

妻を
殺しても
バレない
確率

*The probability that
I will not be found out
about killing my wife*

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Hiro Sakurakawa



The Probability I Can Kill My Wife Without Being Found Out

– Tsuma wo Koroshite mo Barenai Kakuritsu –

- Short Story -

-Author-

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Hiroro

[Yoraikun Translation]

- STORY -

“I may kill you and take all the money you’re to inherit for myself. Even so, are you alright with me?”

When we were done with the marriage, those words I nonchalantly tossed at her. For a moment, she made a face of surprise, before smiling as she assented.

“That’s fine. It’s only a matter if I can get you to fall before that, right?”

Her challenging words somehow made her out as a gallant warrior, making me open my eyes wide for a second. And within the day, I had inputted, ‘the probability I can kill my wife without being found out,’ into my glasses. After entering that simple question, the wearable terminal took in various affairs, computed to a precise value of them, and output a probability.

‘The Probability I Can Kill My Wife Without Being Found Out’
‘0.061%’

'0.061%'

My morning always began with me activating my computer glasses, and checking a certain future prediction.

"Well, I guess that's about right."

Lately, I hadn't seen the number it broadcast cross 1%.

'The probability I can kill my wife without being found out.'

That was what I had preset the future prediction to calculate.

It had already been around fifteen years since home PCs got to be able to perform simple predictions if you entered the query. It was being used for various applications, and I was employing it without exception.

My wife and I were what you'd call a political marriage. The company my grandfather managed, and the financial support my wife's father- now my father in law- had proposed, drew this political marriage together. When I was normal in looks, and there wasn't anything particularly special I could do, the reason she wanted me was simple because that girl I'd never met had taken a liking to my photograph.

"I can't think I'll love you, but if you're alright with me."

Ten years had gone by since I said that to her. And our marriage. It's not like I had a girlfriend or anything. And her looks weren't for worse. My grandfather's company avoided bankruptcy, and I was to be its next company president. Every little thing was going swimmingly. In respect to the world, and in respect to common sense, that

surely how it was. But I didn't think so.

Maybe because I felt strongly that I had been bought with money, to an extent I mildly hated her.

If I didn't want it, I could have simply shook my head, but the situation wasn't one to allow it. I mean, it had come to the point where grandfather's company wouldn't last a few days, and in the case it did go bankrupt, some part of me was convinced that stubborn grandfather of mine, with his overly strong sense of responsibility may try and choose converting his own life into money. He said his life was enough to save mine from massive debt, so I could only permit the marriage.

"I may kill you and take all the money you're to inherit for myself. Even so, are you alright with me?"

When we were done with the marriage, those words I nonchalantly tossed at her. For a moment, she made a face of surprise, before smiling as she assented.

"That's fine. It's only a matter if I can get you to fall before that, right"

Her challenging words somehow made her out as a gallant warrior, making me open my eyes wide for a second. And within the day, I had inputted, 'the probability I can kill my wife without being found out,' into my glasses. After entering that simple question, the wearable terminal took in various affairs, computed to a precise value of them, and output a probability. The first number to come out was '38.235%'. That surprisingly high number froze me in shock. For it to be so close to 40! I thought, but then I recalled my wife was going on a trip starting the day after. What's more, a trip alone. Killing her, and making it seem she was still overseas sounded possible.

"Shall I make it seem I took a trip myself, and kill you? It seems I'll succeed almost 40% of the time."

"I see, good luck with that. Want me to bring you anything back?"

Her flippant words were so interesting I found myself asking, "You think I can't kill you?" only for her to reply, "No, if you do kill me, it will be because I didn't put enough effort into it," with cold eyes.

I saw her off, and calculated another future prediction.

'The probability I will love my wife half a year from today.'

'0.001%'

I'll bet, I nodded to myself. Even if I thought she was an interesting woman, it was a fact I didn't harbor very good sentiment towards her. I couldn't think that would change within a mere six months.

A few days later, I told that to her when she returned. I had been excitedly looking forward to her reaction, but she only returned an, "I see." To be honest, it was a let-down.

"I was sure you didn't hate me."

She picked me as a marriage partner, so even if she didn't hate me, I was sure she had some favorable sentiment towards me. But she had said two simple words as if she didn't care at all. I won't say I wanted her to cry, but I at least wanted to see her vexed expression.

"...Could I ask how you plan on killing me next?"

"What?"

"Before I left, you said, 'Shall I make it seem I took a trip myself, and kill you?' didn't you? I was waiting for you the whole time. If you came, I was sure it would've been a splendid honeymoon."

"You want to be killed?"

"If possible, I want to be loved."

I thought she was an incomprehensible woman. In front of her, I flipped the switch on my glasses, and computed the probability again.

'The probability I can kill my wife without being found out.'

'12.253%'

So out of ten times, I won't be found once. That's quite a number.

Since we were the only ones in the house at the dead of the night, that's what I could expect. I stopped my thoughts here.

"Right now, it's around 12%. I guess I won't for now. If I do kill you, I'll make it so you never returned from that trip, and leave your body in some ditch nearby. I'll bet they'll think you were the victim of some hit and run."

"In that case, I recommend the park nearby. That place is famous for suspicious activity."

"...I don't understand what goes on in your head."

"I'm just desperate to get you to love me."

When I turned her some dangerous eyes, she gave a light laugh, and handed over a box, calling it a souvenir.

"I'll throw it away."

"I gave it to you, so I don't mind whatever you do to it."

