

The Taboo Book



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Characters:



➤ Kito Akiichi (鬼頭明一):

A young man working in an Izakaya (traditional Japanese tavern). He suffered an unfortunate event one year ago, thus he became depressed and decadent. Although understanding some magic tricks, his skill still cannot be called “mastery”.

➤ Kiyohime(清姫):

Introduced in the "Kiyohime Legend". She fell in love at first sight with the handsome monk Anchin, who requested for a single night's lodgings while on his way to a temple in Kumano. However, upon visiting Anchin late at night, Kiyohime was bluntly rejected. Nevertheless, Anchin promised to meet her again while, on his way back from the temple in Kumano. However, Anchin broke his promise out of fear for Kiyohime and ended up running away without meeting her. Noticing that, Kiyohime felt into despair, grief, and resentment over being betrayed, turned into a dragon, and began to pursue him. Finally

catching up at a temple, she burned Anchin to death while he was hiding inside a bell. There are no records of her having the blood of the Dragon Kind mixed in. There was only a persistent deep-rooted delusion towards the human she was deeply in love with.

...In other words, one could say that transforming into a dragon just with a "misconception" is a manifestation of her tenacity.

➤ Ryoko Shimizu (清水涼子):

Genius, top student, intellect... These adjectives are never too much for her. She is a playmate in the childhood of Kito. She has a sharp tongue but a tender heart, even though she does not want to admit it at all. She always takes care of Kito, maybe an ambiguous relationship has been formed?

➤ Uncle:

Owner of the Izakaya. He is a strong and frank man, who seems to be careless and strict, but in fact, he is very sensitive and warm heart.

➤ Gangsters:



A group of infamous youth in the town.

➤ Nun:

Full of mystery.

➤ The Hostess of spring: A benign old woman.

➤ Grandma:

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➤ Parents:

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Prologue

The sky was overcast, and the weather was also muggy.

Walking alone on the quiet street, it was not a tediously long journey, but I even thought it could not be finished forever.

Silent. Although my position did not deviate from the centre of this small town, I saw no one on the road. It must be noon now, despite it was as dark as evening. —As if falling into a strange parallel world, what a strange day.

How many times I had been alone like this? I couldn't remember. Well, maybe a whole year had passed after that thing happened.

With heavy steps, I continued to follow along this familiar road, walking, walking. The clothes were soaked with sweat.

"Damn weather..." Complaining like this, the bag in my hand seemed to be getting heavier.

Exhausted. My body was about to fall apart. Maybe I would totally faint next.

"Bah... Getting so tired...after just taking a mail?! Huh, well-well... I'm just a jerk!"

Knowing that no one would be listening, but still speaking out such affected words of self-abandonment... I really didn't know what's wrong with myself.

So quiet. What my ears could hear were only the sounds of the friction of the plastic bag and my heavy walking. Oh, of course, and the gusts of wind as well.

The weather forecast said there would be thunderstorms today. Sure enough, it was stupid to go out at this damn time.

Very close to my home on the edge of the town now... I shall hurry up... and get home before it fiercely rained. With that in mind, I quickened my pace.

One step... Two steps... Three steps...

In a moment, however, I seemed to lose my balance, I thus fall to the ground. The things in the bag had been spilled all over the floor. Terrible, I must pick them up quickly...

But... Why so dizzy... Was the world spinning?

—I couldn't do it. I was too exhausted to move anymore. I wanted to sleep... But why in this place?

Well, just forget it, anyway, everyone must be sheltering from the rain at home, even if I slept here, no one would be in trouble, right?

Well then... Good night, the world...

"...Hey!"

Eh? What was that noise? Was it an illusion?

"Hey, Akiichi! Wake up!!"

A familiar voice. Who was it? Who was calling me?

"I said, Akiichi! You big fool! Don't sleep here!!"

I slowly opened my eyes, and a fuzzy figure appeared in front of me.

"Kito Akiichi! Wake up, or you'll catch a cold!"

When my eyes gradually focused, I finally realized that I was wet through, and the

girl holding an umbrella for me was keeping looking at me with reproachful eyes.

“Hey, hey, you fool, you wanna have a fever? Stand up right now!”

Well, that made sense. I gave a weak sigh and called the familiar name—

“Ryoko, it’s you.”

“So you are not stupid enough, ah huh? —Come on, grab my hand and I’ll pull you up,” Said Ryoko, who attempted to reach out to me.

“...Thank you,” After a simple thanks, I stood up and began to look around. I found that the things spilled on the ground had already been picked up, and now they were neatly placed beside me.

Thanks to the rain, I felt much cooler, though I would catch a cold if I kept going on like this. But now I must go home as soon as possible. I tried to pick up the bag and was ready to leave.

“Stop! What are you going?!” As soon as I just intended to step forward, I was immediately stopped again by the loud female voice.

“Go home,” I replied briefly and left the umbrella held by Ryoko at the same time. —Ah, honestly, there was a chill at the moment.

“Enough!! Akiichi, how long will you be so decadent?” Ryoko’s angry voice came, and my head was soon covered by an umbrella, “Come on, I’ll go back with you!”

“No, my house was in a mess. Besides, there’s nothing to do with Ryoko.”

“So what?! I can’t leave you alone, do you understand? And you know, we are...”

She suddenly stopped, but only a few seconds later, another harsh voice came:

“In a word, don’t stay here too long. Let’s go back to your home first.”

In this way, with Ryoko’s insistence, we walked home with an umbrella.

There must be a world of difference between walking in the rain in romantic movies with the cruel reality — for every step, my shoes would be steeped once. Woo... That was so annoying!

Unconsciously, I began to slowly look at the beside me with long straight hair and in glasses — Shimizu Ryoko, my playmates in childhood, in other words, we were brought up together. Until we grew up, recently she was accepted by a famous university in the city, but I hate learning, so I could just be trapped in this boring town forever. But even so, Ryoko would always come back here every summer, these days she must be on holiday — well, that was why she began to interfere with my affairs just now?

At this time, Ryoko seemed to have noticed my sight, so she glared back at me, and then quickly looked ahead again — as if she was disgusted with me.

“What an interesting move,” I laughed, in spite of myself. Such a long-lost feeling, I hadn’t laughed like that for a long time.

Ah, it was just like back in the past, when Ryoko and I quarrelled every day. I really miss that happy time... Since *that thing* happened, I...

Thinking of this, I suddenly began to have a headache again, and the smile on my face thus disappeared.

Therefore, we continued to go through the road in silence.

Soon after, we stopped in front of a gray house.

“Oh my, Akiichi, this’s too messy,” Ryoko, who had just put away her umbrella, immediately showed a look of blame.

Ryoko’s complaint was reasonable. Honestly, I loathed cleaning and even felt a headache when I heard that word. Furthermore, due to my depression these days, I never intended to do chores such as cleaning my house with garbage mountains, dust everywhere. Just like a disorderly warehouse, my “sweet” home just supported me barely lived.

“...I’m not good at housework. After all, for me, it’s enough to live.”

Not wanting to explain too much, I silently took out the key and opened the rusty door. Although the guest was Ryoko, my old friend, I still felt embarrassed to make her seen the messy room.

What came into view was the living room. Despite it was called the living room, only two sofas were placed. The whole room was full of all kinds of sundries. Except for the ground leading to the stairs, other places were covered with dust.

“Unbelievable,” Ryoko said, with her hands akimbo. Her dark eyes kept staring at me, “Where’s the broom?”

“You don’t have to help me... Ryoko.”

“And let you sleep in a pigsty-like place, huh?! Can’t you see that, ah, the garbage on the ground is already stinky! If no one deals with it, cockroaches will settle down here soon!”

“That’s exaggerating... Ryoko, you haven’t changed at all.”

“I can’t stand it anymore! —Bucket! Where’s the bucket?”

“Ah... Wait!”

So, with a sense of guilt, I began to clean this messy house, or rather, under the pressure of Ryoko.

“Whoa, so tired!” Two hours later, looking at the clean floor, Ryoko was planted on the sofa with her arms outstretched.

In the face of Ryoko, I couldn’t help feeling more guilty. I wrung the blackened rag again beside the bucket. Ah, how many times have I repeated it? I really couldn’t remember.

“Thank you, Ryoko. I’m really happy after cleaning with you. Ryoko must be a good wife.”

“W-What?!!”

Ryoko’s face immediately blushed, “what are you talking about...”

All of a sudden, she noticed a picture frame at the table, in a flash, she fell silent.

“It’s grandma,” I took the frame and wiped the dust with my hand, “She will be also happy to see Ryoko is coming.”

“Ah, I’m sorry about that... Akiichi...I feel so sorry to your grandma...”

“Don’t apologize. I think I should get used to it.”

I sighed and answered Ryoko, but it was more like saying to myself, “after all, I was alone at first, even though my parents... I’ve never seen them. Now even if I have nothing, I may face it calmly.”

“Akiichi...” Ryoko suddenly looked at me seriously, “Maybe you should know...”

“Know what?”

Ryoko didn’t answer. Instead, she stood up and opened her wet backpack, looking for something.

Soon, Ryoko stopped. What appeared in her hands were two... two books?

“Actually, I’m here for you this time...”

Ryoko spoke, her sweet voice clearly into my ears, gradually, formed a sentence that I can’t let go of—

“Kito Akiichi, do you really think your parents left you nothing?”

“Eh?”

I was stunned. Until just now, I firmly believed that I had lost everything except this old house. —My parents, whom I had never met before, almost be of little.

“My parents...?”

I silently reciting this empty and strange word, and found that there was no touch in my heart?

What would they leave me? Relics? Money? Or...

“These two books?”

“These aren’t ordinary books. They’re *magical* books.”

Magic —another word that shocked me.

Maybe in the eyes of others, that was ridiculous absurd. However, I knew clearly in my heart that magic does exist, and my grandmother was a witch, after all.

“My parents were wizards, too?”

“Well, just like Grandma. They manipulated magic.”

“Well...” I answered briefly, but there was a storm in my heart.

“Go to the attic, you know, the *attic*.”

Ryoko seemed to see through my mind and walked towards the stairs.

The attic was where grandma used to study her magic. The only people who knew this secret were me, grandma and Ryoko.

We skillfully climbed up the ladder to the small room. Finding the familiar oil lamp in the dark, wiping the dust, and then reigniting it. In the heavy rain, this oil lamp became the only light source in the dim attic.

“Well, I miss it so much,” Ryoko sighed as she looked around the attic.

Just last year, I also studied magic with my grandmother here. Nevertheless, compared with my skilled grandmother, I could only do some simple tricks.

“Is there anything special about these two books?” I asked.

Ryoko put the books on the small table. With the light of the oil lamp, I watched them carefully—

These are two very old books, one is black, another is white, but there were no words on their covers. In other words, if only dully staring at their appearances, we could never know what was written inside.

“Grandma gave them to me. She just asked me to bring them to you when you’re at a loss or in trouble...” Ryoko replied.

“...In trouble?”

“Well, as the gifts from your parents, you’d better open it by yourself. So... I’ll wait

for you downstairs.”

Thus, Ryoko left. I was the only one left standing in the attic, staring at the two books.

So, which book should I choose?

