motivation, you know?

Based on what I’d seen of how Manaka carried himself in the few day’s I’ve been here, it didn’t look like he was sulking or anything. So I had to ask.

“Manaka-san... if all that’s going on, then why can you work so hard?”

“Well, a man’s gotta support his wife and kids after all.”

I see. The working adults have it rough. A father's troubles, that sort of thing... The moment before Neito may have been able to feel for him. Manaka looked out far into the distance, and continued.

“And you see. World domination, you see. I want to cling onto it. Even like this, when I was young, I was sure I was going to change the world. I always looked up to an evil organization that may be able to do something like that. And I'm finally in one.”

It was the same. That portion was considerably similar to how Neito felt before he got in the company.

“That is...”

“Haha, stupid, right? This from some underling old mook, right?”

His bashful laughing face gave a childish sort of impression opposed to the words coming from his mouth

“No, I didn't say anything like...”

At that moment. A loud voice came from the park near the oden stand. Sirens began to blare.

“... Guardian, huh.”

Manaka muttered.

Guardian: it was a public order institution established to combat the influx of Evil Organizations not too long ago. It was also a nickname to refer to the members of said organization.

Of course, the police still existed as their own organization, but the Guardian's power and influence was placed on a higher tier. An existence that had gained quite a bit of authority to oppose Evil Organizations. They were much more proactive than the existing police force, and it wasn't rare for there to be cases where force was used. Their laws were rigid, and they were truly strong. They were sometimes even called the realizers of order.

They were different from the mysterious heroes that moved individually, the Rocks, but anyways, they were allies of justice.

Naturally, they were an enemy to Metallica.

Could it be they came to suppress us? Neito panicked for a moment, after listening to the shouts, he could tell it was something different. They were yelling high-handedly at someone outside.

What should I do. It doesn't look like that cat's out of the bag, but is it best we run? When neito began to think along those lines, Manaka by his side slowly rose.

"Manaka-san?"

"Hmm? Ah, I'll be off for a bit. Boss, put it on my tab."

"Sure thing, Toshio-san. You haven't changed a bit, have you. You're not young anymore, so pushing yourself too much is poison on your body."

After Manaka paid some money to the stands owner, he walked outside.

? Didn't he just say tab? Then what did he pay for?

Neito hurriedly turned to follow him. In that park nearby, just as Manaka had said, the Guardians were there.

Characteristic white protective equipment, and keiren cyclist-like helmets. They held batons in their hands. It was the standard dress for Guardians on duty. Those were the guys for C Rank general security or something.

The three guardians were drawing near some homeless man who'd erected a cardboard house to stave off the wind.

“Oy! It’s a violation of city code to build up a cardboard house here! Demolish it at once!!”

“Y-you can’t... if you drive me out of here now, then what do you expect me to do... I’ll die in this cold... I’ll leave tomorrow, so... please...!”

It seems an eviction order was given in regards to the man. I see, well what he’s doing is quite definitely illegal, I’m sure.

“Not my business!! It’s a violation, a violation! You get it? Old man?”

“Yeah~. This really is a pain. Just make it quick already. Go off to the park of the town next door. It’s out of our jurisdiction, so we’ll let it slide.”

Neito felt a sense of discomfort at the Guardians’ overbearing tone of speech. They truly weren’t evil. But he didn’t feel the urge to cheer them on at all.

“ ... ”

Neito shut his mouth, and quietly watched the scene. But Manaka beside him was different.

“This is why Guardians are...”

“!? Manaka-san!?”

Without the chance to be stopped, Manaka went and walked up to the Guardians.

“Hey, yes, you Gars over there. Yeah, you guys. Let me hit you around a bit.”

CHAPTER 5

OY, EDA

At the sudden intruder, even the Guardians hesitated a bit.

“Who are you!? What is your intent!?”

But Manaka displayed a fearless smile, and answered in a subdued voice.

“Well you see, I’m... Metallica. Do you think Metallica needs a reason to do bad things?”

What!?! Neito was much more surprised than the Guardians could ever be. He couldn’t think it sane to name yourself a member of a famous evil organization before the enforcers of justice.

“W-what!? What did you just say!?”

As expected, the Guardians held up their batons, and entered a vigilant formation. They likely weren’t any amateurs. Could a member of *that* Miscellaneous Division, Manaka, really do anything against them?

He had barely been in contact with the man, but Neito couldn’t help but worry for his safety. He was aware of the shaking of his own legs. That person definitely isn’t a bad person. No, perhaps he is, but I can’t feel that way about him. Even so...!

“Yeah, quite your shouting. If you’re going to do it, then come at me already!”

Quite separated from Neito's worries, Manaka strongly provoked the armed Guardians.

"Arrest him—!!!"

They came down on him all at once. He'll be taken in at once, at this rate... or so Neito thought, but the result was different.

"Keh...! Grah!!"

Manaka kicked the park's sandbox with all his might, pouring its sand down on the men.

And...

"Well then!!"

Perhaps it had entered his eyes. One of the guardians faltered a bit, and Manaka proceeded to deliver a bit boot to his body before pinning his arms to his back.

"Wha...!?"

"Oh, don't move! Want me to snap his neck?"

The remaining two Guardians halted at his words.

"Bastard... using sand and hostages... how cowardly!! Have you no shame!!?"

“What? I said it the very start, right? I’m a villain.”

He was quite quick to say it. He pushed the pinned man out towards his two friends, and when their stances crumbled to catch him, he got in another blow. A dull sound resounded through the dark park.

“H-he’s strong! ...And wait...”

Horrible. Thought Neito, but he didn’t say it aloud. Yes it was cowardly, and terrible, but so what, he thought.

“The young Guardians they put on night patrol, you think those guys that just flocked in from college can lay a hand on my twenty years of fighting?”

Manaka left it that, left them aside, and proceeded towards the homeless again.

“E-EEK!! It’s Metallica!!”

They were scared of him, shrinking away while seated on the ground.

“Oy, you. Keep your mouth shut, go to that oden shop over there, and eat a meal. Well, the taste isn’t anything special, though. For now, it’ll be something to fill your stomach.”

“...? You...”

The homeless man hesitated on how to reply to the mismatched statements of the villain who had suddenly made his entrance. Looking upon the scene, Neito felt just a little warmth in his chest.

“... Manaka... -san... ah!”

Far away as he was, there was something only Neito could have noticed. One of the guardians that had been beaten down before was unsteadily rising to his feet, taking his gun from its holster.