So to fully answer her request, I threw it into the trash can with good momentum. And triumphantly turning to look at her face, I felt a bit of regret. Her eyebrows were drawn together sorrowfully as she looked at that box. I didn't want to look at her eyes, so I hurriedly applied myself to my room.

While we were married, of course, our rooms were separate. Because I thought I'd never be embracing her, and was sure she didn't want to be embraced by me either.

That brutal lifestyle continued and half a year passed. When my mornings began, before I even left the bed, I'd look up, 'the probability I can kill my wife without being found out'. And after getting up, I'd get my appearance in order, and head to the living room.

"It was 15% this morning."

"Oh my, then should I be feeling relieved?"

“You never know. It’s possible I laced that coffee of yours with poison.”

“When I brewed it just now?”

“If I prepared it yesterday, it’s a possibility.”

“Then I’ll keep that in mind. And here’s some for you.”

“Thank you kindly.”

Taking that coffee that obviously didn’t contain any poison in hand, I arrived at my seat. From there up to eating the breakfast she prepared was our usual flow.

Otherwise, there were some days we wouldn’t have a proper conversation, but I had begun, more or less, feeling a sense of comfort at that. Her policy of nonintervention was nice. The breakfast and lunch she arbitrarily made was charming. But that was a different recognition than love, and if I were asked, ‘do you love her?’ the answer would certainly be a, ‘no’.

And just like that, two years went by. It was what others viewed as the time period where spouses broke up as couples, and began operating as a family. She said she wanted to go on a date with me.

“Well I don’t want to go.”

“But I do. Let’s go to the aquarium today!”

“I do not love you. It isn’t even a like.”

“But I do love you.”

And so what, I thought. Why did she think we could get along as a normal couple after so long? My irritation caused me to stare at her in silence. I perceived her easy smile.

“Are you sure you’re fine with that? You plan on letting this chance slip by?”

“What do you mean?”

“If you answer my invitation, you may be able to kill me.”

“I don’t just want to kill you. I want to kill you without being found out. If I get caught, there’s no meaning.”

“Exactly! Do you remember today’s numbers?”

“5.7... I believe?”

“Right, haven’t they been falling lately? Are you sure you’re fine with that? If you go places with me, that number may just skyrocket! If we’re in a crowd, and you stab my back with a knife that has nothing to tie you to it, you won’t be caught. But for that sake, we have to start going into crowds.”

“When we’re talking about killing you, you sure are in a good mood.”

“I want to be in a good mood for today. It’s alright, I’ll leave my back to you.”

“To be stabbed?”

“Oh, you can hold me tight if you wish?”

Lured by her amused laughed, I formed a smile. In the end, my opposition was overcome, and we went on our first date. We were almost into our third year of marriage.

If you only gave me two choices of fun, or not fun, I’m sure I had fun. It was my first trip to the aquarium in a long time, and I get the feeling I was in high spirits unbecoming of my age. It was a day my heart danced too much for me to check the numbers. And for her, smiling beside me, I wanted to thank her for that time alone.

When night came, we ate dinner at home as per usual. It was a bit more extravagant than usual, and looking over the table lined with nothing but my favorites, I finally looked at the calendar.

“It’s my birthday?”

“So you forgot it after all. We were celebrating it every year, for argument’s sake.”

Thinking back, I got the feeling there was always a day once per year where my favorite food was extravagantly lined up. Thinking it was a whim, I hadn’t been mindful at the time, but come so far, I realized those must have been my birthdays.

“I won’t say thank you.”

“You just did, so that’s enough.”

“I don’t have the mind to celebrate your birthday.”

“I did it because I wanted to, so you needn’t mind it.”

“...”

“Thank you for being born.”

“You’re welcome.”

Thinking back, I can understand she was only embarrassed, but at the time I was flustered, and ‘is this woman alright?’ was all I could think.

As expected, my attitude didn’t change, and neither did hers.

But once a month, we got around to going out together.

For me to kill her. For her to date me.

Did I really intend to kill her? If you asked, I would have to answer, I never did from the start.

It was true I didn’t think well of her, and if she died, then... it’s not like I never considered it. But something as high-risk as killing her wasn’t an option a coward like me could choose so easily.

As we’d become a married couple, it came up as just the right topic of conversation.

I’m sure she knew that. She knew, and used it in negotiations. We all acknowledged it, and I hopped on board those bargains.

Why was it? I thought I had a slight idea of what it was, but I hurriedly closed the box. I mean, it’s been so long.

From then on, two years passed, and for the marriage, it was our fifth year.

“Today was 2.564%. The worst. It’s way too low.”

“I’m relieved it looks like my peace will go on.”

“You never change to begin with. You’re the epitome of peace.”

“That’s not always the case. I cooked today’s fish too long, and burnt it black.”

“Mine looks normal, though.”

“I quickly did another one for you. Just look over here, burnt black.”

Saying that, she showed the fish on her own plate, and gave a bitter smile. I took her

plate, exchanged it with mine, and started on my breakfast.

“You sure? It’s practically charcoal.”

“And are you sure? I may have laced that plate with poison when you weren’t looking.”

“If it’s poison you set, I’d like to try it.”

“Then go ahead.”

“Thank you for the meal.”

While eating our usual breakfast, I looked at the clock. Next to the time, it displayed the date.

Already five years.

To be honest, I thought it was time to call it quits.

As she ate her breakfast, before her eyes, I did a future prediction. Seeing the numbers projected on the glasses’ lens, I let out a sigh.