**The Black one*

Page1: Encounter

I gently stroked the book's wrinkled cover. What a broken book it is~

I put my palm on the book cover slowly, “Eh!” I suddenly flicked my hand away like an electric shock. After many years, there was still Wild Magic surging inside. Yes, that was the magic book my parents left me. I sighed: “The legacy left by my parents who have never met...”

Out of the window suddenly crossed a flash of lightning, leaving silver-white light, which shines the room weakly. The rain gradually became wild, knocking on the windows of the roof, as if trying to submerge the whole house.

Boom, boom, thunder, the sound of the waves hit the room, even the glass trembled slightly, “It's time to get the house mended.” I looked at the roof and said, “What is the mantra of repair... I can't remember.” “Well, I guess I'd better open this black book first,” I said and reached for the book with the black cover.

A strong light was emitted from the book, and the dazzling white light filled the whole attic. Then, the sound of the electrical appliance downstairs quieted down. I knew that it is a trip. “Is it too much magic?” I reluctantly recognized the title of the book by the light of the oil lamp: taboo... Book? “What is this?” I scratched my head.

All of a sudden, a dark wind blew by, and the weak burning flame in the old oil lamp flashed twice and fell into the darkness. Ryoko yelled downstairs, “Kito, are you OK? I'm going to see what happened so stay safe!”

I could not answer her because I was completely shocked, after the strong light, a girl with green hair and white clothes appeared. With the light of the lighting, I had a glance at what she looks like:

“With tiny feet, her arms crossed in front of her body arms, it seems that she is a little bit of bashful, but in the hands of the block is the main tone for plain white very gorgeous kimono, her long green hair like stagnant water on the shoulders. She lowers her head, just like a shy girl, but her eyes which are in the colour of dark red are staring at me in the dark, looking in my direction.”

As the light of the lightning faded, I slowly squatted down and rubbed my eyes, I could not believe what I just saw. But the eyes in the dark were still staring at me. The red eyes are still there, flashing in the dark. Staring at me like hell. I could not help that I fell into horror, the instant the cold sweat soaked my back. Suddenly, the red dots in the dark disappeared out of thin air, and then the sound of creaking bones came. I found that my body numb with fear had been entangled by a python at some time, and the girl also disappeared.

It was cold, sticky, and slippery, with scales. The Python's body was wrapped around my body. Slowly, winding more and more tight, more and more upward. I wanted to cry for help, I wanted to struggle, but I could not do anything because my lungs were compressed and lack air. Snake letter son slowly licked my cheek, gentle and cold-blooded.

"Am I going to die now?" I thought despairingly, "But I haven't done anything yet..." the breath from the snake's mouth was getting closer and closer, and a faint smell of blood came from my mouth, "Ah, like... whatever..." Thinking like this, I gave up the last struggle.

"Z ~ La ~" calls, the roar of the machine was getting louder and louder, and Ryoko's footsteps were getting closer "Kito, what happened?" The voice went from far to near, and as she spoke to the last syllable, she just pushed the door open.

I looked at her and said, "Help me..... eh?" At this time, I found the weight of my body lightened. Looking up, the beautiful girl with green hair was riding on me, holding my shoulders with both hands, which made me unable to move. Her eyes were full of love and staring at me. "Anchin-san, finally, finally, finally, I met you again." With that, she leaned down and kissed me on the cheek.

"Ah?!!!" My brain was in a mess. "Where is the big snake just now? Is the beautiful girl riding on me? Anchin? What about books? What's Ryoko doing now?" I secretly looked at Ryoko, but the beautiful girl broke my head back with her hands: "From now on, Anchin-san can only look at Kiyohime." She laughed and touched my nose with her hand. But my heart was like falling into a hole in the ice in general -- cool through the heart.

"Kiyohime? Isn't that the snake demon in Japanese legend?" I vaguely remembered her story:

"It is said that the family of Kiyohime provided lodging for travelling priests, who passed by on their way to a shrine famous for ascetic practices. One day, a handsome visiting priest named Anchin lodged at the house while on a pilgrimage. He fell in love with the beautiful Kiyohime, but after a time he overcame his passions and refrained from further meetings.

Kiyohime became furious by his rejection and pursued him in rage. At the edge of the Hidaka river, Anchin asked a boatman to help him to cross the river but told him not to let her cross with his boat. When Kiyohime saw that Anchin was escaping her, she jumped into the river and started to swim after him. While swimming in the torrent of the Hidaka river, she transformed into a large serpent or dragon because of her rage. When Anchin saw her coming after him in her monstrous new form, he ran into the temple called Dōjō-Ji. He asked the priests of Dōjōji for help, and they hid him under the bonshō bell of the temple. However, the serpent smelled him hiding inside the bell and started to coil around it. She banged the bell loudly several times with her tail, then gave a great belch of fire so powerful that it melted the bell and killed Anchin."

Kiyohime seemed to see through my heart and looked at me with a smile: "How is it, Anchin, do you remember me?"

"Well? It is more like... "I hesitated. "Yes, he remembered you." The untimely voice rang out, but it just saved my life.

Kiyohime looked at Ryoko angrily: "You... Who are you?" "Kito's childhood sweetheart, this is not the right place for you to stay." Ryoko also made a rude reply "Ah, is Kito the guy under me? His name is Anchin! It's Kiyohime's Anchin-san!" "Forget it,

Kito and I have been together for so long that we can't accommodate you as an outsider!" "You don't know how long I've been searching for Anchin!"

"You..." Seeing that it is about to become a quarrel, I said hastily: "Hey, ladies, aren't you tired? It took Kiyohime such a long to come here, and Ryoko also helped me to clean up the room. So would you all like to stop for a minute and go to the convenience store to buy something to eat?"

Kiyohime and Ryoko looked at me together, then looked at each other again, and turned their heads and said: "Hum, I will never get out with this kind of guy!"

Page 2

The first ray of sunshine in July gently sprinkled on my eyes. I rubbed my sleepy eyes and yawned to recover my consciousness. "Ah, yesterday... What did I do yesterday? I was so tired..." I was paralyzed in the quilt and thought weakly. "Ah, a lot of things have happened recently at home... It is so annoying... I'd better sleep for a while." I thought and turned over, then I continued to sleep as if I can escape everything by that.

But it was so hot around me... Is it time to turn on the air conditioner? I lazily stretched out my hand and reach for the remote control of the air conditioner. But I accidentally met Kiyohime's long light green hair. "This is..." I look down, Kiyohime was lying beside my bed, staring at me with her pale-yellow pupils. "The sleeping face of Anchin is beautiful," she said with a smile. "A? A? A? What are you doing here?" I hastened to withdraw my hand.

"Anchin-san, it is time to get up." It seemed that Kiyohime did not think about that too much.

"I know." I got up, but suddenly the atmosphere of this room fell into silence.

Kiyohime also got up and remained silent.

As time passed by, the atmosphere became really awkward.

I first broke the silence: ".....Kiyohime?"

"What's up, Anchin-Sama?"

"You see, I need to get up and put on some clothes."

"Un-huh?"

"So... You're here and staring at me... I can't change my clothes, do you understand?"

"But... But don't you need me to help you to change your clothes? Or I was rejected by Anchin....."

"No, I did not reject you, and I don't need your help to wear my clothes. And by the way, why a 17-year-old man still need others' help in wearing clothes?"

"But..."

Kiyohime came up with my clothes: "Come on, Anchin-san, I will serve you well~"

"Hey, don't touch this place! It isn't that too... That is too sensitive for me... Yabai!"

"Anchin, are you still shy?" she smiled and pressed even closer.

The distance between us was getting closer and closer, almost like a couple. I was even able to feel her breath and hear the beating of the hearts.....

At this time, the door of my room was opened with a "pop", and Ryoko came over with a black face: "You guys are so energetic this morning, don't you hurry up to wash and eat?"

“For such a long time you have been through...Thank you, Kiyohime” I clumsily moved my lips, trying to express my gratitude to Kiyohime. Although I am not Anchin, I still did not sincerely respect her.

“Eh, eh, eh?” She suddenly became panic. “Nothing... Nothing... I just, just...” she suddenly became silent.

“Nah, Anchin.” She looked up and I noticed the tears swirling in her eyes.

“Anchin, forgave Kiyohime?” “Well, of course. “I smiled and nodded.” Anchin, do not hate Kiyohime anymore? “Well, I’m sure Anchin won’t hate you.” “But what about my family?”

“Eh?”

“I abandoned my life. For the sake of Anchin, for the sake of love. But my family, Kiyohime’s family... For 300 years, Kiyohime has been, has always been, alone. Loneliness, coldness, pain, sadness...”

I gently gagged her. “Stop it. Let us build a better life together, the two of us.

Kiyohime lightly took my hand away. “The two of us, together.”

Keeping our eyes on each other, the only feeling that we had left is shyness. Without notice, our distance was becoming closer and closer. Kiyohime gently raised herself upon a tiptoe, the eyes with tears were slightly closed. The distance between me and Kiyohime was getting closer and closer, I could even smell her fragrance.....

Her closed eyelids had such a long eyelash.....

“Cough!” Ryoko had a sudden cough, and then we realized there was someone else besides us.

Kiyohime’s face turned red, and she quickly separated from my arms: “Then... Well...I will go to the bathroom first. You two, please go ahead and have the breakfast first!”

“Eh...” my ears were steaming and stammering, “Emmm.....”

I sat back to the chair gently, while my nose seemed to be full of the fragrance of Kiyohime.

“That scene...” Inside my mind, the scene was still refusing to leave.

“She really likes me...”

“But am I really good enough for her, do I even deserve that?” I looked at my arms, so thin and weak.

“Besides, she likes that guy Anchin, right? Uh-huh. What was I thinking? It was...” I forced myself to force on the foods and took a big gulp of Miso Shiru.

“It is...such a delicacy...”

Page 15

“So annoying, so annoying, so annoying, so annoying, so annoying, so annoying, so annoying!” That day was the day to work in an Izakaya, however, I was still scratching my cheek against the messy wardrobe. “Ah ah ah ah! Where on earth did I put my work clothes?” In front of the wardrobe, I had no one to complain about..... The last time after my work was done, I just threw my work clothes in the closet, but I did not think

that the day of work will come so soon... I sighed: "Although the boss said it's OK not to wear work clothes... But it's still..." While finding the clothes, I had a glance at my watch on my wrist. "Gosh! I only have 5 min left!" Without thinking twice, because I ran out of time for thinking, I got on my bike and sped to the Izakaya. "I'm sorry, Kiyohime." I thought to myself. "I cannot be with you tonight."

It was actually a relief for me to work in such an Izakaya. All the people who come here are strangers. They do not know each other, and they do not want to get acquainted with people, so I will occupy myself with them - no one will pay attention to me anyway.

At nine o'clock, I arrived at Izakaya, as soon as I entered the Izakaya, the bar counter gradually becomes busy.

Forcing to smile, I shuttled between rows of red lanterns, served food, took orders in the corridor alcohol and tobacco flavour, and sometimes I had to deal with some troublesome guests. Nevertheless, even though I deeply feel the trouble, this small shop immersed in the secular world seems to have an incredible magic power, which makes me forget everything and give up thinking as if time is forever fixed in this restless night.

"Brother, a bottle of sake!"

"Just a moment, please." "OK, sake!" I served the sake to the customer.

"Hello! Why isn't Kanto cooked well?"