And its muzzle was fixing on Manaka.

“U... u... uwaaaaaaaah!!!!!”

His legs moved faster than his head. Raising a strange battle cry, Neito ran.

Defying a Guardian wasn't something any sane man would do. More so when the opponent had a gun in hand. No decent person would even think to try it. I mean, the enemy was justice, and an existence that carried it out. Unless you were an outlaw with some built up experience, everyone would do the same. Yes, that's why I'll run. Right. Run, and run...

I was sure my legs were supposed to be pointed to flee, but...

Neito was running straight towards the Guardian holding up the gun.

“Waaaaaaaah!!!”

It was a pitiful body blow without the least bit of training or theory behind it. But its effects were massive on a Guardian who could barely stand on his feet. The Guardian let off a strange, 'kyuu' sound before falling to the floor.

Because he had some something so unfamiliar, Neito himself fell as well.

But Manaka soon came to extend his hand, and help him up.

“See, you do have it in you, Neito. You saved me there. Though normally, you should hesitate a bit more. You know, there might be more bad in you than your appearance suggests.”

Manaka said that with a grin.

“He... hehehe...”

Two villains had beaten down some allies of justice in the park that night. Neito felt a little strange himself, and he ended up laughing. Just for a little longer, I'll try and stay with this job, with Metallica. That night, Neito thought that as he successfully returned to his house.

From the next day, his training began. His current goal was the practice battle with the one charged with training him, Eda.

The one who had gotten along well with him since that night, Manaka, would offer him advice during lunch and other break times. There wasn't nearly enough time for him to put any real martial arts to heart, so he was only training a usable move or two.

According to Manaka, Eda was apparently a former sumo. He didn't accomplish anything that great in the field, but still, that was some dreadful news to Neito.

There's no way he would win going about it normally.

"Well, just put your all into it. It's not like a loss'll get you instantly fired or anything. It's enough to show off some of your good parts. I'll put in a word too."

Manaka tried calling out during lunch break, but...

"What should I do... conceal a knife, and stab him with the element of surprise...? Or maybe poison... no, that's wrong. Something... isn't there's something...?"

"O-oy, Neito."

"Ah"

It seems he was lost in thought.

"I'm sorry, Manaka-san. What were you saying?"

"N-no. It's nothing,"

"?"

For some reason, Maka was staring fixatedly into Neito's face. He looked a little surprised.

"What is it?"

"Hey, you. You really have never been in another organization or something before, right? What's your criminal record?"

Just what could Manaka-san be saying? Do I, who's never gotten into a fight, who's never even broken a school regulation, who's- if I really had to say- been on the bullied side of things, really look like such a villain to you? Neito's thoughts turned a little strange as he looked at Manaka's exaggerated expression.

"Surely you jest. There's no way I have anything like that. More importantly, Manaka-san, can you teach me a little bit more about Eda-sn?"

"Y-yeah. Right... then..."

He altered his training, and carried out all the preparations he could. For now, that's all he could do.

And the days passed all too fast, the day of their bout at hand. Weapons and poisons banned, knocking down the opponent once is their loss. No killing. With those rules in place, all prior preparations are fare game. Fight like a member of Metallica, was all that was announced.

"Neito... can you do it?"

Manaka was making a worried expression. But if we were talking anxiety, Neito had far surpassed him.

"Oy, oy, fresh meat! I hope you've trained at least a bit like I told ya'. If yer too weak, ah may end up beatin' ya' too far, okay? Not that there's any helpin' how useless you are. We don't wanna have you drop the evaluation of the one in charge a trainin' you, me, as well, do we?"

His opponent, Eda, was messily chewing on gum, with a leisurely expression.

Damn, what an irritating fellow. The only thing I've ever learned from you is the variety of juices at the vending machine down the street. Go get diabetes, and die. Neito was half full of such anger.

Crap, I'm screwed. If that fatty hits me for real, I'll die. Our weight classes are too different, if you think about it logically. The other half was such fear.

He had prepared. But would he be able to carry it out?

“Are~ You~ All~ Right~? Did ya' go take care of yer' business? You don' wanna piss yerself when I'm beatin' you.”

He raised a vulgar laughing voice.

This bastard... no, I'm still scared after all.

“Then let the match begin!”

With that mixed sentiment, the match's start was announced. The signal came from the supervisor, of whom you could never really tell if he was there or not, or if he even existed, but his voice was surprisingly eminent.

“Orah!”

Eda's jab. I can't dodge. For a fatty, he's fast! What's more, as he wasn't ready for it, the impact of a single jab was considerable.

“... Uuh... kuh...!”

“Hey, hey.”

Even now, a stream of jabs. Without being able to raise a limb, Neito was beaten black and blue. He knew he could fall at any moment.

“I won’t... I don’t want to lose...! I... don’t want to... lose!!”

But the difference in ability was ruthless. Even if he wrung out the guts he rarely ever used, that gap wasn’t filled in! Overwhelming offense. He was receiving enough damage that even Neito himself was surprised he could remain standing, but still, he didn’t fall over.

It no longer looked like a match, but simple violence. Only one onlooker, Manaka, seemed to be waiting for something as he looked over Neito.

“I’ve had enough. Yer too weak. Let’s just pin you already.”

Perhaps he wasn’t blessed with much stamina, as before long, Eda came to grasp at Neito. It was a bear hug. But he would squeezing with ample force, in an attempt to drop his opponent. That’s all there was to it, but that move was Eda’s specialty.

The moment before he could be grabbed. In Neito’s hazy mind, the words of the recruitment ad abruptly played back.

Do you want to change the world? YES

Continuing on to the interviewer’s question at the interview.

Even if that means to destroy the current one? YES

I answered yes to those questions. Did I take them too lightly? I mean, of course I did at first. But I've given it a bit of thought since then. Since the time I answered it online. By the time the interview came around, I could answer it quite normally. But those were my real thoughts. They're what I believe. My life up to now, and the current society. I want to change it, and it will change. That's what I answered. And yet, you think it will end here?

No. It's always been like that. I was weak. The world was harsh. And I didn't change. I kept running. The world didn't change. The world cornered me. That's why I was a NEET. Without any aspirations, just a NEET.

But not this time. I felt there was something special. Here in Metallica. I don't get what that something is yet, but I won't let it all end here.

If I answered I wanted to change the world, then world aside, what do you think it'll mean if I can't even manage the fatty before my eyes?

I... I... I I...!!!!

Neito fel a black tainted water begin to pour into his heart.