‘1.524%’

As I thought. It was low. What I told her before was a number plus one. And when I woke up, it had been ‘1.564%’. By the way, that added one was a worthless display of obstinacy.

In the past, I had talked with a friend knowledgeable on the future prediction system about the predictions I was doing, and about us spouses. Because I was curious about the numbers decreasing over the years.

You sure are an idiot, he said and sighed, after which he gave me a thorough explanation.

According to him, ‘the probability I can kill my wife without being found out’ query would start its calculations from the probability the individual who input it was likely to ‘kill their wife’. Meaning the rate declining over long years likely indicated a change in my feelings, he said.

That's absurd. After that thought crossed my mind, it was followed by, even if that's the case, what do you expect me to do after so long. And it became hard. After saying nothing but cruel things to her, she was always the same, and after ignoring anniversaries, I only put up with whatever she gave me.

It was five years. Five whole years.

Just what sort of face am I supposed to put on as I tell her I treasure her?

And in the end, even after that, I chose to continue doing nothing but putting up with your feelings.

But let's end it already. It's time to call it quits. I've no idea if I love you, but I'm sure I do treasure you. I think that's what I'll tell her.

Today was the day you were born.

I finished my breakfast, and got my appearance in order to go out to work as I always did. As always, she saw me off to the door. I lightly opened my mouth, and let out a voice that sounded like it would fade away.

"See you soon."

"...Yes. Come back safely."

She was making a teary face as she smiled, so it made me somewhat happy, and I tried saying, 'see you soon' again. I said it in a little clearer of a voice than before, and she really looked like she would burst into tears, so I hurriedly departed to leave the house.

This is a place I could return. Those words I couldn't say because I didn't want to think it. If you were going to be so delighted, I should have said them sooner, I thought as I headed for the company.

Let's start over.

I honestly thought it. I'll buy a bouquet on the way home. I already reserved a cake. Let's celebrate for what we never celebrated before. I don't know what sort of present will make you happy, so let's go buy one together. Let's start from there. I didn't even

know her preferences. When she had a perfect grasp of mine, and I never even said anything about them, it was simply embarrassing. But I'll learn them from now. We have plenty of time. We're a married couple.

It was the first time I realized how long the time I spent at the office was.

After operations, I bid my leave, and as I planned to return home directly, I dropped by a flower shop.

I didn't know what color she'd like, so I chose the standard roses, and had them wrap them. They asked how many I wanted, so I randomly threw out a hundred, making an unbelievable portion. Even so, they said they only had what they'd prepared for the day, and with the number reduced by seventy, all was well with the world.

When I leaned in to accept the bouquet, the glasses against my face fell, and made a metallic sound. The shock instantly brought up the morning's prediction from its history.

'25.283%'

The number it displayed opened my eyes wide. I hurriedly put the glasses back on to see the number refresh by the second.

'32.154%'

'38.259%'

'42.985%'

The digits rose with each blink, and finally exceeded the 50% mark.

'The probability I can kill my wife without being found out : 52.385%'

The moment I saw it, I ran as if a switch had been flipped.

I recalled the words of the friend I'd consulted about us.

“If you want to treasure your wife, yet on top of those feelings, the probability exceeds 50%, then be careful. Because regardless of how you feel, it means it’s come to a situation where it’s more than possible.”

What do you mean? When I asked, he just laughed it off with a how should I know? A situation where it’s more than possible? What situation is that? I thought, as I set my feet to the road home. Her face floated in my mind, and a cold sweat flowed. I passed through the shopping street, and as I passed the appliance store, my feet came to a stop. Because the news running on the television display projected her image.

‘Traffic accident, dump truck, critical condition’

I frantically sorted through the information flowing in. As the final blow, they uploaded her image once more. I fell to my knees.

I don’t really remember what came after. On the end of the shrill ring of my cellphone, I could hear my father-in-law yelling something, but it didn’t reach me.

You were asleep. On a hospital bed with many machines fastened to you.

The bandage I saw made me want to avert my eyes, but the first I’d ever seen of your sleeping face was so beautiful I couldn’t keep them off.

“Happy birthday.”

Were the first words to come out.

“I’m sorry for everything.”

And the next were an apology.

Luckily, the two of us were the only ones in the room, so I sat beside her, and did a future prediction again.

'The probability I can kill my wife without being found out 99.274%'

I'll bet, I thought. Even if my feelings got in the way, if I were to touch any of the numerous buttons around me, I'm sure she would die. And if that could be traced, then a light hand against her throat would be enough to do her in.

My friend had said it, that it would, 'start its calculations from the probability the individual who input it was likely to 'kill their wife''. Hesitation, so to speak. When it came to killing, whether my feet would be held back.

The current her was an existence that might die before I could even hesitate. If I even walked to the starting line, she would depart.

"Hey, today's probability was 0%. It isn't just a matter of being low."

I said it to her as I always did. I mean, the probability was 0%. Even if the lenses of my glasses projected '99.358', I wanted her to live, so the probability was 0%. There was no way I could kill her.

"So I promise your peace for today. So don't sleep there forever, let's take some lunch, and go to the park. I never said it before, but I love the sweet eggs you make. The fried chicken you make is also delicious. I had always eaten those lunches you put all your heart into making in silence. But even so, you smiled in delight, so I had convinced myself it was fine if it stayed that way."

Gently to warm it up, I stroked your face going cold. Praying it would flush with the usual pink.

