

# Towazugatari

A Katanagatari drama CD



# Towazugatari – Yasuri Shichika

I am the seventh head of Kyotouryuu, Yasuri Shichika!

...But even if announce myself dramatically like that, the sad thing is that nobody knows about it. And even I have no idea what Kyotouryuu actually is. Sis could probably explain things nice and clear, but I dunno if I can. Since I'm not good at thinking. And I'm bad at talking, too. Actually, I'm not even bad at it, I just can't do it. I should just outright say that it's impossible for me. I mean, just think about it. I'm a sword, aren't I? I'm a weapon, you know? How can you expect me to think and talk? You'd have to be some kind of magical sword to get profound about philosophy or give moving speeches.

"Kyotouryuu is a school of swordsmanship that doesn't use swords. Its practitioners are swords themselves", apparently. That's what Dad and Sis told me, but it hasn't really sunk in for me. That's probably that's what they call a lack of real world experience. So I guess I'm inexperienced.

I don't really get it, and that might be why I can talk about it so casually, but swords are just tools for killing, aren't they? They're made for murdering people. Even if you treat them like works of art or craftsmanship, they're just dangerous knives. They're weapons made for killing people. And swordsmanship isn't meant for fighting people, but for killing them, isn't it?

I've spent twenty years on an island without people, being trained on how to kill people. It's been beaten into me. I've trained myself as the seventh head of Kyotouryuu and as a sword. But I haven't learned anything or really thought about it. Not a bit. It wasn't a real education. I didn't think or feel anything for these whole twenty years.

Well, I was alive for four years before that, but I'm not gonna remember anything from when I was that little. Well, I don't even remember anything about the twenty years after that. I don't even remember what happened yesterday. I...don't remember anything. Tomorrow, I'll probably even forget about what I'm talking about now, or that I was talking at all. Sorry about that.

Well, it's because I'm dumb and an idiot. But that's just something I'm taking as a fact. I'm not really trying to change that fact or reject it, huh. I mean, even if I was smart, there'd be no point. If I was a amazing genius, then so what? What would be the difference? Is a smart sword going to be any sharper than a dumb sword? It's not.

The sixth head of Kyotouryuu, my dad, always said that swords shouldn't be smarter than they need to. I don't know when exactly he said it, but it was like a catchphrase for him. And Sis is like that, too. I don't think it's because she's in this Kyotouryuu Yasuri family, but she's not a deep thinker. She's sort of sharp, but it's more like she's cut loose than sharp. She doesn't look like it, but she's way more reckless than me. She's way more impulsive than me. It could be that she's more hopeless than reckless, or more ignorant than impulsive. Or maybe she's just careless. What's with her?

She's a little, or maybe really...extreme. Well, it's not like I have anything against her being like that, but she is extreme and radical. She thinks living is killing. For her, living and killing have exactly the same value. This isn't even because she's a sword. Of course, you have to eat to live, and food is all, basically...living things. Living is eating, and you have to kill to eat, so living is killing. It makes sense when you put it like that, but when Sis says it when it looks like she could die at any minute, it sort of makes sense but not quite, well, I'm not really sure. And I can't tell how serious she is when she says that. I don't know anything...

But this isn't just about people or Kyotouryuu. Even if you don't do anything, just by living you'll be ending a lot of lives. Whether you live in the city or the country or on a desert island, it's all the same. So maybe I don't really have to say that swords are tools for killing. I'd look dumb trying to proclaim something that obvious. Or should I just say that they're tools for cutting? But I don't need to say that either.

Like I said, swords don't need to think or talk. They just get wielded. They just do what their wielder wants. Apparently, Dad got called the hero of the rebellion who saved the country, but shouldn't his wielder be called that instead? So maybe that's why Dad didn't really care about it. It was an honor, but not a glory. That's how it is, I guess.

In the first place, Kyotouryuu is supposed to be in the shadows, in the back of history. It's not supposed to be the center of attention. Everything sort of worked out in a good way, what with getting banished to a desert island. Or maybe not. Yeah, that's not it at all. That did happen, but it probably wasn't about that, huh.

They were all trying to take back Kyotouryuu's honor, and it's not like I don't care about it either, but if you get down to it, that was getting offtrack. Honor for us is completely different from what's normal, so even if you try to take it back the normal way, you can't. Not that I know much about what's normal... Anyways, I don't think or know anything.