“Oy, Eda.”

He was in his grasp, and it was the moment before any power was put into the hold. Neito addressed Eda in a low voice.

CHAPTER 6

WELL OF COURSE

“Oy, Eda.”

What did that guy say just now? Oy, Eda or somehin'? The weaklin' who hasn't offered a word of resistance, this guy did? To me? To a former sumo and a senior in Metallica, no honorifics, huh?

“Are you listening, Eda?”

“... You.....!?”

Neito's expression was cold enough to send shivers down his spine. His eyes looked as if darkness itself had resided in them. Black, and deep. There's something scary in this man. That's how he felt. From this guy I've been overwhelming for a while? Why?

“... Hey, you know your sister? The one that lives in Setagaya? Yeah, the one that finishes badminton practice at 7:00 p.m., and goes straight home? Truly an exemplary high school girl there. But she walks that path home alone, you know. Now doesn't that sound dangerous?”

What was he saying? Seriously, what is this guy saying? If I don't down him soon, he'll be dangerous.

That's how Eda felt.

“Her house is on the third block, her room on the second floor, facing due west. It seems you've cut ties with your parents, but you treat that sisters of your quite dearly.

To even give her Christmas and birthday presents every year, you really are a nice guy, aren't you?"

His junior coworker indifferently continued on. This is strange. This guy is strange.

"You told me on the first day, but our locker here... it sure has a lot of things in it. It sure is amazing that a form's all you need to bring out a gun or bomb."

He was scared. He was scared of such a weak man. Eda had forgotten. That strength wasn't the only thing to make a person hold fear. There was something far more basic: malice. To something like that, strength was irrelevant. It was scary in itself that such a thing was pointed at him.

Eda was a known delinquent from his school days. From that experience, he could plainly tell. This guy is no delinquent. He's evil.

"You still don't get it? In this match, killing was banned, right? That's why you won't be able to kill me. And you see, I don't want to lose."

"W-what are you saying...!?"

"Now if you end up defeating me, then I can't say for certain what might happen to that sister of yours."

A shudder. His response to the cold voice Neito let out could only be described as such.

"...! Wa... it..."

“Don’t want to. Now here’s what’s going to happen. I’m going to hit you. You’re going to be hit, and fall.”

“Wha...!?”

“You can dodge it if you want. But if you do, I’m going to peacefully forfeit this match. And after that...”

“Stop!!”

His mind couldn’t keep up. But at the very least, he could tell it didn’t sound like a bluff. It’s quite probable this man would do it all for real. And if he tried to stop him, he’d just take another measure. So to stop him, there was no other option but to kill this man. But in a workplace practice battle? Surely you’re joking.

“...!!”

The pride of the man called Eda wasn’t something stable enough to stand against ill intent of this level being sent his way.

The gentle punch Neito sent made a dull sound as it stuck into his body. Eda fell down quite unnaturally, and the match ended.

“Winner, Komori!”

The supervisor let out the decisive call. Thank god It looks like it went well.

To be honest, I wasn’t really sure it’d work out. Ah~ thank goodness.

“Fu... thank god... he... hehe...”

Neito took a deep breath in relief at his current victory.

Perhaps because he had quite consciously let out an unfamiliar tone of speech, the fatigue set in on him severely. And in the first place, his entire body was in pain.

But he had won. With a gentle punch.

The winner was much more beaten up than the loser. But even so, Neito felt a sense of fulfillment... however...

“That was dirty! Dammit!!”

After the match had ended, Eda declare what was on his mind.

The life of his sister was taken hostage. This match is null and void. He wanted to assert that.

?? I mean... huh? That's no good? Why?

“Eh? Eda-san? Why are you so angry? I mean, you let me win after all, so there's no way I'll do anything to your sister! What do you have to be angry about?”

Yep. It's a good thing he was such an understanding person. Is what Neito had thought.

“That's not what this is about!! You even used such a dirty bluff!! Even I won't be able to concentrate if you say somethin' like that in the middle of a match!”

Eda said that in a rage. This is bad, I think he's coming to hit me. This time, I'm so dead. What should I do? In the first place, this person is making quite a fundamental misunderstanding.

"Lay off him, Eda!! A bluff that looks cowardly is but a single sort of strategy!! I said to fight like a member of Metallica, didn't I!!? Vicious means are fair game!!"

The supervisor held back a rampaging Eda. Yep, for now, let's run away. I did win, for argument's sake. Yeah, let's leave it at that.

Neito left the area, and Manaka followed behind to talk to him.

"You did it! I never thought you'd be able to say something like that! Hooray! We'll have a celebration tonight!"

A bit roughly, Manaka was praising him. A little into his congratulations, Manaka spoke as if he just remembered something.

"... Hey, Neito. If... Eda had chosen to ignore what you were saying, and defeated you... what did you plan on doing?"

Eh? Even Manaka-san's saying something like that?

"? Then of course I would have inflicted harm unto his dear sister."

I flat out said that at the very start. Why is everyone acting so strange?

Of course, I wouldn't want to do such a thing. So I really was glad when Eda folded like that. I mean, if it didn't go like that, I'd end up doing it for real.

Neito hadn't noticed. That the special talent he had had begun to sprout. And that normal society would never evaluate a trait as black as his.

CHAPTER 7

WHAT EXACTLY IS THAT GUY DOING?

From the day after Neito's practice battle with Eda, slight as it was, his work environment began to change for the better.

It wasn't a matter of wages, but mainly training. Following the results of that battle, Eda began to hold some animosity towards him, and therefore, Neito training partner was swapped out to Manaka.

It was all Neito could wish for.

"Wrong, wrong. You watching? A stun rod will disperse the same electricity no matter where you hit, so you don't need to swing it around like that. Do it with the intentions of pricking your opponent a bit."

"You'll first need some stamina if you want to fire a gun. For now, it's best you jump rope, and do some muscle training."

"Work to the best of your ability to prevent having to fight empty handed. When you've got nothing on you, it's best you grab whatever's close by. Even pebbles."

And various other bits of advice. Neito was able to learn quite a few techniques that couldn't be considered respectable. Of course, he wasn't able to gain those abilities instantly or anything. It's not like his athleticism was good to start out with, and he retained his lack of stamina. He tried with all his might to gain the basics at the level of an amateur imitating them. Strangely enough, Manaka, who was so assertive in teaching him all the technical skills, didn't say a single thing about the thought process he should use to take action, or the right heart or anything like that.

Curious about that, Neito tried asking once.