"I will urge the chef, please wait patiently, thank you!"

"Well, thank you."

When I was busy, a blue shadow came into my eyes. It was.....

"Kiyohime?"

I rubbed my eyes to see clearly, but I was distracted by the customers.

"Table 4, check out!"

"....."

The busyness did not end until 4 a.m.

"Yo, Kito."

The Izakaya manager came over with a raucous laugh.

Although my body was exhausted, the voice of the store manager was so recognizable that I could recognize it without distinguishing it.

"Good even... Well, that should be the good morning I guess, manager."

"Work hard, boy! Otherwise, this month's wages can be deducted all!"

"Eh~"

My exhausted body has no more words to say.

"Haha." the manager laughed and walked into the back kitchen. Really, this uncle always makes trouble for me these days, but I have no room to resist, otherwise, I am afraid I'll lose my job.

I stretched: "Hoo ah ~" dragging my tired body, pushing my bike, walking slowly on the road. I do not know where Kiyohime is...

"Life is so hard."

When I was still in high school, I always envied the adults in society. Their life is very free, have their own source of income, and do not have to be bothered by the relationship

between the students in the class... But after I dropped out of school, I found that it was not the case at all.

“Life is really tired and boring.”

My head was dizzy, was it because of the smell of the smoke and the wine?

“So...tired...”

My head was Chao, and my steps were instability. Without notice, I was already on the wrong way.

It was like stepping on cotton, so limp, and my hands were so weak, so weak... “So...sleepy...” I was stumbling along the alley. The sky was so dark, just like *that day*’s sky. “So...” My heart felt as if it was being held by the devil, a trembling pain continued in my heart. It hurt a lot. Every time I close my eyes, I will recall... *that day*. The lungs were suffocating, breathless, and my stomach was tumbling. “It hurts...a lot.....” I squatted down and started retching. “Uh...huh...” But I cannot throw up anything.

The dark alley blew a gloomy night wind.

I straightened up but accidentally ran into passers-by. “Ahhh, sorry...sorry...” I hastened to admit my mistake. “Well, if apologies are enough, then why do we still need policeman, huh?” Ah...” I met a gangster...

“What are you fucking doing, asshole?” As soon as he finished his word, his feet mercilessly kicked on my stomach. “Wool!” A mouthful of vomit spewed out and splashed on the gangster’s shoes. “Oh, damn it, it even dirtied my shoes, you jackass?!”

“Maybe that is just the atonement of that day.” I thought silently. I lowered my head and let my fists fall on me.

Pain, humiliation, tiredness, annoyance, wanted to cry, wanted to talk to someone, wanted to rest, wanted to live, wanted to work hard, could not live up to the expectations of others.

The expression mixed and filled in my heart.

Dim in front of my eyes. Night, the black night.

“Hey, stop.” a gangster with a cigarette uses his feet turned over. “Don’t f**king kills that bitch, man, what if the police came to trouble us because of that.”

It was a blur in my eyes, and the ground became wet. Is blood? Or tears? I could not recognize that anymore.

Tinnitus became more and more serious, even close to the ear of the sound cannot be heard clearly.

“Hey-----Hello? -----That man-----Is him dead? -----F**k-----
-----Who Cares-----I am not sure-----Like...Whatever? -----”

But inside my body, I could still feel the blood going through my veins. My heart was still pumping new blood into my body. Bang, bang, bang. “Nah, is this still any meaning for me to stay still?” I touched my chest and say with a forced smile.

Smiling still, I became unconscious.

But, before I lost my consciousness, a tear dropped on my face.

Whose?

It did not matter anymore. Sorry, and farewell.

.....

.....

What woke me up was the sound of doctors calling in the hospital and the pain all over my body.

“With all those bandages all over my body, I cannot even move...” I sighed.

“But by the way, why am I here anyway... Is this heaven?”

I looked up a little bit and find that.....

“Kiyohime?!!”

Kiyohime was sleeping peacefully beside my bed. Her body floated slightly as she breathes. That delicate eyes also hanged a trifle tired.

“So..... Well, it was heaven in a way.”

I gently kneaded her head: “You’ve had a long day.”

Though bruised and bandaged, my body recovered remarkably quickly. Three days later, I am cured.

All the way there remained silence.

It was almost home. Kiyohime and I both said, “Nah...”

Embarrassed at each other for a moment, we both turned their heads away at the same time.

“Well...” Again, at the same moment.

“How about you (Anchin) first...”

“Fine, I’ll speak first.” I signed.

Kiyohime lowers her head: “OK.”

“How did I get to the hospital?” I tried to say it in a light tone.

“Sorry, it is all my fault...”

“Nonono, that is because I didn’t build up my muscle so I can fight against those gangsters or what.....”

“Last time, it was Anchin-sama who saved me,” Kiyohime said softly. “But this time, I didn’t get to Anchin in time...”

“Well, from my perspective, I’m already lucky enough to be sent to hospital in time, haha.”

“But...”

“I’m done, you shall ask now.” Although I said that, I still remembered the touch of tears...

In the subliminal image, Kiyohime was bathed in a sea of fire, and the air was filled with the stench of burning...

And... A nun? Before I could remember more, Kiyohime speaks.

Kiyohime cleared her throat: “Huh-eh, Then... I’ll ask you again.”

“OK.”

“I have already told Anchin my secret already.”

“Un.”

“But I have no idea what Anchin-san have experienced at all.”

“I know that this request may be rude and offensive, but at least I want to know who is my あの 人, who are ...you...the real you...” Kiyohime’s voice trailed off.

“Of course,” I answered directly, without thinking twice while trying to neglect the pain that goes through from my heart.

“?”

“It is OK, we got plenty of time to spend together, and have a ‘pleasant talk.’” I force a smile.

“I can...we can have a ...?”

“Yeah, of course.” I smiled, trying to hide the hollowness in my heart. But I knew that could never be remedied.

“Then, how about next month’s fireworks show!!!” Kiyohime’s eyes sparkled.

“Aye?” I rubbed my ears to make sure I heard right.

“So, as a reward for saving you from those thugs, come to the firework party with me!” with her hands on her hips, she says that rakishly.

“HA???!?”

Page 21

I found the secret of that book.

It was a usual morning, and I woke up with the same nightmare.

As usual, I could never see my father and mother’s face clearly, and they were always doing something I cannot understand. “After all this time?” I whispered to myself. “Always, Kito, always.” The voice inside me answered gently.

I took out the Taboo book again.

“I haven’t had time to take a good look at it for a while, aren’t I?” I fondled its cover meltingly.

Slowly, I lifted the heavy cover.

A girl called Kiyohime came into your life.

This is...Forced to suppress their excitement, I continued to flip back down.

Got to know about the girl by having breakfast.

Ah...

My hand seemed to lose its control; it automatically turned a page over again.

Kito will be bullied by a group of ruffians.

These three pages recorded every event that took place these days.

“So...this is a prophesy book...” I was stunned. The thing that my parents left me is a prophesy book!

“Then, if my prediction is correct, the next page will be...the thing that is going to happen today.”

As I was about to flip to the next page, Kiyohime came over.

“Kiyohime!” I said, with a bit sulky with her rudeness. “Didn’t I tell you that you need to knock on the door before I came to my room!”

But always she, the one who always listens to me simply ignored what I said to her. “Anchin, did you open the book just now?”

I smiled awkwardly: “Ah~ Ha-ha, I don’t know what you were talking about at all~”

“Anchin, this is my admonition. Stay away from the book, it will only give you some illusion while not real belief.”

“Why...”

“Coz, that is the Taboo Book.”

Signed, Kiyohime left the room, before she closed the door, she asked me: “I’ll go to the supermarket for a while, do you have any particular needs?”

“Eh? Well, I guess no.” I forced a smile to eliminate the awkwardness.

“Well...Fine...” She shook her head and closed the door immediately.

I heaved a sigh: “Taboo Book? But if I use it in a proper way...”

I flipped the page over, and blood-red word is written there:

Kiyohime will be in danger when she goes to the supermarket.

.....

.....

That evening, the sun’s afterglow spilt like blood on the horizon.

The crows croaked from the tree’s edge, but otherwise, there was a deathlike silence.

On the way to the mall, I recalled the words written in the Taboo book. “Kiyohime...” I start to pick up the pace.

Little by little, the sun slid down the hillside, leaving only the bloody dusk on the sky.

I stumbled all the way to the supermarket where Kiyohime often goes to. At this time, most of the pedestrians and employees had gone home from work, so it became very cheerless and quiet.

I looked up anxiously, just in time to see Kiyohime coming out of the supermarket.

She took the bulging bag with her both hands and looked at me slightly surprised and slightly reproachful and said: “Ah, Anchin! There is so much sweat on your forehead, doesn’t it matter? Why come to me suddenly...”

Kiyohime’s face felt like a tranquillizer to me. All my courage, temper and worry disappeared, and the rest was only joy and happiness to see her again.

“Anchin, let me wipe the sweat off you.” Kiyohime managed to pick up the plastic bag in one hand and leans towards me.

“Fortunately, I caught up. Nothing happened yet.....”

Just before her hand touched me, a dark barrier came down and separate us.

The sunset completely, and the sky turned dark without any stars.

Out of nowhere, a group of grotesquely dressed young people blocked the supermarket door, their vulgar laughter and the strong smell of alcohol and tobacco echoed into the dark night.

It is...” The punk of the day!” I clenched my fists.

“Oh, isn’t that the bro that day? Hehe, what a ‘coincidence’.” The gangster who seemed like a leader came with a cigarette in his mouth.

“You.....What did you do to Kiyohime!”

He did not answer my question. His eyesight first laid at the dark barrier and said, “Hiss, this is the most powerful magic weapon ever. We took this out only in order to get a girl.....Huh, is that really fine?”

“Bah, boss, why do you care so much? Anyway, the church has told us that if we do not let the fucking devil show up in the city, we can use it in any way we want. Besides, the nun is also looking at us, here.” A gangster with a plump belly pointed up at the sky.

I followed his gaze to the sky, where a white nun clutched a cross on the roof of a supermarket, watching it all with a blank face.

“Eh, of course.” The leader of the mob shook his head and pretended a sign. “This is a real bitch, guys. A few weeks ago, she even stinged-out to hurt us, and that really pissed us off, isn’t it, huh?”

“Fortunately, I have a kind of sordid relationship with the church, so I just came here with this weapon.” The gangster smiled; his eyes narrowed to a slit maliciously.

The leading gangster smiled and gave a thumbs-up to the nun. Then he turned to the other bullies:

“Hey, when the girl is on the point of death, how should we deal with her?” The leading gangster yelled to his “bros”.

“If you ask me, why don’t we... Hahaha, anyway the chick is quite pretty, I’ve become quite interested in her pussy, ain’t it?” A gangster who looked ailing said with obscene eyesight.

“Huh, what about letting our boss do that l~e~w~d thing first?”

.....

I glanced at Kiyohime and our eyes just met together. Her complexion became pale and the corners of her mouth shook, a mist seemed to sweep over her eyes. The whole body curled up in the corner of the wall, the body shaking badly, hands tightly hold the chest of the clothes, as if she is trying to endure the pain. She opened her mouth, but because of her pain, she could not spill a single word.