"Today I learned it for the first time. That you wanted me to say, 'see you soon'. Because of my petty backbone, I could never say it to now, but that place had already become my home to return to long, long ago. I made you cry, didn't I. Were you crying when I wasn't watching, or is that just my conceit? I won't let you cry anymore. It's true. I swear it."

My sobbing had risen to the back of my throat. The depths of my nose gave a prickly ache, and unable to endure it, my tears flowed out.

“I’m really sorry. Thank you for waiting all this time. And now I want to hear your voice. Dearly.”

I gripped her hand hard enough to turn white, and sobbed. I didn’t have confidence that my words would come out properly. But even so, I knew there was something I had to say.

“I love you. Come back, Yuri...”

We spent the sixth anniversary of our wedding in a hospital room.

Our anniversary and her birthday were close, so it had been almost a year since she was bedridden. In the eyes of the world at large, Yuri had become a human vegetable. I didn’t want to use such a disgusting term to describe her, but whenever I had to explain her condition, I was driven to use it out of necessity. I’ve really got to polish my vocabulary, I got the feeling she gave a greater smile than usual when I said that to her that day.

As Yuri had always done for me, I would change the room’s flowers every day, and talk to her about trivial things. I’d wipe down her body, and if the weather was nice, I’d open the window and we’d bathe in the sun together. I was learning cooking under one of my subordinates, and I was just getting desperate to have it be the first thing she ate when she woke up.

“Hey Yuri, today’s probability was 0% again. Your peace is safe today.”
'96.783%'

Looking at the numbers that had only dropped 3% in a year, I smiled a bit. It’s fine, I can wait. I’ll wait forever. So take your time, and come back.

A few days ago, the doctor had told me to keep, 'turning off her life support within my field of vision'. Her prospects of recovery were low, it seems. I raised my voice and punched him, but now, I'm properly repenting it. So Yuri, don't be angry when you open your eyes.

Half a year later, father-in-law had given up.

But I had not. I frantically overcame it whenever I felt I would, and desperately talked to you who wouldn't respond.

And another half year, the seventh year of our marriage.

Lookin at Yuri, who wouldn't respond if spoken to, I thought to the five years I wouldn't respond to her.

Did it feel like this? To deal with me who wouldn't talk back... did I have Yuri taste this sense of nihilism?

Even when it was her birthday, my eyesight was clouding, and there was nothing I could do. Without wiping the tears streaming down my face, I spoke to her.

"Happy birthday. I brought the flowers I couldn't get to you last time. This time I have a proper one hundred. Amazing, isn't it? We can go buy a present once you wake up. For seven years' worth, it doesn't matter whatever you ask for. And I haven't the slightest what you would want. You'll have to tell me in detail next time."

"Hey, today's probability was also 0%. Why are you still in bed?"

'92.693'

"What color do you like? What are your hobbies?"

'85.696%'

"What did you do when I was away? What flowers do you like?"

'68.258%'

“Show me some pictures of your childhood next time. What high school did you go to?”

'51.258%'

Having come so far, I was taken aback. I hadn't noticed the numbers going down. The number kept dropping, more and more. My heart rate rose in inverse proportion.

It couldn't be it couldn't be it couldn't be.

'32.258%'

'20.258%'

'12.258%'

'3.178%'

'0.001%'

“Good morning. You sure slept in today.”

Behind her oxygen mask, her well-shaped lips quietly smiled. Her large eyes reflected me as they lightly shook.

“Good morning. Masahiro.”

Her voice didn't come out, but on the shape of her moving lips, I broke into tears.

And I was continuing on with my habit.

'0.061%'

That was today's result.

Rising from the bed, I pat Yuri beside me, and today once more, the small life beyond her energetically burst into tears.

桜川 ヒロ

Hiro Sakurakawa

A Game to Make him Fall

彼を陥落させるゲーム

宝島社

A Game To Make Him Fall

– Kare wo Kanrakusareru Game –

- Short Story -

**-Author-
Hiroro**

[Yoraikun Translation]

- STORY -

Born to a house where women were only seen as tools to birth children, I was already in my twenties. I was standing on the crossroads of life.

At my fingertips were close to fifty photos of different men. They were the marriage partner candidates my father had prepared.

Those who took the initiative and volunteered because they wanted his company, and those that were recommended to strengthen our ties with other companies. There were various reasons, but I was to marry one, and build up a child.

That was my reason for existence in this house.

I don't think I can love another.

I wonder how everyone believes in something so shapeless as love.
It was only a marvel to me.

That I couldn't do something any standard person could must be because I was a person who was never properly loved.

I put a break on the countless unanswered questions I held since my birth, and stared down at the photos around me.

That I chose him was truly a coincidence.

“Get a child already”

That was my father’s favorite phrase.

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The largest reason I chose him was because his photo was at the very bottom of the stack. The order of the close-to-fifty photos was decided by how much profit each person could bring to the company. Since he was at the very bottom of the stack, he was practically pointless to my father’s company. As revenge against my father, I took

his photo in hand.

He of the photo was a plain man you could find anywhere. A man whose only real trait came from the diligent air given off by the glasses on his face. When it was a photo to hand to a potential marriage partner, he wasn't smiling at all. More than that, it even looked as if he were glaring. Angrily.

His unflattering bearing held a contrarily favorable impression.

Looking at the profile on the back of the photo, I was even more certain I would settle with that person.

His history indicated, after graduating a second-rate college, he entered a mid-tier company you could find anywhere, and his years in service to it would total five this year.

And for such a man, the reason for his candidacy was to save his grandfather's company, he wrote. My mind went strange.

"What a fool."

By the time I noticed it, I had leaked those words.

