

The Irregular at Magic High School

Vol.32 Sacrifice & Graduation



By: Satou Tsutomu

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Notes

The word “精神” appears regularly in the volumes, it can mean “mind”; “spirit”; “soul”; “heart”, and in Mahouka’s magic system can mean both “mind” and “spirit” at the same time.

Though, even if is called “mind” the meaning diverges from brain, that which the author uses a different word for it (脳). “精神” is referred when talking about "thinking" on this volume – and, I presume, in the past ones – and “spirit”.

One example of the usage of this word is in the therm “Mental Interference Type Magic”, which was translated as “Mental” in this case. So, since both things in this context are at least connected, Miyuki’s Cocytus, as an illustration, is a magic that not only acts on the mind of the target, but on its spirit, freezing them. And, accordingly with this universe, any effects on the spirit of someone, will be reflected on its physical body. So, paraphrasing the wikia about Cocytus, “It can also be fathomed as a magic that froze the time of the realm of a target’s soul”.

Given that ambiguity, its meaning will alternate between “mind” and “spirit” based on the context. Though I will try to keep consistency.

Credits

ORIGINAL WORK

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[***Tatsuya & Miyuki \(Colored Illustration\)**](#)

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[***Tatsuya Attacking Minoru**](#)

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Keywords

Gram Demolition -Gram-Cut- 'Gram-Slash'

Non-systemic magic, which is just like ‘Gram Demolition’ or ‘Gram Dispersion’, and it’s classified as counter-magic. It is a variation of ‘Gram Demolition’. It neutralizes magic by ‘cutting’ the magic sequences in the information dimension with a psionic blade.

Because it is able to neutralize magic without hurting the opponent, it has attracted the attention of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department as being ideal for subduing criminal magicians.

Thunder Beast

An arrangement of Zhou Gongjin’s favorite magic, ‘Shadow Beast’, that uses a chemical simulacrum of a beast to attack the opponent. By the addition of lightning magic, it makes it possible to summon a beast wrapped in lightning from a summoning tile. While the beast’s figure is of a virtual image, the electricity on its surface is real, which is charged with high voltage. Because of that, the air that the Thunder Beast passes through will be ionized, thus creating a path for electric current. When combined with lightning magic, it is possible to hit a target without the need of magically converging or inducting the discharge.

Contact Type – Gram Demolition

This magic creates a completely homogeneous layer of high-density psions around the body at the boundary of 50 centimeters, which repels all psion coming from the outside. As if covering the body with ‘Gram Demolition’, it is possible to neutralize any magic directed at the caster.

Tomitsuka Hagane can use this magic due to his predisposition to it. Due to his advanced skill in controlling psions, Tatsuya is also capable of putting this into practice.



Sakurai Minami

Shinsetsu's former [Guardian] candidate. After coming back from Minoru, she now works as Tatsuya and Shinsetsu's maid.

[Remove the parasite
that is possessing
Minami, right now]



Shiba Tatsuya

The older brother of the Shibas. A 3rd year high schooler in the E class. He's quite philosophical, and puts everything into protecting his little sister Miyuki as her [Guardian].



Kudou Minoru

The descendant of the once world's strongest [Teacher], Kudou Retsu. He had potential for magic since birth, and was able to overcome his hardships with the parasites.





Sacrifice Arc

Chapter 1

Sunday, August 4, 2097 AD.

The newest island belonging to the Izu Archipelago was attacked by a foreign armed group.

The island's name was "Miyakijima".

According to the official statement, the armed group that attacked the island was allegedly a mixed group consisting of a USNA navy unit, deceived by a Soviet agent and dispatched by a fake order, plus a saboteur squad formed by the efforts of agents from the NSU right on the territory of the USNA.

Even if it were true, the fact remains that the ships and soldiers belonging to the USNA navy attacked Japanese territory. If this situation goes on as it is, the USNA's reputation, will worsen its relations with not only Japan – the evaluation of the USNA by the international community will also deteriorate to "an untrustworthy nation that treacherously launches surprise attacks on its allies".

First of all, the USNA officially dispatched a high ranking official, the Secretary of Defense, to Japan in order to control this situation... More precisely that was the case, at least officially.

Certainly, reconciliation with the Japanese government was one of the purposes of Secretary of Defense Liam Spencer's visit to Japan, but in truth, that was hardly his main objective. For that matter, it was not Spencer, who had a leading role during this visit to Japan.

Five days after the incident. While the USNA Secretary of Defense and the Prime Minister of Japan were creating a harmonious atmosphere in front of the press, the talks between true protagonists had begun unnoticed behind that main stage.

Friday, August 9th. Early this morning, Tatsuya returned to Tokyo from Miyakijima for the first time in twenty days in order to answer the invitation of the USNA Secretary of Defense's assistant, Jeffrey James.

Two days ago, Tatsuya received a letter from the White House through Lina. To put it better, it was an offer of reconciliation to Tatsuya. At worst, it was an attempt to pull Tatsuya onto the USNA's side and use him.

Tatsuya accepted the USNA's offer. Whether they mean well or not, the implications are still the same. Friendly relationships are of more use. It was the same on Tatsuya's side. Irrespective of Japan's foreign policy, Tatsuya has hit the Great Asian Union and the New Soviet Union with a serious blow, so it's natural to be seen as hostile. If he can build a friendly relationship with the USNA, even if they have an ulterior motive, to him it's a big win.

Tatsuya wrote the reply of acceptance on the spot when he received the letter and had Lina deliver his answer yesterday, on the morning of August 8th. Also, yesterday evening, he received a phone call from Lina saying, "The Secretary of Defense's aid wants to meet with you tomorrow."

As a meeting place, Jeffrey James appointed his room in the same hotel, where the delegation of the Secretary of Defense was staying. It's a fairly high-grade room, though not as luxurious as the suite used by the Secretary himself. This reception indicated the substantial status of Jeffrey James.

Alt. variant

The [area] outside and inside this room was tightly strengthened by guards with/of combat professionals, who looked like former or active members of Special Forces, and each of them was clearly a veteran in their field. However, Tatsuya showed no fear and entered the room while being welcomed to do so.

At that time, no body check was performed. Tatsuya wasn't the only one with confidence. He didn't know whether this was a sign of their confidence in their fighting power or confidence against his position.

"Nice to meet you, my name is Jeffrey James. Please call me JJ. You don't need to use 'Mr.'"

JJ, or Jeffrey James, who invited Tatsuya, welcomed him with a very friendly attitude. Tatsuya didn't feel intimidated despite the fact that he was two meters tall, had wide shoulders, and a thick chest.

“I’m Shiba Tatsuya. I’m fine with only Tatsuya. Needless to say, neither ‘san’, ‘sama’, or ‘dono’ is necessary.”

This kind of familiarity wasn’t something that Tatsuya preferred. However, in this situation, Tatsuya returned the self-introduction in the same style as the opponent.

“Okay, Tatsuya. Thank you for your willingness to accept this invitation on such short notice.”

“It’s only natural for me to visit because otherwise it would take precious time away from the Secretary of Defense’s aide. It’s not a big distance either.”

The expression of JJ subtly changed. Specifically, his right eyebrow went up and down slightly. However, JJ did not let Tatsuya read what kind of feeling it reflected. It looks like he’s thirty years old at best, but maybe he’s actually older. Or is his appearance much older than his actual age?

“I’m sorry for the inconvenience. Tatsuya, do you have any requests for a drink?”

“Then I’ll have coffee, black.”

This time, a clear surprised expression passed JJ’s face. Wasn’t the attitude of making a request without reservation against the stereotypical image of Japanese people? Or was it the daringness that showed that he wasn’t worried about his drink being spiked?

Although it wasn’t what Tatsuya intended, the short time that JJ spent to regain his thoughts also worked for Tatsuya. Coffee for two people arrived, and the conversation resumed in a flat atmosphere where neither party had the initiative.

“Now, Tatsuya. Let’s get into the main subject.”

“JJ, my intentions were stated in the reply that I sent through Miss Shields. Was there anything that was unclear?”

At the invitation of JJ, Tatsuya returned with a light jab.

“No, thank you for your willingness to agree with this offer. To be honest, it was more than we expected.”

JJ responded to Tatsuya’s lines with a lower profile than expected. If such an attitude was taken, Tatsuya couldn’t say anything careless.

Tatsuya was even more cautious and carefully selected his next words.

“I don’t want to antagonize your country. I think this is the individual responsibility of Edward Clark.”

“...Is that what you think of the Dione plan?”

“Yes.”

Tatsuya and JJ watch each other in silence for about 3 seconds.

“That’s good. It was worth coming to Japan just to find out that there was no serious misunderstanding of our question.”

JJ naturally exhaled.

“For me, it was worth it to know that the USNA didn’t have any hostility towards me.”

Tatsuya responded with a ceremonial smile.

“We hope to strengthen our friendship with you.”

Tatsuya urged JJ to continue with his eyes.

“Tatsuya... Would you mind coming to America?”

It is impossible to think of such a suggestion. Tatsuya did not expect that he would make such a bold offer.

“To America?”

Tatsuya asks back without hiding his surprise.

“We will provide the best research environment. And use your wisdom for the nations who love freedom and democracy.”

Contrary to what he had just said, JJ’s tone was not bland.

“You aren’t saying that it’s for the sake of humanity, are you?”

Tatsuya asked JJ, who was giving an impassioned speech, in an amused voice.

“You didn’t like it?”

JJ replied with an uneasy tone. Even though his tone was uneasy, his face had a wide smile.

“No, I think it’s good that your purpose is clear.”

Tatsuya answered JJ's question with a similar look. And at the same time, they erased their smiles and turned their gaze toward each other. Among them, empathy and disgust were born at the same time.

"I am sorry to say that I cannot leave Japan until the project on Miyakijima is complete."

"That's right. That's a shame. For that reason, I'm afraid there's no way."

JJ withdrew quickly after Tatsuya declined.

"So what about the alternative? Would you accept the dispatch of an engineer?"

An alternative was immediately presented. Given the speed, it seemed that this request was the intended one.

"Do you want to send me an engineer? For a training program?"

"Yes. I was wondering if you could provide stellar reactor technology, so I would like to learn not only through data but also hands-on experience."

"Well..."

Tatsuya did not give an immediate answer because he thought that the acceptance of the engineer could be used to infiltrate an operative.

"Okay. I can't decide on my own, but I'll try to make adjustments in that direction."

However, he immediately reconsidered and decided that it would be meaningless to keep out the technicians because the media was allowed interviews.

"Thank you very much. If you make any decisions, please let me know at this address."

Saying so, JJ presented a business card-sized piece of paper with a long string and color code printed on it.

Tatsuya read the string and understood that it was a highly encrypted virtual private line. This was no ordinary network. Probably only open to limited agents of the Department of Defense.

"Is that okay?"

Tatsuya unintentionally asked JJ.

"What is it?"

But when asked back, he realized that it was a meaningless question.

“No, I understand.”

“I look forward to a positive reply.”

After this, Tatsuya talked with JJ for about five minutes and left his room.



The discussion between Tatsuya and Jeffrey James ended at 10 am. Tatsuya left the hotel used by the Secretary of Defense and returned to his home in Chofu.

The house was being maintained by home automation while Tatsuya and company were away. However, when he came home, the expected dust for a vacant house was completely absent. It must have been because Miyuki and Minami, who came home ahead of him, did their best to clean up.

“Welcome home, Onii-sama.”

Immediately after he opened the door of the room, Miyuki's voice greeted him.

“I'm back.”

Tatsuya made eye contact with Miyuki in order to respond, then lowered his gaze to remove his shoes. There he noticed that there were already three pairs of shoes resting on the entrance.

“Lina is coming?”

“Yes. Because it is almost time for lunch.”

Up until this point, Miyuki answered with a serious expression,

“She already cleaned her room? That's pretty neat, coming from Lina.”

Miyuki couldn't stand Tatsuya's lines and gave a small laugh.

“Onii-sama, you're not very good at listening to people.”

“Yeah... so what is it really like?”

“Lunch is coming soon.”

“I see.”

Tatsuya too, laughed a little as if he was caught.

“I’ll help you later.”

Miyuki added that he should follow along with a smile on his face.

After having lunch together with Miyuki, Minami, and Lina. The four of them headed to Yakumo Temple “Kyuuchouji”.

The new four-seater air-car was parked in the temple’s parking lot, and they climbed the stairs leading to the mountain gate.

There was no rough welcome today. Considering the purpose of Tatsuya’s visit, Yakumo must have weighed the situation. From the precincts, a tingling sign could be heard.

Beyond the stairs, Yakumo was waiting on the other side of the mountain gate.

“Hi there.”

“Master, thank you very much for welcoming us.”

Tatsuya bowed in a formal manner. He was truly thankful, not pretending at all.

“Don’t worry, the barrier would have reacted even if I didn’t come here.”

However, when he heard Yakumo’s words, Tatsuya blew away the magic without courtesy. His facial expression tightened rigidly. No, it may be more appropriate to describe “severely” than “rigidly” and “strengthened” rather than “tightened”.

“Master. That’s...”

“Let’s talk about the details inside.”

Yakumo intercepted Tatsuya’s lines and guided the four to the soubou, not the main hall.

Yakumo and the other four sat down on the cushions laid inside the room. Yakumo was in Goza, while Tatsuya, Miyuki, and Minami in Seiza. At first, Lina tried to sit

properly, but after moving her hips, she opened her toes slightly outside so as not to stand out.

When everyone sat down, the windows were closed from the outside. Tatsuya still did not know whether a disciple closed it or it was due to a technique. Since there was no sign of people or magic, it may be a mechanical device contrary to the old-fashioned appearance of the building.

The room, which was almost airtight, became dark in spite of it still being noon. However, it was not hot and humid. Rather, there was a draft of cold air. It was strange for the current season. The possibility of using air conditioners without wind is not zero, but the four visitors felt that they were not being mechanically cooled.

Candles were lit all over the wall. Obviously, the ignition was the work of Yakumo's magic. The smell of perfume oil drifting in the twilight was different from what Tatsuya and Miyuki had previously experienced. It must be something that helps build the barrier, but Tatsuya felt that the barrier was a magical "field" keeping the inside in rather than keeping the outside out.

"Now..."

Yakumo's voice snapped Tatsuya out of his reverie. He had been distracted by the barrier.

"First of all, let me see. Sakurai Minami-kun, come forward."

"Minami."

"Yes."

At the prompt of Tatsuya, Minami, who was sitting on the right side of the group, headed for Yakumo. Waiting for Minami to settle down, Yakumo formed the hand seal. Tatsuya and the other two held their breath and stared at Minami and Yakumo.

The priests' quarters were filled with tension. Sweat ran down the forehead of Miyuki and Lina. Tatsuya kept his poker face, but his hands were tightly closed.

About five minutes passed in silence.

Yakumo stopped the hand seal and exhaled a little.

The tense air inside the room loosened a bit.

"In conclusion, I don't think there's any need to worry about it for the time being."

Yakumo announced in a tone with a lack of sense of crisis. If you're really worried, that's fine, but there's no issue with her "immediate" condition. Moreover, I do not understand the meaning of "time being". Is it okay to keep it as it is, or is it likely that it will worsen even if it is fine now?

The answers for both are so different that they can be called opposites.

"....."

"....."

"....."

Miyuki, Lina, and the concerned party, Minami silently looked back at Yakumo.

"...Master."

And only Tatsuya raised the question.

"Even if you didn't ask it, I would explain it properly."

Under the reproachful gaze of Tatsuya and Miyuki, Yakumo smiled.

"It is the subdued parasite that holds Minami-kun's magic skill under control. By sinking the parasite that was sealed into the depths of the consciousness, you can say that it's barring the magic calculation area."

"Subdued parasites.....?"

Tatsuya wondered whether such a thing is possible.

"Can you do it too?"

Yakumo responded by saying, "What are you saying?"

"The basic principle is the same as for "seal spheres". It does confine it, so it cannot move freely. The technique used on the parasites possessed by Minami-kun is more skillful."

"Sensei, aren't you worried about the seal breaking?"

Miyuki asked in a pleading tone.

"It's not just a seal... This parasite is in a state of being bound by the command "Do nothing, stay there. Don't move". Unlike the seal that forces it to confine itself by

ignoring the demon's will, I think it's okay as long as the controlling subordination relationship continues."

This answer was not for what Miyuki asked for.

"How long will this relationship last?"

There is magic that causes irreversible changes, but there is no magic that has a permanent effect. For example, Miyuki's "Cocytus" irreversibly inactivates the mind, but does not continue to force the frozen state.

"When the effect is about to expire, I think the caster will come to fix it."

"...Does that mean that it won't hold for much longer?"

Miyuki nervously asked.

"So Minoru will come after Minami?"

Before Yakumo answered Miyuki's question, Tatsuya asked another question.

"I think that's what he intends to do. Once the seal is released, the parasite will start eroding Minami-kun. If he planned to allow that to happen, he wouldn't have used such a troublesome technique from the start. Otherwise, wouldn't it be better for Kudou Minoru's purpose to disregard Minami-kun's will and fully make her a parasite."

"What is Minoru's purpose?"

Lina directed a question to nobody in particular. No one answered it.

Tatsuya and Miyuki knew that Minoru said, "I just want to cure Minami's disease." At first, they both believed it. However, now Tatsuya and Miyuki suspected that Minoru's true intentions were different.

And, in Miyuki's thoughts, she was afraid that was also "What Minami truly desired", and Tatsuya was afraid that Miyuki would be hurt when Minoru's true intentions were revealed.



After returning to their home in Chofu from Yakumo's Temple, Tatsuya and his companions, including Lina, were gathering together in the living room with a serious expression.

"Um, there is no problem in my daily life so far. So you don't have to worry about me..."

Perhaps she couldn't stand the heavy atmosphere, so Minami quietly broke the silence.

"...There isn't a magician in the Yotsuba family who is good at Non-Systematic magic?"

Ignoring Minami's words, Lina asked Tatsuya and Miyuki.

"That kind of magic is the speciality of the Tsukuba family, but if it's something that Sensei can't handle... I don't think even the head of the Tsukuba family nor Yuka, the next head, can manage to do something."

Miyuki weakly shook her head.

After the diagnosis, Tatsuya and the others naturally asked Yakumo whether he could remove the parasite inside Minami. However, Yakumo's answer was not good.

Yakumo is a magician who specializes in Ancient Magic. Unlike the "Traditionalists school" –who are only "traditionalists" in the name–, which Tatsuya confronted when he pursued Zhou Gongjin, he had inherited the real tradition as a practitioner.

Since ancient times, the most important mission of magic users was to protect the people from the demons and spirits. For that reason, Yakumo had mastered magics of a high level that defeats demons. Even then, Yakumo could not remove the parasite from Minami.

According to his words, the parasite inside Minami is sealed. No, is it more nuanced to say that "a parasite is sealed inside of Minami"? Yakumo explained that the parasite is sealed using Minami as a vessel, and the sealed parasite serves as a lid to suppress the activity of Minami's magic calculation area.

The procedure necessary to permanently remove the parasite is to remove the seal in Minami and then eradicate it, but at the release stage, there is a risk of erosion by the exposed parasite. Parasites are submerged in an area deep inside the mind, between the conscious and the unconscious, and if erosion starts, Minami's mind will inevitably suffer great damage, even if assimilation could be avoided.

In Yakumo's conclusion, the technique of submission rather than repulsion is necessary to take out the parasite. In other words, it is a technique to subdue and

manipulate the parasite. I can only destroy parasites or seal them. Yakumo smiled bitterly as he said so.

“...Is there no choice but to find Minoru and dispel the technique?”

Neither Tatsuya, Miyuki, nor Lina had expected Minami’s dismayed response.

“After all, is there only that?”

“But how will you find him? Aren’t there no clues about Minoru’s whereabouts?”

Miyuki nodded to Tatsuya’s words, and Lina pointed out the problem.

She had no intention to be mean to Minami. On the contrary, she was really worried about Minami, so she could not stop herself from voicing what she was feeling anxious about.

“There are not many places where Minoru could escape to.”

“What do you mean?”

Unable to understand what Tatsuya was trying to say, Lina asked with a big question mark above her head. Miyuki also couldn’t hide her confusion.

Of course, Tatsuya did not waste time in this situation.

“No matter how good he is with magic, Minoru is still a second-year high school boy. Because he was often ill, he had no opportunity to expand his personal connections outside of the school.”

“But, Onii-sama. Didn’t Minoru absorb the knowledge of Zhou Gongjin?”

“That’s it.”

Nodding for Miyuki’s counterargument, Tatsuya continued, “That’s why”.

“I believe that the escape route that Minoru has chosen will be limited to what Zhou Gongjin knows.”

“In particular?”

Lina doesn’t know much about Zhou Gongjin. Naturally, she recalled the question, “What kind of person is Zhou Gongjin, and under what circumstances did Minoru get that knowledge?” However, Lina, who presumed that it would be a complicated story if

she asked about it, thought that there was no need for urgency. So she held back her curiosity and only asked Tatsuya for the conclusion.

“The Far East part of Asia and North America are places where Zhou Gongjin has connections.”

“Isn’t that too wide?”

Lina looked dumbfounded.

That was a good point, but Tatsuya didn’t look like he was concerned by it.

“The criminal syndicate, No Head Dragon, who had been in Far East Asia two years ago, was crushed by the collaboration between the Japanese Police Forces and the Great Asian Union. In addition, I’ve heard that the route that was used as an escape route was in a ruined state due to being excessively exposed.”

“You don’t think that East Asia is where he’s escaped to, right?”

“Yes.”

Tatsuya nodded toward Miyuki.

“Minami, tell me one thing.”

Tatsuya looked at Minami, who had until then been ignored by Tatsuya and the others.

“Yes, what can I do?”

Minami didn’t show any displeasure. Actually, he didn’t remember her showing any signs of displeasure since she came back. She dutifully responded.

“Wasn’t there a parasite companion with Minoru when you were taken out of Japan?”

“...Yes.”

This is the first time that Tatsuya questioned Minami about when she escaped. Up until now, even if Minami felt the urge to confess, Tatsuya and Miyuki evaded the topic. They didn’t let Minami talk.

“Do you know who he really is? Just the name is fine.”

“Minoru called him “Raymond”.”

Minami replied promptly to Tatsuya’s question, without pausing to remember.

“Was he a caucasian young man, fair-haired with blue eyes that is refined, but gives a childish impression?”

“That’s right. Do you know who he is, Tatsuya-sama?”

“Onii-sama, that is...”

Without answering Miyuki and Minami, Tatsuya resumed the explanation.

“East Asia is no longer a candidate for his getaway. North America, especially California, is the region where Jiedo Heigu, the boss of Zhou Gong, was hiding until half a year ago. And now, it is certain that the American parasite will accompany Minoru, who fled the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands as Minami has told me. I think the most likely hiding place for Minoru is the USNA West Coast.”

“I think it’s still too wide... How can we find him?”