So I'm completely different from Sis or Dad. So you could say I'm a natural Kyotouryuu, a pure sword. I became the successor to Kyotouryuu after twenty years of being trained to be strong, strong and stronger. So I guess I'm the best at

representing Kyotouryuu, the strongest swordsmanship school. But that's too much for me, it's way too heavy, and I wouldn't be able to live up to my ancestors.

I dunno what the founder of Kyotouryuu was thinking when he started up the school—well, he was a sword too, so it's not like he *was* thinking anything. He was probably like as me, maybe even the same as me, and only spent his time polishing, sharpening, and tempering Kyotouryuu as a killing tool. The first, the second, the third, the fourth, the fifth, the sixth, and me the seventh, haven't drifted from that. No matter how we were born or bred, we're unyielding and implacable. Our whole existence is a sword. The strongest swordsmanship that doesn't wield swords, Kyotouryuu.

That wasn't much of an introduction, but that's about it. If you wanna know anything else, we'll have to talk with our fists. That's what I'm good at. I'm not one to talk, but it's easier to understand with your body than your head. Wanna give it a try? But by then, you'll have been torn into pieces.

## Towazugatari – Togame

I don't mean to be presumptuous in introducing myself, but I am the army general director in support of critical tasks under direct control of Yanari Shogun of the Owari Shogunate, Togame the strategist. Oh, but strategist isn't my job, it's just a title I invented. Did you know that? Well, it doesn't matter. Whatever you call me, I'll still be myself, and I won't turn into anyone else, so I don't care what you call me, but it's more convenient if you call me that. It's just how I want to introduce myself.

Hm, while I have the chance, why don't I talk about what a scheme is? It might just be idle talk, but it'll at least help pass the time. If you aren't interested, then go ahead and forget it. What a scheme is, the kind of plan a scheme is. It's more than being unexpected or unusual. That's what makes it hard to explain, but at least for me, schemes are just a plain and dull way of living. This might come as a disappointment, but it's not about being flashy, either. It's not at all like these clothes of mine.

Hm... no, never mind that. Actually, to tell the truth, the clothes I usually wear, my twelve-layered upon twelve-layered kimono, or rather twenty-four-layered kimono, isn't just for show, you know? It has a sly and sneaky purpose. As you can see, I have a slight build, so if I dress as heavily as I can and cover as much skin as possible, I can at least try to give myself a bigger presence. If I avoid exposing my pasty arms and stick legs, I'll look more threatening, right? My ornate clothing and haughty attitude are only means to an end. Sadly, they're nothing more than means. They have the same purpose as a lion's mane or a peacock's tail. Of course, as strategic and eccentric as my clothes may be, hiding my presence would be the correct thing to do

considering my job and position, yet I do the opposite for reasons that are not at all proper. That's how it is.

But the opposite of proper is proper, and the reverse of proper is still proper. At least, for me. Ah, but my clothes, to be clear, well to be blunt, are at least in part due to my love for luxury and splendor, and my haughty attitude is part of my nature, too. So these are only justifications. But taking advantage of your nature is more important than you might think. Anyways, there's no end to examples, or rather, examples will only confuse the matter, but I can at least say that coming up with novel techniques isn't what it means to scheme. There's no example without a precedent, no special case without a precedent, and no exception without a special case. There's no need to confine yourself to the novel. I'm not saying that we especially need to learn from history, but it's a huge blunder to think that intelligence must be original. See, that might be the difference between schemes and plans.

But I don't believe this is enough to explain the gist of it. If you can tell that, then you have good sense. What I've said is more or less a pretense. It's only something I say to dodge the question of what a scheme is. The truth is much more clear-cut. In my opinion, or rather my personal philosophy, the difference between plans and schemes is much simpler. To get straight to the point, without beating around the bush, the strong make plans and the weak make schemes, I suppose. It's a makeshift and rather vague definition, but to me it's the plain truth. The strong make plans, and the weak make schemes. Winners make plans and losers make schemes. That's all. The truth is that schemes are the logic of the weak and defeated. That's why I don't recommend them. They might help you move up, but they won't help you move forward. Unless you can think of yourself as so terribly and awfully weak that you can't live by normal means, there's no point to using schemes.