Going out of his way to marry a woman he didn't love to save someone else. He must have been unbelievably softhearted, and kind passed salvation.

'I can't think I'll love you, but if you're alright with me.'

Those words he let out the first time we met. I couldn't forget my father's face the moment he said it. Scowling, with his shoulders perked up, as he scattered shouts at me to give up on that man.

It was so amusing I couldn't help myself. That alone made me glad I chose him.

And we were married.

When our marriage was still young, he said this to me.

“I may kill you and take all the money you’re to inherit for myself. Even so, are you alright with me?”

I thought he was a man to say interesting things. If he was really planning such a thing, he’d keep quiet and carry it out, but for some reason, he sought my consent.

At the very point he said it, I was sure he wouldn’t kill me, but for some reason, his eyes were serious, and I laughed without restrained.

And I thought up a game.

“That’s fine. It’s only a matter if I can get you to fall before that, right”

I thought it would be interesting if he fell for me for real.

Though I doubted I would love him either, I could act in love as much as I wanted. On the other hand, with how blatantly it seemed he hated me, he was likely bad at lying.

Then to act out a happy couple, I knew it would be necessary to make him fall.

‘A game to make him fall.’

When I thought of it like that, this married life for the sole purpose of having a child began to feel fun to me. How strange.

“Shall I make it seem I took a trip myself, and kill you? It seems I’ll succeed almost 40% of the time.”

An overseas trip I had been planning from before the marriage. On the day before, he said that.

I had no idea what forty percent was supposed to mean, but it seems he was thinking about killing me again. And once more, he confessed it to me. What a strange man.

I answered whatever felt appropriate, and the day came to a close. Early the next day, I took a large bag and descended from my second-floor bedroom to the living room. And I was surprised by who I found there.

“Morning.”

“...Good morning.”

He who had become my husband a few weeks ago was there, his appearance in order. I was so surprised I was at a loss for words. He gave a dangerous scowl, and asked, “Won’t you be late?”

By his urgings, I headed for the parlor, and turned back.

“...See you later?”

“Hm.”

The reason my line became a question was because I couldn’t determine whether he had woken up early to see me off or not.

He simply nodded and didn’t reciprocate my words of parting, but the words I heard before closing the door slackened my face.

“Take care.”

That was all it was. But it was an important thing to me.

From before I gained awareness, I didn’t have a mother. Even when she had married into a house like mine, she had died promptly after having me, so my family was my father alone. That man of work, my father, rarely returned home, and the times we ate breakfast or dinner together were few enough to count.

But even so, to the time I rose to high school, I was alright with that. Living alongside the house’s helper I got along well with wasn’t bad, and she who was around the age of my grandmother doted on me quite a bit.

It was a relation built on the money invested into her employment contract, but at that age, I didn’t feel too strongly about that, and I depended on the fatherless ‘family’ given to me.

In the spring of my first high school year. She passed away.

Father said he would hire another helper around the house, but I declined. Because to me, she was family and a position that could never be replaced.

But even so, father went and hired one. I brushed them aside, but in my doing so, my father had forcefully changed my cognizance of her as, 'family' to mere 'helper' and I had lost the 'family' I had within me.

And my life alone began.

It was a house large enough for it to be painful. I took food alone, prepared alone, and went to school.

There was no one to see me off or back, and my father who'd occasionally returned wouldn't hold up a proper conversation.

If I were to die just like this, would anyone even notice I was no longer there?

That question even floated up, and floated out.

Without giving me a motivation to kill myself, mind you.

Like that, I gradually grew used to being 'alone'.

'Take care.'

The first words for my well-being I'd heard in a while.

What's more, the one who said them were my loveless husband from a few weeks ago, and the one who threatened to kill me just the other day.

I felt it amusing to the depths of my heart, and filled with a pleasant feeling.

Unable to contain it, I laughed through the taxi I'd called, and remembering his sour face as he saw me off, my head was filled with thoughts of nothing but how to make him fall.

It was a trip of a few days, and to be completely honest, the most fun I had was choosing the souvenir to give him.

And in regards to my return, his first words were as follows.

“The probability I will love you half a year later is 0.001%, it seems.”

“I see.”

Meaning it will take more than half a year. That was my only impression. I already knew half a year wouldn't be enough to nab that man, so I wasn't particularly surprised at it, and I merely drank it down as him stating a fact.

It did seem he was discontent at my attitude, and a little irritated, “I was sure you didn't hate me.” He declared.

It seems he wanted to knock me speechless.

I'm sure he wanted to see my bitter face and hatred. And he thought his sour stomach filled with the thought he had been 'bought' would subside some by that.

But from the start, I didn't have the slightest intent to move as he wished, and he wasn't the type of man to fall for a woman who moved however he wanted.

“...Could I ask how you plan on killing me next?”

When I said that challengingly, he let out a wimpy voice. He likely never thought it would come to that.

“You want to be killed?”

“If possible, I want to be loved.”

Those were without a doubt my true feelings.

Before my eyes, he flipped the switch on his glasses-shaped PC, and carried out a future prediction. The characters I could see spelled out, “The probability I can kill my wife without being found out’.

I see, so that's what he was looking into, I accepted.

So that's where the 'forty percent' he came out with before the trip meant.

After the end of a fierce clash. I handed him the souvenir I had put several hours into choosing. I could tell from looking at him that he treasured those glasses, so in the end, I chose to play safe and buy him a glasses case.