“You don’t need it. For something like that, just move how you see fit. Ah~ but if there’s something I have to say, it’s got to be that. We’re the bottom of the pecking order, but... you should probably start thinking of what Metallica should do with the world, and what you want to do yourself.”

Or so he answered, but I didn’t really get it. For some reason, Manaka’s expression was serious, so I gave an honest nod, and since then, I’ve begun to think over what an Evil Organization could accomplish, and what I wanted to do.

World domination? That’s a process, and a means. Not a goal... apparently.

“Maybe you won’t know it for a while. But you should go find it. If you can, then I’m sure you’ll...”

He stopped speaking there, but his words had been heavy.

Whatever the case, he was reliable, and a senior at my workplace I got along well with. With such a relation, and a training to keep him occupied, Neito felt a sense of fulfillment.

On top of carrying out odd jobs around the place, he shed sweat as he trained. That was a first for him, and while tiring things were tiresome, he got paid for it, and the feeling of learning something new every day was quite refreshing.

The workplace couldn’t be called wholesome, but even so. He felt something like the value of manual labor.

In the mornings, he even began training by himself at the riverbed.

The contents of said training: 'practicing to fly off in a dramatic fashion, when hit, and pretending to stay down,' 'practicing to creep up without making sound, and take them out from behind,' 'practicing to dodge through rolling,' 'practicing to throw your jacket to take away their vision' etcetera, truly underhanded, and all acts that, if looked upon from the side, would make one wonder what the hell the man was doing. But there was no helping it.

He even experienced some practical business dealings.

He made sure not to ask the specifics, but Neito was part of the team that transported a mysterious load to the harbor, he helped offer security for a large-scale gambling facility, and various other things.

Just once, he experienced battle. The information on one of Metallica's research organizations was leaked to the Guardians, and they were about to barge in to investigate. That facility was small in scale, and none too special, but even so, they couldn't just let the data within it seep to the outside, so Neito's team was dispatched to a point nearby.

Basically, while a different squadron was busy disposing of all the data, they had to buy time from the Guardians. There were five enemies. That was the first time Neito had ever equipped Metallica's Miscellaneous Branch's uniform, their combat clothes.

The combat uniform was a black fiber-textured track-suit like thing with partial red protectors attached around, and on top of that, a black visor-equipped mask came with it as a set.

To be honest, when he first put on the suit, meaning right before battle, Neito's tensions rose quite a bit.

“Whooooh. No matter how you look at me, I look just like a grunt for an evil organization. But it’s a little cool, ain’t it?”

Those were his impressions. By the way, that suit wasn’t something like the reinforced suits a portion of the Rocks wore. It didn’t really have anything that strengthened the body’s physical ability, and it didn’t heighten one’s senses. It was just a little sturdy, relatively light for its durability, and that was all. IT did have knuckle guards for argument’s sake, but those likely weren’t going to be of much use.

But the feeling of playing the part had quite some appeal to it.

Oh, about the battle that followed, but it wasn’t really anything special. Neito was tasked with moving around in the back, and launching nets to bind the enemies trying to damage his comrades.

During break and after work hours, he would eat and go out to drink. He was generally with Manaka.

“Ah~ I’m tired. The beer sure is nice.”

“I’d say so.”

“I really wonder what was in today’s cargo~.”

“Well of course, it’s gots to be weapons or gold or illegally produced stuff, right?”

“Wow. That’s clearly unlawful, isn’t it?”

“Need you even ask? Oh, how about a shochu next?”

“Sure.”

“Today’s Gars sure were weak.”

“Not that I did anything.”

“No, no, for now, you’re faring fine.”

“No~. Ah, is it alright I order the negima?”

“Oh, go ahead, go ahead.”

(TL: Negima is a dish of tuna and onions, usually a skewer, or stew)

“Hey, you have a girlfriend?”

“...”

“H-hey?”

“There are good things and bad things to ask a person, Manaka-san. Let’s turn this around. Do you *think* I have a girlfriend?”

“... N-no, that’s...”

“I was a NEET until recently, I’m poor, none too handsome, and an otaku, and at present, I’m a low time goon for an evil organization.”

“... Sorry.”

“No, don’t mind it...”

“T-then how about that? A girl you’re interested in, or one you’re getting along well with...?”

“... There’s this girl Mayuzumi-san who’s in the same business, but...”

“O-oh!! What sort of girl!?”

“I really wonder what she’s doing right around now.”

“Oy, oy!”

It’s not like anything happened in particular. Even so, he was tired out by work and training, and continued his hardships in a work environment you couldn’t really call favored. But...

Neito didn't find it harsh.

Such days continued to fly by.

But change is something that drops by without warning. Two months into that, the Miscellaneous Members of the team Neito, Manaka, and Eda were in, were called out by the supervisor for some business orders.

"Tomorrow, at 17:00, we're to stay on standby in Area B-37. Based on how things go down, combat is a possibility."

For a standby mission, the supervisor's face was overly tense.

"The classification given by the main branch is 『R』."

Following his words.

"!!..."

The members of Misc. were sent into shock all at once. The air suddenly turned colder.

From the Miscellaneous Handbook, Neito knew what it meant.

Classification R. It meant a mission where you could expect confrontation with the Rocks.

Rocks. They started with 『Dylan』 , who appeared twenty years prior. Allies of justice of unknown origin.

Some of them possessed special constitutions, others wore armor of super technology, and some even displayed superhuman abilities from the magical mysteries of some ancient ruin or another. Heroes.

Their strength was as steadfast as stone, and from their larger-than-life dispositions, they were generally termed the Rocks.

While they were usually a target of admiration, for the evil organizations that started with Metallica, they were something to fear over anything else.

“Let me explain the details.”

With twice the concentration as usual, they listened to the supervisor’s voice.

Neito felt the pores on everyone’s skin contract.



What exactly is that guy doing?

It was Mia’s habit to walk her beloved dog before going off to school. Within the pure morning air, she leisurely strolled down the banks of the river.

Pulling on the leash as he wagged his tail, the happy miniature schnauzer was an important part of the day for Mia, who did some activities unusual (?) for a high school student.

On a certain day, Mia was walking her dog as she always did, when she spotted a peculiar person.

a little separated from her walking path, below the embankment closer to the river, was a man repeating quite a strange task.

And from the day she first spotted him, he was there every day without fail.

By himself, he dropped to the ground, and started rolling around. He took off his jersey, and swung it about.

??