Lina, who knew the size of her home country, asked in a tone that didn’t hide her insecurity of “is it really possible to find him?”

“I think it’s too wide for an individual to search for. I also think it would be difficult to fully mobilize the information network of the Yotuba family. But what about the USNA federal government? I think it’s not impossible for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) or the CIA counterterrorism center to find a parasite that has been smuggled into their area.”

Lina frowned lightly at Tatsuya’s answer to her question.

“It wouldn’t be difficult if you motion the FBI’s National Security Department.”

Apparently Tatsuya’s use of “not impossible” seems to have been an understatement for Lina.

“So? Ask Senator Curtis to “look for Minoru?” Or maybe I should request the secretarial office to ask the Secretary of Defense?”

Tatsuya grinned a bit to Lina’s slightly helpful lines.

“The White House dispatched me. Let’s ask for a task immediately.”

What was ironic to Tatsuya is that in the USNA presidential office’s letter to him said, “Lending Colonel Angelina Shields for free and indefinitely.”

Lina left the USNA army and came to Japan. She will later be naturalized in Japan. In a sense, this is a “peaceful asylum” and it can be said that USNA had let a nationally

certified Strategic-Class Magician escape. However, there's no way that you can accept such a blow to your honour. Therefore, the USNA government and the army received the resignation from Major Angie Sirius, but they did not allow Angelina Shields to retire. Lina decided to argue that Angie Sirius' true identity's rank, "Lieutenant Colonel" Angelina Shields was the result of her being put into a secret work mission in Japan.

And that secret mission is "surveillance and placation of Tatsuya Shiba, a Strategic-Class Magician," which appeared as "free of charge and unlimited loan".

Of course, Tatsuya wasn't able to reveal the underlying circumstances. The only thing that he had been told by the USNA government was the "grant/indefinite loan" part. The rest was just Tatsuya's reasoning. But right now, it didn't matter if his reasoning was right or wrong.

"Lina, ask the federal government to search for Minoru."

"Okay. Okay. I was lent to you, right?"

The fact that one of the people present who acted as a messenger was enough.

Waiting for the morning on the eastern coast of the United States, Lina dared to call Colonel Balance's Pentagon phone directly and didn't use any special code.

In a normal, non-encrypted call meant "for the military", Lina asked Balance to search for Minoru.

◇◇◇

"Minoru. It looks like the federal government is starting to move."

It was still early in the morning on the west coast, but Minoru and Raymond were awake.

No, it would be better to say that they were still awake. It seems that the vampires of today have a routine of going to sleep in the morning and waking at dusk.

"The federal government? Not the army?"

Opening the window curtains on the second floor a little bit, Minoru, who was watching the city that had just begun to come to life, addressed Raymond's voice.

They didn't have to speak aloud, but parasites were not the only ones in their hideout. Rather, there were also human magicians. The main reason why they tried to talk with their voice was because it was inherently natural to both of them, but it was also to not raise unnecessary suspicion from the humans around them.

The two were in a corner near the harbor in Los Angeles. Minoru and Raymond were concealed at a hidden base of a radical organization made up of magicians.

"It was only the military that received the request, but I think the FBI and CIA will also move."

"Isn't the CIA in charge of foreign affairs"

Raymond shook his head with a smile to Minoru, whose head was tilted sideways.

"When dealing with terrorists, there is no distinction between domestic or international measures."

"So we are terrorists? Well... I guess that can't be helped."

Immediately before coming here, Minoru had wiped out one of the Federation bases. Although the USNA military believes that Tatsuya was responsible for the destruction of the Pearl and Hermes base, it was Minoru who killed all the remaining officers at the base. Looking back on this fact, there is no denying that he was a terrorist.

"Tatsuya requested the search. It was much faster than you predicted."

Minoru frowned at Raymond's point. It was not an expression of discomfort, but an expression that was worried about bad things unexpectedly happening.

"So what will you do? We've only been here for half a month, but with the FBI and the CIA, I think it's only a matter of time before they find out."

"I will go back to Japan."

Raymond's eyes widened at Minoru's answer.

"Isn't it dangerous? I'm sure that Tatsuya is waiting."

"I have to settle this."

There was a firm determination in the eyes of Minoru. Raymond understood that it was impossible to have a conversion without using telepathy.

"Then, I'll go too."

Instead of persuading, Raymond said so in a tone that lacked seriousness.

“What are you saying!? I have to go back to Japan because I need to do that. It’s pretty early, but I intended to return home eventually.”

Minoru changed his complexion and looked at Raymond with serious eyes.

“I have a reason to go back. Raymond, you don’t have to risk it.”

“Is it because of Minami’s treatment?”

Raymond’s light tone did not change.

“Didn’t I say it? My desire is to see the story of you two until the end.

For that reason, I don’t regret this life.”

Chapter 2

August 10th, the day after the private meeting with USNA Secretary of Defense assistant, Jeffrey James.

About Minami's case, the USNA authorities were asked to search for Minoru. For now, all that there was to do was wait.

Tatsuya, who thought it would be too rushed to return to Miyakijima today, was working on establishing an industrial manufacturing method for the magical Relic for storage of magic sequences in a laboratory in the basement of the building, which also served as the Tokyo headquarters of the Yotsuba family.

It was about 11 o'clock in the morning, three hours since he began working, when Miyuki called from the top floor by the indoor phone.

"There was a phone call from Honoka just now."

When Tatsuya asked her what she needed, Miyuki cut him off. From Miyuki's expression, the phone call did not seem to be about bad news.

"The Defense Force will assist in the Monolith Code exchange battle."

It was good news, but it was a bit surprising. To be clear, Tatsuya felt like he almost showed it in his face.

Did the Armed Forces suddenly change their attitudes because they learned that Tatsuya had contacted senior USNA government officials? Are they afraid that he would turn over to America?

Tatsuya thought it was ridiculous. It would be uncomfortable if he thought it would be so simple for him to change camps just by being murmured a bit of sweet words, and it would be even more displeasing if the Defense Force thought that he would be cheerful about this.

"I think it's good news. If we can start preparing now, it looks like everything will be ready by the end of the month."

However, Tatsuya did not express his thoughts, and gave the camera a suitable smile for the situation.

“Yes. So I also want to go and help with the preparation.”

“Are you going to attend school?”

“Yes. Shouldn’t I...?”

“Of course I don’t care. Will you go now?”

The Miyuki on the screen was changing into a uniform.

“I planned to do that.”

“Okay, I’ll be back to my room soon.”

Tatsuya would naturally accompany Miyuki.

Miyuki understood on the spot what he meant.

“No, Lina will come to school with me. It will be better if Onii-sama doesn’t go out too much.”

“...Really...”

Miyuki’s remark was logical. It was still only six days after the defense battle at Miyakijima. If he carelessly went out to town, he would be shamelessly hounded by self-proclaimed journalists.

“I don’t think you need to be worried because I’ll go to school by car instead of by a cabinet.”

“Okay. Then please do so.”

This building was the Tokyo headquarters of the Yotsuba family. Even if Tatsuya didn’t drive, there was always a driver for the next head, Miyuki, available.

“Make sure to call when you are on your way home.”

“Understood. Off I go.”

It had been less than a week since Tatsuya’s message to the world that he had the power to fight against enemy nations. It would be a nuisance to others, rather than himself, to go to school in this situation. It was a rational decision to avoid following along, and he knew that Miyuki was not evading him.

So it was ridiculous to think of her “distancing away from her brother.”

In his head, he understood when he was being stupid.

◇◇◇

“Hey, Miyuki. I don’t know the details, but what was canceled and what was decided in the first place?”

Inside the car, heading for First High, Lina asked Miyuki.

Lina returned to Japan in late June. By that time, it was already decided that the Nine Schools Competition would be cancelled.

She studied in Japan from January to March last time she came. Lina didn’t know about the Nine Schools Competition. It’s not surprising that she did not understand the situation.

“The event that was canceled was “Nine Schools Competition” and the official name is “Nationwide Magic High School Athletics Competition”. It was held every year at this season, but it was canceled this year.”

“Why?”

“Do you remember the attack on a Great Asian Union base in the beginning of May by an armed guerrilla?”

“The Niger Delta Liberation Army conducted the attack, right? I remember.”

Lina was still a part of the military then and remembered the incident well.

“The magic used in that attack, “Active Air Mine”, was developed by Onii-sama and was first shown at the Nine Schools Competition two years ago.”

“Eh. Just because of that?”

Lina was not surprised. She knew that, for Tatsuya, to develop one or two new tactical-class magics was a piece of cake.

“It was said that a competition that spreads dangerous magical techniques used by armed guerrillas is dangerous, so it should stop. It was during the time when the inhumane massacre by large-scale magic was loudly criticized. Fearing public backlash, this year’s Nine Schools Competition was canceled.”

“What’s that? He is not to blame! The person who used the magic is responsible for the deaths. No, the one who ordered the use of the magic is, and Tatsuya has no responsibility in the first place. I’ve heard that it was military officers of the Great Asian Union who were killed and injured in the first place. I don’t want to side with guerrillas, but it’s weird to treat it as if it was a civilian victim.”

Lina was indignant as if it was an attack on herself. No, “as if it was”, as a Strategic-Class Magician it’s not like the feeling was strange to her.

“I think it’s exactly as Lina said, but the public opinion is emotional.”

Miyuki explained that it was not something that can be reasoned with.

Lina could read between the lines.

“...So, instead of the canceled Nine Schools Competition, there was a talk about us having a Monolith Code exhibition game between the nine schools. I asked for cooperation from various places, but it wasn’t going well. Until yesterday.”

The last word was in an ironic tone. It eloquently told the innermost thoughts of Miyuki. The Defense Army’s change of mind could not have been more displeasing for Miyuki.

“Did the situation suddenly change this morning? Hey, that’s...”

“Yes, maybe that’s the way it is.”

Miyuki nodded at Lina, even though the latter hadn’t finished her sentence.

With that look, Lina realized that Miyuki thought the same as herself. The two shared the speculation that “The change in attitude of the Defense Forces must have been influenced by the meeting between Tatsuya and USNA Secretary of Defense attached Jeffrey James.”



Even though it was summer vacation, and a Saturday, First High was crowded with many students. The news that it was decided to hold an exhibition game in the place of the canceled Nine Schools Competition must have been widely spread in a short time. The students were so disappointed about the cancellation of the Nine Schools

Competition that they could not stand still knowing of a come-back of the games, even if it was just Monolith Code.

Because of this situation, many students witnessed Miyuki and Lina going to school in a high-class sedan. And no one looked at them in a strange way. There was no longer a single high school student who didn't know who Miyuki was.

In their gaze towards her, there was not fear but acclaim and worship.

“Miyuki-Onnee-sama! Oh, thank you for coming here.”

...Although it was rare for her to have enthusiastic blunt ones.

“I heard that you had great success the other day! But, did you get hurt? Are you not overdoing it?”

“Izumi-chan, calm down a little. I’m neither injured nor forcing myself.”

Miyuki was already familiar with Izumi’s attitude and didn’t stiffen her face. Though she couldn’t help but reflexively pull back a little.

“Izumi, to suddenly hug the President like that... I’m surprised.”

Kazumi, Izumi’s twin sister, reproached the excited Izumi.

“Guh... Kasumi-chan, it hurts! It hurts!”

“Get away already.”

Kasumi pulled her collar from behind, and Izumi reluctantly let go of Miyuki.

“Miyuki-sempai also came because of the Monolith Code?”

But she wouldn’t leave. Now Izumi was like a puppy who shakes its tail hard and clings to its owner after a long absence.

“I hope that I can also help.”

As long as it was within moderation, Miyuki didn’t think the adoration was bad. She answered Izumi with a smiling expression.

“Is Honoka in the Student Council room?”

“No, Mitsui-senpai is at the club headquarters.”

“Thank you. Lina, let’s go.”

Miyuki called Lina, who had been left aside and headed for the club room building where the club headquarters was located.

“I’ll go with you.”

Izumi tagged along with her.

Lina shrugged her shoulders, saying, “oh dear,” while maintaining some distance. When she suddenly looked at her side, Kasumi was there doing the same gesture. They, Lina and Kasumi, had formed a relationship based on empathy.



When Miyuki arrived at the club activities headquarters, Honoka was just about to leave. It looked like it wasn't a mistake to head over at the last minute.

"Miyuki!? Is the matter in your house ok?"

"Yes. There already wasn't much to do from the beginning."

Miyuki replied to Honoka's words with a faint bitter smile that could only be understood by one who had seen it.

"Is that so? I thought you were very busy."

Surprisingly, Honoka replied

"Tatsuya-sama is busy. I don't say so, but maybe more than me."

"Is that so....."

Honoka let out a disappointed mutter.

Miyuki could understand that feeling very well.

Tatsuya was indeed busy. Miyuki felt really lonely as he spent less and less time with her.

However, the one who has stopped Tatsuya from coming to school today was Miyuki.

"More than that, Honoka. Isn't it good that now there is a chance to hold the Inter-School game?"

She glossed over the feelings of guilt by changing the topic.

"Yeah, that's right..."

"Did something happen?"

Miyuki tilted her head as Honoka beat around the bush.

"Somehow, it was sudden."

Shizuku walked up from behind Honoka and spoke. It's no wonder why Shizuku was here. She is a Monolith Code freak, which she admitted herself to others. If she wasn't interested, she wouldn't even try to get involved in the preparation for the Inter-School Matches.

"Sudden?"

This time, Lina, who was behind Miyuki, stepped forward and asked. Perhaps she was looking for an opportunity to participate in the conversation.

“After receiving the advice from Tatsuya-san, Igarashi-kun immediately asked a favor through an alumni in the Army’s public relations department. He had been complaining until yesterday that the lack of response wasn’t good.”

“He was suddenly contacted from the other side this morning.”

“By the Defense Forces?”

Miyuki asked the question while hiding the fact that she had an idea of the circumstances behind Shizuku’s words, who continued Honoka’s line.

“Yeah, them.”

“They want to sponsor the Monolith Code Interleague Play to the same level as the usual Nine Schools Competition.”

Shizuku nodded and Honoka added the details.

“Did Igarashi-kun say that?”

Miyuki voiced her suspicion.

“I was there when he got the call.”

Honoka’s answer was probably unique to the modern age when video calls are popular. Unlike the era of voice calls, where one-on-one was common, video calls allow people in the room to hear the conversation without using earphones or headphones.

“I was surprised.”

Honoka’s eyes widened as she tried to recreate that moment.

“I was too.”

Lina called Miyuki’s attention by pulling on her sleeve.

“Hey, that’s...”

Miyuki interrupted Lina’s whisper with “as I thought” in a low voice.

Honoka, Shizuku, Izumi, and Kasumi were aware of the exchange, but none of them inquired.

“Miyuki-senpai, Lina-senpai, you haven’t had lunch yet, right?”

Instead of asking, Izumi changed the topic.

“Why don’t we discuss the details while eating?”

“Yeah.”

Miyuki immediately responded to Izumi’s concern.

“Let’s go to the cafeteria.”

“It’s open?”

Lina asked Kasumi instead of Izumi, who was glued to Miyuki.

“The menu is smaller than usual, but it’s open.”

Despite being spoken to suddenly, Kasumi immediately returned an answer.

There were a lot of students in the cafeteria despite the summer vacation. However, it may not be surprising considering the time in the afternoon and the large number of people coming and going in the school.

It’s been almost two and a half years since Miyuki entered the school. High school students would get used to the situation.

However, even today, the students held their breath out of admiration and stared at Miyuki the moment they saw her. Lina followed after her and also received admiration as someone who was comparable in beauty.

It was Miyuki and Lina who were the ones who got used to it. Ignoring the natural shower of gazes, they picked a lunch tray cooked by the automatic machine at the serving table, then moved to a table slightly behind the center of the school cafeteria.

At the table, sat a group of male students which had just stood up with trays.

Immediately after looking back, a boy with a particularly good physique changed his facial expression to say “Oh?”

“Miyuki-san.”

“Saijou-kun.”

Miyuki and Leo addressed each other at the same time.

“Saijou-kun is also helping with the Inter-School Matches?”

“I too... I mean... No. Since Miyuki-san is the President, it’s only natural that I help out.”

After talking to himself, Leo was convinced,

“Mikihiko and Erika are also coming.”

“Erika too?”

“Does that woman have a love for the school?”

Miyuki leaked an elegant small laugh, then said nothing more.

“I wonder if I can tell Erika that.”

“Hey, Lina, don’t do that.”

Leo returned to Lina, who had been standing on the side in a relaxed manner. Despite being away for over a year, Lina was already accepted as a “colleague” among Tatsuya’s circle of friends.

“Then, I will see you later. I presume Miyuki-san will also attend the preparatory meeting.”

“Yes, I plan to do so.”

“See you.”

Miyuki smiled a little and Lina waved her hand lightly.

The other response was not from Leo, but his companion.

Lina, who was seated, looked at Leo’s back as he was leaving and asked, “What is the preparatory meeting?”

“Today’s agenda is player selection.”

It was Izumi who returned the answer. Of course, the other four did not ignore Lina, she just responded the fastest.

“It hadn’t been decided yet, right?”

Miyuki’s mutter was her soliloquy rather than asking why.

“I didn’t know if such a meeting could really be held.”

But perhaps she interpreted it as a question, Honoka replied from the side. The seats were arranged in the order of Izumi, Miyuki, and Honoka on the aisle side, and Kasumi, Lina, and Shizuku on the other side.

“Did you postpone the selection?”

Lina’s voice had a critical nuance.

“I was practicing as a temporary member.”

Shizuku argued that she interpreted it as “Is it okay to not practice?”

“Isn’t that member okay?”

“The Monolith Code is three people per team. Two or more teams are required to practice.”

“Oh, that’s right. Then you decide the regular from that.”

Lina’s guess was natural, but Honoka didn’t shake her head.

“It’s not decided that way. Some students couldn’t participate in the practice due to various reasons.”

The faint gaze directed at Lina swayed toward Miyuki.

“And Tatsuya?”

Someone would easily deduce the meaning of that line of sight, even if they weren’t Lina.

“Unfortunately, Tatsuya can’t do it. He’s busy.”

Miyuki responded to Honoka’s struggle with a little loneliness.

“Oh... that’s right.”

Honoka dropped her shoulders because her expectations were clearly denied.

“First, I think students from other schools would disagree if that happened.”

“Yeah.”

“I think so, too.”

Shizuku and Kasumi continued to agree with Miyuki's point, even though it was probably against Miyuki's personal feelings.

"It can't be helped, Miyuki-senpai. Shiba-senpai is now one of the strongest magicians in the world. Shiba-senpai's name has grown too big to compete in a high school competition."

For Izumi, it was in her nature to be extremely unwilling to praise Tatsuya. However, for her, comforting Miyuki's heart was the priority.

"I know. Thank you, Izumi-chan."

"Ah! You waste your words on me..."

No one disturbed Izumi, who was immersed in her own world. Leaving her to Miyuki, Lina asked Honoka and Shizuku about the details of the Inter-School Matches. From there, the conversation developed to a hot topic with Kasumi about last year's Nine School Competition.

◇◇◇

Miyuki and the other five returned to the Clubs Committee headquarters just before the player selection meeting for the Monolith Code Inter-School Matches was about to begin.

The steering committee is Igarashi Yousuke, the head of the Clubs Committee. The Student Council secretary, Mitsuya Shiina, was sitting next to Igarashi to take minutes.

Among the members of the conference were Mikihiko, Leo, and there was also Erika, a surprising attendee, as Leo said. She noticed Miyuki's gaze and returned it with a light wave of her hand.

"President Shiba, I'm sorry for making you go out of your way."

Igarashi was feeling completely embarrassed after seeing Miyuki

"I can't be indifferent as the Student Council President. Please start regardless of me."

"Ye- Yes, that's right."

Igarashi announced the beginning of the meeting, as prompted by Miyuki.

“Before we start a concrete discussion, I have one thing to tell you.”

After declaring the opening, the chairman, Igarashi, made a statement.

“As a result of discussions with representatives of the other schools earlier, in these Inter-School Matches, the blood relatives of the Ten Master Clans will be asked to decline participation in this competition.”

There was a stir. But it soon subsided. There are no particular questions or protests. All the participants were convinced with the face that “it can’t be helped”.

“Please, bring up anyone who you want to submit as a candidate.”

No candidacy is recruited. It had been decided in advance that only recommendations of others will be made.

A hand went up immediately.

Even though it was a provisional team, they had already practiced many times and the candidates had been narrowed down to some extent.

The first name to be mentioned was Mikihiko, who also participated as a player last year. Next, Igarashi, who is the steering committee, is recommended. He may be timid, but his ability was recognized by all students. It’s just that he’d never had a chance to play an active role in the school because there are other students in his class and seniors who are even more amazing.

The next name was Morisaki. For a while after enrolling, his misunderstandings and fruitless effort stood out, but from the beginning of the summer vacation of his first year, he had the bad habit of disappearing, and at the same time, he began to demonstrate a proper merit of technical magic handling.

Now, even if it is inferior in capacity and interference power, regardless if his judgement is good or bad, he has won the reputation of being one of the most skilled magicians who can make up for it with techniques and produce more results. Apart from whether the evaluation is good or not.

“Igarashi, may I say something?”

Morisaki, who received the recommendation and the voice to support it, raised his hand and stood up.

“I’m glad I got the recommendation, but I’m not fit to represent First High.”

There were voices saying that is not the case. However, Morisaki did not back down.

“I know my strength well. I’m not strong enough.”

“Are there any other students you would like to recommend?”

Morisaki didn’t hesitate when asked by Igarashi.

“I think Saijou is more suitable than me.”

“Me!?”

Leo pointed at himself and made an out-of-tune voice. The two of them had a dispute as soon as they entered school, but now there is no feud between Leo and Morisaki. That said, Morisaki’s mouth came up with his name as a player candidate, which was unexpected for Leo.

“Saijou has a track record in the rookie competition. He is also accustomed to working with Yoshida. I think he can get better results than me.”

“No, wait a minute. The rookie battle was set up by Tatsuya. I can’t use anything other than hardening magic, so I can’t fight well with the rules of the Monolith Code.”

Leo wasn’t being humble and was seriously declining.

“You could have fought two years ago. The problem of magic that you are good at can be solved by using the same device.”

However, Morisaki was not convinced. He seriously considered Leo to be the better player.

“No, it was a surprise attack that the other party didn’t anticipate, so it worked. If someone knew I would participate, every school would take measures.”

“Still, I think Saijou is more suitable than me.”

Neither Leo nor Morisaki showed any sign of giving up.

Igarashi intervened there.

“Saijou-kun and Morisaki-kun seem to have strong reasons. I understand what you’re saying, but I wonder if you can ignore it and participate.”

“Leo, I know your strengths and weaknesses well. On top of that, I think you have the ability to play an active role as a national team player. It’s an opinion that everyone who is gathered here surely shares.”

This was said by Aizu, the Head of the Kenjutsu Club. Apparently he also agreed with Leo’s participation.