A black, leather-coated case. On the bottom, I had carved in his initials myself. The only one of its kind in the world, if you called it that, perhaps that was the case, but by appearance alone, it was a glasses case you could find anywhere.

And he tossed it into the trash with good momentum.

It was a shock. A greater shock than I anticipated. It was an act by someone I didn't think anything of, so I didn't have to pay mind to it, but I bit my lip a bit, and kept silent. He hurriedly returned to his room, but for the hour that followed, I was glued to the spot.

That was how our newly-wedded life had started out, but by the time I had noticed it, half a year had gone by.

I continued on with my 'game to make him fall', and it seems he was still checking that probability every day without fail.

"Today was quite a treat. 17%."

As he reported it every morning, at the start I doubted his motives, but to be blunt, I was already used to it.

In short, this was a conversation starter. And so I would always make use of it as one.

"You're up two percent from yesterday. Good for you. A good thing happened to me today too. Look, those perfectly dashi-rolled eggs. You like them, don't you?"

"...You're not wrong, but there are times I find myself afraid of you."

"Oh my, why's that?"

"I wonder why."

Giving a sudden smile, he took his seat, and after preparing his breakfast, we ate together. That was the usual flow.

Every morning, every meal, I would diligently make what he liked. It wasn't that I was thinking to grab him by the stomach, but between a woman who made what you liked, and one who didn't the former was overwhelmingly more likable, I thought.

His likes and dislikes were easy to see through. Unable to lie, whenever he liked something, the corners of his mouth would rise, and when he didn't a wrinkle would visit his brow.

"Is it good? Nicely done, right?"

"Well..."

It seems today's breakfast was to his tastes.

And just like that, a year went by.

In that period, my father began pestering me about whether I had a child yet. Even if he asked that, we slept in separate rooms, and he didn't show any signs of doing anything like that, so what's impossible was impossible. If I had a child, it would be the second coming.

When I told my father that, I was yelled at again. He heatedly went on about how a woman's happiness lay in leaving a child in the world, but at present, it wasn't hard to imagine he just wanted a successor, given his age.

"Don't call me again."

With those words I hung up, and faithful to them, he barged into the house next. It was a holiday, and he had barged in when that man was home, so I was more panicked than you could believe.

My father demanded from him the meaning behind all of it. Because I had ended up leaking the fact that the separate rooms was his idea over the phone.

“I have no intent to embrace her. I do not love her, and I doubt she feels she wants to be embraced by me either. A woman’s purpose isn’t a tool to have children. If that’s the reason you married her to me, then you are the one who made the wrong choice. So let me divorce her at once, and please marry her off to someone she properly loves.”

Those words shut both me and father up.

Father returned as if running from the spot, and I put out some coffee.

“Thank you.”

“I don’t understand your thanks.”

“You did that with me in mind, didn’t you?”

“I... just wanted a divorce.”

Saying that sulkily, he sipped the coffee.

He really was a kind person. It seems the individual himself hadn’t realized it, but those truly were words sticking up for me.

I opened my mouth to bring forth more gratitude. But the words coming from me were extremely twisted on the way out.

“Oh, are you really fine with that? If we divorce, you can’t kill me, and a large sum of money will be distancing itself from you.”

“...That’s right. I wouldn’t want that.”

“Could I hear your next plan?”

“If I tell you, then you’d move so as not to be killed, wouldn’t you?”

“As your wife, I have the resolve to accept anything from you. I’d like you not to underestimate me.”

“Even if this were a knife?”

He touched the coffee cup against my chest and grinned with just his lips. I stole the cup from his hands and downed its contents.

“Even if this were filled with poison.”

When I said that with a smile, he burst into laughter. Within this lifestyle, wasn't that the first time I saw a real smile from him? I thought. And with his lips alone still in a leisurely smile, he held up a finger.

“Then could I order another coffee? Without the poison, if you will.”

“I've never even thought to feed you poison, dear.”

When I said that and assented, he reverted back to his usual expressionless state. That felt somewhat lonely, so I decided I would definitely make him laugh again sometime.

I understood it only in hindsight, but at that point, I had fallen.

When I was supposed to be dropping him, it was honestly pitiful and all that jazz, but my life from then on was like a gemstone to me.

I still didn't understand love. But I still did treasure him.

From there, another year and a half passed, and it was three years for our marriage.

I was still playing the 'game to make him fall', and I had mastered his tastes in makeup and dress.

Having come this far, I was already nothing but a woman in love, but my small bit of pride didn't allow me to accept that.

He was going at it bit by bit, but there still was a change. Of all things, he got around to help around with the chores. At the start, any and everything was left to me. I had kept quiet to that point, but recently I protested that while I stayed home, for argument's sake, I still had a job, so wasn't that unfair? He accepted division of housework all-too-easily, and now, the laundry and trash every day was his charge.

“If it was that hard on you, you should’ve said something earlier. I don’t want to have you dying from overwork. I want to kill you without being found out.”

It was a recent occurrence that he began to smile whenever he said something like that.

We were becoming a family. Slowly, but surely.

I was unbearably happy at that fact, and my heart danced at the prospect of having a warm household for the first time in my life.

And his birthday came.

Moving by the plan I had devised long beforehand, the preparations of morning to dinner, I did my best on my makeup and dressing up.

I thought to go on a date with him. Embarrassing as it was, it was the first date in my life. I was a sheltered daughter by the definition of the term, and in truth, my acquaintances numbered zero.

Just how long had I waited for this day.

I argued down his agitation, and took him to his beloved aquarium.