“Ha, ha, ha, is that all there is to a demon?” The gangster laughed, and spit on the black barrier. “Gosh, I never imagined that the power of it could be so fucking strong.” He thrilled to look at the evaporative phlegm.

The gangster laughed. “I am afraid that only after a little while, the demon will just piss off~” He pretended to think, “Aye aye, hey, no, wait until death, we still want to have some fun~”

Anger, disgust, indignation...

My fists were shaking with anger, and by the time I knew it, my fists were already out.

But instead of the muffle and thump I expected, the inertia of my fist carried me forward then it hit the hard concrete floor.

“So weak, so weak, so weak, so weak! Hey, Never!” My body fell heavily on the ground, and the gangster took advantage of it and stepped on my head. “Look!” He squatted down. “Down!” His head became closer and closer to me. “Upon!” He yelled. “Us!” He unscrupulous burst into a loud guffaw.

He took his feet away and squatted down in front of me, then grabbed me by the throat with one hand and picked me up.

“You started it. Don’t blame me for being rude.” As soon as he said that his fist landed hard on my stomach.

“Poof!” It hurts so much, want to vomit, but because I was pinched so I could not breathe.

“Ha!” The second landed on my stomach, which was already bruised and swollen.

“Hiss~” I could not even breathe. My lungs felt like they were going to burst. Oh, the pain, the pain!

“Wu!” With a third punch, I heard my ribs crack.

“Hey!” The fourth punch.

“Ah!” The fifth punch.

.....

It hurts, but I can still endure that.

.....

“Ya~” This ninth punch.

.....

“Kiyohime...”

All that I had experienced in my short life played back in my mind.

I was so surprised to find out that, I have such a deep bond with others.

Ryoko, Mom, Dad, Grandma, Boss, Workmates, classmates, neighbours...

And Kiyohime.

I found that I cannot just simply give up on this world.

Yes, it is a sad world, but inside this sadness, this is some exact felicity.

Bit by bit memories of the story between me and Kiyohime were recalled by me.

Encounter: “It was cold, sticky, and slippery, with scales. The Python’s body was wrapped around my body. Slowly, winding more and more tight, more and more upward. I wanted to cry for help, I wanted to struggle, but I could not do anything because my lungs were compressed and lack air. Snake letter son slowly licked my cheek, gentle and cold-blooded.

At this time, I found the weight of my body lightened. Looking up, the beautiful girl with green hair was riding on me, holding my shoulders with both hands, which made me unable to move. Her eyes were full of love and staring at me. “Anchin-san, finally, finally, finally, I met you again.” With that, she leaned down and gave me a kiss on the cheek.”

Acquaintance: “For such a long time you have been through... Thank you, Kiyohime” I clumsily moved my lips, trying to express my gratitude to Kiyohime. Although I am not Anchin, I still did not sincerely respect her.

“Eh, eh, eh?” She suddenly became panic. “Nothing... Nothing... I just, just...” she suddenly became silent.

“Nah, Anchin.” She looked up and I noticed the tears swirling in her eyes.

“Anchin, forgave Kiyohime?” “Well, of course. “I smiled and nodded.” Anchin, do not hate Kiyohime anymore? “Well, I’m sure Anchin won’t hate you.” “But what about my family?”

“Eh?”

“I abandoned my life. For the sake of Anchin, for the sake of love. But my family, Kiyohime’s family... For 300 years, Kiyohime has been, has always been, alone. Loneliness, coldness, pain, sadness...”

I gently gagged her. “Stop it. Let us build a better life together, the two of us.

Kiyohime lightly took my hand away. “The two of us, together.”

Bosom friend:

"I have already told Anchin my secret already."

"Un."

"But I have no idea what Anchin-san have experienced at all."

"I know that this request may be rude and offensive, but at least I want to know who is my あの人, who are ...you...the real you..." Kiyohime's voice trailed off.

"Of course," I answered directly, without thinking twice while trying to neglect the pain that goes through from my heart.

"?"

"It is OK, we got plenty of time to spend together, and have a 'pleasant talk.'" I force a smile.

"I can...we can have a ...?"

"Yeah, of course." I smiled.

And...That Promise:

"Then, how about next month's fireworks show!!!" Kiyohime's eyes sparkled.

"Aye?" I rubbed my ears to make sure I heard right.

"So, as a reward for saving you from those thugs, I'm inviting you to go to the Firework Party with me!" with her hands on her hips, she says that rakishly.

.....

Sorcery, Initiation

.....

"Yaaaa~" How many punches? I have lost count.

.....

"The Curative Water, Please Cooperate Me Forward."

.....

"The Sagaciousness Spring, Please Vouchsafe Me Enlightenment."

.....

"The Untrammeled Stream, Please Endow Me Strength."

.....

"The Tolerantly Ocean, Please Benedictive Me .

Slowly, my body became lighter and softer, but I can feel that the strength is flowing through my veins.

My body hurts a lot, but I can still move.

I can hardly breathe, but I have the left Oxygen in my lungs.

My cerebrum is tired, but I can still endure.

"Open your eyes, and see that clearly, this is one of the five ancient magic."

The white mist was clearing from my feet, closing in on me and the gangster leader, and gradually shutting out the sound of the outside world.

"Aw!" The nun exclaimed and jumped down from the 40th floor in a strange gesture and ran quickly to the barrier.

"*Kyrie Eleison*" [Empathy eyesight gazes on this man]

The white butterfly gently flew from the body of the gangster, but as soon the butterfly met the mist, it immediately became ember.

“What the hell is this.....” He frightened look at this but could not change anything.

The arm of the gangster become more and more powerless, little by little, his arm dropped.

All his body was transformed into a huge white butterfly and flew to the sky.

“Cough.” I touched my throat, which is still in the shape of that gangster’s fingerprint. The mist slowly disappeared, I immediately started to search for Kiyohime. She collapsed on the ground, and the black barrier also disappeared.

“Kiyo.....!” I yelled, trying to wake her up, but I cannot make any sound.

“Detes...table.” I tried to stand up, but I could not use my legs at all.

Kiyo...hime My eyes were getting blurred in front. I offered my hand to Kiyohime...

.....

“So tired.” I thought, and without my control, I closed my eyes.

.....

Page 22

“Kiyohime!” I woke up suddenly.

“Anchin-sama, finally you woke up.” Kiyohime’s voice came over, I moved my head to find her, but I could not see her figure.

I signed, and moved my head again, in order to find a more comfortable position.

“Ya~ Ki...chi-sama, if you keep on doing this, I’ll get confused...” I looked up, and finally found Kiyohime’s face. “? Wait a minute, this is the...”

“Lap pillow!” I instantaneous sild from her thigh and made an apology. “At this point, I can only apologize by hara-kiri.”

However, Kiyohime just smiled and exhaled. “I’m glad you’re okay. Seeing that you are still so peart, I will not need to worry at all now.”

“Aye? But I thought I was badly hurt...” I was surprised to move the arm: “Ah, I’m cured!?”

“Yeah... I’m quite surprised as well. it because of the magic you used?”

“The Curative Water, Please Cooperate Me Forward.

“The Sagaciousness Spring, Please Vouchsafe Me Enlightenment.

“The Untrammeled Stream, Please Endow Me Strength.

“The Tolerantly Ocean, Please Benedictive Me [REDACTED]”

“That one?” I thought for a while but still could not know why.

“Anyway!” Kiyohime’s voice brought me from the ocean of thinking into the real world. “I’m so glad that we are still alive, isn’t it, Ki.....Anchin.”

I pretended not to hear her change of my name, and asked her with a smile: “We have already experienced that sort of thing, and you are still calling me like this? After that, you can just call me Akiichi.”

“Aye?” There was an unbecoming blush on Kiyohime’s face.

“Then...Ancki...chi?” She hung her head shyly.

“Hey, what is that?” I laughed.

“Moooo, I’m also very shy...” She patted her face and her eyes dropped in shame.

“Again, A kii chi.” I stared at her face and said that word for word.\

“Aki...ichi?”

“Correct!”

Kiyohime smiled happily. “Akiichi, Akiichi, Akiichi!”

“Yes, it is Akiichi.”

Kiyohime clasped her hands in front of her chest, “As long as I’m saying this name, happiness will be filled in my heart.”

The sun rose slowly and shone down on the two persons as they embraced.

“Akiichi.” She said my name slowly as if she was thinking something.

“Huh? If there is anything that matters you or your body is not comfortable, just tell me.” I smiled and looked at Kiyohime.

She lowered her head a little and looked at her toes.

“How did you...how did Akiichi learned magic.”

“Eh?” My smile suddenly became frozen.

“Magic...”

I.....

I remember vividly the scene of **That Day**.

My heart had a twinge after the memory that was recalled of **That day**. So uncomfortable, so painful, so painful, so painful, so painful, so painful, so painful, so painful, want to cry, want to cry, want to scream, so black, so black, so black why why why why why why why!

A great sense of guilt came down on me, and I could not breathe.

The Voice of Kiyohime brought me back. “Are you OK, Akiichi? Did I asked something that is forbidden?”

“Yes, probably, I guess.” I settled my face and spoke. “I have been concealing the truth for such a long time, and it is time for me to tell you the truth.

Kito's Story

When I was a kid, I already found that I am different from other kids. My parents are gone. Grandma told me that I have the blood of the noblest magician in my body. And my mom and dad were just exploring more abstruse magic, which will take them a lot of time.

I thought it was...I mean, I told myself that it must be real, it must be...true. But I still felt lonely and helpless. When I was in kindergarten, other children were laughing at me, saying that I was an orphan. Except for Ryoko. She spent all this with me, otherwise, my immature heart would have been unable to bear those rumours, haha.

And my grandmother. She has always been very gentle to me. She brought me up. She taught me literacy, magic... It can be said that she made me everything.

During the daytime, I was like a normal person...taking classes, rest, having fun...And talk to Ryoko.

Because she was the only peer I could talk to.

In the evening, I would study magic with grandma. From the most basic magic spell to potion, metamorphosis, gemstone... But really, magic is boring, it really is.

It is troublesome to not only remember those formulas, actions, and recipes but also practice them. So, I always found excuses to go out to play. Grandma could not always keep an eye on me because she got on in years... Well, I cannot blame anyone for learning magic.

I thought the wheel of life will just keep on rolling. And nothing will change it.

But I was wrong, that day had finally come over me.

On a rainy day, in order to find me who was still building the sandcastle, grandma went out home without umbrella, and by that chance, she got a bad cold.

However, when she went to the hospital to check her illness, the doctor found that she was already in the terminal stages of cancer.

In the rain, the sandcastle built by me collapsed.

Half the sky had fallen in my world.

"The doctor cannot cure himself" is the same for the magician. Grandma cannot cure herself with healing magic as well.

While I knew nothing about the healing magic.

I began to regret, began to skip class, began to chagrin.

"Why...why I did not learn magic well."

I can only watch grandma become infirmity day by day.

"Cough cough." grandma coughed a few times and vomited a mouthful of blood.

"Child, you still have a long way to go. Don't worry about me."

.....

Half a year ago, I finally learned how to use healing magic.

With dark circles under my eyes, I rushed to the hospital overnight to tell Grandma the good news. I wanted to snatch grandma back from the hand of death. If I succeed, my life will return to normal! I was so happy, so excited.