A bit of a strange person? She thought, but that didn't seem to be the case. At times, the man would stop as if to confirm something, and scribble some memos in a notebook.

Oh, I see. He must be practicing for something. Or so she decided to take it. I mean, despite all the strange things he's doing, his expression is quite serious. Could he be pantomiming or something?

Watching him flop around the floor with a serious expression, the first thing she did was burst out laughing.

Pfff...! Just a bit of laughter.

But somehow, seeing him there every day had become a bit fun.

Hey, it looks like he's become quite good at that pantomiming(?) of his.

Mia had quite a bit of popularity among male students.

She was confessed to quite a lot.

But from her point of view, the man pantomiming by the riverbank was a type of person she didn't see around her.

He wasn't cool at all, so she didn't feel any romantic attraction, but she became somewhat intrigued.

Will he be there today~? Or so she always thought when she reached the usual spot on her walk.

Just a little, her morning walks had become a little more fun than before.

CHAPTER 8

IT'S TIME FOR THE HERO OF JUSTICE

Neito was unaware of it. That Ikeno who joined alongside him had, as a member of the Planning Department, been left with the drafting of the plan. One week before Neito's team was to receive the R Classified order, Ikeno was proposing an important proposition to the faces gathered.



“My planning is perfect. By discarding one team of the Miscellaneous Division, the Rocks' arrival at the scene will be delayed at least an estimated two hours. With that much time, we can...”

What Metallica was planning this time was suppression of a private research institution in the Kantou region.

The institution in question was one that had displayed extraordinary success in the field of genetic engineering, and if they could monopolize on those results, it would be possible to gain a considerable amount of power.

It was one Metallica would want to take over by all means. In order to enhance its military might, and to get control over a technique that may pave the way to world domination.

Ikeno was a new recruit, but his excellent personal record and abilities were recognized, and he was permitted to suggest a plan for the mission.

His plan went as follows.

They knew beforehand that the Rocks' 『Dylan』 knew of their plans to suppress the facility. It was quite likely that some interference would come on the day in question. So there, they would leak another piece of information. That a large-scale criminal meeting was to take place in a certain area.

Of course, there were no such plan. The important part of it, was that the existence of such a meeting was to become common sense among the populace. And there in truth, there would be a large number of Miscellaneouses stationed there. Meaninglessly.

While they would know of the high likelihood of the research facility being attacked, the allies of justice, the Rocks, wouldn't be able to leave the fake information aside without confirming it.

And for that sake, the facility and meeting site were adjacent to one another.

The hero would definitely come. There's no way they'd let it slide. Ikeno had taken that into consideration. But even if they figured out at once that the information was false, there would be those Miscs there. They should at least be able to stall for time. It was that sort of plan.

The higher-ups were reluctant, but he forcefully pushed it through. It was fine as long as it succeeded.

Ikeno put together the documents, and headed over to the General Affairs Department. One of their duties was copying and relaying decisions throughout the ompany.

“Maki-chan, please file this one.”

He called out to General Affairs' Mayuzumi Maki, and handed over the papers. She had joined alongside him, of attractive face and figure, and honestly quite cute. It was a good opportunity for him to appeal to her with the hard work he put up on the forefront of the operation.

"Ah, yes...! This is..."

After accepting it with a smile, she looked over the papers, and for some reason made a dubious expression.

"Hmm? What's wrong? It's received the proper approval."

"... By this plan, the people of the Misc. Division will be..."

"Yeah. There's a chance they'll receive a little damage. But that's the Miscellaneous Division's job in itself, is it not?"

Even after he had explained it like that, Maki's expression continued to sink. Ikeno was completely unable to comprehend the reason behind that.



The point Neito was stationed at for the R Classified mission was on the coast. But it was just a desolate line of warehouses without any tourist popularity.

"Manaka-san, will Dylan really come here...?"

"... Perhaps."

The Miscellaneous members were dispersed to an extent, and they dotted the coastal area. The division had a basic premise of working in teams of two, so Neito paired with Manaka, as he waited on standby as the sun began its descent. Manaka was equipped with a rifle, while Neito carried a tranquilizer gun. Hidden in the shadows, the two of them checked over the surveillance footage, and time passed.

“... I’m sorry, man. I was opposed to having you participate in this operation, but you know...”

Manaka abruptly muttered that.

“D-don’t mind it. What are you even talking about? It’s not like death is certain or anything...! Right. When we’re done here, let’s go out drinking again.”

Manaka’s words rung out as if this was the end, so Neito frantically tried to deny them.

“... Right. Okay. Today, we’re not going to the usual oden joint. I’ll treat you to somewhere nicer!”

“Yes!...”

It was at that moment. The cameras had caught footage of a certain something. The transformation sequence was already complete.

It was the same as what he’d seen on TV.

With nuances somewhere in between mechanical armor and the exoskeleton of a living being, a pure white body. Something like a horn protruded from its forehead, and a dull luminescence surrounded its body as if you let you discern its overwhelming energy at a glance. It was like a knight of light you’d see in a fairy tale.

So there are other things like that one in this world? That was the first generation Rocks, who protected society from the hands of evil. The incarnation of justice...

『Dylan』 !

“Manaka-san! There...!”

He heard the sound of spit gulping down his throat.

“Yeah... looks like it’s time for the Hero of Justice... no helping it. Send out a notification for the other members to gather, and we’ll approach for now.”

Neitno nodded, and started moving in response.

This time’s mission was to, ‘take on Dylan– who’s likely to show up– with all your numbers. But don’t just come down at him at once. Challenge him one at a time,’ was all that came. He didn’t ask the reason.

The enemy was a mighty hero, tried and true. Could Neito and the rest of the Misc Members, who were really no more than small fries, really stand a chance of winning if they all went at it alone? Wouldn’t that just result in them being beat down one after another? In the end, it would just be biding time until their annihilation, wouldn’t it? His doubts towards the reason for the orders continued to grow, but... there was no helping it. That was Miscellaneous. The role of the lowest soldiers of an Evil Organization.

“But you won’t enter his field of vision. I’ll be the only one to directly confront him. You just stand and watch from the shadows.”

“!? That can’t...!”

“You got that!?”

Without waiting for a response, Manaka jumped from the shadows, and danced to Dylan’s front. Naito watched on from a place a little ways away.

CHAPTER 9

ARE YOU AN IDIOT?

“ ... ”

Dylan seemed to recognize the one who appeared as a villain. His eyes met with Manaka's.