I had learned he liked the aquarium quite recently. When we were coincidentally watching TV together, an aquarium commercial came on. I could determine it by the sparkling eyes of a young boy with which he eyed the penguins. I was certain he loved the aquarium.

The result was superb. It seems he loved it, and I enjoyed it as well. I was happy.

When I let too loose, and bought enough paraphernalia to carry in both hands, that he quietly took all of them from me and carried them all home was actually the part I enjoyed most, but that’s my life’s secret from him.

“Thank you for being born.”

“You’re welcome.”

His flushed face was lovely.

After that, we got around to going out together around once per month. Starting with the nearby park, we got as far as small trips out of the prefecture.

When I made lunch, he'd make a sour face as he quietly ate them, but I didn't let slip by the rising of the corners of his lips whenever I packed fried chicken or eggs.

The next time, I tried loading the lunch with those foods, only for him to look at me with a bit of a surprised face, and say this:

“Can you read hearts?”

It was so strange, so interesting... he still didn't smile very much, but even so I thought it had become quite an enjoyable married life.

And from there, a year went by, and my desires began to come out.

Around four years since we had been married.

At that point, I knew it was about time I admitted that I liked him, and it was because I accepted it, that these desires began to be born. I wanted him to come to love me. I wanted us to become a normal couple, and family.

And honestly, I'd devoted myself so much, so I thought he should at least have taken to me a bit. But with his usual poker face, there were times I couldn't tell what he was thinking.

I wanted to know his feelings, so I decided to test a certain means.

The means he used every morning.

I started up the old-type notebook PC I had stowed away in the back of the closet, and started up a future prediction.

On the empty input that came up after a while, I hesitated a moment on what to enter. And with a nervous face, I typed it.

'The probability a husband loves his wife.'

In the husband and wife slots that came up, I entered our names, and birthdates, the serial numbers that identified us as individuals, and various other things. I pushed down the enter key.

'0.000%'

That was the answer.

That answer that fell with a thump made me finally realize it.

That every bit of it had been me rushing at windmills.

Wanting him to love me, the cooking and makeup I had put all my effort into studying, the flowers I changed every day with a smile, the words I exchanged to understand him just a little bit more, if I thought back to it all, I was always alone. I had made merry by myself and done it all myself. To him, I'm sure it was all a bother.

From the start, to him I was a human to be hated, and in these five years, I'm sure that had never changed once.

(Come to think of it, I've never heard a, 'see you soon,' or 'I'm home,' from him.)

I let tears spill onto the keyboard, as I thought along that vein.

And even after that, I continued my 'game to make him fall'. The point was, I simply wanted him to like me, but if I thought about it like that, I felt too ashamed, so there was no helping it.

Frankly, it was irrelevant whether he found it a bother. Because all of this was something I only did because I wanted to.

Believing he would turn back to me one day, I spoke to him again with a smile.

And that day came without any forewarning.

The usual morning, the usual time to leave for work. I saw him off as I always did.

“See you soon.”

I thought I had misheard for a moment. But there wasn't anyone but him there, and by how he averted his eyes with a red face, I could understand I had heard them right.

Come back safely. Those words I returned got caught up in my nose for some reason.

“See you soon.”

Once more, he said it this time with a little clearer a voice, and fled from the house like a fired shell.

My face was wet. The drops moistening my face were flowing from my own eyes; It was something I realized ten-odd seconds later.

I returned to the living room, and took care of the tableware he'd eaten with. My footsteps were light, enough I could burst into a skip at any moment. And I noticed his forgotten item on top of the desk.

A leather glasses case.

I had never seen him use a glasses case before, but he was the only one who wore glasses in this house, so there was no doubt it belonged to him.

I took it in hand. I thought it was something I had seen before. From living together so long, perhaps I had just caught a glance of it somewhere, but my heart was screaming that wasn't the case.

I turned it over, looked at the bottom, and froze.

His initials were carved in, and I recognized them.

It was the souvenir. When our marriage was still young, the present from the trip I took alone. The case he tossed into the trash a few seconds after I gave it to him.

I gripped what looked worn out, but well looked after.

And I moved it to embrace in my arms, and cried again.

Honestly, this wasn't how it was supposed to be. I was supposed to make him fall, but before I realized it, I had fallen myself, and I was fed up with myself. Having fallen so easily, I wondered why it had been that man. There were as many men with better appearance and personality than him, then there were stars in the sky, and I'm sure even I could have met such a man in my life.

With a repeated stream of whys, I was no closer to the answer, but there was one thing that was certain.

Among all the men I'd met in my life, he was the only one who taught me 'family'.

That entire day felt pleasant. I wasn't troubled at all with shopping for dinner, I mean, nothing but his favorites were floating in my mind, so there was no helping it.

While I was doing prep work for the meal, I suddenly turned to the calendar, and unintentionally burst out laughing.

Today was my birthday.

The happenings of the morning must have been some birthday present from god or something. If that were the case, then wouldn't it be fine if I celebrated my own birthday a bit?

No one had celebrated it for many years, so I was on the verge of forgetting it, but one day was fine. I mean, what a wonderful day it was.

I was lonely. Lonely. Truly lonely.

If I was happy, I'd say 'I'm happy'.

If I was glad, I'd say 'I'm glad'.

If I was sad, I'd say, 'I'm sad'.

I always wanted a 'family' where I could quarrel over those trivial things.

Right, I'll buy a cake.

It just has to be big enough for two to eat, a round one, with a candle on top.