"Well..." Kiyohime's eyes were slightly red.

When I got to grandma's inpatient ward, the doctor told me that grandma would die soon.

"Well, sometimes life really likes to play some tricks on you ain't?"

I flustered to make the magic circle.

Order! The angels and devils from the firmament and the abyss!

"Aye, just leave me alone, grandson."

Abide my command!

I tried to disassemble my weeping accent.

Bestow splendour to this body.

"....." Grandma lied on the bed and looked at me peacefully.

Mend... Wait, what was the next word?

A tear trickled down my cheek to the ground, and I looked at the magic book to gloss over what just happened.

But I felt grandma's hand rubbed my hair gently.

"Kid, soon after my death, you will , at that time, don't be too greedy."

While saying that, that hand slowly fell and became stiff.

.....

The End.

I take a long breath. Probably, this is the first time that I have talked about it with others. I smile bitterly.

"I am..." Kiyohime became silent. "I'm sorry for your grandmother."

"It is fine." I signed. "It actually makes me feel better...you know, this is the first time I ever talked to other people about this."

"Let the past things just pass away, because the future is still waiting ahead of us." She said this word of wisdom.

"Of course." I smiled. "By the way...do you have any plan for the future? I mean..."

"Future?" Kiyohime disturbed me.

"Yeah, for instance, the university, job, work..." I abruptly stopped. "Ah, sorry, I forgot you are a ... and of course you don't need to work or what..."

"As a matter of fact, I..." A sense of sadness came out from Kiyohime's eyes. "Sorry, just ignore that."

.....

The silence remained for a long time.

"Ho~hum~ I'm a bit tired now, may I take a rest?" Kiyohime tilted her head to me and asked.

"Of course." As soon as I finished my words, she fell asleep on my shoulder.

"Kiyohime, you are really..." I had a wry smile.

"Well, like whatever."

Page 25

Today is the date of the Hanabi Festival.

In the early morning, I was pressed by Kiyohime when I was still asleep.

"Hey, are you serious..." I smiled, "you got so excited just because of the party... just like a kid, ain't you?"

"I am not a kid!" This sentence seems to poke to some pain point, she pressed her tail around me even more hard.

"Wu!" "Ouch, Kiyohime- ojouann, maybe...it is time for you to lose some weight..."

"Huh?!!!"

"OUCH!" I yelled.

.....

After some toss and turn restlessly, we finally put on our yukata and went out.

"By the way, why we get out so early..." I yawned and stared at Kiyohime next to me. The peacock green background on her yukata depicts the understated white peony, all the description were done in one smooth motion, which is quite concise and without any sense of procrastination. Which brought me a feeling of refreshing and rafraichissante. The colour of her yukata coordinated the vegetation beside the road, as a result, the Kiyohime that day looked even more adorable than before. I could not help but keep my eye on her.

"Hum, because the party is about to start?" Kiyohime laughed and looked me in her eyes.

“Ha?” I was instantly speechless. Indeed, because she is a demon, so there is no doubt that she lacks the common sense of human’s society. “The celebration usually starts in the evening” I kind-heartedly explained.

“Ah...In that case...” Kiyohime thought for a while. “Then let’s have a date during the daytime!”

“OK...Wait, wait a minute, a date(でいと)?”

“Er...yes, date.” She slightly blushed and cracked a smile.

“Well...” Seeing her behaves like this, I smiled, “Fine, let our first date start!”

“First of all, do you have some places that wanting to go to?” I asked.

“Hum, what is the milk tea shop? I saw that on TV before...”

“The milk tea shop...Haha, I never thought that Kiyohime will also want to have a cup of milk tea~”

“Moooo~ pls don’t laugh at me...” Kiyohime lowered his head bashfully.

[*I brought the pearl milk tea for Kiyohime]

“Whoa!!! This is so tasty!” Kiyohime’s eyes sparkled, and sucked hard at the straw with her mouth, making a purring sound.

While I just bought a bottle of mineral water and watched Kiyohime drinking the milk tea.

“Do you like it?”

“Yeah!” Kiyohime yelled happily, with her hand waving in the wind.

Seeing her like this, I could not help but burst into a laugh.

.....

“Where else do you want to go next?”

“Er...There, there, there, and ...”

I smiled, the time spent with her is so simple and are filled with happiness. “Sure, let’s go.”

.....

[*It is already dusk now, and the sun started to go down.]

“You are fond of this place?” I looked at Kiyohime, who just get out of the shrine.

“Yes, the shrine nowadays is quite different from before.” She nodded.

“Well~” My eyesight had a glance of the watch. “The time is about to start the celebration, let’s go.”

“Well, let’s hurry up and go!” Kiyohime took my hand and started to run.

“Sure, let’s go.” I followed her steps.

Her hair flutters in the air. She laughed, and the sun shined on her cheek, so I can see all her fine hairs on her face, so bright and lovely. So pretty and fabulous.

As the sun fell, the atmosphere of the Hanabi Festival had eventually become more and more strong.

All the shops have lightened their lanterns, prepared the goods, to be ready for the arrival of customers, and not far away some impatient children have already started to set off their own fireworks.

“Phew! Phew!” Little fireworks rose from the ground and shot into the air, it seemed like a normal sight to us. But even so, Kiyohime was thrilled.

“Wow!!! It is Hanabi! Akiichi, is this the start of the Hanabi Festival?” Kiyohime pulled my sleeves and asked excitedly.

“The is far more from the fireworks in this party.” I looked at Kiyohime with a smile, “The real fireworks are much better than this one.”

But she did not care to listen to these things. Before I finished, she took me to the market already.

“Takoyaki, karaage, yakitori, yakisoba!” She looked at the shops feverishly. “And kakigori! Nah, Akiichi, can I try this?” She pointed at that kakigori shop and begged.

“Well...” Since she had come to the Hanabi festival, she seemed to have changed a person. “Of course.” I smiled. Although I cannot help with that, to see such a jocund Kiyohime, I am already satisfied.

“This is also delicious!” Kiyohime held the チョコバナナ (Chocolate Banana) and went near me.

“Really?” I asked her tongue-in-cheek.

She gave her Chocolate banana to me, “What are you thinking about~ come and taste that~” I tried to take that from Kiyohime’s hand, but she escaped artfully. “Akiichi-san, it is not right to rob someone’s snack.” She leaned a little further and slightly wagged her finger near her cheek.

She was smiling, spinning, gently tiptoe, bathrobes were then spread out, emitting a pleasant smell of the sun. The light of the store’s lantern just shined on her, emitting a yellow halo. “So beautiful...” The world seems to have entered slow motion, others fade out of the camera, leaving only me, and her. Her sweet smile is like the sweetest candied dessert, just a bit bite, then it can moisten your whole throat. When I came back to myself, she held the チョコバナナ to me and asked me: “Nah, Akiichi, would you like to have a bite?”

“Er...But ...” I looked at her innocent cheek in surprise. “That...that would be ... an indirect kiss....”

“Huh? It seems that it’s true...” She suddenly froze for a second. “But, if it’s you...then it will be OK.” She lowered her head and muttered.

“What did you just say?” I rubbed my ears and wanted to confirm that again.

“So...so!” Although she blushed, she took a step forward and showed her lovely canine teeth, “Would you like to taste it or not?”

So close.

The distance between us is so close.

Almost...like a couple.

I simmered with laughter.

“Yeah, of course.”

.....

I closed my eyes gently.

It felt like a dream.

The sweet taste of chocolate did not attack my taste buds.

Instead, are the tender lips of Kiyohime.

“?” I looked at Kiyohime in surprise, while a blush already overspread on her face.

“Silly, why did you just close your eyes...It made that feels like a kiss scene...” She lowered her head shyly.

“There is no doubt that I had a crush on you...damn.”

“Why there is a ‘damn’ behind that sentence.” I joked, pretended that I was not surprised.

“A saying goes, if you fall in love with the person before that he or she crushes on you first, you will be the loser in the love.”

“Hum.”

“Well, I lost completely. My mood has been out of control, whenever I’m alone, I will run out of control of thinking you; whenever I’m with you, my spirit will become peaceful; just now, it was just a scene that looks like a kissing scene, and I could not help myself to...kiss you.”

Sensing my feelings for Kiyohime, I replied with a smile.

“Well, in that case, I’m already a loser as well.”

“We’re both losers. It is a draw. Is that OK?” I smiled.

“Aye?” This time it was Kyung Hui’s turn to be surprised.

“It seems that my wish...” She pressed her hand gently in front of her chest

“...have been well delivered.”

The Hanabi celebration had begun, with the sound of ignition, many resplendent fireworks bloomed in the air and burst out in the silent night sky, bloomed out the colourful beauty, which makes people forgot its huge sound when it burst out, forgot the silence of the night sky, the magnificence when it burst out until it was gone.

A new couple embraced and kissed beneath the fireworks.

“Akiichi, Akiichi, Akiichi!” Kiyohime repeated my name constantly, and the tears in her eyes reflected the glittered fireworks.

“Here I am, Kiyo, here I am.” I gently patted her head and told her, here I am, your love, here I am.

We hugged, kissed, twirled, and danced as if we had lost track of time.

ただ僕らは愛をこう歌う

「朝に、夜に、触れ合うもの」と

時に薔薇を、時に嘘を

繰り返すリズムに乗せながら

回りだしたレコードが揺らす

君と、君の長い髪と

浅い酔いも 明日の憂いも

繰り返すリズムに溶けた

The Monologue of Kiyohime

It was one spring, and I was 14 years old. As before, Anchin went to the temple once a year to worship. My father had a lot of assets and liked Buddhism, so he often invited Anchin to come home as a guest. Me, Kiyohime, was deeply attracted by Anchin's words and behaviour. My heart was full of love and admiration for him, so I kept waiting for Anchin's annual worship every year.

On that day, it was still spring day. At the age of 17, Anchin visited my house as usual. At the banquet, my father joked that I would be betrothed to Anchin when he saw that I had already grown up as a neat and beautiful woman. At that time, my heart started to be throbbing. I never expected that my father would say that. I did not think it was just a joke at that time, so I took a glance at Anchin quickly and found that Anchin did not show an attitude of refusal... I was so happy, so happy, so happy, "I'm going to be the bride of the one I like!"

I was so happy.

.....

Late at night, I sneaked into Anchin's room. My feelings were overflowing. I like him, like him, love him.

"Anchin-sama, about the promise that happened during today's banquet..."

"I know, wait for me, after I finished the worship, I will marry you."

So happy, I am so happy.

Tears secreted a little bit from the corner of the eye secretion, you can be said that it was hit by mistake; It can be said that it is a coincidence, but I have done it, with the man I like, fond of and love.

Naked bodies had nothing to hide.

Warm spring water flows through the whole body.

The sturdy, fitness body of Anchin was right opposite me. I stood behind him, leaned gently at his back, while my hands gently caressed his body, and contentedly sighed.

Fingers lightly touched the rock beside the spring, only the feeling of rough texture made me feel that this is not a dream.

Comfortable bed, covered with the smell of Anchin.

I lay down on my bunk and took a deep breath, knowing that I would be surrounded by this man's nice, healthy breath soon.

Although it was my first time, I was not afraid of that.

Comfort.

The liquid splashed, leaving a happy sigh.