“Yo, Hero. First time I'm seeing you in the flesh, but you sure are cool. What's up with you? You wearing something? Or did your body transform?”

“ ... ”

“Sorry, but I was told not to let you pass.”

“ ... ”

On Manaka's conversational tone, Dylan didn't react at all. He merely slowly began walking towards the man.

Dylan's right fist emitted a light.

... I knew that one. I've seen it introduced before on the news programs.

A knuckle charged with energy. One of Dylan's signature moves. Commonly called Justice Hammer. Other Rocks also used similar moves, and that attack that was now

known as a sort of trademark of the group possessed enough destructive power to even demolish boulders.

“Tsk!!”

It would be the end if he drew any closer. Manaka held up the rifle in his hand, and immediately discharged it!

... But.

At the same time, Dylan began accelerating in his direction. It was faster than a leopard, and sharper than an eagle. If Dylan had gone and done an 100 meter dash, it was most definite he would achieve a speed breaking the world record by a large margin.

“... Fu-!”

... He didn't even dodge the bullet, he deflected it to the side with a single sweep of his arm.

And.

“... Seyah!”

... To Neito, it only looked as if a flash of light was racing about.

A sound of impact reverberated in the area, and in the next instant, in the outer wall of a storehouse far behind, he confirmed the figure of a beaten Manaka.

“... Manaka... san...?”

Looking closely, the red protectors on his Miscellaneous Battle Uniform were shattered, and after falling from the wall to the floor, Manaka didn't move in the slightest.

That can't be.

That can't be.

That can't be.

In that single instant? Without the slightest portent? So that thing called the fist of justice really was something that strong?

Enough for a man who'd chosen to walk the path of evil to be demolished in the blink of an eye?

Neito couldn't move. It wasn't fear. The truth unfurling before his eyes was going too fast for his mind to catch up.

And Dylan's simple presence was overwhelming.

“ ... ”

Without confirming the result of his actions, Dylan proceeded on. And his form went out of sight.

“...! Hah! Manaka-san!?”

As if he had just been freed from paralysis, Neito ran over to manaka.

“Manaka-san!! Manaka-san!”

He lifted up his collapsed body, and called out.

“... Neito... is it...?”

Manaka’s breath was faint, and his voice sounded as if it would go out at any moment.

“Please get a hold of yourself!! Manaka-san!!”

“... I can’t... be saved...”

He could tell by looking, but still, he didn’t want to admit it.

“You can!! Manaka-san! I’m begging you!! ... You said it, didn’t you!? That... that you’d take me out for a drink...!”

“... Sorry for... that...”

“Please don’t die!! Your wife and your kids are... waiting for you!!... So...!!”

Manaka's wife had, just the other day, ran off with the kids to some other man. Even Neito knew that much, but even so.

He couldn't remain without letting any words from his mouth.

"... You there. Good... listen..."

The first person he regarded as a senior at work gripped his hand, as he went on.

"... You have talent..."

He didn't know what Manaka wanted to say. But if he was going to make these words his last, then they had to be heard. Neito clenched his hand as he inclined his ears to Manaka's words.

"... Aim for Metallica's summit. And the world..."

Neito could only listen and nod. Metallica's summit. Could that mean to become the big boss?

So he was to become a lord of evil. Of the numerous organizations, the oldest and most powerful one. To stand at the top truly was to stand where one could demand change in the world.

"... It's a promise. Alright...? If you see me in hell, then you've got to tell me... the word 'evil's real..."

"UWAAAAAAAAAAH!!! NOOOOOooo!!!"

Manaka couldn't lay out words to the end. Power seeped out of the hand he clenched, and his arm hung limp.

He couldn't talk any longer.

He was dead. He had died. I had practically entered the organization just by going with the floor. The workplace was off from my expectations. And within that, he was the first to properly interact with me, and dim as it may be, the person who to point me onto my path.

I mean, I won't say he was a good person. Of course he was a villain.

But Neito had liked Manaka. It wasn't just battle techniques. He felt the man had taught him something precious.

And he had died.

“ ... ”

His comrade, a grunt of an evil organization, had been vanquished by the hero protecting society.

What Manaka had left him in the end. Its meaning was one that Neito couldn't really quite grasp. But...

He could no longer stand still. He could no longer leave things like this. Even if the path before him was too dark to see, he could only feel around for it as he preceded on.

He had wished for the world to change. He had walked forth for it. And when he did, so many things had begun to change around him.

Perhaps he it had been a mistake. But even so...

“... I am...”

Manaka left behind a ridiculously grandiose challenge, and left. I'll have to think over it for as long as I have to press onwards.

But right now, there's something more important.

“... Like hell I'd let it go down like this...!”

I'll take down that Hero of Justice.

This isn't for vengeance. That's barking up the wrong tree right there. If I let that one go, then Manaka-san, and the rest of us will have been nothing but meaningless existences in the grand scheme of things. I can't forgive that.

Neito didn't actually know the reason for this mission, and he didn't know what meaning it held in the big picture. Perhaps a day would come for him to take action after learning that reason.

But for now, as a single combatant, he didn't want things to end this way.

“... I'll do it. If I'm aiming for the big bad, then this much is...”

I'll even fight your Hero of Justice.

It was the same sensation as back then. No, even stronger than that. Stronger than when he had threatened Eda into victory.

Neito discarded the uniform and protectors over his body. He was wearing a T-Shirt and khakis below. He tossed his uniform into the ocean, and stuffed the tranquilizer gun he had from the start into the space between his pants and him.

“I’ll be borrowing this, Manaka-san.”

He went on to take the Rifle Manaka had, and...

“Stop!!! Don’t shoot!! Please, spare my life!!”

Neito screamed out in a loud voice, before touching the gunpoint to his own left arm. With an exceedingly calm state of mind, he wrung out wrung out resolve from the whole of his body, and quietly pulled the trigger.

A gunshot resounded in the area.

The round gouged out the flesh of his arm.

“UWAAAAAAAAAH!!!!”

It hurt just as much as he had expected. The pain caused him to roll across the ground.

“... Aaaah... Gwaaaaaaah!!”

He hadn't his a vital. But a vehement pain raced across his body.

It's no good. Rolling around in pain is good an all. But that should be an act, shouldn't it?

Contain it. The pain, contain the anguish.

“ ... ”

He gritted his teeth hard enough it felt his molars would snap. And he endured.

He'll come. That guy will come. He'll surely come. Because that one is a Hero of Justice after all.

The seconds of eternity he spent holding back the pain. Within his fading consciousness, in the corner of his vision, he saw him. Dylan.