“No, wait. I don’t hate the idea, but if you can ignore the part of the magic being unsuitable, there are better candidates than me.”

“Who does Sajou-kun recommend?”

Leo responded to Igarashi’s question without hesitation.

“Erika.”

“Heh!? Me?”

Erika’s surprise was beyond Leo. It was just like “a pigeon getting hit by a peashooter”.

“I hate to admit it, but Erika is much more accustomed to fighting than I am. Unlike me, who can’t make ranged attacks, she has the ability to shoot non-systematic slashes. It’s really annoying, but she is definitely more powerful than me.”

Leo was really serious about repeating “annoying” twice.

“But she is a girl.”

“What’s wrong with her being a girl?”

Leo asked in response to Igarashi’s common-sense counterargument.

“It is wrong...”

Igarashi probably didn’t expect such a question to come back. Leo repeats the words while he is stuck.

“The Monolith Code is a competition where direct contact is prohibited. It’s not strange even if girls participate. Isn’t it a rule of the Nine Schools Competition that only boys can participate?”

“That’s right. The university does have a women’s division.”

“By the way. I do see mixed-gender games in the States.”

Shizuku and Lina backed up Leo's point with evidence.

It should be noted that Lina's point "in the States" is "in America's military training", but that didn't need to be explained here.

"Igarashi-kun, is it okay?"

Mikihiko, being well-behaved, raised his hand.

"By all means."

"There is a women's division in the Nine Schools Competition. Women also have the opportunity to participate, but due to lack of time for these Inter-School Matches, only the Monolith Code could be prepared."

Prompted by Igarashi, Mikihiko participated in the discussion.

"Although it is Inter-School Matches instead of the canceled Nine Schools Competition, girls will be locked out according to the conventional rules. I'm not a virtuous person, but I was worried about it."

The participants of the meeting nodded their heads to the words of Mikihiko. Many of the boys, as well as the girls attending the conference, showed similar gestures.

"I think Erika's participation is good in terms of ensuring that girls have the opportunity to participate in exchange events organized by students themselves."

Due to Mikihiko's point, the atmosphere of the place changed. There were many voices saying that they were in favor of it.

"..... Chiba-san, how about you? As Saijou said, physical contact is prohibited, but the Monolith Code is a sport with many injuries. There was no women's event in the Nine Schools Competition. I think that was taken into consideration."

Erika, who was asked by Igarashi, stood up and looked around once.

"I don't like the hand-to-hand combat ban rule, though."

With that said, Erika gave a fearless smile.

"Then?"

"I don't mind entering. With the other four, of course."

"The other four?"

“Yoshida-kun.”

Erika called Mikihiko by surname instead of “Miki”.

“Igarashi-kun, Morisaki-kun, and the idiot there.”

“Hey, you! What the hell!”

Leo bites at the timing when it shows. He’ll be offended, but it’s like a comedian duo that has been around for over a decade.

“Oh, sorry. It was a beast, not an idiot.”

“So did you intend to follow me!”

“You have a lot of injuries, right? Then you need a replacement.”

“Don’t ignore me! Listen!”

“Uh.....”

“Igarashi-kun, can I speak too?”

Igarashi, who was in a cold sweat while looking between Erika and Leo, jumped at Miyuki’s words with great relief.

“Yes, President!”

“As Erika said, I don’t think it’s necessary to limit the number of players to three, which is the maximum number of participants. I think it’s better to choose a player who can be replaced for each match instead of regulars and substitutes.”

“Yes, That’s right!”

Igarashi’s voice was quite strong, perhaps because he wanted to distract himself from Erika and Leo.

“If you don’t mind, would you talk to other schools? I think it’s better to get consent, including the participation of female athletes.”

“It is as you’ve said!”

The real Izumi was next to Miyuki, but Igarashi acted much like her and immediately passed Miyuki’s proposal to a resolution. The result of the vote was unanimous.

Erika's participation in the Monolith Code would be decided after discussing with the other schools.

“Oh, I forgot to say it.”

Isn't it just like Erika for her not to be done so easily?

“While I'm not saying that I blame the tools for my faults. Since I'm no Kobodaishi¹, I will let you know that I'm pretty selfish.”

“Oh, Erika, according to one theory, all the brushes that Kobodaishi had were first-class, so he didn't need to choose them.”

“Oh, is that so? Then, it has the stamp of approval from the Student Council President.”

“You don't need to worry.”

In response to Erika's challenging lines, a small schoolboy stood up.

Erika knew the student with platinum hair and silver eyes.

“We will be responsible for finishing Chiba-senpai's device!”

He is Kento Sumisu, a sophomore who served as Tatsuya's assistant in last year's Nine Schools Competition.

“Well, I will be expecting it.”

This time, Erika laughed with satisfaction.

¹ “弘法大師” is a posthumous name of Kukai “空海”, a Japanese Buddhist monk, which the invention of the Kana syllabary is attributed to.

Chapter 3

When the exchange battle player selection meeting started at First High, Tatsuya was told by Minami through the intercom that he had received a phone call.

“From where?”

Tatsuya asked Minami, who looked apologetic on the screen, without giving a bothered expression.

“It’s Doumeki-sama, the manager of the Kanto branch of the Magic Association.”

“Connect me.”

Tatsuya thought that it was a hassle, but he ordered Minami to do so.

“As you wish.”

Along with that voice, a thin man that was over fifty appeared on the monitor screen.

“Tatsuya Shiba, right? I’m Doumeki, the manager of the Kanto Branch of the Magic Association.”

His tone was arrogant, but it was unclear whether it was due to his position as the branch manager of the Magic Association or based on the societal value of respecting the elders.

“I’m Shiba. So, what do you need?”

The old Tatsuya would have responded politely to such opponents so as not to make repercussions. But now his position had changed. Various persons were already approaching him in order to use his power, knowledge, and name. Tatsuya dared to ask back in a blunt tone so as to not mislead the branch manager.

“I’ve heard that you’re back in Tokyo. We, the association, have something to ask you directly.”

The branch manager expressed discomfort. Apparently, he is a person that is easy to understand.

“Yes. I understand, ask it.”

In response to Tatsuya, Doumeki was visibly frustrated.

“I prefer to say it directly. I want you to appear at the Kanto branch the day after tomorrow.”

He seemed to be sensible enough to talk without yelling. Still, in the same arrogant tone, the branch manager ordered Tatsuya to come to the Association.

“Please ask the questions here.”

“I’ve already told you! I’m not going to do it by phone!”

However, Doumeki’s patience was soon exhausted.

“So, I will answer you directly by phone. Of course, ‘as far as I can answer’.”

On the other hand, Tatsuya continued to give a humorous answer with only superficial words. Even if the director of the Kanto branch of the Japan Magic Association made a loud voice, it would not hurt or discomfort the current Tatsuya.

“Are you going to refuse to appear? Magicians are affiliated to the association without exception.”

The tone of the director changed to one that included a threat.

Of course, Tatsuya’s response did not change from such a threat.

“I know. Under the laws of this country, anyone who obtains a magician’s license, regardless of his or her circumstances, is affiliated to the Japan Magic Association. This provision also applies to high school students attached to Magic University before obtaining a license.”

Doumeki snorted and nodded to Tatsuya’s monotone answer.

“That’s right. And if you are a magician affiliated to the association, you are obliged to obey the appearance order! “

“The Japan Magic Association does not have the authority to order an unconditional appearance just because I am a magician.”

“What?”

Doumeki screamed with a vacant face.

“If you want to force someone to go, follow the necessary steps.”

Tatsuya struck the truth in that gap.

Just then, a notification of a call extension was displayed on the edge of the monitor screen.

“Excuse me for a second.”

“Hey, wait!”

Ignoring the manager’s demand, Tatsuya put the call on hold and switched to an extension call.

“I’m sorry to interrupt your call.”

Minami spoke before Tatsuya could ask.

“What happened?”

“I have a call from Hayama-sama. What should I do? “

“Wait a minute. I’ll end the call I’m receiving right away.”

“As you wish.”

Tatsuya returned the videophone to the call with the Magic Association.

“Sorry I made you wait.”

“Hey, you. Just because you became a little famous...”

Tatsuya didn’t listen to the director’s complaint until the end.

“Let’s meet on another occasion. Now, if you don’t have any other business, excuse me.”

“Wait! This conversation is-”

Tatsuya pressed the call button on the videophone. This button acts as a connect switch when pressed before a call and as a disconnect switch when pressed during a call.

The monitor switched to the pending extension video.

“Minami, please connect.”

“Yes, right away.”

In response to Tatsuya's simple command, Minami operated the videophone without saying anything else.

"Tatsuya-sama, I'm sorry for interrupting you."

In contrast to Doumeki, the branch manager of the Magic Association, Hayama spoke to Tatsuya in a respectful polite tone and gave a non-sitting bow.

"No, no problem. It's over."

"Could you tell me where the call was from?"

"It was from the Magic Association. They were talking about me going to the association because they have something to ask."

"Hoh... Did the Magic Association order Tatsuya, who is directly affiliated with the Yotuba family, to appear? Was Chairman Tomitsuka on the other side? "

Hayama spoke in a polite tone, which was also extremely cold. Of course, that feeling was not directed at Tatsuya. Hayama was uncomfortable with the arrogant words of the Magic Association.

"Chairman Tomitsuka" is Tomitsuka Hisui, the current chairman of the Magic Association. She is the mother of Tatsuya and Miyuki's classmate, Tomitsuka Hagane.

"No, it was the branch manager Doumeki."

"The Kanto branch manager... So, how did Tatsuya-sama reply? "

"I declined. From my current point of view, I don't like being seen as a push-over."

"I think it was a good decision."

Hayama gave a small, but respectful bow.

"So, what business does Hayama-san have with me?"

"Oh, pardon me for my rudeness. Actually, I would like to hear from Tatsuya-sama about the Master Clans meeting. As you can predict, madam has asked if you have the intention to attend the meeting."

"Aunt, no... If mother decides that I should go, of course I will attend."

It wasn't the case that Tatsuya mistook the words for "aunt". It was an indication of his arguing that his position was false and that he was not really recognized as the son of the head.

The Hayama on the screen, at first glance, didn't seem to care about Tatsuya's misstatement.

"Then, please attend the Masters Clan conference that will be held from 11 am tomorrow. The designated place is the Kaga Daimon Hotel in Kanazawa."

"11 o'clock tomorrow. I understand."

Unfortunately, Tatsuya didn't know a hotel named "Kaga Daimon Hotel", but if the location is Kanazawa, it would take less than two hours to fly there. Since there is no need to use an air car or a freed suit, Tatsuya can let Hanabishi Hyogo, who has become his personal butler, fly the helicopter.

It's unlikely that the hotel doesn't have a heliport at this age, but even if it doesn't, all he has to do is use magic to descend.

After Tatsuya calculated that in his head, he nodded to Hayama's words.

◇◇◇

It was at the dinner table that Tatsuya met Miyuki and Lina. The two were back a little earlier, before 5 pm, but Tatsuya was in the underground lab at that time.

"It promises to be interesting."

Tatsuya commented when he heard that Erika was selected as a player.

"First High is also quite different."

"Yes, really..."

"I think so too."

The three people think of the atmosphere of the high school when they were in the first grade two years ago. Certainly, at that time, it would have been unthinkable for a female second-class student to participate in Inter-School Matches between the nine schools on behalf of the school.

“But it’s surprising. Didn’t Tomitsuka’s name come up?”

Although Tomitsuka Hagane was in a different event, he is a top class student of the current third years who also participated in the Nine Schools Competition last year. It was natural for Tatsuya to feel suspicious.

“Tomitsuka-kun himself declined in advance because he wanted to participate in the Open tournament of Martial Magic Arts held at the end of the month.”

However, Tatsuya’s question was quickly resolved by Miyuki’s answer. The national competition for magic sports competitions is scheduled after the end of the Nine Schools Competition every year. Prioritizing that over the Monolith Code is not unusual.

Tatsuya just nodded, “I see,” and didn’t mention the Tomitsuka anymore.

“Anyway, is Erika In Monolith Code? That will be tricky...”

“Really? I think Erika’s skills are at the level of the Stars”

Lina argues against the mutter that Tatsuya leaked.

“I know Erika’s strength. Lina, Erika is much stronger than she was two years ago.”

“Seriously? Even two years ago, she was so strong that a Satellite class couldn’t match her. If so, you have no reason to worry, right?”

Lina had an expression that she couldn’t really understand.

“The problem is that Monolith Code is a sports competition, not a real battle.”

“So, what do you mean?”

Lina leans her head.

“Lina, Onii-sama is saying that the rules of the Monolith Code don’t fit Erika.”

It was Miyuki that answered that question.

“Maybe Japan’s rules and the States’ are different?”

“In Japan, physical contact and attacks with tools that are directly manipulated by the body are prohibited. Is it different in the United States?”

“What’s that!? Isn’t that a one-sided disadvantage for magicians who are good at hand-to-hand combat?”

Not only was Lina amazed, but she was upset with her lips slightly tightened.

“In the USNA, hand-to-hand combat is not prohibited, right?”

“The States just forbid lethal weapons. You can use swords with dulled edges and bows and arrows with no penetrating power, and of course you can fight with bare hands. Otherwise it wouldn’t be training.”

To Miyuki’s question, Lina explains the rules used by the USNA military.

“In Japan, Monolith Code is not practice for the military.”

In response, Tatsuya pointed out the difference between Japan and the United States.

“Hmm, that’s right. The Japanese Monolith Code is really a sport. Does that involve what Tatsuya said earlier?”

At last Lina finally understood.

“But Onii-sama. Erika was willing to do it.”

This time Miyuki turned to Tatsuya.

“Hmm... I think I have some idea. But apart from Erika’s speculation, it’s an unprecedented participation of a female player. It will be necessary to take measures according to the rules.”

With that said, Tatsuya took some time to think.

“...Certainly, according to university rules, defensive armament devices with programmed object shield magic should be allowed in the women’s division. At least protectors should be given preferential treatment. Women players at other schools may be entering as well.”

“Do you think that female athletes will also participate from other schools?”

“Because the Nine Schools Competition is gone. It’s rather the boys who want to give girls the opportunity to play an active role.”

Miyuki was impressed by Tatsuya’s words, “I see...”, and Lina replied, “I wonder if that’s the case.”

◇◇◇

August 11th, Sunday morning.

Tatsuya was about to leave for the Master Clans meeting in Kanazawa.

He usually has a hard time here, but he didn't have it today. Miyuki, who was ordered to stay at home, didn't ask to take her with him.

"Have a safe trip, Onii-sama."

Tatsuya was confused by Miyuki's considerate attitude. But he didn't express it.

"I don't know how long it will take today. I don't think anything will happen while I'm away, but if there is an urgent call from Miyakijima, call me through Hyogo-san. If the Japanese and American governments say something, please call at your discretion. You can ignore the Magic Association and the media."

"As you wish. Please leave it to me."

"Lina, Minami. I leave Miyuki to you both."

"Yes, leave it to me, but I can only do escorts."

"As you wish. Please leave Miyuki-sama's everyday necessities to me."

"I'm going."

Miyuki and Minami bowed, and Lina shook her right hand in front of her face with her index and middle fingers aligned and saw off Tatsuya getting into the helicopter.

The helicopter takes off and tranquility returns to the rooftop heliport.

Lina stepped back indoors, stopped and looked back to Miyuki.

"Miyuki, won't you go with him today?"

"Today is a little..."

Miyuki lightly frowns and returns ambiguously.

"Eh, what? Is there any reason?"

It was a sign that she didn't want to be asked, but unfortunately it did not reach Lina this morning.

Miyuki gives a small sigh.

“...I don't want to meet the head of the Ichijou family yet.”

Miyuki answered Lina's question rather easily, perhaps because she didn't think too strongly on not to tell her why.

“That's rare. Miyuki saying things like that.”

“On New Year's Day this year... The head of the Ichijou family tried to obstruct my engagement with my brother. Since then, the situation has been dying out, but I feel that the other side thinks “I don't think the story is over yet”. So...”

“I don't know what the story is, but if you meet face to face, it will be brought up again?”

“That's right. Especially because the venue this time is the hometown of the Ichijou family.”

“Hooh, I see.”

Lina resumes her steps from where she had stopped and proceeds into the building.

Miyuki looked at Minami with a bitter smile while in a moody behavior.

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The “Kaga Daimon Hotel,” which was selected as the venue for the Master Clans Conference, was a new hotel located at the foot of Mt. Daimon, which rises on the border between Kanazawa City, Ishikawa Prefecture, and Nanto City, Toyama Prefecture.

The clock face shows 10:30 am. Five helicopters were already parked at the heliport, which was set up just a short walk from the hotel building.

He was told that the heliport was booked under the name of the Master Clans when he called the hotel yesterday. Even if everyone comes by helicopter, it will not be impossible to get off. The heliport is so large that the choice of this hotel as the venue,

perhaps, was a lesson learned from the Hakone meeting that was attacked by Jiedo Heigu. This time it seems that the means of transportation was more important than the confidentiality.

There were five aircraft already parked at the heliport. It would be reasonable to think that five people arrived before Tatsuya. However, when he and Hyogo arrived at the hotel, they were guided to a room with nobody in it.

“It seems that the heads of each family do not want to run into each other.”

Hyogo talks to Tatsuya, who sits on a classic sofa, in a sarcastic tone. They are in a room where only two hotel employees are left.

There was a good chance that this room was being tapped, but Tatsuya didn’t blame Hyogo.

“There is nothing wrong with this.”

He just whispered so. He is neither bluffing nor feigning ignorance. Tatsuya really didn’t harbour an ounce of guilt.

Tatsuya thought that today’s call would be about the message he sent to the world after the battle on Miyakijima a week ago.

Tatsuya thinks they want to denounce his selfish actions.

The Ten Master Clans have a basic policy of not standing on the front stage. He heard that there was a disagreement within the Clans even when Itsuwa Mio became a nationally recognized Strategic-Class Magician.

That said, Tatsuya didn’t intend to quietly let himself be scolded.

Light meals would be prepared in the room. But it’s still a little early for tea before lunch. Tatsuya had no habit of eleven’s tea anyway. He waited for the start of the meeting with only the black tea prepared in the thermos pot.

“Excuse me.”

“Here you go.”

It wasn’t a hotel employee who opened the door and came in.

He controls and hides his psions, but he is a magician. And also a battle magician on a level of actual fighting power.

Unfortunately, unlike the widely popular fiction, there is no such thing as “identifying the magician by their attribute”. There is no “attribute” for each magician in the first place. Whereas, just by looking, he doesn’t know who he belongs to, but considering the land of Kanazawa, it is highly possible that he belongs to the Ichijou family.

“The meeting is ready. They are waiting for you.”

“Are they all ready?”

“Yes, so please accompany us promptly.”

“I understand.”

After all, it seems that I am the accused. Tatsuya thought so.

Just thinking about it, he doesn’t show any more emotions, and heads to the venue following the guide’s back.

“It is here. Please wait here.”

“Hyogo-san, Miyuki may contact you, so please wait here for the time being.”

“As you wish. Please go.”

After being sent off by Hyogo, Tatsuya enters the conference room.

There is a sound of the door closing behind. Hearing that, Tatsuya looked around the room with just his eyes.

No one was sitting at the tables in front of him which were arranged in a square.

The two people who were near the back of the table, and in front of Tatsuya from his perspective, were Ichijou Gouki and Futatsugi Mai. Five people were at the table on his left. Going from the back to the front, there was Mitsuya Gen, Yotsuba Maya, Itsuwa Isami, Mutsuzuka Atsuko, and Saegusa Koichi.

Three people sat at the table on Tatsuya’s right side. From the back, sat Shippou Takumi, Yatsushiro Raizou, and Jumonji Katsuto, who stood up alone and welcomed Tatsuya.

The heads of the Ten Master Clans, a group that represents Japan’s magicians, were lined up.

“Then, we will now start the Ten Master Clans conference.”

Maybe because it's in his region, Ichijou Gouki announced the opening.

But he doesn't seem to be the chairman.

"I'd like to start the questioning of Shiba-dono immediately."

The first person to speak was Ichijou Gouki.

"Wait, Ichijo-dono. Shiba-dono hasn't even sat down yet. He's not a defendant and we're not judges. First, let's all sit down."

It was Katsuto who threw the words of restraint at Gouki. He turned to Tatsuya and called out, "Shiba-dono."

"Please take a seat."

"Thank you. I will take up your offer."

After seeing Tatsuya bow to him and sitting down, Katsuto also took a seat.

"Shiba-dono, are you settled now?"

Gouki, who had been interrupted, calls on Tatsuya with an intimidating and strong tone with wrinkles between his eyebrows.

"Yes, please ask your questions."

Tatsuya turned his face to Gouki with his spine straight and urged him to continue.

There is no sign of apology for temporarily ignoring him.

Maybe he didn't like that attitude.

"A week ago, what on earth were you trying to do?"

Gouki asks Tatsuya with a belligerent attitude.

"A week ago? If it is about the 4th of this month, I just counterattacked an unjustified armed attack."

"That's not the case."

"Would you not fight back? Do you say that the use of force for self-defense is not allowed?"

"I didn't say that!"

“So it was okay to repel the USNA invaders, destroy the new Soviet base, and kill Bezobrazov, right?”

“Of course! Defense of his country is a magician’s duty!”

“Thank you.”

“...what for?”

“For your understanding of my actions. The message I sent after the end of the battle is also for national defense. At that point, it was not only Miyakijima and its surrounding waters where battle occurred. It was necessary to justify the attack in Japan’s territory and waters, but also on the New Soviet Union territory. Otherwise, the concern that the attack on the Birobidzhan base and the eradication of Bezobrazov would be considered a surprise attack by Japan could not be ruled out.”

“...Did you take the initiative to dispel that concern?”

“Yes, at worst, I thought that the New Soviet Union was aiming the tip of the spear at my person.”

“Mmm... No, but...”

Gouki was not convinced. However, he could not find a clue to refute Tatsuya.

Gouki unintentionally looks around the faces of the heads of other families. Gouki himself is not aware that it is a gesture to seek a lifeline.

“Shiba, I have one question.”

It was Saegusa Koichi who answered Gouki’s gaze..... Maybe it is more correct to say “piggybacked” rather than “answered”.

“Isn’t it better to notify the governments of each country through the Defense Forces to justify the counterattack? Was it necessary for Shiba to take such a conspicuous action?”

Koichi’s point was a clear statement. Tatsuya and Miyuki had to struggle because the Defense Force did not move in the first place. It was unlikely that the Defense Forces would direct a counterattack against the New Soviet missile base, which was completely at Tatsuya’s discretion. It is easy to predict that the Japanese government would not be involved in the destruction of the missile base and the assassination of Bezobrazov.

“I will refer to the suggestions made by Saegusa-dono next time.”

However, Tatsuya did not argue and began eating. In response to the answer to his question, the sly old fox, Koichi said “Now...”