I consider myself to be as strong as a paper screen. That I'll die if I trip. That I'll pass away if I don't breathe properly. That's not something I plan to change. It's too late to train myself in military arts, and I see no need to. In fact, it's almost superfluous. Weakness is my greatest weapon. I'm weaker and possess less than anyone else, which allows me to grasp my enemies' weak points better than anyone else. That's why... That's right, I might be jumping from point to point in making my conclusion, but that's why I'm more afraid of the weak than the strong. I'm more afraid of the have-nots than the haves. They ought to be feared. Still, if there's anyone weaker than me, I'd like to meet them.

A method that focuses on avoiding defeat instead of winning, an approach that centers on survival instead of victory... that's what a scheme is in more roundabout terms. Which is why specific tactics like surprise and targeting weak points are secondary. These various means are distant from the heart of scheming. Schemes are more sincere and earnest, as mad and desperate as biting into stone and slurping up mud. You can't expect any quick or easy victories. It's sink or swim, do or die. Of course, you might obtain a quick or easy victory on occasion. And there are times when

feigning one may be necessary— but always, anywhere, and no matter what, it's like tightrope walking without a rope. Acting out incredible miracles while coughing up blood. For me, schemes are for miracles, and nothing else. And I've already said this, but I don't recommend them at all. If you have an enemy to defeat, you should train yourself from square one. Putting aside whether I needed to or not, I've had no opportunity to train myself in military arts. And so I've delegated it. That's pitiful, sly, and sneaky. But as a strategist, I have the resolve to accept such criticism. I won't seek acclaim. I haven't been looking for glory from the start. And that's fine by me.

All in all, I'm destructive. I don't just cause destruction, I have destructive tendencies. And the kind of destruction I aspire to is the kind that's a nuisance to everyone else. It must be unbearable to be around me. But even if I'm aware of that, there's nothing I can do about it. My life is that of a strategist. Every little effort, from eating to breathing, is part of a scheme. Every remark and gaffe is only a crucial, irrelevant, and haphazard part of the scheme known as life. You could even say that that's my strength. My weakness is my strength, and that strength is still weakness. There's no other way around it.

There's this madwoman in the center of shogunate who denies absolutely everything, but my advantage over her is that she's strong, and I'm weak. The things we do aren't actually so different. But her plots are plans, and my plots are schemes. We do the same things, but with a different name and meaning. It's an old cliché that it's not about what's said, but who says it, but the same can be said about what's done and accomplished.

Oh, am I almost out of time? Hm. Then I'll sum it all up. The short answer to the question of what a scheme is... is that everything Togame the strategist does is a scheme. Even these things I've been going on about could be part of a trick, you know? It's no fun to trick someone who's too gullible. Don't be so quick to trust me.

## Translation Notes

In the light novel, Togame is described as wearing a juunihitoe, an elaborate multi-layered kimono worn by court ladies. This is different from her design in illustrations and the anime.

Togame talks about the difference between 奇策 (translated as schemes) and 策 (translated as plans), which would be more literally translated as outlandish schemes and schemes, respectively. Meanwhile, she calls herself a 奇策士 (a made up word translated as strategist) in comparison to a 策士 (tactician or schemer). A more literal translation would be outlandish schemer.

# Towazugatari – Yasuri Nanami

I would be better off dead.

Oh, pardon me, I'm the head of household of the Yasuri family, Yasuri Nanami. I'm no one of any importance. Despite its status twenty years ago, the Yasuri family that I'm head of is only a shadow of its former self, just like myself.

Should I just say that I want to die? Of course, there's nobody who would be better off dead. It's obvious that living is better than dying. That's what they all say, so I'm sure it's true. But think about it this way: That's only a broad and general idea, not necessarily one that applies to everybody or one that applies everywhere.

'Would I be better off dead? Or would I be worse off dead?' is a question that should be decided on an individual basis. My brother Shichika would say that life and death isn't a question of good or bad. That's how he's been raised by his predecessor. After all, if he had any values about life and death, it would dull his edge as a sword, a tool for taking life. He hasn't been taught any of that. Swords are tools for killing, tools for bringing death. They have no sense of right or wrong, and for better or worse, no other purpose. That's the fate of the Yasuri family, of each head of Kyotouryuu. And Shichika is a natural, too.

Oh? Something about myself, and not Shichika? But I have nothing to say about myself. The more I talk about myself, the less value it would have. Oh, that's right. Why don't I talk about this to pass the time?