A white warrior. He knew he would return. Because the hero would be certain there was no one here but Metallica's members and himself. And so who was there to scream? Did a civilian wander in by chance? Or so he would think.

“... Hah... hah...”

Conveniently enough, blood had begun to spread out from the spot on his arm, making the wound look more severe than it was.

“!! Why...! Are you alright!? Sir!?”

He came at once. As expected. And Dylan undid his transformation to help Neito up.

Well of course. The transformed state had that much power in its body. There's no way he'd lift up a heavily injured person with that. If handled poorly, he could fracture bones without the slightest intent. I do believe there was an incident like that quite a while ago.

“Sir!? Get a hold on yourself...! Why did this...”

Hmm. So he's a cool, hard-boiled old man with the transformation off? I was sure he'd be a young handsome schmuck, but when you think about it, he did become active more than twenty years ago.

“... You can't remain here. There are... Metallica soldiers... they suddenly shot at me...! I'm sure they're still around...”

“It's alright now! I'll take you to the hospital at once...!”

The arm that lifted his body. It was strong and warm.

Ah, as expected, this guy really is a nice person. Well of course. By himself, he's been fighting on for the sake of everyone, hasn't he. But you see.

“The hospital can wait. After you've taken a good punch or two.”

His expression suddenly changed as he said that.

“Wha...!?”

Without a moment's delay, Neito drew the tranquilizer at his waist, and pushed it against Dylan's chest.

“Bang.”

He immediately fired.

A surprise attack at point blank. He had removed his transformation, and he didn't even take a defensive stance. Metallica's signature tranquilizer round that could take down large game in a single shot had hit the Hero straight on.

“...! Y...ou...!! Were... Metal..lica...?”

Dylan unsteadily separated from Neito, and with unsteady footing, he breathed his mind.

“Yeah. That's right. As expected of a hero. You can still move after that?”

“... Damn... you. Underhan... ded...”

“Are you an idiot? I'm a flat out villain here. What's wrong with me doing bad things?”

Neito himself felt he would pass out from the pain, but he frantically withheld it, and showed off a fearless smile.

“...”

“How ‘bout it? Is the medicine working? Now sweet dreams. After you’re down, me and my comrades will leisurely finish you off.”

He always had to show off composure. As an underhanded schemer who’d planned it all out.

“... Kuh.”

Dylan squeezed out his strength, and ran off from the spot. HE had taken something that would knock out an elephant, so I never thought he would be able to run. What’s more, the bugger’s freakin’ fast. His movements, and the speed at which he decided to give up battle and flee.

“... So I couldn’t... bring him down...”

His stamina at its end from his loss of blow, Neito fell onto the ground. The sun had already set.

He instantly relaxed his mind. He was horridly tired.

“... Manaka... san...”

In the desolate quay, Neito whispered, and passed out.



On that day, Metallica's other detachment was able to promptly suppress the research facility as planned. Without any interference from Dylan.

A single Miscellaneous newbie had confronted Dylan, and let alone surviving, he had even managed to repel him. It didn't take long for such news to spread around within the company.

CHAPTER 10

I'LL WALK

When Neito regained consciousness, he was in one of Metallica's affiliate medical facilities. After the battle had ended, his Miscellaneous comrades had carried him there, apparently. His injuries included nothing but the gunshot to his arm. He had passed out from blood loss, and other than that, he hadn't received any major damage.

He could be discharged in a relatively short time, apparently, and he had done quite well this time around. Exceptional results for Misc... Sorry about Manaka. Don't let it get you down. The Misc Supervisor who came to see him explained as such, and had just left the hospital room not too long ago.

"..."

So those events really weren't a dream. The battle at the unpopular quay, the power of a hero you could even call overwhelming, the shot in the dark from my desperate mind. And Manaka's death.

"... Dammit..."

Employment exam, deployment, miscellaneous, company. The organization's structure was just like that of a normal company, but there was no mistake the place Nieto worked was not normal. Perhaps its members had purposely organized it that way to inhibit the enterprise's abnormality. Neito absentmindedly thought over it. If he turned his thoughts towards something else, perhaps he could drive out the sentiment in his heart, or so he wondered.

After a while of that, an abrupt knock came at the door to the room.

“...? Yes?”

“Good day. May I... enter?”

The one who peeper her head through the doorway was fellow recruit Maki.

“Maki-san...? Why are you here?”

Perhaps today was a day off, as she was wearing a fluttery one piece.

“Yes. I learned about your condition from the workers’ compensation insurance form, so...”

Make was holding some flowers. Does that mean she just came to pay a visit? Why would she do that? Because we were fellow interviewees? Working adults sure have it rough. Or so Neito thought.

“I see.”

Maki was stationed in General Affairs. I’m sure they get information like that going through them as well. She probably knows of how Manaka died in battle as well.

“Ah, here. Some flowers... Is it alright if I arrange them?”

As she said that, she produced a sack containing a vase from her bag, and started laying the flowers in it.

“... Sorry. For having you go out of your way when you finally got a day off.”

The beauty who had joined the company alongside him paid a sick visit. Normally, it would be a happening to make him grin from ear to ear, but he didn't feel such an urge at the moment.

“No. I was free after all! You don't have to worry about it!”

Maki finished up the flowers before shaking her hands in an exaggerated gesture.

“... Thank you.”

“You're welcome. Even so, that was amazing! Neito-kun. It's being talked about even at the main branch!”

Perhaps she was trying to cheer him up, as she was speaking in quite an energetic tone.

“A newcomer repelled a Rocks, what's more, that Dylan of all people! They're saying! It's amazing! What's the matter?”

“...”

“... I'm... sorry.”

In a complete change, Maki made a sullen expression.

No, that's fine. It's not like I'm mad at her or anything. I'm quite happy for her consideration. Really happy. So I guess I can at least give off some empty spirit myself.

"R-right! I wonder if they'll raise my salary or something~?"

"... Ah haha. That's right. There's a chance you'll get a nice bonus!"

"Hooray!"

"Good job!"

And for a while following, he received a report on the present state of things, and chatted about some completely irrelevant television programs.

Just a little, his mood had become lightened. Maki surely came to make sure he didn't become depression, or so he understood it. To a coworker whom she didn't hold particular affection for or anything, for her to be so considerate... On top of being a cutie, she's a nice person to boot? That's amazing.

Or so his thoughts turned.

"Ah... I've kept you a while. I apologize. It's not good if it has an impact on your recovery, so it's about time I went."