While his complexion changes for a moment, in the next the expression disappears and his mouth is closed.

“What is that reply!”

Gouki is fierce instead of Koichi.

“Ichijou, please calm down.”

It wasn’t Tatsuya who returned the words to Gouki, but Yatsushiro Raizou, who was sitting in the opposite seat.

“Shiba-dono hasn’t said anything wrong. That self-defense declaration to the world has already happened. In short, it’s done. Even if an alternative is offered now, there is no choice but to use it as a reference for the next similar case.

Raizou said to Gouki without hiding his annoyance.

“If there is a similar case, though.”

He added in an ironic tone.

Gouki turns, his face red, and shuts up. To tell the truth, Koichi kept silent because he realized the reasoning of what Raizou said.

“There is not a public office for the nationally recognized Strategic-Class Magicians, but their power is exercised by the decision of the government. It can be said that they are a tool of the nation, like the military.”

Mitsuya Gen suddenly changed the topic as to manage the unfriendly atmosphere of the heads of the families.

“Given the magnitude of their influence, unofficial Strategic-Class Magicians should be the same. Magicians are already feared. The Strategic-Class Magicians are the strongest among them. If the existence of Strategic-Class Magicians that are not under the control of public authority are discovered, the cries for the exclusion of magicians will be even stronger, even if the fear is grounded on misunderstandings.”

Gen’s words were met with a sympathetic look at Tatsuya.

“But this time, Shiba-dono has shown to the world that private magicians possess military power comparable to that of a nation. In other words, Shiba-dono showed that magicians can use violence that the government cannot control.”

Tatsuya understood the meaning of the sharp gaze directed at himself.

Gen believes that Tatsuya’s cause has led people to consider magicians to be uncontrollable and dangerous monsters. As a result, he fears that magicians will be more persecuted than ever before.

Like the mythical dragons, which were ganged up against and destroyed just because they are dangerous.

“The Ten Master Clans are an organization that protects the magician’s “right to live as a person”. If a magician is at risk of being persecuted just because he is a magician, he must be set apart.”

His gaze on Tatsuya is strict.

However, Tatsuya does not move one eyebrow.

But, he wasn’t as calm as he looked.

He wasn’t nervous, but there was a quiet anger in his heart.

The phrase “protecting the magician’s ‘right to live as a person’” that Mitsuya Gen said irritated him.

Tatsuya seemed to be hypocritical, saying “the right to live as a human being” while being content with the current situation of forcing magicians to play the role of weapons.

“Shiba-dono, there is something I want to clarify here.”

“What is it?”

This time, Tatsuya repelled Gen’s line of sight instead of accepting it.

Tension rises.

“On October 31, 2095, you were the one who cast the magic that destroyed the Great Asian Union Fleet?”

Formerly, he asked in a roundabout way if he was a Strategic-Class Magician. This time, he was being direct.

Tatsuya looked at Maya and she nodded.

The two of them will no longer hide this exchange.

“That’s right.”

Tatsuya returns Mitsuya Gen’s question with an affirmation.

“By order of the National Defense Forces, I used a Magic of mass-energy conversion.”

“Magic of mass-energy? Does it really exist...”

Raizou lets out a skeptical mutter. He wasn’t the only one to think so, but no one responded to his words. His interest soon returned to the confrontation between Tatsuya and Gen.

“According to the National Defense Forces’s orders? If the government then recognized you as a new Apostle, this situation would not have happened...”

Gen expresses his opinions like if he was talking with himself. The word “Apostle” he spoke of refers to a nationally recognized Strategic-Class Magician. It comes from the fact that the thirteen nationally recognized Strategic-Class Magicians were called “Thirteen Apostles.”

“Shiba-dono. Are you willing to continue to obey the National Defense Forces’ orders?”

Gen returns his consciousness from within himself to Tatsuya, who is facing him, and asks.

“The situation has changed since then. While I may respond to National Defense Forces requests, I no longer will obey orders.”

“And what is the reason?”

Shippou Takumi was the one who voiced the question. His tone was milder than Mitsuya Gen, but there were wrinkles between his eyebrows.

Tatsuya looked at Maya. Who raised the corners of her mouth slightly and gave a small nod.

“Because the relationship of mutual trust between me and the National Defense Force was broken.”

After receiving Maya’s approval, Tatsuya answers Takumi’s question.

“Relationship of mutual trust, when Shiba-dono is only eighteen years old? Was there a continuous relationship with the Defense Forces other than ‘Scorched Halloween’?”

There was confusion on Takumi’s tone and facial expression.

“I have been in military service as a Special Officer for about four years. Legally, I was a volunteer who was under the command of the army. The destruction of the Combined Fleet of the Great Asian Union was ordered as part of that.”

“...The 101 Independent Magic-Equipped Battalion of the National Defense Army.”

Koichi murmured to himself, but it reached everyone’s ears.

“Yes.”

It was also communicated to everyone that Tatsuya admitted that he belonged to that unit.

“If I say so myself, without me the war with the Great Asian Union two years ago would have been a tough result for Japan. I am proud that I have made a considerable number of other contributions.”

“Nevertheless, you were betrayed by the Defense Forces?”

Mitsuya Gen asked that because the confrontation with Major General Saeki was due to Tatsuya hiding Lina. With that sort of reasoning, he intended to draw a closure favorable to his argument of Tatsuya being responsible for the betrayal of the Defense Forces.

“Do you remember the surprise attack of Bezobrazov with the Tuman Bomba on June 9th when I was in the Izu Islands? The Defense Force had received information about that surprise attack beforehand.”

But Gen’s speculation is wrong. Because Lina’s asylum was on June 19th. If Tatsuya’s words are correct, it was Saeki’s side who first broke the relationship of trust.

“Is that a confirmed fact?”

“Indeed it is.”

Tatsuya replied with an unwavering attitude to Raizou’s question.

“I don’t think I’ve been treated unreasonably. Though that was undeserved.”

Tatsuya now proceeds to look at everyone at the same time.

“Old people say that ‘when the nimble rabbit dies, the hunting dog is cooked’. Even if they pledge absolute obedience to the government, if someone is considered dangerous, the government will actively try to eliminate them rather than protect. That is political realism.”

There is no reaction. Needless to say, everyone understood this much.

“Don’t get me wrong, I’m not actively in conflict with the government, but it’s dangerous to rely entirely on the government. To protect the magician’s ‘right to live as a person’, I think it’s better to leave them with some bargaining chips instead of unconditionally obeying government orders.”

With that said, Tatsuya fixes his eyes on Mitsuya for clarity.

“.....What are you trying to say.”

Perhaps he felt provoked, Gen’s words were sharp.

“I think strategic magic will be an effective bargaining chip with the government.”

Tatsuya’s line is from earlier, it was a head-on counter-argument to his opinion that “Strategic-Class Magicians should be under government control” and a clear statement to the heads who were sympathetic with Gen that he would not give in to group pressure.

“...That’s just your personal opinion.”

Gen retorts in a bitter tone.

“No, I concur with Shiba-dono.”

However, there was a voice in support of Tatsuya.

It’s not Maya. Neither Atsuko, who is Maya’s fan rather than of the Yotuba family, nor Raizou, who has been critical of Gouki and Gen. It was Itsuwa Isami who raised her voice.

“If Shiba-dono was a Strategic-Class Magician who destroyed the Combined Fleet of the Great Asian Union, he would be arguably the best military achievement for the nation after World War III. Despite this, he wasn’t even warned of the risk of assassination. Because of that, I can’t fully trust the National Defense Forces.”

“I think Shiba-dono’s opinion is justified.”

Following Isami, Shippou Takumi turns to Tatsuya’s support.

“Anti-magic public opinion is certainly alarming, but entrusting the Defense Forces with the control of civilian magicians is against the raison d’être of the Ten Master Clans, that is to protect the human rights of magicians against the tyranny of the state’s power.

“I don’t think all civilian magicians should be under military control.”

Mitsuya Gen hurriedly argued.

“Strategic-Class magic has too much impact on society, so we should give the government the responsibility.”

“Say that you are a Strategic-Class Magician, would you resign yourself to be managed by the army?”

Itsuwa Isami repels Gen with a strong voice.

Isami’s daughter, Mio, is a Strategic-Class Magician. She is weak and should avoid long-distance travel, but she was forced to board a warship to the East China Sea two years ago in November just because she was a “Strategic-Class Magician.”

As expected, Mio had to spend about a month in a hospital bed after returning to Japan. Fortunately, there was nothing wrong with her health, but in the perspective of a parent, she surely has a lot to think about.

Mio’s hospitalization is known to everyone present. There was no one who could say “yes” to Isami’s question.

“Isn’t it time to stop chatting and get into the main subject?”

Maya, who had been silent until then, opened her mouth here.

Gouki, Gen, and Isami showed displeasure to the expression “chat”. Because it was no less than surmising someone’s feelings

That’s because Maya’s point was true.

Gouki and Gen’s denunciations against Tatsuya were a revelation of the irritation they harbored against him. Although it didn’t go out of control, the result was that they let their emotions get the better of them, and they ended up sowing unnecessary sparks of conflict within the Ten Master Clans. No one here is so incompetent that they can’t realize that.

“Tatsuya-san.”

Maya didn't seem to care about their dislike and spoke to Tatsuya.

"Please explain the results of the negotiations with the USNA, including the case of the former Major Sirius."

Tatsuya immediately responded to Maya's request.

"The day before yesterday, I met with the assistant of the Secretary of Defense of the USNA to confirm that there is no hostility between me and the American government and that we will cooperate in the future."

Hearing Tatsuya's words, a commotion spread in the conference room. It was against their common sense, such as the establishment of equal transactions between individuals and nations.

"I will provide them with the Stellar reactor technology. USNA offered financial support and a free indefinite rental of Major Sirius, that being Lieutenant Colonel Angelina Shields."

Tatsuya did not misunderstand what Maya said as "former Major Sirius."

"Rent a nationally recognized Strategic-Class Magician...? Not for the Defense Forces, but for Shiba-dono individually?"

Mitsuya Gen seemed to struggle to voice his conclusion

"That's right. Lieutenant Colonel Shields is supposed to hide her military conscription and go to First High."

"It's dangerous! Letting the USNA's Strategic-Class Magician go unchecked without any military surveillance..."

Gouki expresses not anger, but confusion. Half a month ago, Gouki was told by Major General Saeki that "Angie Sirius" was being hidden in the Yotsuba family, but he didn't think the Yotsuba family would send the USNA Strategic-Class Magician to high school.

"I do not let her go unsupervised. It was arranged that she will always be accompanied by the next head of the Yotsuba family."

"Isn't it dangerous? The next head is important to the Yotsuba family."

Koichi criticizes the Yotsuba family's handling.

"Don't worry. I also monitor her remotely. As you saw the other day, distance is not an obstacle to me."

With Tatsuya's assertion, there weren't any further objections.

When the counterargument has ceased, Tatsuya did not miss the timing and pressed further.

"The USNA government has kept the identity of Angie Sirius secret. If Miss Shields is exposed as Sirius, USNA and Japan's relationship is expected to deteriorate. I would like to ask everyone to manage this information thoroughly."

The positions of offense and defense were reversed, and the interview with Tatsuya was over as the heads were jabbed by Tatsuya.

Neither Tatsuya nor Maya talked about the idea of forming a global magician joint organization, which has been an agreement with Chandrasekhar of the Indo-Persian Federation.



"Shiba."

Tatsuya was called out in the corridor just outside the conference room.

"Ichijou."

The person who called was Ichijou Masaki. Next to him was a slightly younger Asian girl, who had a faint different impression from Japanese. Tatsuya recognized who the girl was.

(Why is Liú Lì Lěi with Ichijou?)

The girl that was accompanying Masaki was Liú Lì Lěi, a nationally recognized Strategic-Class Magician of the Great Asian Union.

"No, this is..."

Masaki notices Tatsuya's suspicious gaze and shows a slight panic.

"I do not intend to pry into it."

Masaki shows relief to Tatsuya's lines.

Tatsuya instinctively wanted to reverse his previous statement, “I do not intend to pry into it”, which would confess that he thought that there was something wrong with Masaki’s situation.

Actually, he didn’t change it.

“...Is Shiba going home now?”

“Yes.”

“Can you wait a little? I want to talk about her.”

Tatsuya decided not to inquire into it, but apparently it seems that Masaki wants to confide the situation.

“Ok.”

The questions and doubts in the matter of why the Ichijou’s eldest was accompanying Liú Lì Lěi have not disappeared. If the opposite side wants to talk about it, there is no reason for him to refuse. So, Tatsuya accepted Masaki’s request with little hesitation.

On the other hand, Masaki probably didn’t expect Tatsuya to agree immediately.

“Thank you.”

Although he seemed to be a little taken aback, Masaki thanked Tatsuya without wasting time and entered the conference room where the Ten Master Clans meeting was held together with Liú Lì Lěi.

After asking Hyogo to stand by the helicopter, Tatsuya waited for Masaki in the hotel’s tea room.

Masaki appeared about half an hour later. They hadn’t decided to meet there, but it’s the place that stands out the most apart from the lobby. He shouldn’t have had to search around for a long time.

“Shiba, sorry I made you wait.”

He is not sure if that’s a confirmation, but Masaki, who approached Tatsuya’s table, didn’t say, “I was looking for you,” but “I made you wait.” It may be a routine greeting, but from the appearance of Masaki, it seems that he came to Tatsuya immediately after being released from the meeting.

“No, it was faster than expected. Why don’t you sit down first?”

Prompted by Tatsuya, Masaki and Liú Lì Lěi sit on the other side.

“So what’s the story?”

Tatsuya asks Masaki.

“Today’s meeting? We were called regarding the Strategic-Class Magician Management Treaty.”

When he talked to that point, Masaki had a taken aback expression.

“As you already know, she is the nationally recognized Strategic-Class Magician of the Great Asian Union, Liú Lì Lěi.”

Tatsuya nodded, “I know,” to Masaki, who introduced the girl next to him.

“Since early in the last month, the Ichijou family is taking care of her asylum in Japan because she was about to be held accountable for the defeat by the New Soviet Union.”

Masaki went on to briefly explain why he was with Liú Lì Lěi.

“I’m Liú Lì Lěi, but please call me “Leila”. Masaki-san calls me that.”

“I’m Shiba Tatsuya.”

Tatsuya simply returned the same self-introduction of Liú Lì Lěi, of just saying your name casually, and didn’t say anything more.

And Tatsuya, returned his gaze to Masaki. That attitude showed that he was not interested in her, but just in the circumstances explained for the time being

“So, what is this Strategic-Class Magician Management Treaty? It seems like a plot to force the governments to manage unofficial Strategic-Class Magicians.”

Masaki lightly grimaces at Tatsuya’s words.

“I feel bad about the expression “plot”, but the outline is exactly what Shiba says. Didn’t they call you to talk about this?”

“No, it was about a different matter, but it seems that Ichijou was called because of the treaty. My case is somewhat similar to Leila’s.”

Masaki expressed his surprise at Tatsuya’s answer.

“A different matter from me...? Didn’t you talk about the treaty?”

“I’ve heard that unofficial Strategic-Class Magicians should follow government control, just like National Recognized Strategic-Class Magicians. But I didn’t talk about the treaty.”

“Why...? Are you a Strategic-Class Magician?”

“I was just asked about how to clean up after the battle a week ago.”

Tatsuya did not answer Masaki’s question. It may not be necessary to hide it from him, as it is known to Gouki Ichijou at today’s conference that he is the user of Material Burst. However, he didn’t feel like admitting that he had caused the catastrophe two years ago in front of Liú Lì Lěi, a soldier of the Great Asian Union.

“So what did they ask you? Was it about if you would accept the treaty?”

“No, I was actually asked about the treaty last month.”

“Is that so? I don’t know the contents of the Strategic-Class Magician Management Treaty. If you don’t mind, could you tell me?”

At Tatsuya’s request, Masaki nodded, “Oh, it’s ok” and told him exactly what he heard from Saeki two weeks ago.

“...And you accepted without complaint?”

After listening to Masaki’s explanation, Tatsuya said with a frightened voice.

“I don’t think there’s anything strange about it. Isn’t it still the case that strategic magic is effectively under government control?”

Masaki argues against Tatsuya’s criticism in a strong tone.

“Isn’t that treaty proposal the idea of Major General Saeki?”

Tatsuya asked Masaki with a suppressed voice in contrast.

“Ah, Yes... It was Major General Saeki who brought this matter. So what?”

“There are hidden plans to reduce the influence of the Ten Master Clans within this Strategic-Class Magician Management Treaty.”

After saying that, Tatsuya shook his head once, saying “No”.

“It’s not hidden. It’s pretty obvious. That’s why I don’t understand why you and Ichijou-dono didn’t oppose it. Did you get deceived by the name ‘Strategic-Class Magician Management?’”

“...What do you mean?”

Masaki asks for an explanation with a confused face.

“What is noteworthy in this treaty is that the government grants, for magician management, the right of inspection to the Magic Association. The Magic Association inspects whether the government can control Strategic-Class Magicians. As a result, the knowledge involving the fighting assets and techniques that the Ten Master Clans possess will be given to the Magic Association, and under the guise of a recommendation based on the results of the inspection, magicians who are inconvenient to the Association will be deprived of their freedom and their techniques and knowledge will be forcibly seized put on hold. In other words, the Japan Magic Association would reign over the Ten Master Clans.”

“Wait. It’s the International Magic Association, not the Japan Magic Association, that has the right to inspect.”

“What are you saying? The Japan Magic Association is a subordinate organization of the International Magic Association. If the Magic Association exercises inspection rights in Japan, it will be decided that the authority will be entrusted to the Japan Magic Association. And the Japan Magic Association is a semi-governmental organization under the protection of the government. If the Strategic-Class Magician Management Treaty comes into effect, it will be used as an excuse in order to put the Ten Master Clans, a private autonomous magician organization in Japan, under full public control.

“Ugh...”

Masaki didn’t say, “I didn’t think about it too much.” He may have had a feeling in the depths of his heart that there was something dubious going on.

“Ichijou. You witnessed the power of Ocean Blast, do you think that large-scale magic has to be managed? Ocean Blast is your own magic. If someone has to manage it, it should be you.”

This time, Masaki could not deny it.

Masaki is not the only one who has thought about it. Liú Lì Lěi, who sits next to him, also cast her eyes down with a look that seemed like something had come to her mind.

Seeing the two of them, Tatsuya gave a sincere bitter smile. He also remembered that Material Burst was managed by the Yotuba family until just the other day. But that was not institutional management. His shackles were directly in his mind. Given that, he is not in a position to preach to others.

“So what came of the discussion today. Don’t tell me that the treaty was signed?”

While hiding his inner feelings, Tatsuya asked Masaki.

“...Huh? No, it was not that.”

Asked by Tatsuya, Masaki raises his eyes.

“I was asked about my future course.”

“Course? Do you mean entering university?”

To the unexpected answer, Tatsuya couldn’t hide his genuine surprise this time.

He is in the third year of high school. His future course is a pretty common trouble, both particular and urgent.

However, such everyday topics were completely unexpected, especially being talked about at a Ten Master Clans conference where deterrence and protection of the rights of magicians were discussed.

“I want to hear from you. Shiba, what are you going to do in the future?”

“I’m going to the Magic University.”

Unable to measure Masaki’s true intentions, Tatsuya replied with his apparent plans for the time being.

“But Studying at the Magic University is not something you would need, right? That said, I don’t think it makes sense to enter the National Defense Academy now if you crushed the base of the New Soviet Union alone.”

“It is a misunderstanding that I don’t need to study.”

“Really.....”

“Are you uncertain about your future?”

“To be honest.”

In response to Tatsuya's irony, Masaki nodded, showing hesitation.

"Until last month, I was planning to go on to Magic University, but now that I've been certified as a nationally recognized Strategic-Class Magician, it's inevitable that I'll be deeply involved with the military. I'm wondering if it's better to enter the National Defense Academy"

"Doesn't it mean you won't go to the University?"

"Of course not. Even if you want to join the army, you would need to go to the National Defense Academy first."

"I guess you wouldn't want any other advice from me, right?"

Asked by Tatsuya, Masaki eyes swim around.

"Oh... No, advice is advice. I would like to use what you think about your career path as a reference. Because it is comparable to or beyond that of a Strategic-Class Magician."

"Then my answer is exactly as I said. My intention to go on to Magic University remains the same. Ichijou, shouldn't you simply prioritize what you want to do?"

"But then the responsibility..."

"If you're responsible, you just have to repel the enemy. If you don't become a soldier, there is no responsibility to do more than that."

Tatsuya strongly cut off Masaki's misunderstanding.

"....."

"Ichijou. It's a fact that we are magicians. No matter who says what, even if we deny it, that fact doesn't change. But it's just a matter of government and military convenience that you're labeled a Strategic-Class Magician. You don't have to be a Strategic-Class Magician. Your title of Strategic-Class Magician and your title of Third High School's Third Year are equivalent for you."

Masaki has a bewildered expression.

It seems that Tatsuya's words were not completely convincing, but at the same time they cannot be ignored.

"That's all I can say."

On the other hand, there was no hesitation in Tatsuya's expression, who stood up after saying that.

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When Tatsuya started talking to Masaki.

In Chofu, Tokyo, an international call was made to Lina who returned to her residence on the same floor as Miyuki.

It was an unidentified call. It just displays the name of the city where the call came from.

(Boston!? No way, right?)

Isn't it almost midnight over there? Lina pressed the receive button in front of the 27-inch wall monitor, wondering about unnecessary things.

"Hello. Lina, it's been a long time

"Abby!?"

Lina's voice cracks. The person on the monitor was the same one on her mind when she thought "no way".

Dr. Abigail Stuart.

Stars technical advisor and developer of the Strategic-Class Magic "Heavy Metal Burst". She also created Lina's magical weapon "Brionac".

The relationship between Lina and Dr. Abigail Stuart dates back five years. When Lina still wasn't an official Stars member but an apprentice in a training course called "Starlight," she went to Boston on her first mission, where Abigail was waiting for her.

Since then, the two had met face to face about four or five times a year. It's a business relationship, built around the activation adjustment of "Heavy Metal Burst" and the improvement of "Brionac", but that doesn't mean that there is no friendship between them.

The age difference between Lina and Abigail is five years.

Abigail is only five years older than Lina.

Both are precocious geniuses, one who at a very young age became Captain of the Stars and one who was entrusted with a division of the Federal Army's Magic Institute. They are close to each other and have something in common, however they have few chances to meet, but once they meet, they have a close meal.

However, that is “face to face”, they didn’t talk on the phone often.

To make an international call to someone who was virtually in exile, did something serious happen?

Lina puzzled over this in her head, Abigail called her, rather than Canopus or Balance.

She has no pending business that she can think of.

“...It’s been a long time. Even so, how do you know my contact information so well?”