Why do people live? What purpose are people born for? These are common questions in society. It seems like they would be. Of course, I know little of the world, so I don't know if they still would be, but everybody used to trouble themselves with those questions.

But in my opinion, those are the wrong questions to ask. Even as a child, I could only shake my head at them. Why do people live? What purpose are people born for? That's inferring the cause from the effect; it's reasoning from the conclusion. In other words, it's an unproductive question. No matter how deep of a reason you have, it won't change the reality that you *are* alive. If a duck realizes that it's a swan, it won't change biologically, will it? The same idea applies here.

That's right, no matter what you live for, or whatever you were born for, it won't change a thing about the fact that you're alive. Thinking about it is a waste of time. Contemplating about your life might seem optimistic, but it's actually quite pessimistic. Such wastes should be eliminated, in my opinion.

More importantly, let us think about death. That's much more optimistic. Thinking about life is thinking about the past and thinking about death is thinking about the future. Should we not think about tomorrow and not yesterday? Why do people die? What purpose do people die for? Pondering over these questions will lead to a fruitful life. People cease to be people when they die. Life leaves their bodies, and the living become the deceased. It's a transformation, a transfiguration, and a transmutation. What else would have meaning if not this? What indeed?

That is why we shall ask these questions. Why we shall ask these questions to ourselves. Why do people die? What purpose do people die for? Of course, these questions require some intelligence, and would be difficult for someone like Shichika, but they're not terribly difficult questions. They're debates with no answer. If you think you're right then you're right, and if you think you're correct then you're correct. The right answer should be determined by each individual. Ah, perhaps not each individual, but in this case, each deceased.

At the least, there's no need to rely on the wisdom of ancestors. To give my answers as a point of reference, people die as part of natural law, because living is unnatural. And the purpose that people die for is themselves. The first question aside, the second question might require more explanation. Allow me to explain.

What does it mean to die for yourself? This is a precise meaning of the words, one that might be something that's exclusive to myself, and I don't even expect my brother to share it, but living requires more effort than dying. To be frank, it's tiring. It's exhausting. Waking up, eating, walking, talking, sleeping... expenditure comes with exhaustion. In comparison, death, or rather being dead, is easy. There's no expenditure or exhaustion.

Just like the Yasuri family at present. We have been exiled to an uninhabited island for twenty years, doing nothing and feeling nothing, only dying. Not living, but dying. You could say that Shichika and I were born into death. Or would it be more direct to say that we were born from death? Well, no matter you call us, I am myself, Shichika is Shichika, and the Yasuri family is the Yasuri family. Strangers shouldn't intrude in family matters. There's no need for outside interference.

How was that? I didn't have anything to say about myself, and I may have only lined up some nonsense, but please overlook my misconduct as a bit of entertainment.

But even so. If you have the opportunity, why not think of these questions? Why do people die? For what purpose do people die? Why do you die? For what purpose do you die? Would you be better off dead, or would you be worse off dead? It may be of some use. It might paradoxically help you live more optimistically. Despite what I say, these questions may not have comforting answers, but death has accompanied me



for a quarter-century as a friend, so I hope you won't insult it. That is my request as the head of the Yasuri family, Yasuri Nanami.

## Towazugatari – Princess Hitei

Y'know, people really misunderstand me.

Oh, I'm Princess Hitei. And that's a real gem, too. They call me a princess, but I'm not a princess or anything. I haven't got any of that noble lineage or lofty status. They just call me a princess since I look like one. If you want to be cynical, it's a kind of sarcasm or irony. Well, part of it's that I'm calling myself a princess and making myself look like a princess. That's not anything worth denying. So that's a double negative.

My real name? Just like that unpleasant woman, I don't have one. Actually, I don't know about her. I can't be sure she doesn't have a real name. Not that I care. Well, whatever.

Anyways, I really like being called Princess Hitei. I can't think of anyone with such good taste, so maybe I did think of it myself. Giving myself a title, just like that unpleasant woman. Seems like something I'd do. I'm first-class at self-expression, after all.

Just kidding. Denying, denying, and denying again is my way of life, or like one of my principles. Completely obfuscating the truth and what's true. No wonder I'd get misunderstood. Yeah, I'm not joking or hassling here—hm well, I'm not really trying to have a serious talk in the first place. There's no point in expecting me to be serious. Seriousness and sincerity is the complete opposite of my denying way of life, go try that unpleasant woman. Well, it's not like that unpleasant woman's really serious or sincere, so yeah, I'm just being a pest. That's part of it too, but I've got nothing to do with the truth in sincerity or the gravity in seriousness, so it just looks insane to me.