I always wanted to do it once. I could count the times I'd been invited to a friend's birthday party on my hands, so I'd recreate the scenes I'd seen in my dreams here and now.

I'm sure he wouldn't tell me, 'congratulations' or anything of the sort. That was fine. Just sitting around a cake together was plenty.

"If I recall correctly, you're supposed to blow all the candles out at once."

My restless lips let such a thing out.

With light steps, I took my purse, and left through the parlor. The inside of my head was filled with thoughts of tonight, so perhaps I was careless.

I got into an accident.

When I came too, I was standing in empty darkness by myself.

Ah, I'm alone again. I suddenly understood, and my chest felt tight. In the end, perhaps god was telling me not to get carried away. That life wasn't so soft, that such

turnabouts don't happen.

I mean, the probability was zero point zero zero zero percent, was it not? The probability he loves me was zero. Even if a year had passed, I doubt that probability would make some dramatic comeback.

He loving me was an impossible thing for eternities to come. So he wouldn't be my family. I got the feeling he told me that as well.

So my mind sunk down once more.

The next place my consciousness resurfaced was a space more gray than black.

I didn't quite have a grip on my sense of time. Whether a lot of time had passed, or it had only been a few hours. To me, the fact I was alone again came first, and I could care less about the time, so perhaps that's how I perceived it.

It felt as if a light was hitting me from somewhere. While they were closed, an impact of something piercing into my retinas gradually changed my surroundings from gray to white.

'Yuri, today's probability was 0% again. You'll have a good day today.'

I heard a voice. His voice.

It was a bit muffled, but it was definitely his voice.

But that was strange. Did he ever even call me by my name before?

Thinking that far, I understood that voice was an auditory hallucination. The words and voice I wanted to hear were arbitrarily being broadcast by my brain.

'The weather's nice today. When you wake up, let's take a walk together.'

"Oh, I can't see it from here. But that sounds nice. I'd like to walk with you too."

I had answered before I realized it. How foolish, having an internal conversation with the him of my illusions was sheer stupidity. I thought, but even so it was fun, and I joyfully responded to the words coming down.

The next time, and the time after that, every time my mind resurfaced, I would converse with his illusion.

“Today, I brought some dashi-rolled eggs I cooked up. They’re not tasty at all, and I ended up burning them, but won’t you eat them with me someday?”

“Of course. If it’s something you made, then I’d eat it even if it were poisoned. Didn’t I tell you that?”

“The truth is, I punched your doctor today. I don’t regret the fact I hit him, but I do want to apologize, for what it’s worth. But I don’t have the courage. When you wake up, can you go together with me? I think that will boost my confidence.”

“You’re a bonafide adult, so you can go on your own. I’ll see you off half the way.”

“Today’s flowers are gerberas. They look like they’d suit you. It seems that gardening’s the new fad these days. Do you think we should try it out together sometime?”

“Sounds nice. The truth is, I like cosmos. But they’re not quite suited for gardening, right? I also like pansies, so should we start with those?”

His illusion often used the word, ‘together’, and when I thought over how that was indicating my own desires, I became excessively embarrassed. But are these really hallucinations?

What I was exchanging words with was a phantom. That was what I thought, but could it be the words themselves... seeing myself think that, my chest became tight.

If these really were his words, I’d be delighted. Unbelievably delighted.

I’m not sure how many times it had been. I felt my mind resurface.

Today, his ever-muffled voice sounded much clearer than usual.

'Happy birthday. I brought the flowers I couldn't get to you last time. This time I have a proper one hundred. Amazing, isn't it? We can go buy a present once you wake up. For seven years' worth, it doesn't matter whatever you ask for. And I haven't the slightest what you would want. You'll have to tell me in detail next time.'

And I tried to respond as I always did. But it was strange. Today of all days, my voice wouldn't come out.

'Hey, today's probability was also 0%. Why are you still in bed?'

Those words were caught on his nose for some reason. Was he crying? When I thought it, I couldn't just stay as I was.

'What color do you like? What are your hobbies?'

Why are you crying? Are you in pain? Sorrow?

'What did you do when I was away? What flowers do you like?'

I like cosmos. I told you earlier, didn't I? What's wrong? Didn't you hear me?

'Show me some pictures of your childhood next time. What high school did you go to?'

I'll show you as many as you want, and I'll tell you all about them. So you don't have to cry, I don't want to see your crying face.

No matter how many times I tried to let out my voice, it wouldn't come out. A hazy, strange sound was all that came out, and no words to comfort him would escape my lips.

If he was crying, then cheering him up was my role.

I mean, I'm his 'family'.

A painful light seared my eyelids. My painfully dry throat only let off a strange sound. That shadow I could vaguely make out was surely you. There's no way I would be mistaken.

"Good morning. You sure slept in today."

"Good morning. Masahiro."

Again, my voice wouldn't come out. And again, he cried.

"Did you think up a good birthday present? Want a new computer? Your old notebook was already broken, wasn't it? Or would a bag or necklace be better? Woman have an image of liking precious metals, but does that image fit you?"

On a certain day, near my encroaching discharge, Masahiro asked me.

"Can I really ask for anything?"

"Yeah, because I made you wait quite a while. But please limit to what I'm capable of. I don't think I can become an oil baron."

"Oh, I've no desire to extort something so expensive from you."

As my mouth turned sour, the hand he reached to pat my head was comforting.

"Then say it. Quickly. Anything."

"Masahiro, please lend me your ear."

Since I was sitting in a wheelchair, he brought his head close.

And with all my might, I pestered him this.

“I want a family with you.”



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