Abigail laughs mischievously on the monitor when Lina asks. When they met five years ago, she looked like a young boy at first glance, but now she’s completely feminine. All she has in common with those days is her short hair, which is clearly a female cut. However, such a casual expression gives a glimpse of the remnants of those days.

“Actually, Lina.”

The pauses in her words hinted at a deeper meaning. Lina’s attention was drawn to Abigail’s next words, even though she knew it was what Abigail had expected.

“This time, I’m going there.”

“Huh?”

With her eyes widened, Lina’s expression is completely “I don’t know what she’s talking about.”

“That... does that mean to Japan?”

“Japan is Japan, though. Have you not heard anything about it? “

“...I had no idea.”

“That’s strange. I’ve heard that Lina was involved in the negotiations with Mr. Shiba on the Stellar Furnace project.”

“Even though it was a negotiation, I just handed over the letter, and Secretary James summarized the details.”

“Then you haven’t heard the content?”

“No, I’ve heard from Tatsuya to some extent. Certainly, he decided to accept some of the States’ engineers for a technology transfer... No way!?”

“Exactly.”

Abigail grins at Lina’s surprised face.

“I also decided to go to Miyakojima as a member of the dispatched technical team. I’ll be staying with you for about six months.”

“Abby, did you really get permission for half a year?”

Even if Abigail is a developer of strategic magic. Since her research is specialized toward charged particle weapons, she has no track record of devising different types of magics like Tatsuya, and there is the fact that the USNA fears a brain drain.

“I and the Government attach great importance to the Stellar Reactor technology. I’m planning to arrive on the 15th of Japan’s calendar. I’ll be looking forward to working with you.”

“Ye—, Yeah. I’m glad that Abby is coming. I’ll look forward to working with you too.”

“Yes, I’m happy to. See you in four days.”

Even though the phone hung up and the monitor screen went dark, Lina remained there, absent-minded, for a while.

Chapter 4

On the evening of August 11th, there was an event that could not be ignored, regarding the aftermath process of the Miyakijima incident.

High school students who happened to be on site at the time of the armed attack testified on a TV news program.

The cable TV station that they appeared on was not one of those dominated by traditional media. It is a channel operated by the multi-media company “Culture Communication Network”, commonly known as “Cal Net”. As a matter of fact, the owner and president of “Cal Net” is the father of Maki Owamura, a famous actress who had involvement with Tatsuya through Shippou Takuma last April.

And it goes without saying that the “high school students who happened to be there” are Erika, Leo, and Mikihiko. After clarifying that they are in fact Magic High School students and Tatsuya’s friends, they talked about the attack on, and defense of, Miyakijima.

The repercussions of the program were large.

Some people saw it with colored glasses, because they were aspiring magicians and Tatsuya’s friends, but many viewers viewed it as just high school students who witnessed the incident by chance.

It was Erika who spoke the most. Both Leo and Mikihiko hated to appear on TV in the first place, but Erika forced them to appear together because there would be strange misunderstandings if she appeared by herself.

To tell the truth, Erika herself had no intention of appearing on TV until the day before yesterday. Immediately after returning to Tokyo on the 6th, she received multiple requests for appearances from all over, but she refused all of them.

However, the day before yesterday, when she allowed a certain terrestrial TV station an interview under the condition that they did not reveal her face or name. She was persistently guided by the script of the TV station and felt a sense of crisis that “maybe the facts would be twisted”.

They were allowed to stay that day on Miyakijima on the condition that they would be a third-party witness. If nothing is done in this situation, it may develop into fake news that would be disadvantageous to Tatsuya. Contrary to appearances, Erika has a strong sense of duty, and was so worried that she decided to appear in the news, on the condition that it would be a live broadcast, since it had a low risk of the report being distorted.

A scenario that a certain TV station tried to make up was that Tatsuya was hiding a relationship with Erika from Miyuki. And he struggled not only with the New Soviet army but also with the American military to protect Erika. The phrase “strange misunderstanding” that she mentioned when dragging Leo and Mikihiko into this appearance was with this scenario in mind.

As mentioned before, there were voices that assumed that Tatsuya was defending a magician who attended the same high school, based on Erika and the others’ behaviour. Although they were few in number, the voices were loud.

However, in terms of the “number” of voices, there were far more favorable ones. Many asked amusing things such as “Who is that beautiful girl?”.

In this way, Erika made a brilliant debut during the interview, and along with it, completed the mission to become a true witness with Leo and Mikihiko... She felt that the main subject was changed, but as long as the original purpose was achieved, it seemed to be a trivial problem.

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Monday, August 12th.

Tatsuya went to school by air car with Miyuki and Lina on board. Manual driving to school was originally prohibited, but he was specially allowed because of the pressing concern of the havoc it would cause if he used a public transport, and also given the fact he is currently on summer vacation.

He came to First High for the first time in a long time to meet his friends who had a hard time yesterday.

The first person he was looking for was in the cafe.

“Erika, thank you for your hard work yesterday. I’m grateful for your help.”

“Really. On Tatsuya-sama’s behalf, thank you Erika.”

Tatsuya and Miyuki thank Erika, who was absentmindedly holding her chin in her hands, for yesterday’s TV appearance.

“You’re welcome.”

Erika replied with a dull smile and a rather tired voice.

“Erika, you don’t seem to be very well, are you feeling sick?”

Lina was worried and asked.

“It’s okay. I’m just a little tired... emotionally.”

“Emotionally?”

Lina didn’t seem to understand, but Tatsuya and Miyuki seemed to.

Even on the school grounds, where she is well known, there were 50% more eyes than usual on Erika. The stare of others outside First High must have been irritating for her.

“You probably should have stayed at home today.”

“That’s not the case.”

Erika shook her head at the words of sympathy from Tatsuya.

“There aren’t many days until the Inter-School Matches.”

With that said, Erika stands up in a hurry.

“See you later.”

Erika hangs a bag with a change of clothes over her shoulder and leaves while waving her vacant hand.

“She is surprisingly diligent.”

Lina muttered surprised, while watching Erika’s back moving away.



The headquarters of the Kyoto branch of the Japanese Magic Association.

A branch heads meeting was held this day bringing together the president, branch managers, and the department heads.

“That boy is becoming excessively arrogant! If we do not take decisive action here, the authority of the Association will be damaged!”

Doumeki, the Kanto Branch manager, emphasised with a red face. It was he who asked for this conference.

The agenda is the application of punishment for Tatsuya.

“But the opponent is a magician of the Yotsuba family. Wouldn’t it be ineffective?”

Even if it’s called punishment, violent means are not allowed even in the magic association.

Expulsion from the association is the heaviest one. If you receive this punishment, you will not be able to use your license as a magician, so you will not be able to get a job that requires magic skills. The use of magic itself is not forbidden, so it doesn’t matter if you can find a customer and work on your own without relying on a license. The same is true if you are hired by a personal connection.

In that respect, Tatsuya is a member of the Yotsuba family and does not need to hunt for a job from the start, and he doesn’t need to rely on a license from the Magic Association as an engineer, soldier, or even a War asset.

Other than expulsion, even “non-application of mutual aid insurance” and “publication of his name as a delinquent magician” will not hinder him any more. Doumeki probably knows that too.

“The power of the Yotsuba family will not be permanent! Even if it doesn’t affect him now, someday it will!”

Doumeki does not break his self-assured attitude. But, if viewed from a different angle it seemed like a bluff.

“Well, it is a fact that Shiba-kun disrespected the Magic Association. Doumeki, as branch manager, seems to have decided on a punishment resolution. What do you think, President? “

“Yeah... that’s right.”

Asked for her opinion, Japan's Magic Association president, Tomitsuka Hisui, spoke in a non-committal way.

Rationally it would be disadvantageous to become antagonists of the Yotsuba family interests.

However, on the emotional side, she has a strong desire to get revenge on Tatsuya, because of the painful events around the Dione Project.

"...Let's decide for the time being whether or not to apply a punishment on the person in question. We can discuss the specifics that would apply later."

"That's right."

"I understand."

"Agreed."

The unintentional implicit premise of punishment in her words made voices of support rise for Hitsui.

"Then, those who agree with the punishment raise their hands."

However, when they were about to make a decision, the emergency call buzzer sounded.

It is an internal line with strict rules, that it will not be used unless it is a case of genuine emergency. Suspending the vote, Hitsui pressed the response button.

"What is it?"

Hitsui doesn't hide her displeasure in her inquiry.

"This is an urgent call from the Minister of Defense."

The answer from the hands-free speaker is returned with a seemingly hurried voice.

"Urgent? I understand."

Hitsui responded to the message and told everyone in the conference room, "I'll leave my seat briefly."

Hitsui, who left the conference room to receive the call, returned in about five minutes.

“What kind of business did the Minister of Defense have?”

A question flies at Hitsui, who sits down with a serious expression.

“...The vote will be canceled and the matter closed.”

“Why?”

Doumeki stands up in anger at the sudden closing declaration from Hitsui.

“...What was the matter with the minister?”

Another executive asked Hitsui nervously.

“The Minister of Defense said, ‘the government recognizes that there was no problem with the actions taken by Tatsuya Shiba at this time.’”

The conference room is quiet.

“I heard that they want the Magic Association to act within the lines of this recognition.”

There was a bang and a knock on the desk.

Kanto branch manager Doumeki is trembling with his hand down.

Looking at him with pity, the other members of the meeting stood up one after another.

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“...Is that so. Thank you... Yes, I’d love to join you if I get the chance.”

In a relaxed position, while holding a classic handset, Maya, who was receiving a voice-only call, laid down the handset with a graceful movement.

“Minister of Defense, madam?”

Hayama, who placed a teacup in front of Maya, asked on the pretense his hostess wanted to speak.

“It seems that he told the Magic Association about the government’s evaluation of Tatsuya-san.”

“Is that so? That’s good.”

“I think the government doesn’t want to anger Tatsuya-san”

“They may be trying to understand Tatsuya-sama’s contact with the United States. Since they don’t know what the agreement was, they are more cautious that Tatsuya-sama and the Yotuba family might leave Japan for the United States.”

“They seem to be caught in a situation where ‘if something looks suspicious, everything else will also look suspicious’.”

With an evil expression, Maya can’t hold back a laugh.

“I wonder if he hurriedly gave a warning to the Magic Association, because they were about to do something.”

“Certainly.”

“Well... this might be excessive help for Tatsuya-san.”

“There are weaknesses in the world for the weak and also for the strong. While Tatsuya-sama is more mature than his age, he is still just eighteen years old. I think the elders should make up for the things he can’t see, even if it would be considered excessive care.”

Maya laughs. This time on both inside and outside.

“Mr. Hayama is the only person who talks about Tatsuya-san like that. If you find something that that child can’t reach, please back him up.”

“Certainly, I will, madam.”

Hayama bowed his head in a reverent and honest manner.

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After Miyuki and Lina parted with Erika, they went to the club activities headquarters, taking a different course of action from Tatsuya.

“...So it’s not a problem for Erika to participate in the Inter-School Matches?”

“Yes, I got the consent of the other schools.”

Igarashi confirms Miyuki’s words.

“Actually, including ours, there are a total of five schools that said ‘then us too’ and will let girls participate.”

“Isn’t that the majority?”

“Maybe it’s natural, but I think girls also wanted to go to the Nine Schools Competition... Oh, I’m sorry.”

Igarashi apologized because he remembered the widespread slander that Tatsuya was the reason the Nine Schools Competition was canceled. He thought that Miyuki might have misunderstood that he was blaming Tatsuya for the cancellation of the Nine Schools Competition.

“What for?”

However, it was an unfounded worry of Igarashi.

Even so, Miyuki had not forgotten the slander on Tatsuya regarding the cancellation of the Nine Schools Competition.

Tatsuya was initially exposed to this backbiting back in May.

So many things have happened since that she didn’t care anymore.

Igarashi didn’t understand that much, but for the time being, he was relieved to know that Miyuki wasn’t angry and stroked his chest.

“Rather, Igarashi-kun.”

“Yes. What is it!”

Called by his name shortly after he relaxed, Igarashi stretched his spine like a recruit being yelled at by a very strict sergeant.

Miyuki tilts her head in response to his excessive reaction.

“What will happen with the rules for female competitors?”

However, Miyuki, who thought it was not necessary to worry, asked about the advice given by Tatsuya on Saturday.

“Rules?”

Igarashi cannot understand the purpose of the question and asks back.

“When a female player participates in Monolith Code at college, she would be allowed to use a defensive armament device with programmed object shield magic. At least the protector should be given preferential treatment.”

Miyuki conveyed the content pointed out by Tatsuya as an answer.

“Oh, that’s right...”

From Igarashi’s reaction, he seemed to know about the college rules.

“I will talk with other schools immediately.”

Igarashi goes to the video conference system as said.

Miyuki and Lina looked at the hurried figure, and then at each other. They went out of the club activities headquarters so as not to get in the way.



At the same time, Tatsuya went to the training forest behind the school building where the Monolith Code practice was being held.

Beyond his line of sight, Erika runs through a magical barrage at a speed that made her almost invisible.

Seemingly a reckless rush, yet Erika hasn’t been hit by a single shot. She still has superb physical control. Tatsuya considered Erika to be the “fastest magician,” and that impression remains to this day.

If you just want to compete for speed and acceleration, there will be many magicians in the world who are faster than Erika. However, Tatsuya’s evaluation of her being outstanding, comes from the fact that she can control her body as she wishes while accelerating herself with magic, that is, she is mastering self-acceleration magic rather than being accelerated by magic.

Her brother Chiba Naotsugu also skillfully uses self-acceleration magic, but in a different version from Erika. The reason why Naotsugu is called “Illusion Blade” is because of his combat technique that finely switches between acceleration and stopping so that he cannot be aimed at by the enemy. Unlike Erika, he is manipulating the technique to the limit of human perception. So to speak, Naotsugu is an illusionist, and Erika is lightning-fast.

However, the present Erika who is dodging a rain of magic before her eyes, is able to shift in an instant. By mastering the technique of switching between acceleration, stopping, and acceleration, she is not letting her opponents in the mock combat aim.

Although it is like a lightning-flash, she can move freely. Although her illusionary step has not yet reached the level of Naotsugu, there was no doubt that Erika was steadily improving.

The students who practice with them are also top-class talented students though. So, Erika’s breakthrough ended in a battle with the student who was guarding the monolith.

After all, it appeared that the rule against cutting someone directly was inconvenient for her.

“Erika, are you okay?”

Tatsuya called to Erika, ignoring the defender that was in a collapsed state, who was struck by Erika’s non-systematic magic and got the illusion of being cut and fell over on his back.

“It hurts... Huh, Tatsuya-kun? Aren’t you with Miyuki?”

Tatsuya gave a wry smile at Erika’s line. After all, there is the misconception that he and Miyuki are glued at the hips. To Tatsuya, that idea wasn’t unpleasant.

“Miyuki went to the club activities headquarters to check the situation. Is there any injury?”

“Not to the bones. Only a bruise. Well, it hurts... but this is a daily occurrence.”

The magic that struck Erika was one that applied direct pressure. It is called a “pressure lens”, which, while targeting the whole body, applies a force to a focus point. Its effect is similar to a heavy local strike.

Erika was laughing with a normal face. But given the magical power Tatsuya saw, it must have been a terrible bruise.

“Is it the groin of the left leg that hurts?”

“Yeah, yes... I won’t let you see it, okay?”

Erika laughs mischievously.

“You don’t need to take off your clothes.”

Tatsuya said so with a calm expression while holding his left hand toward Erika.

The silver bracelet attached to his wrist receives a thought signal from the fully thought-operated CAD “Silver Torus” pendant type controller and initiates an activation sequence in an instant.

The activated magic is “Regrowth”. It looks like a complete cure and restoration, but its substance is a magic of rewinding a limited time. No, is it more accurate to describe it as a magic of “time-lapse modification”? Magic that replaces “the present that has been confirmed by being influenced by external influences in the past” with “the present from a point in the past that had not suffered external influences”.

“Regrowth” acts on Erika.

The bruise on Erika’s left leg, due to the external influence of a magical attack, disappeared as if it had never existed.

“...Thank you. It was bad, right?”

Erika knows of “Regrowth” and its price. The reason why she looked terribly apologetic, was because she imagined feeling the “compensation” that Tatsuya received on herself.

“I’m used to this degree.”

Tatsuya said without pretending to be tough, and extended his right hand to Erika.

With the help of Tatsuya, Erika stands up.

“It seems there is no way to protect against magics with immediate effects.”

“If it was a weak magic I could just use my fighting spirit to blaze through it.”

“Using fighting spirit, you say... even though it is a mistake?”²

² Extended based on original word: “気合いわく” - Fighting spirit; Yell of kendo; In this case means she bear through it with her fighting spirit, but it’s also related to the magic.

Mikihiko, who walks up from his team to check Erika's state, speaks with an astonished voice.

"Because you are a student of the First High Magic High School, shouldn't you say, 'with the pressure of the emitted psions from my body?'"

"It's too long. 'fighting spirit' is quicker."

Erika replies in a light tone.

"I think that direct attacks can be mitigated to some extent with a protector, but you should also prepare counter magic."

In contrast, Tatsuya spoke seriously. His voice had a compelling force.

"Eh...? But I can't use counter-magic?"

Counter-magic is magic that neutralizes magic. "Data Fortification", "Zone Interference", also Tatsuya's "Gram Demolition" and "Gram Dispersion" are classified as counter magic.

"If it's a weak magic, you can blow it away with 'spirit', right? Then there is a possibility. That's right..."

Tatsuya puts one hand on his chin and thinks for a while. Somehow pressured by this appearance, Erika and Mikihiko waited silently for Tatsuya to open his mouth.

"Erika, couldn't you cut the magic sequence with a sword?"

"Huh?"

Erika's face shows that she didn't understand what he said.

"The main body of magic is a magic sequence. If you can destroy the magic sequence, you can nullify the magic."

"...I know that much, but cutting the magic sequence... Where should I cut? The magic sequence isn't on the surface of the body, right?"

"Of course, it's an information dimension."

"How the heck then!?"

“It’s the same as when you use magic. Erika, how do you target your body when you use self-acceleration magic? Are you drawing the magic sequence with your physical hands?”

“Of course, not. It is obviously with a mental image...”

While answering, Erika shouted, “Oh!”.

“It’s the same. Using your intuition to know the position of the enemy’s magic, you can send a magic that is a psion Sword with your “mind’s hand³” and swing it like a blade.”

“I see...”

“I will prepare an activation sequence for this blade that cuts magic sequences. Let me see... Wait for two hours. I will prepare a CAD prototype with the equipment I have with me.”

“Two hours?”

“Ahaha...”

Mikihiko screams in disarray, and Erika leaks a dry laugh.

“Keep practicing until then.”

Tatsuya turned to the school building without worrying about the reaction of the two.

Tatsuya returned to the Monolith Code practice area two hours later, as he had foretold. Behind him is Miyuki and Lina, and Leo, who they met on the way.

“Erika.”

Tatsuya hands Erika a long and slender mobile terminal CAD. Erika frowned, probably because the form of the mobile device that occupied her hands didn’t suit her fighting style.

“The magic for creating a psion blade is perpetually active. Once activated, it will be continuously activated by loopcast until you end it.”

Of course, Tatsuya couldn’t have taken that much into consideration.

“Hmm... Then, is it okay to leave the CAD in my pocket?”

³ “心の手” heart/mind/spirit/vitality/inner strength’s hand.

Tatsuya nods to Erika's question, which erases the wrinkles between her eyebrows.

"It will be a dual wield with a sword with substance and a blade without true form. It may be confusing at first, but I think it's not impossible for Erika to master it."

The corners of Erika's mouth raised at Tatsuya's line of "not impossible".

"If you say that much, I can't help but be enthusiastic."

"...Even if the kitten is flattered he will climb the tree."

It was Leo who muttered.

"What did you say?"

"You misheard. What did you hear?"

Leo feigns ignorance to Erika's immediate reaction.

"Do you intend to play dumb? Kittens even... Han～?"

Erika tries to continue her pursuit, but as she tries to repeat the words herself she stops at loss when she understands the discomforting words of the phrase.

"Then I'll watch from over there."

Leo turned his back to Erika while waving one hand and headed to the waiting area of the standing relief team.

"Let's move away as well"

"Yes, Tatsuya-sama."

"OK."

Miyuki and Lina nod to Tatsuya's words.

"Erika, if you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask."

"Uh, yeah. Thank you."

Erika replied to Tatsuya, but still looked unconvinced.

"Hey, Tatsuya."

Lina speaks to Tatsuya in a whisper at a distance where Erika can't hear her.

“What did Leo say? Usually, its ‘Pigs also climb trees if flattered’, right?”

“Have you ever heard of a kitten climbing a tree getting stuck on a tall branch?”

“Oh, so he meant that?”

It was Miyuki who voiced her understanding.

“I think I’ve heard that. But what is it? Miyuki, don’t just keep to yourself after understanding, tell me.”

“In other words, Lina, like a kitten who climbs a tree without realizing how high he is, until he tries to go down. Saijou-kun warned that if she becomes overconfident in her ability, she will be hurt.”

“Leo also said something embarrassing. I did ensure a good safety margin, but let’s watch the game carefully so that Erika doesn’t overdo it.”

In response to Miyuki’s line, Tatsuya muttered an advice to himself.

Chapter 5

On August 14, Tatsuya and the others returned to Miyakijima. It was in preparation for the next day, the 15th, when a group of engineers from USNA aiming to acquire stellar furnace technology will visit Miyakijima.

Looking at the list of engineers provided by USNA through Jeffrey James, Tatsuya muttered, “They are serious about it.”

He was muttering in the living room with four people in. His voice reached everyone’s ears.

“What is it?”

It was Miyuki who asked that. Lina tilts the cafe au lait mug uninterestedly, and Minami is modest and silent.

“The name of Abigail Stuart is on the list of engineers coming to Japan.”

“Is there something wrong with that person?”

Miyuki asked, Tatsuya turned to Lina.

“Lina, do you know her?”

Miyuki, who interpreted the meaning of the line of sight as “ask Lina,” redirects the question to Lina.

Lina, who returned the mug to the low table, glared at Tatsuya for a moment and replied, “Yes,” pretending to be calm.

“Abby... Dr. Abigail Stuart is a technical advisor to Stars. She specializes in charged particle magic weapons. I’ve been indebted to her.”

“When you talk about charged particle magic weapons... Is that the person who made Lina’s Heavy Metal Burst and Brionac?”

When Miyuki asks with her head tilted, Lina, with her eyes wide, opens her mouth flabbergasted.

“How did you understand that with just those words!?”

“How’ you say... I wonder if it’s such a difficult reasoning.”

Lina sighs loudly at Miyuki, who talks as if nothing had happened.

“Tatsuya isn’t the only one here who is not right in the head...”

“...I’m sorry, Lina. I didn’t hear you well. Could you please say it again?”

Miyuki gave Lina an overpowering impression, with a pure white like powder snow, glittering, soft, dry and cold smile.