This isn't something I can go shouting around, but there are a ton of geezers in the shogunate that're confined by the truth, and it's a real pain. It's like, jokes don't get through to them and they've got no sense of humor, they're seriously behind the times. So, just to brag, but I've never got mad in my entire life. Hm? Well, probably.

Emonzaemon might go "you're lying, you princess", but let's just deny his whole existence. Anyways, I've never gotten angry. Doesn't getting mad or irritated just show you're serious? You can't really imagine someone being mad as a joke, or being mad for fun. Dunno if you'd call it being wound up or wound tight, but it's a real

mess, you know? It's a short life in the face of history, so you might as well live jokingly like me. I don't know what people who cling to a purpose and focus their efforts on a single goal are thinking, if they're even thinking.

Just in my opinion, and put in a denying way. From *their* point of view, people who live aimlessly like me are probably just idiotic fools. Well, if I don't fool around a bit, life's too much of a folly to deal with. You aren't living if you're not having fun, right?

Anyways, I don't have a deep-set goal—well it's not like I don't, but that's not *really* my goal. I can't tell you what it is here, but now just what could it be? It's more like a purpose in life than a goal, and this purpose in life isn't a reason for living but one for being born. So I'm not too excited to work towards it. Well, I'm not going to throw in the towel, sure I'll work on it, but playing all the way. I'll do it as playfully as I can.

Oh, right, I didn't say, but you know, don't you? I've got this real important job in the Yanari shogunate in internal inspection, and you know what kind of job it is? That's right, it's to find traitors. You don't know how many plans, how many dozens and hundreds of plans I've exposed. It's my job, so I don't feel guilty about it, but you know, unlike how denying the word 'traitor' is, traitors are actually pretty devoted. No matter what orders they're following from which organization, that kind of conviction is admirable. That's what makes them worth rooting out.

When you get as stupidly enlightened as me, there isn't much else you can do for fun. Besides crushing the beliefs of others. Since I haven't got any deep convictions. Instead of being convinced I doubt, and instead of committing I pretend. So like, Emonzaemon says that I'm full of life when I'm around that unpleasant woman. Can't say if it's true, and it'd be weird if it was, so maybe he's making it up, but that unpleasant woman's definitely worth picking a bone with. She's fun to play with, well a fun toy, though she doesn't seem to think the same.

Well, I don't have any evidence to say if she's a traitor, but I've got this sixth sense from doing this job for so long, or to use a less exaggerated and embellished word, this women's intuition, so I can basically sniff it out. The smell of a traitor.

The smell of a traitor's convictions, whether or not they're serious and sincere. To put it more simply, hmm... it's the smell of my kind. The same kind and the same sort as me. Except that unpleasant woman has convictions, and I don't, and that's the only difference between us, so maybe that's why we're incompatible.

Oh, sorry, my bad. People really misunderstand me, and I don't even mind. I don't care what anyone thinks about me, since it just makes them easier to use. Well, sorry. I've been saying a lot, but just make sure you don't misunderstand that I don't think badly of that unpleasant woman. I definitely hate her. I hate that unpleasant woman from my bones. I, Princess Hitei hate that strategian. With every ounce of my body

and every bit of my soul, I deny that strategist. That's how it has to be, and we wouldn't be ourselves otherwise.

Traitors should betray earnestly and in the open, as part of their convictions. I'll criticize them in the open without any convictions, half in fun, half in play, full of curiosity and humor, carelessly and aimlessly, plotting and interfering and joking and messing around. I won't accept sincerity. I won't accept seriousness. I deny them. It's my way of doing things, not the strategist's. I won't affirm anything. I won't even acknowledge myself. I deny reality, the present, fantasy, limits, origins, excess, and the entirety of the world.

Truth is stranger than fiction. Fiction is livelier than truth. And I won't affirm it. I'll rip a hole into that lively world. That's right, I am Princess Hitei, and I deny everything, without exception.

Just kidding. So is this enough?

## Translation Notes

Hitei means denial. There was a lot of word play in this. In particular, the words in this list all begin with the same sound in Japanese. "I deny reality, the present, fantasy, limits, origins, excess, [...]"