With the last shake of my body, my throat made a small, rustle sound.

.....

Lips kiss tightly. Hands touch his chest gently.

"You have promised, marry me."

"Of course." He stroked my hair, which was still black at the time and hanged down to the floor.

But I do not know why, I cannot remind his face anymore.

So...obscure and ...fuzzy...

Well, maybe it is a time for me to forgot that.

Three months had passed, and there was no sigh for Anchin.

I looked out at the threshold, and worried.

Why, why, why is that! Why Anchin still doesn't come back!

We have promised... and promise are supposed to be obeyed.

I felt as if a knife were being twisted inside my heart, and I became so worried about the safety of Anchin that I ran straight up the mountain, regardless of my father's dissuasion.

I asked every passenger for information about Anchin, but nobody could tell.

“Anchin...Anchin...I have never heard of his name, sorry.”

I continue to run forward, even forgot to tide my own appearance, but Anchin... Anchin-sama...where is him, where are you...

After another week, I finally found Anchin. I was so happy that I grabbed his hand and said, “Anchin-sama, I am your Kiyohime!”

You cannot imagine how happy I was to see Anchin again.

“Well...I think you've got the wrong person.”

At that moment, I clearly heard the sound of my heartbreaking.

I was so angry, so angry, so angry about that. I took his arm and pulled him along, but he just blindly ran away, seemed to be very scared. Is dishevelled Kiyohime not worthy of being loved by him? Or the relationship between us, the love affair between us is just a.....

~~One nightstand.~~

Anchin found a ferryman to travel through the river. But I can swim across that by transform into a snake, although it will hurt me, I can bear that.

Anchin escaped into the temple, I can transform into a dragon to fly swiftly upward to chase him.

Before I noticed that, the temple was already lit by the fire I spread because of my anger.

So interesting, as a matter of fact, I do not have any bloodlines inside my body, so I am supposed to be unable to alter to a dragon. So, it is just because of

“It was just because ofmy anger.”

Anchin had no place to escape, so he hid in the huge bell of the temple.

Then...

I used my “body” to entangle the bell, and my mouth to hold the peak of it.

Then, I spit fire to my own body.

The smell of scorch swept the whole temple, but inside my heart, there was a sense of comfort.

In this way... only in this way can my anger be calmed down.

I was deceived, I know that. 300 years ago, Anchin had lied to me.

Ever since I started to hate lies.

So, I hid my true heart, hid it, hid it. Hide that far, far away from people, hide that far, far away from anyone, anybody.

I do not want to be cheated, fooled, and manipulated again.

My heart slowly froze and became a piece of ice.

But he is different.

When I took my first glance at him, my heart was melted by Kito's smile.

300 years of hard ice were melted just because of a smile?

Yes.

Whenever I close my eyes,

Everything that happened with him.

The mood of thinking of him had been irrepressible, as long as I am alone, I will start to think of him, as long I see him, my mind will be satisfied.

However, I only dare to be ignoble and curled up in the shadow to like him. Because I, after all, am a demon.

But if you call it a fake emotion, then there will have no reality in the world.

However, Kito San did not ignore me as others do. Kiyohime felt that I was respected for the first time in my life.

I cannot help feeling to fall in love with him. When I found out, I had already done the... Ki... Kiss.

But it is so comfortable, and content.

You have shown your heart well, Kiyohime.

“But what about that thing...shall I keep that away from him as still?”

“Wait, just wait for a while, at least let me finish the rest of the happiness.”

.....

.....

We snuggled up, lying on the lawn, and watching the bright fireworks light, rise, bloom, and disappear. “So beautiful... I have never seen such a scene before...” Kiyohime opened her eyes and stared at the beautiful fireworks.

“Although fireworks are beautiful, it is a flash in the pan after all.” I sighed and hugged Kiyohime tighter. I did not look at the fireworks while all my attention was paid to Kiyohime. She is such a lovely girl, but why I feel like she looks like the fireworks...

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For a few days after we bared our heart, I started to read the taboo book every day and turned back to see the future to make sure that I and Kiyohime would be safe. After all, the church might still be watching us these days.

“Today is also a refreshing day ~” Kiyohime stretched a stretch and got up from me. “She quietly came to sleep next to me at night again.” I thought, but I was used to it already. “Yes, Kiyohime.” I got up with a smile and gently patted her head. She also slightly lowered her head and laughed. “Mooo, Akiichi is always like this.” she chuckled, looked at me with crescent eyes. I also smile and cuddled her. Unexpectedly, Kiyohime picked up the soft pillow and beat my head: “Doing such things just when we get up... You are really a lecher. Fool, silly, but...” I smiled and blocked the attack of the pillow with my hand: “But what?” “I love you the best.” Our faces turned red immediately. “Mooo, who is to blame for that occasion?” Kiyohime said in a low voice.

After breakfast, when Kiyohime and I were doing the dishes together, she suddenly looked up and asked me, “ah, Akiichi, where are we going to do today?” “Well...” I lost in the ocean of thinking. Since I have taken Kiyohime travelled the whole city already...I really could not think of a place where we can have some fun. At that time, I reminded of what the taboo book said about: “Something will happen in the hot spring.”

I joked with Kiyohime: “Nah, Kiyohime, do you want to go to the hot spring?”

“Well? OK.”

“Ha?” I looked at her in surprise, my hand even stopped washing the bowl.

“If it's with Akiichi-san, I'll be OK.” she continued to wash the dishes, but her face was flushed.

[hot spring entrance]

“Wow...” I looked at the whole building in surprise, while Kiyohime was just hostility staring at Ryoko beside me. “Nah, why is she here, did you take her here?” Kiyohime's eyes were full of jealousy, and her voice was full of resentment. “But...at least she is my friend...and I don't want you two to have a bad relationship...” I looked at Kiyohime and Ryoko apologetically. And Ryoko's expression was very complicated: shame, regret and doubt.

“Akiichi, let's go to the hot spring, and let Ryoko go there by himself, OK?” Kiyohime took my arm and looked up at me. “As I said, we cannot leave her alone, also if we go together, we will have to have a kind of...erotic plot that will be banned in the short story...”

“It doesn't matter, as long as I am with Akiichi.” she looked at my face stubbornly and continued to take my hand.

“Ah...” just when I was in distress between this little argument, the landlady poked her head out of the hot spring door: “Ah, welcome to our spring~” The landlady's face was wrinkled, and her long silver hair floated with her movements.

“Ah sorry, I just didn't hear your voice. This is...” the old man's smiling eyes half narrowed and swept me one by one. Kiyohime beside my arm, and Ryoko, who was purring in the distance. “Ah, my dear guests, I am so sorry. Today's public bathing place is too dirty. I suggest you go to the bar separately.” the old man bowed slightly, but the golden hairpin on her head glittered with dignity.

“Ah...” Kiyohime sighed, slightly released me, but the palm of her hand was still close to me. “See, people can't help it.” I patted Kiyohime's head and made a look of regret to Ryoko.

...

...

In this way, I entered the hot spring particularly for male alone, and Kiyohime and Ryoko entered the females of course.

The hot spring water slowly submerged my legs and soaked my whole body.

Gentle waves of water around the body were beating and water contacts the body.

I sighed and sank into the water, letting the waves float freely above me.

At this time, I clearly heard the girl voice coming from the next room.

“It is Ryoko and Kiyohime??”

I quickly got up from the water and put my ears close to the wall to hear what they were saying. Fortunately, the walls of the hot spring are made of hollow bamboo, so the sound on both sides can be heard clearly.

First came Kiyohime's complaint: "Why do I want to take a hot spring with this guy... I cannot understand... If it's not Akiichi's order....." I could not help but feel nervous. Although I like Kiyohime, I do not like others to slander Ryoko.

Then there was Ryoko's voice: "Ah, Kiyohime. So...you are devoted to Akiichi?"

"Well? Of course..." Kiyohime was interrupted before she finished.

"In that case~ let's talk about this and that, hehe." Ryoko's voice suddenly became vivacious.

Next door came the sound of splashing water, and Kiyohime's exclaims.

Ryoko's voice continued: "Oh, I didn't expect that Kiyohime, you have a pretty good figure."

"That's because I usually wear kimonos... so that actually hide my....."

My ear went red: "Did I heard something that I'm not supposed to hear..." I turned to leave, but my body instinct was like being nailed, unable to move at all, and looking forward to continuing eavesdropping.

With the ripples of the water, the sound becomes farther and farther away.

"Nah, Kiyohime, I should really congratulate you...for the recent things." Ryoko's lonely voice made me feel nervous.

"Well? Is it time to say... Thank you?"

"Don't worry, don't worry, Kito that big bastard, I won't... won't like him..." Ryoko's voice with a little cry. "I won't worry about anything... I won't... I..." the voice next door slowly became low.

"This termagant also has a tender side..." I sighed.

They chatted intermittently for an hour. Just as I was drying my body and wrapping myself in a bath towel, I heard a scream coming from the next room: "Kiyohime? Kiyohime"

I could not care to put on my clothes. I ran straight into the bathroom next door. I did not care about the strange eyes of Ryoko and the waiter. I rushed directly into the two-person bathhouse and ran to Kiyohime's side.

"Kiyohime? Kiyohime!" I called Kiyohime's name in a panic and put my hand on her nose.

"Are you all right? Hey!" I shook Kiyohime's shoulder in a panic, but she had slipped into a coma and lost her consciousness.

"Maybe... She is dizzy." Ryoko saw me shaking Kiyohime, turned her head immediately, and her ears turned red because of bashfulness.

"So, ah," I thought for a while, then immediately picked her up from the hot spring water then ran all the way to the dressing room - no one would be there at this time anyway.

I laid her lie stretched out on the bench, with a bathrobe.

"In this case, it's probably OK..." I sighed, picked up the bottled water in the dressing room, when was about to drink, I felt a force holding my bathrobe. "Kiyohime?" I turned my head in surprise and found that Kiyohime had awakened. She raised her head slightly

on the bench and looked at me with a smile. "Thank you for saving me" she gently poked my nose.

"I am...am sorry..." I scratched my head shyly, and my face was burning. My apologies were not only for I did not come to her in time, but also, I saw her naked... "But if I don't do so, her symptom will become even worse." I convinced myself. "Ah, do you want to drink some water when you wake up?" I handed the bottled water to her.

"Well, good." Kiyohime sat up, and her bathrobe came off her chest slightly.

"As a matter of fact, I just drank that."

"Well, that's no problem at all." she grinned, which made me feel embarrassed. "Or... you can also say that it is even better."

The light green long hair of Kiyohime, who just came out of the bath, was all wet that became some small bundles which came out of the bathrobe that I put on for her. It smells aroma, and her face also seemed to have some kinds of feeling that is abnormal... something that is sexual. I didn't know whether it is because her lips were under the light or it was caused by my vision, they became more charming than before. Through that layer of bath towel, I was even able to vaguely see...

I blushed and quickly withdrew my eyes.

"Akiichi, please don't stare at me like that~" after noticing my anxious eyes, Kiyohime said.

"Ah, I'm sorry!" I quickly looked away, but whenever I recalled the attractive scene, all of the heat in my body poured into my head.

"Kiyohime..." I said awkwardly.

"?" Kiyohime put down her water bottle and tilted her head slightly.

"That... Actually I..." my face became hotter and hotter.