“Hiii!”

Lina realizes that she has made a mistake, she cowers with guilt and fear.

“Oh.....”

“Oh?”

Lina feels a cold sweat, and Miyuki strengthens the pressure.



“O.....”

“Oh, what?”

“Oh... I said that Tatsuya wasn’t the only one who thinks strangely fast.”

Lina looks at Miyuki’s face with a praying like expression.

“Oh dear!”

Miyuki’s smile changed from dry snow to fresh flowers.

“Silly Lina. You shouldn’t use “not right in the head”, you know? There are other ways you could have said that.”

“I haven’t improved my Japanese that much.”

“Maybe that’s the case.”

Hearing these words from Miyuki, Lina’s shoulders are relaxed. In fact, she felt so weak that she wanted to lie down on the couch right now. However, if she did it, Miyuki would be suspicious. Lina endured through with all her might.

Miyuki turned to Tatsuya without noticing Lina’s conflict - or pretending to be unaware.

“Onii-sama. Why would such an important person come to Japan just for the stellar reactor technology? No, why would the USNA government allow her to leave the country?”

“Your suspicion is reasonable, but I don’t think you have to worry too much about this.”

It was Lina rather than Miyuki who was most surprised by Tatsuya’s answer.

“Tatsuya, why do you think that?”

“It would be too excessive. If you want to do something, you can’t use an important person like a developer of strategic magic. The cost-benefit tradeoff is too low.”

“What is this cost...”

Lina seems to feel uncomfortable with Tatsuya’s way of thinking, which considers humans as cost calculations. Even at these times, she displays her unsuitability as military personnel.

"It is only a guess, but is Dr. Stuart the type that puts her intellectual curiosity first? Maybe more than her own safety."

"...Yeah, that's true."

Lina's eyes roamed over, and she nodded crisply.

"Abby is a little out of the ordinary... and she's an otaku⁴."

"Otaku?"

It's still used, but Miyuki tilts her head to words that aren't as popular as early in this century.

"Isn't it a geek?"

In this scene, Miyuki uses "geek" to mean "advanced technology enthusiast." If you were a revered enough researcher to be an adviser to Stars, she imagined that an 'Otaku' would refer to a technical Otaku.

"It's a little different, but... I don't think what Miyuki said was wrong, so it's okay to think like that. Abby is obsessed with immature girls."

"...She is a woman, right?"

"Yeah, she's 22 years old... No, I wonder if she's already 23 years old? Anyway, she is a lady in her early twenties."

"So that obsession for immature girls...?"

"Ah, it's not like a lolicon... I think? Anyway, it's not like she has sexually unscrupulous conduct. So, rest at ease there."

"Is that so?"

Miyuki did not pursue further. Looking at her face, one could see that she was not convinced. Even if she asked more questions, she felt that no one would be happy.

The question as to whether there was something behind Abigail's visit to Japan or if she was just coming to see the stellar reactor technology purely for the sake of it was unclear because of the topic of her inclination.

⁴ Otaku- It means a "nerd" in general, and it could be with anything. Like a Car Otaku, for example, is a person who is a "nerd", or has an obsession with cars.



Thursday, August 15, 2097.

This day was never remembered by the world. Tatsuya's meeting with Dr. Abigail Stuart was only occasionally mentioned by later historians as an event in magical engineering.

However, it was a significant encounter for the persons involved.

"Welcome, Dr. Stuart."

"Mr. Shiba, I'm obliged."

When he shook hands with the 155 centimeters tall female scientist, it gave a clear feeling of her lack of physical training. Tatsuya praised her, saying, "So this is the genius who put FAE theory to practical use?"

While shaking hands with Tatsuya, Abigail leaked a sincere sigh of admiration "Is this the genius who solved two of the three great puzzles of weight Systematic magic?".

The "Three Great Puzzles of Weight Systematic Magic" are three subjects that have long been a problem in magic engineering, such as "theoretically possible, but technically impossible". Specifically speaking, "gravity-controlled thermonuclear fusion reactor," "general-purpose flight magic," and "pseudo-perpetual motion by infinite inertia." Of these, Tatsuya has technically put into practical use the "gravity-controlled thermonuclear fusion reactor" and "general-purpose flight magic".

In addition, "FAE theory" or "Free After Execution theory", which is also called "theory of late phenomenon modification" in Japanese, but "FAE theory" is more generally accepted among Japanese scholars.

Specifically, the events that occur as a result of magical modification are events that should not exist in this world, so the bindings of the physical laws are loosened during the immediate aftermath of the modification. Therefore, in an event that is a product of magic, if you make new modifications, you can get the desired result with much less event interference strength than usual."

However, this hypothesis could not be substantiated because the time assumed to be "immediate aftermath" is so short that the expression "immediate" is not exaggerated at all. It was Dr. Abigail Stuart who not only proved the FAE theory for the first time, but also put it into practical use as a magic weapon.

Tatsuya has also succeeded in putting the FAE theory into practical use as the new magic “Baryon Lance” this year. However, this is still only known to the people involved in the Yotsuba family, Katsuto Jumonji who lost to “Baryon Lance”, Saegusa Mayumi and Mari Watanabe who were present during the battle.

However, Tatsuya’s respect for Abigail did not diminish just because he was able to put it into practical use. Tatsuya’s “Baryon Lance” is based on “Brionac” made by Abigail. It’s a new magic that only exists because of her achievements. Tatsuya didn’t misunderstand that.

“Would you like to see the plant immediately?”

“Yes, by all means.”

Tatsuya noticed that Abigail was fidgeting, and gave her wish the highest priority. Skipping the ceremony, he guided her directly from the airport to the stellar furnace plant.

After touring through the plant, Tatsuya once again guided the technicians who came to Japan to a welcome dinner party. The time was already near noon, but when he asked Abigail and others, they said that they didn’t have much appetite due to the time difference, so he left it as a light meal.

“Abby, it’s been a long time.”

Lina was also in attendance at the party. Because of her non-japanese appearance, she was in the middle of the America tech team, but she wasn’t noticed and there was no fuss. Abigail was the only one among them who knew the true identity of “Angie Sirius”.

“Hey, you seem to be doing well.”

No one tries to break into the conversation between Lina and Abigail. Apparently, Abigail is an extraneous presence in the technical team visiting Japan.

If you think about it, that’s not unreasonable. Abigail is only 22 years old at this time. No matter how much of a meritocracy the United States is, it is no wonder that if a young girl in her early twenties is mixed in with a group of people in their forties or older, they will not get used to it. The more intellectually elite, the more the ability of 20 years younger may be recognized rationally but not emotionally. That’s the human who is limited to a life of less than a hundred years.

“Dr., I would like to introduce you. This is my fiance.”

“Nice to meet you, Dr. Stuart. My name is Shiba Miyuki. I am honored to meet you.”

It can be said that it is a natural concern for the host that Tatsuya and Miyuki, who somehow felt the atmosphere of being convoluted, moved to follow.

“Nice to meet you, Princess of Yotuba. I have heard rumors about you.”

Abigail does not seem to be overwhelmed by the beauty of Miyuki. It seems that the relationship with Lina has made her resistant to beautiful girls. However, other technical team members visiting Japan did not do so. Miyuki, Lina, and the two beautiful girls in the world gave off a void area, and for a different reason than before, the table with Abigail was surrounded.

A blank area is formed around Tatsuya, Abigail, Miyuki and Lina.

“That’s better for me.”

Abigail smiled at that and

“I have a message to Mister”

She talked to Tatsuya with a meaningful tone.

“What is it?”

“I heard that they’ve found the person you were looking for.”

Tatsuya didn’t move his expression, but Miyuki, who was listening next to him, stared at Abigail with a surprised face. Even if he didn’t say his name, Tatsuya and Miyuki knew who it was.

“I heard that they were in Los Angeles.”

As Tatsuya speculated, Minoru was on the west coast of USNA.

“But apparently, when I left Boston, the person you were looking for had already left Long Beach in a small cruiser.”

“Do you know the cruiser destination?”

“I haven’t heard that much.”

“Is that so... Thank you.”

“You’re welcome.”

Until the end, Abigail didn't ask who Tatsuya was looking for.

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It was past 5 pm when Tatsuya returned to his villa on the west coast of Miyakijima after meeting all the quota of today's schedule following the welcome party. Miyuki attended only the welcome party.

Tatsuya greeted "I'm home" to Miyuki, and left a thin and light bag with Minami, who was behind Miyuki –as Minami wouldn't move unless he gave the bag–, and settled down on the sofa in the living room.

"Are you tired?"

Miyuki puts a cold drink in front of Tatsuya.

Tatsuya reduced the contents of the glass in half and returned it to the table.

"I'm not that tired, but... USNA technicians are tough. Jet lag normally remains on the day of the arrival."

"Well, it's a daily occurrence for people that stay up all night."

Lina broke into the conversation.

"More than that, what are you going to do now? It seems that you succeeded in making him come out of hiding as planned, but... you haven't been able to track the ship, right?"

When Lina asked Colonel Balance to search for Minoru, she used a code known to be deciphered by the Seven Sages on purpose.

She knew it would be cracked by Raymond that is close to Minoru, and used a normal code.

At Tatsuya's instructions.

Its purpose is exactly what Lina has just said.

Knowing that they were being searched, Minoru escaped from his hideout.

However, as Lina pointed out, the whereabouts after that have become uncertain.

“Will Minoru-kun come back to Japan...?”

Miyuki mutters with a voice that can't hide her anxiety.

Tatsuya predicted that Minoru, who had left his hideout, would return to Japan.

“I think returning home is a dangerous bet for Minoru-kun.”

However, as Miyuki says, if Minoru enters Japan, many magicians, including the ancient practitioner magician who advocates “eradication of malignant spirits”, will aim at him. This time Yakumo will also be on the side of eliminating him. Minoru should be fully expecting that.

“Minoru will come back.”

Tatsuya's answer was an affirmation.

“Minoru won't abandon Minami, just as we won't abandon her. In this regard, I trust Minoru.”

Tatsuya's words had the power to make them believe those predictions would be prophecies.

“That's right... Minoru-kun tried to save Minami-chan by abandoning himself. Regardless of the pros and cons of the means, he will not run away as it is...”

Miyuki's lines were directed at herself, but the words pierced deep, deep, in Minami's chest.

Neither Tatsuya, Miyuki, nor Lina were aware of this fact.

Rather than being careless, rather than being insensitive, it is probably the limit that comes from lack of experience.

Tatsuya is 18 years old. Miyuki and Lina are 17 years old.

No matter how powerful you are

Even if it's an individual that can single-handedly use magic that removes nations.

They were still immature high school students.

Chapter 6

Minoru and Raymond's small cruiser was heading west through the Pacific Ocean at an average speed of fifty knots. The destination is Japan, as Tatsuya expected.

While using "Parade" to hide the ship from the eyes and observation equipment on the ship, Minoru was creating a summoning tile. It is a black talisman used by Zhou Gongjin as a medium to activate the ancient magic of the East Asian continent.

Zhou Gongjin's summoning tile magic is made by an engraved magical circle filled with cinnabar. The talisman is not made of paper. The engraving of letters and magical sigils are made on a thin talisman whose surface has been changed into graphite. Then mercury is poured into it, which reacts with sulfur by using magic processing to make cinnabar. Cinnabar is a magical component that is called "red earth" in Japan and is sometimes equated with "philosopher's stone" in Europe.

Minoru was energetically working on creating a time-consuming summoning tile in preparation for the battle with Tatsuya.

"Minoru."

Called by Raymond as he entered the cabin, Minoru stopped engraving the magic circle, raised his face and urged Raymond to continue with his eyes.

"There is no deviation in the route. The autopilot is operating normally."

There are only two people on this cruiser, Minoru and Raymond. Everything concerning navigation is left to the machine. At this time, there is a risk of typhoons in the western Pacific, but neither of them cares at all.

Rather than being carefree, this is probably the difference in consciousness between those who have magic and those who do not. If you are a high-level magician, some natural disasters are not a threat. Even if they can't prevent the disaster itself, they can do anything to protect themselves and the small boat they are on. Not to mention Minoru, who had the highest magical power among the Ten Master Clans, Raymond was not talented enough to be accepted on the Stars, but he has the ability to achieve top-class results in the high school's magician course.

Since the two of them are parasites, it may seem trivial for them to thoroughly check the risks of disaster.

“If nothing changes, we will reach Japanese waters on the 19th of the local calendar.”

“Raymond’s lines did not include any tone of distress”

“Is it nineteen days... Yeah, the worst-case scenario is likely to be avoided.”

Minoru nodded with a somewhat relieved look.

The ship sinking is, of course, not the worst thing Minoru envisions.

He is worried that Minami’s treatment would not be concluded in time.

According to Minoru’s calculations, the final treatment should have been needed two years later.

However, because Tatsuya is looking for himself — which is an unfounded, but correct, guess by Minoru, that the search was requested by Tatsuya — Minoru misunderstood that the condition of Minami changed suddenly.

Minoru has complete control over the parasites possessed by Minami as an emergency measure. If Minami’s condition worsens, Minoru will know through the parasite that suppresses it.

That is, if he is in the same country.

The reason is unknown at this time, but the telepathy between parasites becomes incomprehensible once Japan’s border is crossed. No matter how close you are, as soon as you cross Japan’s border, you will be cut off. When Minoru tried it with Raymond, one was on the bow and the other was on the tendon on the same ship, as soon as the bow crossed the border of the territorial waters, the telepathy was cut off.

To tell the truth, this is a phenomenon common not only to parasites but also to demons — spiritual life beings. There is no definite answer as to whether those who are not deceased are affected by the “borders” that even the defined human beings tend to ignore. A strong hypothesis explains that the “border” was originally given the nature of a barrier to prevent disasters caused by the demons from reaching its own country. But he doesn’t know whether it is true or not, because it cannot be confirmed by conventional experiments.

Regardless of the reason, Minoru who escaped from Japan does not know the current state of Minami. Minoru didn't have the option of not returning to Japan to confirm Minami's condition.

Speaking of options, Minoru's true intention was to enter Japan by air. He is impatient to return to Japan as soon as possible. However, Minoru and Raymond, who could not get the cooperation of the America military, so they could not prepare to falsify the immigration inspection at the airport.

Three days left until August 19th, Japan time. By then, Minoru endured impatience by persuading himself that it is unlikely that Minami's condition would deteriorate enough to be lethal.

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The morning of August 16th.

Tatsuya was receiving Hyogo's report in the entrance to the rooftop of a building, that is a secondary residence of Miyakijima.

"Then, Hyogo-san, I will leave them in your hands."

"Please leave it to me. Miyuki will arrive in Tokyo with the utmost care."

Behind Hyogo is a small VTOL with a ducted fan built into the main wing, and Miyuki, Lina, and Minami are already on board.

From today, Tatsuya and Miyuki will act separately.

Since Tatsuya is now the technical guide for the stellar furnace, he cannot leave Miyakijima, where some of the plants have started operation.

On the other hand, Miyuki had to return to Tokyo as the President of the First High's Student Council. Also, there is the fact of the Inter-School Matches between the nine schools being imminent.

That's why they're going to split up.

Hyogo gets into the cockpit and the electric motor lift fan VTOL quietly takes off.

From the roof, Tatsuya waved his hand back at Miyuki waving hers through the window.

It was noon when Hyogo returned to Miyakijima. He returned at this time because not only he sent Miyuki and the others to his home in Chofu, but also because he sent Miyuki and Lina to First High with the self-propelled car.

He escorted Miyuki as per Tatsuya's instructions. The reason being, of course, to protect Miyuki, but there was another purpose in making Hyogo do it instead of the resident driver on the Chofu building.

"Tatsuya-sama, I have retrieved the ordered items."

Having said that, Hyogo had nothing in his hand. Instead, next to him was a figure in a maid outfit.

[Master, please give me an order.]

The figure was Pixie, a 3H (Humanoid Home Helper), who had a parasite.

Tatsuya had ordered Pixie to help the Student Council in the Student Council room. Pixie obeyed this order and did not move from the Student Council room. While having a parasite and the capacity to act on her own volition, she adhered to Tatsuya's orders.

If it was Tatsuya himself who summoned her, it may be natural for Pixie to think that she will get some new work on his side.

"First, take care of the housework."

[Happily.]

Pixie returned the said words with telepathy.

This is not related to the fact that the 3H series was originally made to assist with household chores. The core of the idea of the fixed parasite to Pixie is the desire to "devote everything to Tatsuya", so Tatsuya's personal care must be the desire of the parasite integrated with Pixie.

"And one more thing. If you detect the invasion of parasites, let me know."

[Does that mean an invasion from abroad?]

"That's right. I'll take the job of replenishing the consumed psions."

[Really!? I'm so happy...!]

Pixie's body cannot produce psions on its own. Therefore, the psions consumed by the activity of the main body of the parasite must be replenished from an outside source.

Due to the sequence of events leading to its birth, Honoka was the largest supplier of her psions, but Tatsuya said he would fulfil that role today's onward. So, Pixie was ecstatic.

"That's it for now."

[.....As you wish, Master.]

Even in ecstasy, she never missed Tatsuya's words, and Pixie bowed with a smile. Tatsuya had forbidden her to make facial expressions with psychokinesis, but Pixie was in enough high spirits to the point of forgetting it.



August 19th, 10 am.

"Minoru, were entering Japanese waters."

Raymond calls Minoru's attention while looking at a nautical chart with GPS.

The fact that parasites can communicate with each other once they enter the border means that the parasites in Japan will detect Minoru and Raymond secret entry in the country.

When Minoru left the country, there were no parasites left in Japan. It is unlikely that a new parasite has emerged in Japan. But if there is a parasite, if he doesn't disguise himself with Parade, they'll almost certainly find where he is.

However, if he closes the parasite channel, he will not be able to find out how Minami is doing. Is Minami's condition worsened enough to require immediate attention, or is there still time left? It is a factor that will determine Minoru's course of action. There is no option to act without knowing the current situation.

Minoru gave up that it was unavoidable that his entrance would be known. At any rate, he decided to instantly read the current state of minami and deploy a "Parade" without a break, and hide their whereabouts...

"Ten, Nine, Eight, Seven..."

Raymond was making the count down over the territorial waters to measure the timing.

To Minoru it would be a matter of seconds. Fortunately, Tatsuya is not a parasite. Even if you keep Parasider watching for their invasion, there will be an unavoidable time lag in the process of receiving the report. Minoru's plan was to activate Parade before Tatsuya can activate the "Eyes of the Spirit" toward him. This way he will be spared from being discovered for the time being.

"...Three, two, one, zero!"

When Raymond shouts "zero", Minoru opens up his magical perception in an instant.

Minoru killed Stars Zoe Spica at the Pearl and Hermes Base and magically captured and ruled a parasite that had escaped from the ashes of the burnt corpse.

The chain of control was once broken when Minami crossed the border and entered Japan, but the magic that binds parasites has not yet faded. Minoru traced the magical branding signal, given as a sign of enslavement, to confirm the state of the parasites blocking Minami's magical calculation area.

(Was it just unfounded worry?)

Minoru was truly relieved. The parasite embedded in Minami remains completely inactivated, as it was when they parted ways up.

The seal condition is also fine.

It was too much to think that Minami's condition had suddenly changed.

If you know that there is no reason to stay defenseless, you should not remain. Minoru immediately pulled himself together and carefully activated the "Parade" as planned.

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[Master!]

A tense voice, reverberated in Tatsuya's mind. It was Pixie's telepathy, which he ordered her to use to report in case there is any change of the situation.

"I'm sorry, doctor. I'll leave for a minute."

Tatsuya was inspecting the construction process of the Stellar Furnace with the America Technical Team. While the technical lecture is over, apart from being the host, Tatsuya was just accompanying them.

“I understand. Don’t worry about us.”

At Tatsuya’s notice, Abigail nodded happily without prying into the situation. As a technical advisor to Stars, she may be accustomed to sudden events.

Tatsuya left the assembly plant and walked under the midsummer sun, taking out a small transceiver from his pocket and opened a call line to Pixie.

“Did you catch a hold of it?”

[I sensed the parasite waves on the western sea. I lost sight of it in an instant, but there is no doubt about it.]

“Do you know the detailed position?”

[Off the southeastern coast of Shima Peninsula]

“In the Shima Peninsula...”

At the end of June, Raymond Clark entered the country from the Kansai International Airport with a forged passport. Perhaps there is some kind of smuggling route around there.

If they enter from the Kii Peninsula inland, they would be in Minoru hometown. There would also be secret passages a stranger wouldn’t be aware of.

(That’s because he can’t rely on the Kudou family...)

The Kudou family helped Minoru escape in the middle of last month. This time, they may go to Minoru’s side again. But, if he tries to use the Kudou family, there is a probability that information about him will leak out.

(It’s not that I can rely on the Futatsugi family, but...)

The home of the Futatsugi family is Ashiya. If he lands from Osaka Bay or the Seto Inland Sea, the Futatsugi family may be able to seize his whereabouts.

(...Does he pretend to stop for now?)

With that in mind, Tatsuya rejected the idea he had in mind.

If the reason why Minoru returned to Japan is as Tatsuya thinks, he should come in contact from the other side. If he puts his hand out badly and withdraws to a hideout like Aokigahara Forest in Fuji, it will be a waste of time. Yakumo said, “I don’t think you need to worry about it for now” but he doesn’t know when Minami’s condition will deteriorate. Waste of time is not desirable in this situation.

“Continue to monitor in passive mode.”

[As you wish, Master]

Tatsuya only ordered Pixie to do this.

◇◇◇

On August 20, Minoru and Raymond landed in Kobe. The destination is the mansion in Nankinmachi, where Minoru hid them when Raymond smuggled with Regulus last time.

“Isn’t this place known anymore?”

Raymond, who was brought to the back of the mansion, asks anxiously.

Minoru entered the mansion through the back door without any air of care.

A servant, who remembered when Minoru showed his emblem of the head of the house before, welcomes Minoru and Raymond with a reverent attitude. Minoru left his luggage with his servant and settled down in a well-cleaned study chair.

“The safest place on the battlefield seems to be the place where the last cannonball fell.”

Then he talks to Raymond, who has left his body in a wicker chair in the corner of the room.

About ten seconds later, Raymond realized that it was the answer to his concerns in front of the back door.

“Do you mean to outwit the belief that you can’t come back to the hideout where your trace has been lost?”

“I don’t think the battlefield story I mentioned earlier can be relied on. I think it’s okay for the time being. There were no police officers or magicians staking out, and I’m not going to stay here for a long period this time.”

Minoru turns his face out the window.

His eyes were on the eastern sky.

“That’s right. I’m not going to stay long...”

Minoru once again muttered, this time like a soliloquy.

Chapter 7

Friday the morning of August 23rd.

When Miyuki left her room after changing into her uniform, Minami was unusually sitting on a chair at the dining table in a daze.

“Minami-chan?”

“Oh, Miyuki-sama. Good morning.”

Minami tries to hurriedly get up.