"Alright. Thank you for today."

Exchanging those words, Maki stood to leave.

“Hey, you know.”

He wanted someone to hear it. So the words came from his mouth.

“Hmm? What is it?”

“... I had this really good superior at the office, you see? A really, really good one.”

“... Yes.”

Maki looked straight at him, and nodded. Her wide eyes looked as if they clouded over a little.

“That superior told me. ‘Aim for Metallica’s Summit. It’s a promise, alright?’ he said.”

“... Yes.”

The summit of Metallica. Big talk for an underling combatant. Would she laugh at it, he wondered, but Maki answered with a serious face.

“Right now, I still don’t know what that would mean, but I... it may sound stupid...”

To Metallica's summit. The crown of evil.

The sentiment to change the world. Those weren't a lie. And at the end of this path may be a power to make such a change possible.

What sort of thing was the world I wanted to make? It was still faint. But I'm sure I'll catch sight of it if I keep going down the path.

If I continue following evil, there will surely be some things I'll end up breaking. I'll surely have to go against 'justice'. I'll surely have to shoulder much work. Does a man who just kinda joined at a whim really have the resolve for anything like that?

The answer was a given. It was surely something that Manaka's end was a catalyst for. So. As sad and regretful I am to Manaka's death, there's no way I could just stop in my tracks.

"I'm thinking of walking up to Metallica's summit."

Neito declared that in a quiet voice.

And to such a man, Maki did not laugh.

CHAPTER 11

TWO SHOCHUS PLEASE

Neito was able to get discharged in four days, and in the following week, he was able to go back to the backstreet factory that was his Miscellaneous Branch.

Should I start training for now? He thought, but two days after his reinstatement, he received a summons from the supervisor. It was the first time such a thing had happened since he was first stationed there.

“Pardon me.”

“Don’t mind it. Take a seat.”

He was prompted to sit on the old chair in the supervisor’ office. The man’s expression looked to be somewhat nervous.

“Did something happen?”

“Yeah. I was just a little surprised! No, I’m sure you... you’ll be too!”

He had been nervous just a moment before, but he suddenly burst into delight. Neito couldn’t understand his actions in the slightest.

“??

“Ah... ehem! Komori Neito-kun!”

“Yes?”

He purposefully cleared his throat, what’s more, it felt quite strange being called with my first name. I mean, he usually just went oy, Komori!! Or something like that.

“An unofficial announcement for you. From next week onwards, we will be having you transferred to the Second Sales Department of the Main Company.”

“Huh?”

It was a term the recent NEET Neito had little familiarity with, but he knew what it meant. An unofficial announcement was a message from the people in personnel affairs.

“The Second... Sales Department?”

“Right!! For someone to transfer from Miscellaneous to the main company, you’re the first!! It’s an exceptional announcement!! Rejoice!! Your work in repelling Dylan has been recognized!”

An excited supervisor. On the other side, it didn’t really feel real to Neito.

Sales Department. Once again, it sounded like a normal subsection of a normal company, but of course, its contents would be different. As I thought, are they purposely naming them like this?

The Sales Department, as its name suggested, took care of... selling. But it's not like they barged into places to demand the selling of certain items, nor did they prostrate themselves before business clients, or hand up posters to advertise the merchandise of the organization (Though there's a time and place for such duties as well).

What they sold could be summed up as evil deeds. What they sold them to was the world. With the schemes drafted up by the Planning Department as a base, they were the ones who carried out the invasion plans on a large scale.

Unlike his other post in the Misc Division that was pretty much there for odd jobs, it was given an extent of authority, a knowledge of the meaning behind each plan, and based on the situation, it could even give orders to mysterious beings.

Just like the Sales Department of a standard company, it was left to the forefront of the battlefield, and it demanded a level of results. I guess that's the only sense Metallica's Sales Department shares a similarity with them in.

To summarize, they were Metallica's task force.

That was the level of understanding new recruit Neito had on them, but thinking of the wall he had always felt between himself and the main company, it could be considered a great leap forward none the less.

He had never learned the purpose of his actions, and was arbitrarily ordered around like a sacrificial pawn; an inferior environment of manual labor, authority that could be equated to nothing at all. That was the general position, the Miscellaneous Department

Going over to the main company would mean he would be working in the proximity of members with regular positions. Even if his salary remained as general level, it

wouldn't change the fact he would be doing a regular's work. An entirely different position from before should be waiting for him.

"...OH What's up!? Could it be you don't want to transfer!?"

Watching Neito silently thinking to himself, the supervisor hurriedly called out.

So Neito answered with a smile.

"Surely you jest. I'll transfer with pleasure."

"Oooh!! Of course! Great!"

Of course I'll move on. I'll take a step forward.

"Kuh. You sure have it nice. I want to transfer someday too."

The supervisor complained. Perhaps those were his real feelings. But Neito answered in a joking tone.

"If I get a promotion, I'll reform the Misc's reception. I'll make it a workplace with more motivations."

"Oy, oy. You sure have some leisure to be joking around like that. Well, I'll be here waiting with relatively low expectations."

Joking? Far off. I'm serious here. It's best the manual labor environment of the Miscellaneous Division be changed.

“Hahaha.”

But that isn't just for the sake of the people in it. It's for Metallica as a whole. Because this is an environment that forces its members to believe they don't need to produce results.

Leaving the supervisor's room, Neito returned to his business. The expectations for his transfer were gradually building up in his body.

Transfer. Authority. Main company.

Ah, I see, moving over there means I may get to talk to Maki more frequently. Oh right, Ikeno too.

His heart was restless. He couldn't calm himself down.

After finishing up his work, he cleaned up the workspace. And after confirming that no one else remained, Neito shouted out.

“I did it~!!!!”

He was delighted for the first in a long time. And joy is still joy after all.

And after that was over with, he headed to his usual oden stand. He knew he had to go there.

He didn't have anyone to sit next to him today, but still.

"Excuse me, two shochus over here, please."

"Two? ... Ah, I see..."

The shop owner quietly poured two glasses, passing them off to Neito and the seat beside him.

"...It looks like I'm going to be transferred. So for now, I think I'll see how far I can go."

"... But I won't forget."

"I'll surely never forget."

"... Thank... you..."

To the airspace void of a conversation partner, Neito raised his glass.

Right, do your best.

He got the feeling such a voice came along with the clinging sound of glass, but still he saw no one there.

Neito cried a little.

Because sorrow was still sorrow after all.