"I..." I recalled the things that happened between me and Kiyohime again.

Encounter, met, acquainted, and fell in love.

My first love, yes, my first lover.

The mood surging inside my heart, love in the body constantly wandering.

"In fact, I've always been..." What is the matter? We are already a pair of lovebirds. I secretly sneer at myself.

"Well?" Again, again, Kiyohime's soft lips came up.

Soft, hot, and passionate

We reminded kissing for a long time, when we separated and looked at each other, we already became breathless.

I never thought that kiss could be some comfort.

Kiyohime's eyes were blurred, and her expression was a little confused.

But I love it.

I like this girl with green hair.

I like this extraordinary little devil.

I like this enchanting maid.

My hand naturally placed on Kiyohime's waist.

.....

"Ring," Inopportunistly, the phone inside of the closet starting to ring.

Kiyohime is the first to regain the common consciousness: “Ah, Akiichi, the mobile phone rings.” she seems to be a little embarrassed, covering her lips and lowering her head.

“Ah?” Then I realized where I was, and quickly moved away from Kiyohime. “Ah, it's... Hahaha.”

“So! Awkward!” I seemed to be fine, but my mind already messed up.

“Wuaaaaaa, why did I do such a shameless thing!!! And it was even...It happened in the dressing room!!!! AAAAAAAAAA!!!!!!”

My stiff body slowly opened the cabinet and took out the mobile phone. The familiar voice of Ryoko came from the other end of the phone.

My stiff body slowly opened the cabinet and took out the mobile phone. The familiar voice of Ryoko came from the other side of the phone.

“Hello, Kito San?” The other end of the phone was full of a playful tone.

“Wuwuwuwu, please forgive me in this case!”

“Ah, if you're all right, then I'll go back first because the college just called me to let me back~,” she said with a smile: “In fact, it's just to create opportunities for you \(\overline{\quad}^{\quad}*\backslash\)).”

“You...!” I became speechless. “So you saw everything?”

“Well...I went after you, and as soon as I saw you two were kissing...” She burst into laughter.

“Ahhhhh, pls stop!”

“Ah, well, remember to catch up this chance, and goodbye ~” with those words, she hung up.

I looked at Kiyohime: “Ah, Ryoko said that she got to go back to do some assignments in the University, so she went back immediately.”

“Hum~um~ so you mean that we got a lot of free time for just us?”

“Well...yes.” I nodded, “So...would you like to have some special local product of the hot spring?”

“Eh?”

“Well, such as crabs, seafood, etc.” before I finished, my hand was already held by Kiyohime.

“Go, let's go!” Her eyes sparkled.

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“Come on, Akiichi.” Kiyohime smiles, one hand on the table and the other with chopsticks.

“Say, A~” she held up her chopsticks and mentioned to me to eat what she was holding.

This is... greens?

I opened my mouth and naturally swallowed the food she handed me: “mm-hmm, in other words, because you don't like it, so you gave that to me ain't you.”

Kiyohime blushed: “No! I just want you to have some...have more vegetables! For more vitamin s and ...you know that!”

I grinned: “Really? But your eyes have exposed what you are thinking already.”

The attendant looked at us and could not help laughing: “Your girlfriend is really adorable and charming, or she only behaves like that when you two are together...”

“Well? Ah... No, I am not spoiled, I mean, even I’m alone, I will not behave in a spoiled manner as well.” “Even so, it's just not coquetry. I'm...I was just playing Akiichi and...”

The waiter walked a step forward and asked with a smile, “Well, it doesn't look like this, from my point of view, you are already got used to that...ain’t you?” The waiter smiled happily.

“It's not like that...” she became more flustered.

“I...I...I mean... Akiichi idiot... This is not... Doesn’t that make me look very embarrassed on you...” She puffed and stared at me.

“Well, actually you really like to behave like a kid...” I scratched my head awkwardly.

“But I just like that,” I said,

“---” Kiyohime lowered her head and blushed like steam: “woo... Why Akiichi can say such shy words seriously... It's too cunning...”

...

Late at night, Kiyohime and I walked home slowly, silent all the way.

Kiyohime broke the silence: “Nah, Akiichi.”

“Well?”

“Akiichi, what will you do if I'm gone one day.”

“Well? what do you mean of you are away... you mean...”

“Don't be too tangled about what I mean, if I don't exist anymore, just like I have never existed in this world...” By moonlight, I found that Kiyohime's eyes had a reflection of tears.

I clenched Kiyohime's hand.

“Well, let's make a promise,” I said.

“What... A promise.” she seemed puzzled.

“If one day, you have passed out of existence.”

“Yes, we must be travelling in the universe together.”

“It's good to be one of those stars, to chase you, to circle in the night sky.”

“No matter the distance, no matter the direction, no matter how many obstacles are ahead of us.”

“After 1000 years, 10000 years, 100 million years”

“One thousand light-years, ten thousand light-years, one hundred million light-years.”

“In the distant milky way, go through other stars, travel through countless galaxies, pass through stars, planets, and other celestial bodies.”

The world is connected by love.

The truth of the world is the record of love.

In this case,

I will meet you one day.

That kind of promise, the promise that we will always be together.

“If you are gone, I will keep going on to chase you,” I announced formally.

I smile and say such words, but I hear the faint cry from the petite girl around me.

“Ah, how awesome you are, Akiichi. Although I do not want to admit that, but you are really brilliant!” She seemed to be joking, but there was a cry in her voice.

“So, this is our appointment, our...agreement.” She looked up at me.

“If one day I disappear, you must find me.”

“Even if we can't be like today, even if you don't fall in love.”

“It's agreed. Akiichi.” she smiles, but tears flow from her eyes.

“Yes, it's our agreement.” I looked at her and put my head around her.

Lips and lips are kissed together tightly, and we already forgot how many times that was.

But Kiyohime and I are still not satisfied, looking for a new angle, always with a new mood, let the lips so tightly together.

“Akiichi (Kiyohime)... I will always like you from now on.”

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“Hum ~ ah ~” Kiyohime stretched out and woke up in her nap. “What should I do this afternoon, Aki-i-chi?” When she saw my eyes, her face turned red immediately. She lowered her head, grabbed the pillow beside her bed and threw it at me: “Moooo! Akiichi Idiot! Hentai! Bastard!”

And I was laughing, gently blocking the soft attack with my hand: “I have enjoyed enough for Kiyo's sleeping face.”

Her face turned redder, and her head lowered slightly: “Neeeee ~ then I will have my revenge during the night-time~”

“Please do it!” I put my hands together, lowered my head and said aloud.

“Ha, ha.” The laughter of Kiyohime came like a silver bell. I gently opened one eye and saw her sitting in the bed, one hand covering her mouth, the other hand pressing the bedside, her feet swinging up and down, laughing happily. “Akiichi, you are really, haha, since we are already a couple, why are you still so restrained?” a charming smile showed on her mouth.

“Ah, would you like to have an afternoon tea?” I interrupted. “As atonement to the demon?” She deliberately made a show of arrogance, but it was not annoying. “Of course,” I replied. “Well... If Akiichi invited me, there would be no way ~” her mood today seemed to be particularly good, although I don't know why... Anyway, it is not a bad thing.

In a corner of the garden, the small dining table was filled with snacks and desserts. At the same time, there were two cups of hot coffee in front of the chairs. Kiyohime and I sat on both sides of the table, basking in the sun, and sipping coffee. The sun shined brightly on my body, warming the whole body.

Before, I would never choose to do that. I smiled bitterly. I recalled myself one year ago. Dark, humid, indifferent. Before, I may only choose to stay alone in my room. And everything I had for the meals was all cup noodles. Kiyohime really made difference in my life... I looked at Kiyohime curled up in a chair to draw coffee gratefully. But she deliberately made a look of disgust: “What, looking me in a way like this...that was quite

disgusting for you to behave like that.” She said and stroked her arm with her hand as if goosebumps came out.

“Well, Kiyohime, can you bear the bitter inside the coffee?” I asked curiously, “Because I heard that girls don't like bitter things very much...”

“No problem, I can stand that.” she looked complacent. “Here, closer. Would you like to try my coffee?”

“Well? If you do not mind... I can also...” I was a little surprised.

She put her coffee cup in my hand before I could say more words.

“So...I'm going to start drinking?”

“Wow!” I could not help but making complaints about it. “This is not coffee anymore; it is already syrup! How much sugar did you put into the coffee?”

She gently touched her chin with one hand and thought, “Well, about a dozen bags? And half a bag of milk and three coffee partners?”

“Poof,” I said with a smile, “Hey, that's not coffee anymore...”

“But I just can't stand the bitter taste of coffee.”

.....

Joking, making, laughing, time unknowingly passed to the evening.

Kiyohime lay on the table and asked me, “Ah, Akiichi, I remembered that you're going to work the night shift tonight. Go to the tavern.”

“Yes, I suppose I should go there as well” I nodded.

“Then I'll go with you. After all, it's my last...” the words behind it were not clear.

“Well? What?”

“Nothing, nothing, just some...” Her voice seemed to be choking.

“Akiichi, why don't you go upstairs and get ready? Let us go to the mountain for a while. Anyway, there's still a lot of time.” I could not see her face clearly in the dark.

“OK, that's totally fine.” I agreed. “I'll go back first and maybe you can wait for me here.”

Under the darkness, I fumbled back to the room, looking for my work clothes. “Ah, I forgot where I left my work clothes again...Hmmm, maybe I should hurry up or she might get worried...” Looking for it, I inadvertently ran into the taboo book. “I am going to work all night today. It's better to read the page of tomorrow together.” Thinking like this, I let go of the book.

“Mm-hmm, I've seen it here, here too, here too, here...” I flipped page by page.

[The garden where the afternoon took place, Kiyohime]

“I'm afraid today is the last day.” I pulled my hand out of my sleeve and looked at the arm in the sky. I saw the moonlight passing through the arm slightly, and the arm became translucent. “Is it the end of the day...” My face was still smiling, but my voice was full of loss, and loneliness. “Ah, I'm very... I am already satisfied to come here...” I tried to convince myself. The moonlight gently sprinkles on my body and puts on a layer of white wedding dress, but there is no one beside me, just like a... lonely bride. I gently put my hand on my chest because I know that the void in my heart can't be filled.

I know, I know, I know. I know if... If I did not fall in love with him, I will not be as painful as I am now. Frozen sigh, shaking consciousness became hazy.

I dance in the moonlight, and my kimono moves with the wind. Tenshin kashou Zanmai. The spell I won, the spell I got, the spell I earned from him, and him.

Yes, as a demon, I was low and degrading, inferior and humble comparing to that angel, not to mention my story, my.....

But Akiichi, Akiichi Kito, he accepted me. He clearly knew that I am just a devil and how humble I was. But Akiichi still loved me.

I stopped dancing, and when I closed my eyes, my mind was full of him.

“It is all his fault; how can I leave like this?”

.....

[Home, Akiichi]

My hands trembled, pointing to the last page of the taboo book: “Thank you, and farewell.” I burst into tears in my eyes. I wiped them with my sleeve and rushed downstairs.

.....

[Park, Kiyohime]

I walk step by step; every step is as painful as a knife. I know, it is the price of breaking the indenture. But it does not matter. At least it will not hurt him.