But in the middle of the movement, she returned to the chair as if her legs lost strength.

“Minami-chan!? What’s wrong!?”

Miyuki screams and runs up.

“That’s okay... I just stood up too fast.”

As Minami tries to stand up again, Miyuki holds her body with her arms under her armpits.

“Don’t push yourself! Come here, for now.”

In that position, Miyuki made Minami sit on the sofa in the living room.

“Medical call!”

Then, with her hands on Minami’s body, she called out to the home automation.

“This is the infirmary. Miyuki-sama, is there something wrong with your body? “

In response to that voice, the medical staff resident in the building asks back from the speaker on the wall.

“It’s not with me. Something strange has happened with Sakurai Minami’s body. Please come to the room immediately.”

“We will go immediately.”

The medical staff immediately obeyed Miyuki's orders.

◇◇◇

"So, what is Minami's condition?"

"Mild anemia. The doctor thinks it's just summer heat exhaustion"

"Is that so....."

Tatsuya, who received a phone call from Miyuki at the laboratory of Miyakijima, patted his chest when he heard it.

"It seems that hospitalization is not necessary. She is resting in bed now."

"That's right. It must be not only physical but also excessive mental stress... Minami will need a rest."

Minami has been working hard ever since she came back. Before that, she had a two-week life on the run. The process of being taken away by Minoru must have been a great stress.

It was a situation where it wouldn't be strange to get sick. Given that Minami has a bomb called overheating in the magical calculation area, she should have been forced to rest earlier.

"I won't go to school today and will continue to watch over Minami-chan."

"I'll return soon, then."

"Eh? And what about your work?"

"The guidance is over. We will have meetings as the occasions demand."

Tatsuya's words were not a lie. The guidance for the technical team dispatched from USNA ended yesterday. All he has to do is have them visit him freely and explain what they didn't understand at a meeting.

"I see."

Miyuki in the display gave a relieved expression. Even though Lina was at her side, she must have been lonely in Tatsuya's absence.

"I will be waiting for you, Onii-sama."

On the screen, Miyuki thanked him politely.

◇◇◇

Minami's condition was informed to Minoru in Kobe through the parasite possessing her.

"...Minoru, are you okay?"

By the time the sun leaned west, Minoru was completely worn out. Raymond was so worried that he called out.

The frozen parasite does not have the ability to communicate. Only the psion activity of the object of possession, which is Minami, is transmitted through the technique that binds the parasite.

So, he doesn't know the detailed symptoms.

For that reason, Minoru had to fight impatience since morning.

Even at the risk of his location being found out, he still wants to know the details of Minami's condition.

Minoru does not intend to run away from Tatsuya forever. However, there is no point in returning to Japan if they are just killed or if they are captured and sealed. If he ends up getting killed, he ought to be at Minami's side.

"...I've decided, Raymond."

Minoru raised his face and smiled at Raymond.

"Let's move in this evening."

When he heard the words, Raymond opened his eyes.

"Then, is finally the time?"

“Yeah. I will send a letter of challenge to Tatsuya-san tomorrow.”

Minoru nodded with a firm determination.

◇◇◇

Tatsuya arrived at the Chofu building before noon. He was welcomed home when he got off the Air-car on the rooftop heliport. Minami was sleeping in the top floor residence assigned as her residence.

She got up after 5 pm.

“Minami, it’s okay for you to get up already?”

The first person to speak to was Lina, who had been in the living room of Tatsuya and Miyuki house since lunch, worried about Minami. Lina was also given a residence on the top floor apart from Minami’.

“Yes, it’s okay. I’m sorry I made you worry.”

Minami bowed deeply to Tatsuya and Miyuki, following Lina.

“Don’t overdo it, Minami-chan. If you’re feeling a little out of sorts, just be honest with me.”

“As you wish.”

Minami bows again to Miyuki’s words.

“Anyway, I’m glad it wasn’t a matter of grave concern.”

“Tatsuya-sama. I’m really sorry for disturbing your work.”

“You don’t have to worry about it. It is nothing I could remediate in a day or two.”

Tatsuya dared to respond with an overconfident attitude to Minami, who showed a guilty face.

“Wow. Somehow, it is annoying that it does not sound presumptuous.”

Lina puts down the tea in a hateful tone.

Miyuki is the first to laugh, which spreads to Lina and Minami.

◇◇◇

Tatsuya returned to Chofu from Miyakijima because he was worried about Minami in the first place, but that was not the only reason.

The situation he expected did not happen on the day he returned home.

His prediction was right the next evening.

“Tatsuya-sama. I have received an email.”

“To me?”

There is no surprise in Tatsuya’s voice asking Minami, who announced the arrival of the email. Rather, it seems like he was expecting some kind of contact.

“Yes.”

“Open it for me.”

The email arrived at Tatsuya’s home address, not his personal address.

Tatsuya ordered Minami to open it on the wall display in the living room instead of reading it in his room.

The ciphertext was automatically decoded and displayed on the screen.

Short plaintext and a map.

Tatsuya, Miyuki and Minami who were gathering in the living room saw it at the same time. Lina was still in her room.

“Minoru-kun!?”

It was Miyuki who made a surprise voice.

The sender was Minoru.

Minami has her eyes wide open and her mouth closed with both hands.

Only Tatsuya was calm. It's as if he knew Minoru would contact him.

No, it's not "as if". Tatsuya has been waiting for a message from Minoru.

"Is it 22 o'clock tomorrow?"

The email was short enough to be read at a glance.

It says, "I will be waiting for you at the East Fuji Exercise Area at 22:00 on August 25th. Kudou Minoru", and the attached map marked one point of the exercise area.



24th, Saturday night.

Minoru and Raymond were boldly in a hotel's twin room at the East Fuji Exercise Area. They didn't sneak in. With Minoru's magic, he did impersonate another person and stayed proudly. This is a hotel where defense officers stay, so high-level measures against anti-camouflage magic were taken, but even so, with Minoru's camouflage inherited the skills of modern magic and ancient magic from the 9th Lab, and the knowledge of the style of ancient magic of the continent from Zhou Gongjin, they couldn't detect him.

"Minoru, why did you do such a reckless thing?"

Raymond, who was pretending to be enjoying the thrill until he was guided to the room, locked the room, confirmed that there were no surveillance cameras or wiretapping devices, took a breath and asked Minoru.

"This hotel was offered to athletes' accommodation during the nine-school game."

"Heh..."

Raymond knew what the nine-school game was. Minoru wasn't able to play in the Nine Schools Competition for health reasons.

"I wanted to stay there once. I'll never have this opportunity again."

"...That's right. Then it's fine."

Raymond also knows what Minoru intends to do tomorrow. What kind of determination is hidden behind the words "never again"?

With that in mind, he didn't feel like blaming him for being a bit unreasonable.

"I wasn't suspicious of anyone. Tatsuya doesn't think we're hiding in a place like this."

Minoru didn't say anything to Raymond, who said lightly, but responded with a fleeting smile.



Tatsuya did not keep the "challenge letter" sent from Minoru a secret.

"...Then, are you going alone?"

Maya asked Tatsuya, who reported the call from Minoru and asked her not to interfere with it.

"No, I'm going to take Miyuki and Minami. And also Lina, as Miyuki escort."

"Will Lina be okay alone?"

Even though Maya was voicing some doubts, she was not that worried.

"No problem. Minoru has no more pieces to move."

There was no basis for this assumption, but Tatsuya was sure of it.

"that's probably true, isn't it?"

Maya didn't object either.

"I understand. Then Kudou Minoru's matter will be left to Tatsuya-san. However, make sure you finish it this time."

Instead, Maya reminded him with a strong tone.

"Acknowledged."

Tatsuya accepted the condition without any pretense.

After talking to Maya, Tatsuya immediately made the next call.

This time it's a voice-only call, not a vidphone.

“Hello”

A classic response phrase that flows out of the speaker after the ringing tone is repeated three times.

“It's Tatsuya. Is it Master on the other side?”

“Yeah, what is it?”

On the other side of the phone is Yakumo.

“The Parasites Kudou Minoru and Raymond Clark have entered the country.”

“Didn't that happen Monday?”

“Where you aware?”

Tatsuya is not surprised. It's no wonder Yakumo has the magical means of detecting the invasion of parasites, as he used Pixie to find the reaction of Minoru and his colleagues.

Rather, it would be strange to think that Yakumo could not do it.

“It looks like it's out of sight now. Did you want me to find them for you? “

“You don't mean that you did take care of it?”

“No. Their whereabouts are unclear to me for now.”

“Even if you don't know where he is now, if you want to find it, you can find it. As expected of Master.”

It wasn't flattery, Tatsuya expressed sincere admiration.

However, his tightened expression soon returns.

“But this time I don't need you to tell where Minoru is.”

In advance, Tatsuya confided to Yakumo the contents of the email received from Minoru.

“Are you going to take his challenge? You don’t need me to look for him because he’ll be showing up from the other side?”

“That’s right.”

“What about Minami-kun? Are you going to take her with you, by any chance?”

Tatsuya had been seen through.

Tatsuya felt that way, but it didn’t bother him. This time it was a case where he didn’t have to be wary even if they could see what he was thinking.

“I will take her and bring to an end on this.”

“Do you mean to destroy Kudou Minoru?”

“...Master. Can you leave Minoru’s matter to me?”

Tatsuya avoided answering Yakumo’s question.

“Hmm...”

It’s a voice-only call, so he can’t see what expression Yakumo is making. However, it turned out that the voice alone gave Tatsuya a hint of an expression that looked like he was trying to grasp Tatsuya’s true intentions.

“I promise results that will satisfy both Master and His Excellency Toudou.”

“So, you are saying to me not to interfere this time, right?”

“That’s right.”

“Ok, then.”

Contrary to expectations, Yakumo’s answer came back immediately.

On the contrary, Tatsuya had a time lag in the reaction.

“.....Thank you.”

“However, it’s hard to convince that people. Though, I think His Excellency Todo will understand.”

“That people” is known by Tatsuyaa as the “hidden masterminds of the nation” who Yakumo mentioned after the battle, which he had to stand up as an obstacle and fight seriously against Tatsuya, who was chasing Minoru and Minami who were about to leave Yokosuka.

Tatsuya thinks that, perhaps, that “hidden masterminds” and the sponsor of the Yotsuba family are the same people. Aside from the power that made Yakumo say “about the second of this country, “ it is difficult to ignore their intentions.

Still, Tatsuya had no intention of changing the ending he envisioned.

“It’s okay. Please, leave it to me.”

He had no hesitation in spouting big words here.



“Is it tomorrow? It does feel a bit sudden, right?”

Maya raised her face to the voice heard from diagonally above.

Perhaps he misunderstood her gaze, Hayama threw away the contents of the teacup in front of Maya and poured a new cup.

“You don’t oppose it, do you?”

“You mean Tatsuya-sama fighting with Kudou Minoru alone?”

“He will also be taking Miyuki-san and Lina-san along.”

“Didn’t madam consider that Tatsuya-sama will not allow Miyuki-sama to help?”

In response to Hayama’s question, Maya simply agreed with “Yes.”

“It is unlikely that Tatsuya will fall behind Kudou Minoru, but I wonder if he can escape again?”

In the meantime, Maya confesses her concerns to Hayama in the form of a question.

“I think Tatsuya is also very vigilant about that point. Bringing Miyuki-sama may be a countermeasure.”

“...Hayama-san.”

There was a short time before Maya said the following words.

“Yes, can I do something?”

“In the unlikely event that the parasites escape, the Senate’s mood would be the worst, right?”

“We’ll probably have to spend a great deal of time and energy before it gets better.”

The “Senate” mentioned by Maya is not the legislative body that existed in the early Meiji era, before the opening of the Imperial Diet. Of course, it is not a successor institution and has nothing to do with the “Genrou⁵” who was an unconstitutional institution.

It is an unofficial secret organization that sponsored the Yotuba family in exchange for the capture and disposal of magicians who committed heinous crimes and the magicians who were planning heinous crimes. That is the Senate, and Toudou Aoba is one of them.

As a matter of fact, the Yotuba family does not have interest in the Ten Master Clans. It doesn’t matter what the Magic Association says. And the Japanese government is too afraid of the Yotuba family to interfere with them.

The Yotuba family was concerned only with the will of the Senate.

“Our role is to deal with humans who have fallen into the darkness of the devil, and non-human demons are also in this scope.”

“Parasite is a human-mutated monster, so it is included within the scope of action of the Yotuba family.”

“Manager Hayama, is that your opinion as an agent of the Senate?”

Maya turns a keen eye to Hayama.

It’s a kind of gaze directed to Hayama that is never shown in front of other servants.

The fact that Hayama was an agent dispatched from the Senate to monitor the Yotuba family was a secret that only the head of the Yotuba family could know.

⁵ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genr%C5%8D>

“There is no need to be so formal. Please use the words a madam would use to her butler.”

However, after many years of hardship, Hayama himself now puts more emphasis on himself as a butler of Maya than as an agent of the Senate. The answer Hayama told Maya with his unchanging reverence was his true intentions.

“Right.....”

Maya softens her gaze.

“Then let us know what you think, as the lead butler of the Yotsuba family. Should we or should we not move tomorrow?”

“Given the existing situation. I think it’s okay to surround it with a wide berth so that it doesn’t get in the way of Tatsuya-sama.”

“Siege the ambush..... Good, let’s do that. Hayama-san, can you please make arrangements.”

“To every branch family?”

“Please speak to Yuka-san only.”

Maya didn’t hesitate and ordered that only the Tsukuba family should do anything.

“Understood.”

Hayama bowed and left Maya’s study to fulfill his master’s orders.

Chapter 8

Sunday night, August 25th.

The place Minoru determined was the field used as the Monolith Code grassfields stage of the nine-school game until last year, and it was the planned place for the game in the upcoming Inter-School Matches.

The ground leveling has already been completed. There are no plans to build a spectator seat in this year's Inter-School Matches, so all there is to do is install the monoliths.

Today is Sunday, so the venue has not yet been set up. Moreover, it is almost 10 pm. There was no one around.

Although, this is on the grounds of the Defense Forces training ground. There were fences and surveillance equipment in place. The guards also patrol regularly. It wasn't supposed to be an easy place to enter.

However, the self-driving car that Tatsuya is driving not only passes through the gate of the exercise area without being asked to show an ID, but also passes through with a near-face pass, and there was not a single soldier on patrol from the parking lot to the grassy field where he was invited.

"Hey, how weird is that?"

In response to Lina voicing her bad feeling,

"Onii-sama, this is..."

Miyuki spoke to Tatsuya with a grim expression.

"Yeah, it must be Minoru's doing."

Lina stares at Tatsuya, astonished.

"Do you mean he is manipulating with Mental Interference magic!? With a range so wide!?"

“The Zhou Gongjin in Minoru was good with an East Asian continental Ancient Magic called Kimon Toukou, that derails the sense of direction. That magic does not target someone specifically, but rather any unspecified opponent has his or her own sense of direction thrown off. Perhaps that’s the application of it, so that the security soldiers don’t perceive us.”

“You say ‘unspecified opponent’, is that really possible?”

“Isn’t it the case with your Parade? The effects of disguising an information body to an observer don’t have to be limited to just one person.”

“That’s right ... Then at the gate!? Didn’t the gate sentry know us.? ”

“That would be another magic. I think there was some kind of suggestion that they wouldn’t have any doubts about letting us in. The permission I had prepared was wasted.”

Tatsuya had a permit to legally enter the base adjacent to the training ground. But it eventually became unnecessary. ...Well, for Tatsuya, it wasn’t too disappointing because he got it in half a day.

There didn’t seem to be anything more that Lina wanted to ask about. The four remained silent and stopped at the place designated by the challenge letter.

There was almost no need to wait.

Minoru and Raymond appear from the other side of the darkness in the opposite direction of Tatsuya’s walking path.

About 5 meters. Minoru stopped at a distance a little far to talk, and for a short time of less than a second, of the three standing diagonally to the left of Tatsuya, Minoru’s eyes were fixed on Minami, immediately turning his eyes back to Tatsuya.

“Tatsuya-san. I’m glad you came, even though I did call you yesterday.”

“I didn’t have the option of not coming, because I also have business with you.”

Tatsuya looks back and glances at Minami.

It was a movement of the eye that was easy to understand, although, maybe it was on purpose.

“Of course, I think you know what business it is.”

“Yes, I understand. Do you want to ask me to remove the parasite that is blocking Minami’s magic calculation area?”

“Yes. Minoru, you said you wouldn’t insert a parasite into her, unless Minami accepted on her own initiative.”

Minoru smiled in an eerie way at Tatsuya’s denunciation.

“The parasite that prevents Minami from overheating is completely dormant. Unless ordered, she won’t become a parasite.”

“Do you want me to believe in your self-control?”

Minoru’s smile becomes even more eerie. That smile, which suited the darkness of the night, had a beauty that was unintentionally captivating.

It was a completely inhuman beauty.

“You can’t trust it, right? To be honest, I can’t trust 100% myself.”

“Minoru, you...”

“Tatsuya wouldn’t understand. You, who is allowed to live with your loved one.”

“Minoru-kun, you are...”

Miyuki leaks a sad mutter.

“I don’t think that Tatsuya-san’s life has been smooth sailing. I spent a quarter of the year in a sickbed and the other three quarters of the year not being allowed to do anything dangerous. So I think you may have had some sad experiences that I couldn’t even imagine. Otherwise, I wouldn’t imagine that you would fight the world like that.”

The smile disappears from Minoru’s face, and is replaced by an expression like he swallowed something incredible flashes through his beauty.

“But Tatsuya is not alone. I don’t know your past, but in your present and future you are not alone.”

“...Even though you too were not alone?”

Minoru shook his head at Tatsuya’s question.

“I know. I wasn’t alone. Even now, I have friends who are willing to risk death by following me.”

Minoru let out a self-deprecating laugh.

“It’s no one’s fault that it’s come to this. This is the result of my own choices. I don’t think it was wrong. It may not have been the best to be a parasite, but I still think it was the right choice.”

Tatsuya did not point out that the “right choice” had the tragic consequence of killing his grandfather.

“It’s foolish rightness.”

He just said so with a cold voice.

“From Tatsuya-san’s point of view, I suppose. You are a strong person. You can understand the weakness of hanging on to your foolishness, but you cannot sympathize with it.”

That’s not true, Tatsuya thought.

—He was just not allowed to be weak.

However, he just thought but didn’t say it. That was probably not something suitable to say here.

“And I’m so weak, that I’m not confident that I can keep self-control over my true feelings. I don’t know if I can keep up with the desire to be with her and make her the same as me.”

“Do you think you are forgiven if you are weak?”

Tatsuya asks with a harsh voice.

“I don’t think weakness is a justification.”

Minoru weakly shook his head from side to side.

“I’m just acknowledging the facts.”

“That’s even more so. Remove the parasite that is possessing Minami right now.”

“What do you do after removing it? If the hibernating parasite that serves as a lid is removed, Minami-san will be at risk of overheating the magical calculation area again.”

Minoru asks in a slightly cynical tone and seriously gazes at Tatsuya.

“Even if treatment is not possible, the erosion can be stopped, and certainly, we will develop a cure before it’s too late.

Tatsuya answered “certainly” and his gaze had an unwavering light.

“Is that so?”

Hearing Tatsuya’s answer, which was more firm than expected, Minoru muttered with an expression that looked like a Noh mask.

Immediately after that, the eerie smile returns to his face.

“There are two ways to do this. Needless to say, I order the Parasite to leave Minami-san, the Parasite’s hibernation is momentarily released, but since it’s under my control, Minami-san won’t suffer erosion.”

If Minoru intended to do so, he would have removed the parasite from Minami before explaining it. In other words, he has no intention of adopting this first method.

“And the second is to kill me. In this case, the parasite will be released, but since it is weakened by the forced hibernation, Minami is unlikely to suffer erosion. Sorry for the intuitive numbers, but I don’t think there is a sufficient 10% percentage of the probability of erosion to start. At most 5%.”

If he kills Minoru, Tatsuya’s wish will come true. In other words, Minoru himself is telling Tatsuya to kill him, as if he was calmly telling a story.

“Tatsuya, a second.”

Lina, who had been silently watching the confrontation between Tatsuya and Minoru, tug Tatsuya’s sleeve twice. Tatsuya shifted his attention to Lina without turning his face.

“I can’t believe it. It’s not a trap, but it’s a way to turn Minami into a parasite.”

Lina whispers in a small voice.

“It’s not a lie. Even if Minami becomes a parasite, it won’t mean anything to Minoru if he dies.”

Tatsuya answers Lina loud enough for Minoru to be able to hear.

When Minoru heard those words, his expression distorts for a moment.

But soon, it regains its neat appearance.

“That’s it. Tatsuya-san, let’s begin.”

“—Let’s Kill each other.”

A bursting sound occurs immediately after.

Electric light bursts right in front of Tatsuya.

The sparks disappeared without growing into a lightning strike.

Minoru’s “Spark” and Tatsuya’s “Gram Dispersion”.

“You three fall back! Lina, I leave Miyuki and Minami to you.”

“Yes!”

At Tatsuya’s instructions, Miyuki pulled Minami’s hand and fell back,

“Leave it to me!”

Lina stands in front of Miyuki and Minami.

On the other hand, there was no exchange of words between Minoru and Raymond.

Raymond jumped out of the way as Minoru casted magic.

Psion light is emitted from Minoru’s whole body. It’s a sign that high-powered magic has just been used.

But nothing happened.

If you look closely, a faint psion light is fluttering around Tatsuya. The psions in the air are being repelled at the boundary of 50 cm from Tatsuya’s body.

Psion is permeable into matter. Repelling means that a magical force field that acts on psions is deployed around Tatsuya.

However, there was no magical information structure there. It is a fact that is obvious to magicians who have the perceptual power to recognize the existence of information bodies, even if it is not a full-fledged “Elemental Sight”.

“Is it a perfectly homogeneous, high-density layer of psions...?”

What Lina instinctively said was wrapped around Tatsuya’s body.

“And I haven’t noticed a single leak of psions. This is the completed form of the psion’s armor, Contact-Type Gram Demolition, isn’t it? Onii-sama...”

Miyuki spills a mutter of awe and euphoria. It is not simply a structure-less, Contact-Type Gram Demolition that uses chaos as armor, but a counter-magic defense created with high skill.

“Direct attacks are ineffective...”

Involuntarily Minoru leaks a mutter. He is unaware that he is speaking out loud. That’s probably how shocked he was with Tatsuya’s version of Contact-Type Gram Demolition.

Tatsuya used this skill in an actual battle for the first time in mid-July when he confronted Yakumo. This is the first sight of this counter magic for Minoru. Due to his specialization on “Decomposition” and “Regrowth”, Tatsuya had a disadvantage in defense magic. In particular, it was difficult to defend against magic that acts from a close distance. Minoru must have thought that was the strategy point of defeating Tatsuya.