Akiichi will go to work soon. As long as the night ends, there won't be a woman named Kiyohime in the world. She will not have this heart-breaking, isolated love. As long as it is passed.

.....

“Is that all right?” The little voice in my heart asked me.

“It is OK, it is fine,” I answered.

In this way, I will be satisfied.

.....

[On the road, Akiichi]

“Kiyohime! Kiyohime!”

I panic of shout but lost sight of Kiyohime completely.

The phone rings. “Boy, you are supposed to go to work today...”

“Uncle!” It seemed that I already lost my sense of hope. “Kiyohime... Kiyohime...” but I couldn't spit out a complete sentence because of choking.

“Kiyohime is... Well, you don't need to come today.” the manager said gently.

“Do you want me to send someone to help you to find her?”

But because I was anxious, I hung up. “Thank you I will repay you later,” I said silently in my heart.

“Kiyohime said she was going to the park, didn't she?” The voice in my heart reminded me, “Yes, the park!” I rushed to the park.

.....

(Peak, Kiyohime)

Here we are at last.

Although I have been climbing for nearly an hour, my body is as light as a feather.

Grief filled the body.

In the distance, although the night has not set, the sun in the East has begun to shine slowly.

It's OK, let me continue to be lonely, this matter is an episode of life.

.....

(Mountain Road, Kito)

"Hoo, hoo, hoo, Hoo." The feeling of fatigue filled the body.

"Tired, tired..." Every cell in the body is crying to stop me from moving on, every muscle in the body is yelling for pain.

But my mind told me, that I must go to the top of the mountain, in order to save her.
Yes, I have no choice but to move on

.....

(Peak, Kiyohime)

Looking down, Akiichi was there, climbing all the way through the peak of this mountain.

"Do you want to give him some time to say goodbye?" A cold voice came from hell.

"At least... At least..." I closed my eyes and shook my head in pain.

The voice of the underground was silent.

I am supposed to go now, I know that.

But his movement dragged my heart back.

[Peak, Kiyohime and Akiichi]

"Ah, ah, ah!" I wiped my sweat and finally reached the top of the mountain. "Whoa, I'm so tired." The sun rose in front of me, but I did not want to enjoy the beautiful scenery. "Kiyohime!" I called out a voice. "Why did you come here? I was so worried about you....." I forced a smile and didn't say anything else.

"Akiichi..." Kiyohime's eyes seem to be tearful. "Shouldn't Akiichi be angry with me at this time? Kiyohime is a bad girl. She is going to say goodbye without saying a word to Akiichi. I..." Her voice choked and couldn't go on.

"Of course, I am angry!" My sudden loud voice seemed to scare Kiyohime a little. "Of course, I am angry with Kiyohime. You big fool, why are you going to say farewell all of a sudden? What can't go on? We can work together. Why... But why..." something suddenly fell from my eye socket and wet across my cheek, leaving a zigzag line on the dry skin. "Stupid, didn't you say that we were lovers? I said that we would be together in the future... My voice was hoarse, my eyes were closed, and I couldn't stop crying. My grief made me short of breath, even my body trembled.

"Akiichi..." for the first time in countless years, Kiyohime no longer repressed her emotions and indulged herself in crying.

"I don't want to... I don't want to...leave you as well." Kiyohime's tears are like pearls, dropping down from the corner of her eyes.

"Why... Why..." my brain has lost the ability to think.

"Magic... It's magic power inside the book, Akiichi. That book contains the magic I need in my life, and since the moment you open it, my magic had begun to dissipate."

"..." I hammered my thigh hard. "I... cannot accept... It's me who made you die..."

"It's OK, it's OK, Akiichi." Kiyohime squeezed a smile from her tears. "You see, didn't we make an agreement? That agreement!"

Ah, that:

"If one day, you have passed out of existence."

“Yes, We must be travelling in the universe together.”
 “It's good to be one of those stars, to chase you, to circle in the night sky.”
 “No matter the distance, no matter the direction, no matter how many obstacles are ahead of us.”
 “After 1000 years, 10000 years, 100 million years”
 “One thousand light-years, ten thousand light-years, one hundred million light-years.”
 “In the distant milky way, go through other stars, travel through countless galaxies, pass through stars, planets, and other celestial bodies.”
 The world is connected by love.
 The truth of the world is the record of love.
 In this case,
 I will meet you one day.
 That kind of promise, the promise that we will always be together.
 “Agreement... We have an agreement!” I managed to stop crying.
 “Well, it's an agreement between us.” Kiyohime took my hand and put it on her chest.
 Fate ends, fate falls, the fate is unlimited; grieved, distressed, the pain lasts forever; missing, illness, separation forever; open eyes, and close them, my tears were already dry.
 Two people nestled together; the sun slowly rose.
 “Well, it's almost time for me to go.” Kiyohime got up from my arms and looked up at me.
 “Well.” I lowered my head, a little nasal in my voice.
 “Why, are you still reluctant to leave me?” She gently distanced herself from me, asked me with a smile, but her eyes are clearly with tears.
 “Well, I'm sorry, but it's true.” I scratched my head.
 “We agreed, remember.” Kiyohime smiles. But two tears flow out of her eyes.
 “Well, that's our agreement.” I nodded hard.
 We clapped our hands and said in unison, “we will meet soon.”
 All of a sudden, a strong wind came. The wind was so wild and bleak that the trees in the mountains swayed violently and the branches swayed wildly as if they were going to be uprooted. In an instant, I noticed dozens of silver beams coming from the fiery red sky. The beams were getting closer and closer until they focused on us——
 Kiyohime is shrouded by the light column. I can't help closing my eyes because of the strong light. When I open it, Kiyohime has disappeared.

Back Cover

The sun rises slowly, bringing light and color to the world.
 I walked home from the top of the hill in the sunshine.
 “Who would believe that...”
 I wry smiled, my eyes were already swollen, and every time I blink, it will give me sense of pain, but that offered me a sense of reality.
 One by one, tears fell from my eyes, and I did not want to dry them or stop crying.
 Soon the overalls were wet. The deep, pale colors on the overall smiled at me with the smell of dark and mocking.

“Ah...”
 So tired, so annoyed, so troublesome.
 I tucked into the covers.
 Sleeping until 9 p.m., as if that is the way to escape everything.
 “Ah...”
 It is nine o'clock...”
 I ruffled my hair like I am going to work today.
 I got dressed and rode my bike out of the house.
 “.....”
 “.....”
 I crossed the crossing.
 “It is the intersection where she and I used to fight together...”
 I shake my head and clear my mind.
 When I arrived at Izakaya, the uncle came out to greet me with a big smile. “Hey, Kito-san, where's your little girl friend?”
 Words were like knives, accurately inserted into my heart chamber.
 “She...”
 “She...”
 “She.....”
 I moved my lips a few times but found myself unable to put together a decent speech.
 “With no work for today... I thought you would bring her along.”
 “Oh, not today?”
 “Well, I suppose something happened to you...”
 The uncle looked me in the face, then grinned. “Well, how about you coming to drink at here today?”
 With that, the uncle arranged for me a seat in the most.
 “If you can't stand that feeling, just cry that out, crying out the words will be much better,” the uncle forcefully patted the shoulder.
 I laughed myself to death because I already lost the ability to cry.
 One glass after another, one can after another.
 I drank numbly, as if I could escape from reality by drinking.
 I knelt and wept bitterly and hammered my hand with both hands, “Why do I always start to cherish it when she is gone!!!” My mind is filled with the memory of her.
 “She already mentioned to me, about that.”
 A tear fell drop by drop, fell to the ground and broke into countless pieces.
 My eyesight became a bit dim. Is it swollen? I do not care about that anymore.
 “She changed my life, but I did not mention my thank you to her yet.”
 “My life is a piece of shit except for the time I spent with her.”
 “One cup, two cups...” I forgot how many glasses of liquor down, but my stomach already felt like fire. At that time, a familiar figure suddenly appeared before my eyes. So beautiful, like the angel/devil from heaven/hell. “Kiyohime, do not leave me alone.” I cried, like a baby. “Bang!” So clear, so loud, so powerful. I was slapped, and the bar suddenly became silent, leaving only the pain of being beaten and the buzzing sound that still reverberated.

“Her leaving was not to bring you down!” She yelled. I finally realized it was her, Ryoko Shimizu.

The friend I spent with countless days and nights, pal, and his childhood sweetheart. Memory flows through my heart. “Ah, ah, ah,” I replied as if I am a robot. I said with the numb tune “Everything is gone, whether her, my grandma, or my parents, I would choose to die.....” Suddenly, a drop of tear fell on the desk, it was Ryoko’s. She had been crying into a fearful person. My heart suddenly became painful after I saw her behaving like this. “I... I don’t want you to become decadence again anymore, let us go to the future hand in hand!” “But...” I was stuttering said “If you forget your magic, you can learn it again; if you made any mistake, you could compensate for it. What can’t be created by our own hands!” She looked at my eyes directly, the deep blue eyes like ocean, so deep and never can see the bottom of it: “If you made any fault, it is never too late to mend.”

“Yes indeed.” I stood up with a clenched fist, I understand that now. I should relearn the magic and started to work on the magic book to bring them back! “No time for me to stay in a mood like that from now on,” I whispered. The bar suddenly filled with warmth and brightness, the people from the bar looks so amiable. The manager said: “Hey, if you met any trouble, just tell us, OK? Your guys are still young, what cannot you do! Remember, the future is created by your hands.” I looked at them gratefully and made a deep bow: “ありがとうございます” (Thank you)

Forward The Future

— Ten years later in one of the most famous magic individual labs in Tokyo

“Hey, Kito, come and check this!” Ryoko yells.

“Coming~” I answered.

Yes, me and Ryoko became a working partner and built the biggest magic lab in the whole world. And we are doing research about the Taboo book. Well, we are near to completion.

“OK, May all go well with you, Kito-san.”

“Of course. I’ll try my best.”

“Kiyohime-Magic-foundation test on Taboo book-test number-4983-test date-203Kiyohime.6.3Kiyohime”

OK, Relax. Relax. Relax.

“I’m ready.” I wave to show Ryoko that I am ready to make the spell.

“魔法が始まる (Magic Start.)” She smiled: “Let’s see the miracle created by you, Akiichi Kito.”

I nodded.

“Equipment ready.”

I glanced at the clock. “Just on time”

“I’m ready, for now.”

*Silver and iron to the origin. Gem and the archduke of contracts to the cornerstone.
The alighted wind becomes a wall. The gates in the four directions close, coming from the crown, the
three-forked road that leads to the kingdom circulate.*

“Tenshin Kashou Zanmai”

(Please, Kiyohime. I whisper.)

With the blinding light, the familiar figure that I have been dreaming for years appears. She remains like who she looks like before.

The time zips by, at that moment, I had a feeling that I went back to that summer that I first met her.

“With tiny feet, her arms crosses in front of her body arms, it seems that she is a little bit of bashful, but in the hands of the block is the main tone for plain white very gorgeous kimono, her long green hair like stagnant water on the shoulders. She lowers her head, just like a shy girl, but her eyes which are in the color of dark red are staring at me looking in my direction.”

I yell out her name delightedly, with tears of happiness. “Kiyohime!”

She smiles at me, “Long time no see, Akiichi.”

The End

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