The magic that Minoru has used now is “Jintai Hakka”. It is very similar to “Human Ignition”, but it is a different magic.

It is the same in that it causes an oxidation phenomenon in the sense of “taking electrons”. However, while “Human Ignition” destroys tissues by rapid compounding with oxygen, “Jintai Hakka” is a magic that destroys cells at the molecular level by robbing the electrons used for intermolecular bonds. “Jintai Hakka” is superior in terms of difficulty and power, but it is the same in that it attacks the opponent’s body directly with magic. This point is what’s important in this battle.

Since it acts directly on the body, damage will still be applied even if the magic is disabled on the way.

After becoming a parasite Minoru’s magic activation speed is comparable to Tatsuya. If Tatsuya uses the version of “Gram Dispersion” that constructs a magic after recognizing the opponent’s magic sequence, when Minoru uses “Jintai Hakka”, Tatsuya would try to decide the match before he became unable to prevent the activation. Minoru’s aim was to bring out that impatience.

However, this strategy will not work if his defense is strengthened in advance with the Contact-Type Gram Demolition. On the contrary, the current state of offense and defense caused Minoru to be impatient.

Tatsuya rushes towards Minoru.

Minoru launched a variety of magical attacks while retreating with “Leaping”.

However, not only the magic that directly interferes with the body, but also magics that attacks using modified physical phenomena such as lightning, heat, cold air, compressed air, etc., if the activation point is within 50 cm from Tatsuya’s body, it is blocked by the high density psions and ends inactivated.

So all the magic that he can use needs to come from a point more than 50 centimeters away. However, the short distance of 50 centimeters is a sufficient safe distance for Tatsuya.

So, if he tries to release a powerful magic outside that 50 cm range, he may give an indication before projecting the magic sequence and will end up nullified by “Gram Dispersion”.

He got stronger. Minoru thought so.

It's getting intense

Tatsuya's fighting power has improved by one level... No, not just one level. Even though only two months have passed since their direct confrontation at the hospital where Minami was hospitalized. He was strong even at that time, but now he's clearly more.

With this short offense, Minoru realized that.

Minoru thought that if the situation doesn't change, it will get gradually worse and worse.

(With this, I will lose without doing nothing)

(Why is there so much difference?)

A question springs up in his heart.

(...Is it the difference between me, who ran away, and Tatsuya, who kept fighting against strong opponents?)

And a self-answer in the form of a question to himself.

(At this rate, Tatsuya wouldn't even admit that I need to be killed)

Minoru clenched his back teeth and endured his frustration.

(That's not good)

(At least I have to retaliate)

Tatsuya did not use magic. He is chasing Minoru only with his physical ability. Despite this, Tatsuya was closing the distance into Minoru's vicinity, who was retreating with the aid of magic.

Minoru stopped the continuous activation of "Leap" and dropped on the grasslands on his foot.

Then, concentrated his power, including the magical power that was devoted to "Leap", on another magic.

Immediately after Minoru stopped, Tatsuya also stopped.

It was not to keep distance from him. In the first place, Tatsuya was rushing toward Minoru in order to bring him into close quarters.

(Did you stop the continuous activation of Leap? Looks like he's noticed)

Immediately after the battle began, Minoru used "Parade" and "Kimon Tonkou" to hide his presence. Due to these two camouflage magics, Tatsuya is unable to grasp the exact position of Minoru.

It wasn't Minoru himself that he was chasing. He was chasing the signs of the magic that Minoru used to escape. Though, Tatsuya's clue was not the surplus of psion light. Such magical products are covered by "Parade". What he perceived was the local distortion of the laws of the world created by magic. It was not the distortion caused by the magic's event modification, but the laws of the world reestablishing after the completion of the magic effect.

Tatsuya has not yet reached the level of perceiving the laws of the world by definition. All he could feel is a vague sign. But even so, it was enough to follow the trajectory of the world being restored.

Minoru stopped "Leap" not because he knew what Tatsuya was doing. —Tatsuya misunderstood that point. But the outcome was the same: he lost sight of Minoru's position.

“Parade” and “Kimon Tonkou”. These two camouflage magics are still effective against Tatsuya.

If there was only “Kimon Tonkou”, he can disable it with “Gram Dispersion”.

However, Minoru’s Parade disguises even the coordinates of the magic sequence in the information dimension and does not allow the targeting of “Gram Dispersion”.

That doesn’t mean there’s nothing left to do.

Minoru hasn’t disguised his appearance, unlike Lina when she acted as Angie Sirius.

As long as Tatsuya can identify his whereabouts, he will know the position of the vital parts. He doesn’t need to break “Parade” or “Kimon Tonkou”. All he has to do is know where Minoru is. Then, he can use his hands, like when he fought Yakumo.

Track from the past to the present. The false information is retroactively traced back to the past, and the current information that is not false is obtained from the past that is not false.

He doesn’t have to beat Minoru as a magician. Even if he can’t break “Parade” or “Kimon Tonkou”, he can kill Minoru.

Tatsuya’s aim is to destroy Minoru’s heart. To achieve this, all he has to do is touch the center of his chest, where the heart is.

But Minoru isn’t just waiting to be attacked by Tatsuya.

Event interference power is rapidly gathered in the hand of the virtual image of Minoru.

Normally, it would be a sign of powerful magic.

Tatsuya tried to erase the magic sequence before the magic was released.

However, there was no magic sequence there.

(–Zone Interference!)

The Counter-magic “Zone Interference” fills a certain space with event interference to obstruct the opponent’s magic. What Minoru created in his virtual image was localized “Zone Interference.”

The purpose was to divert Tatsuya’s “eyes”.

(-Good!)

Minoru felt that Tatsuya's "gaze" was focused on the virtual image.

At that moment, Minoru threw the magical activation medium he had in his hand.

A black charm flew in the air, from this summoning tile a beast coiled in lightning suddenly appeared. This is an arranged version of Zhou Gongjin's specialty, the attack magic "Shadow Beast" that creates a chemical simulacrum of a beast, implemented with a coating of lightning magic. Rather than calling "Shadow Beast", which is in its entirety black, shouldn't this version instead be called "Thunder Beast"⁶, a beast that wears lightning?

The distance between Minoru and Tatsuya is only 15 meters. "Thunder Beast" ran through that distance in an instant. —But even so, it couldn't reach Tatsuya. When "Thunder Beast" is one meter away it is erased by "Gram Dispersion".

(That was also calculated!)

Minoru activated the magic on standby without a moment's delay.

The capacity to stock magic within himself. This is a clear advantage that Minoru has over Tatsuya. At this time, the location of the magic activation point, that is, Minoru, was exposed, but Tatsuya could not afford to take this opportunity in real time.

Lightning extends from Minoru's hand toward Tatsuya.

It was neither magically induced nor converged, was an aerial discharge that was materialized as a physical phenomenon.

One meter to the left of the visible Minoru. The moment after he caught the activation of the magic discharge just behind the point where the chemical beast appeared. Tatsuya kicked the ground with all his might and threw his body to the left.

A branching of the lightning falls in the grass just to the right of where Tatsuya rolled to.

Just in time.

⁶ Namely "雷獸". It's a reference to a creature from Japanese folklore.
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raij%C5%AB>

The evasion was a moment late because he stayed too long trying to neutralize the lightning magic after the activation with “Gram Dispersion”, only to realize that it was impossible.

A mere electric discharge produced will diffuse in the air. Normally, until the lightning strike hits the target, it must be magically induced and converged, so that it does not spread. By decomposing the magic sequence responsible for this convergence and induction, even if the discharge process has already been activated, it can be nullified.

But Minoru’s lightning strike did not include a process of convergence and guidance.

The lightning strikes rushed to Tatsuya in a bundle without magical convergence or guidance.

Unless the trajectory is controlled by magic, casting “Gram Dispersion” will not neutralize it.

No, there is no longer a magical sequence to decompose with “Gram Dispersion”. He would use “Mist Dispersion”, instead of “Gram Dispersion”, to eliminate the convergence and spread it, but he couldn’t afford to switch magics. Therefore he had to evade relying on his physical ability.

(Was the magical simulacrum prepared beforehand?)

While standing up, Tatsuya infers on the trick Minoru used.

The chemical beast coiled in lightning was not meant to defeat Tatsuya. It was a steppingstone to the next lightning magic in anticipation of being broken on the way.

The Thunder Beast carried a high voltage. The appearance of the beast is of a non-existent virtual image, but the electricity on its surface is real energy. So, when the lightning beast runs through, the air in the path is ionized.

In other words, there is a path for the electric current. The lightning strike was guided by this layer of ionized air.

Therefore, at the one meter point where the Thunder Beast was decomposed, the lightning strike spread rapidly. The small lightning that Tatsuya evaded was a single branch of the branched lightning strikes.

(It was a close call... but I caught it)

The current lightning strike was undoubtedly released from Minoru’s own hands.

Tatsuya's "Elemental Sight" reads information that accumulates over time. It's "gaze" has been locking Minoru since the moment the lightning magic was released.

Tatsuya continued to follow the path of Minoru's movement over time.

(He evaded!? No, it doesn't mean it didn't work)

Tatsuya had to evade the current lightning strike with his physical ability. It didn't feel like Minoru let him with plenty of time. To a large extent, it was an evasion that relied on chance.

Best of all, it wasn't nullified by counter-magic. He probably couldn't. The current blow definitely drove Tatsuya to a wall.

(This tactic isn't wrong. I'll corner Tatsuya-san even more and make him impatient)

If there is no room, Tatsuya will not even think about trying to catch Minoru alive. If Tatsuya isn't pushed to that extent, Minoru won't have a chance to win.

He took the summoning tile out of the waist pouch. While crossing the Pacific Ocean in the ship, he created more than ten tiles. He had consumed some of them since he landed, but there were still five in the pouch, excluding the one he used now.

With just this, it should be enough to take away Tatsuya's composure.

Minoru thought so. Rather than speaking it to himself.

He forcibly dispelled the anxiety that was rising from the bottom of his heart to his head, despite the fact that it was supposed to be a favorable battle situation. And Minoru released his second "Thunder Beast".

He tried to release it.

However—

The magic ends up misfiring.

(The magic was destroyed!?)

It wasn't a mistake from Minoru part.

The magic of the Kunlunfang Institute, inherited from Zhou Gongjin certainly had a response of activating.

Also, the disposable tiles that were made on board the ship with insufficient time and equipment, vanished.

(Gram Dispersion!?)

Minoru hurriedly looked down at his body with his magical “eyes.”

(The Parade is still enabled, why!?)

Immediately after the activation of the magic, while disguised with “Parade”, his location was found out. Due to the strategic combination of creating a path for the electric current with “Thunder Beast”, it must be released from his front, and the lightning magic must be shot from his own hands.

If he looks at the point where the chemical body appeared and the launch point of the lightning strike, he could guess that Minoru is there.

But now, the magical sequence that was trying to give form to the chemical simulacrum has been erased out.

He was neither exposed to psion’s shells nor exposed to psion’s streams.

The magic sequence that was output on the summoning tile was destroyed directly.

In Minoru’s knowledge, only a type of magic like “Gram Dispersion” could do that.

And, as far as Minoru knows, only Tatsuya can use “Gram Dispersion” in actual battles.

(But he shouldn’t be able to use the Gram Dispersion unless he knows the exact coordinates of the magic sequence)

(Is he nullifying Parade without destroying it?)

Minoru still doesn’t know the difference between his “Elemental Sight” and Tatsuya’s “Elemental Sight”. It was unimaginable for Minoru to be able to determine the current coordinates from past location information.

Tatsuya, who had stopped, starts running toward Minoru again.

While holding impatience, Minoru focused on Tatsuya and reactivated “Kimon Tonkou”.

“Kimon Tonkou” is essentially a passive magic. It can be said to be a magic malware.

Seeing, hearing, feeling of touch, sensing. The aim of consciousness and perception is to bring information about the environment to the person. In terms of its magical system, “Kimon Tonkou” manipulates the information by adding a magic sequence to the EIDOS of the visual information = the light reflected and the auditory information = the sound emitted, and then infects the consciousness of the observer who see the caster of the magic or hear the sounds they emit with the sequence, making them misinterpret the information. It doesn’t matter if it’s the naked eye or a camera, a sound heard directly or picked up by a microphone. It interferes with the consciousness of all those who take in visual and auditory information.

Due to the nature of this system, “Kimon Tonkou” is not supposed to be actively targeted at anyone in specific. The reason why he could aim, and do something like shooting “Kimon Tonkou” at Tatsuya, was because the Parasitized Minoru’s magical sense was, and still is, outstanding.

But because of that sense, Minoru notices a shocking fact.

Not only the magic that works on physical phenomena, but also the Non-Systematic Mental Interference magic does not work with Tatsuya now. The reason “Kimon Tonkou” was effective was because it was a passive magic.

It doesn’t mean that Tatsuya won’t be usually affected by Non-Systematic-type magic. However, now, the psion’s armor, which Tatsuya wears around his whole body, is densely and evenly deployed not only on the physical dimension as well on the information dimensions.

Psion is a non-material particle that mediates information. It is natural not to be bound by the material dimension, and it is natural that the information “wrapped in a psion layer” in the material dimension is reproduced in the information dimension, as it is a particle that mediates information.

However, Minoru could not predict that the reproduced psion layer would block Non-Systematic magic that acts on the mind through the information dimension. Perhaps, even for Tatsuya, the effect of blocking active Non-Systematic magic must have been an unexpected byproduct.

For Tatsuya now, only the normal, passive “Kimon Tonkou” that works through the information taken from him is valid. However, there is a good chance that it will be invalidated by “Gram Dispersion”. It is possible for the “Elemental Sight” to filter and recognize visual and auditory information. “Kimon Tonkou” is a magic that works continuously through vision and hearing, but keeping the duration of each cycle

extremely short. Once the sight and hearing are isolated, it is not difficult to recognize the magical sequence of “Kimon Tonkou”.

Minoru realized that he couldn’t rely on Kimon Tonkou. He doesn’t know if Tatsuya knows this strategy. Maybe Tatsuya hasn’t noticed it yet. But now that Minoru knows, he is no longer willing to rely on Kimon Tonkou.

Minoru renewed “Parade” and subsequently activated “Mock Teleportation”.

Minoru’s body instantly moves to a position 5 meters diagonally behind Tatsuya, leaving his virtual image in his place.

He prepared the construction of a magical sequence with the intention of casting the release-type magic “Cloudless Thunder” immediately after the “Mock Teleportation” movement was completed, without a time lag.

“Cloudless Thunder” is a magic that turns the air into plasma and showers the attack target with an electron shower extracted from it. The negatively charged target of the attack is then exposed to a torrent of cations that was left behind, resulting in a two-stage attack.

The magic starting point is 333 centimeters above the ground. It is one length of the East Asia continent’s scale.

Tatsuya is 182 cm tall. With the additional height of the “Contact-Type Gram Demolition” he wears, is plus fifty centimeters, so 232 centimeters from the ground. “Cloudless Thunder” should have been able to snipe Tatsuya without being blocked by counter-magic.

However, by the time Minoru turned around after “Mock Teleportation” was completed,

Tatsuya was approaching Minoru.

Tatsuya immediately sensed that the effect of “Kimon Tonkou” had disappeared.

(Did you cancel Kimon Tonkou?)

It’s not just the effects that have disappeared. The magic of “Kimon Tonkou” has been cancelled.

(Is it a trap? No...)

What are you going to do by undoing one of your camouflages? Regardless of the situation where the technique has been broken, “Kimon Tonkou” still continues to mislead Tatsuya’s senses. It is not so difficult to nullify “Kimon Tonkou” alone with “Gram Dispersion”, but it requires extra effort, so he may be late to respond to an attack. Combined with Parade, it’s even more annoying.

With the interruption of “Kimon Tonkou”, Tatsuya can concentrate on the countermeasures for “Parade”, so it makes the fight more easy for him. However, it was ominous not to understand Minoru’s intentions.

(...Don’t get lost in thoughts. It’s possible that his purpose is to get me hesitate)

Tatsuya tells himself that and avoids stepping into a maze of thoughts.

The sign that Minoru used magic caught Tatsuya’s senses. He didn’t “see” it with “Elemental Sight”. It’s intuition. It was the result of Yakumo’s repeated advice to him not to rely too much on the “Elemental Sight”.

Look back on the sign. Approximately five meters away, Tatsuya recognized a magical event modification. It is a trace of a sudden variation in inertial mass. A physicist might have described it as a gravitational wave. Tatsuya, a magician, regarded it as the aftermath of Weight Systematic-type inertial control magic.

(Is it Mock Teleportation? Then Minoru is over there)

If you believe in the location information, Minoru hasn’t moved since. But it goes without saying that Minoru is disguising his information.

Tatsuya used a flash cast to reduce the inertia on his body and kicked the ground toward where the Mock Teleportation seemed to have ended. There are signs of magic in the sky, but the presumed location of Minoru is just around the corner.

Tatsuya released the inertia reduction and stepped hard on his right foot, not relying on his eyes, but using only the distance in his memory when he discovered the traces of magic earlier.

Struck out his right hand in the form of a forward palm thrust. His hand got a solid response.

Suddenly, Tatsuya appears in front of Minoru’s eyes.

Although Minoru was surprised, he didn’t think it was strange. It was possible to guess right away that he used self-acceleration magic by inertial control.

He could only think about it, but couldn't deal with it.

He can see Tatsuya's right hand extending to his chest.

However, it was impossible for Minoru, who had not trained his body, not to hesitate or prevent Tatsuya's palm thrust. Still, a part of his heart remained optimistic.

The Parasitized Minoru has a strong self-healing power. Even if he suffers physical damage, it shouldn't prevent him from moving.

In fact, being in close contact with him is an opportunity for Minoru. Minoru thought that, if he released the magic "Cloudless Thunder" with a resolution in damaging himself in the process, he would be hurt, but Tatsuya, who is only a human being – not mixed with demons or has not received any reinforcement measures –, would probably suffer more damage.

But things weren't that simple.

Tatsuya's thrust was as sharp as lightning. But for some reason Minoru could see it slowly. The body is totally unresponsive. Even the activation of magic cannot catch up.

Only perception was following Tatsuya's technique.

Just before Tatsuya's hand reaches Minoru's body.

Even though he hasn't touched it yet, an impact is transmitted to Minoru's whole body.

It's not a pain. It isn't a material feeling, but if he dared to say it, it's a wave. A hallucination that ripples ran through the skin.

(Parade was broken through!?)

The accelerated thought recognizes the true nature of that sensation.

Prior to the contact with Tatsuya's palm, the dense psion armor he wore pushed into the psion information body that overlapped Minoru's body, blowing away the "Parade" magic sequence that was clad on Minoru's body.

Of course, that's not the end.

Tatsuya's palm bottom collides with Minoru's chest.

This time the impact is pain.

And Minoru is struck by an agony of not being able to breathe. It was not just because the air was pushed out of his lungs.

His heart stops for an instant, and the blood flow stops.

It wasn't merely a problem with the body's metabolism, where the cells couldn't get the oxygen they needed for their activities.

Tatsuya's psion traveled from Minoru's heart, through his blood vessels, to his entire body, provoking a rejection from Minoru's own psion information body.

Minoru's limbs suffer from severe convulsions. No, not just the limbs. His torso, which had fallen on its back, repeatedly bounces on the grass, bending and stretching like a landed shrimp, and his head swings back and forth in opposition to the movement.

Even the extra-corporeal perception was whitened out due to the same confusion as the body.

Tatsuya straddles Minoru's waist and bends forward to peer at him.

Both eyes were aimed not at Minoru's face, but at the center of his chest, where his heart was.

Right next to the spot where he had just struck the palm bottom thrust.

Bending down, Tatsuya held Minoru's right chest with his left hand and squeezed his right hand.

However, this time his right hand assumed a stance in the form of a spear hand instead of a palm thrust.

Minoru's spasms subsided as if he had run out of strength.

However, he still hadn't recovered his consciousness.

With blurry, unfocused eyes, Minoru looked up at Tatsuya, who was trying to gouge his chest.

Tatsuya felt the psion Layer coiled around the tip of his right hand dug into Minoru's psion body.

In the next moment, "Parade" loses its effect and Minoru's true form is exposed.

Tatsuya recognized it in the space of 0.1 seconds.

He didn't think about it, he knew.

In his right hand is a collection of psions used in his full-body armor.

This wasn't because he had disabled "Parade". It was something he had decided to do by the time he unleashed the palm thrust.

Tatsuya was prepared to be defenseless. Seeing Minoru's hesitation in disarming the Kimon Tonkou, he decided to take the fight to the next level.

The right hand catches Minoru's chest. Slightly to the left, the place he was aiming for was not far from the impact caused by his palm, from there he poured the psions.

There was a positive response that psion penetrated.

There was also a reaction on Minoru, who fell on the grasslands.

Minoru spasms and writhe around.

Tatsuya straddles Minoru's waist to prevent him from escaping, and leans forward to observe his condition.

The convulsions stopped and Minoru's body lay limp on the grass.

The resistance appeared to be gone. Tatsuya judged that it was not acting.

But, since he doesn't know how long this condition will last, he should finish the procedure while it still persists.

Tatsuya leaned over and placed his left hand on Minoru's right chest.

(Obtaining the body's structural information—completed)

(Putting on standby the acquired structural information as a variable)

Then Tatsuya squeezes his right hand in the shape of a four-pointed spear hand with only the thumb spread, and casually stabbed onto Minoru's chest.



A cry of pain escaped Minoru's mouth, and his body strongly spasmed one more time.

It was not just the four fingers from index finger to pinky that were penetrating into his chest. The thumb also dug in without resistance while extended to the side.

This is, of course, the result of using "Decomposition". The event modification of the "Decomposition" is expressed in the area of effect form, wrapped in his right hand, and any objects that comes into contact with it are indiscriminately decomposed.

When his fingers had sunk to the base, Tatsuya clenched his right hand. It's just the position to grip the heart.

Minoru opens his eyes wide and opens his mouth in the form of a scream. However, no voice comes out of his mouth.

Tatsuya pulls out his right hand.

There was nothing there but a gaping hole.

Tatsuya immediately stands up and takes a step back. There is no spurt of blood to be found. There isn't blood even on his right hand, which should have crushed his heart.

Tatsuya is watching Minoru with a serious expression on his face.

One second has passed. Tatsuya keeps an eye on Minoru.

Two seconds have passed.

(It came out)

He muttered in his mind. The main body of the parasite was about to escape from Minoru's body.

(Analyzing the Pushion information body support structure.)

Tatsuya turned his "eyes" to the parasite, half of which still overlaps Minoru's body.

The purpose of this is to destroy the parasite that had been assimilated into Minoru through the Pushion Information Body Support Structure Decomposition Magic "Astral Dispersion".

(Analysis of the Pushion Information Body Support Structure is completed. Astral Dispersion –)

But a moment before he activated the Astral Dispersion.

The parasite that was supposed to have discarded its physical body was sucked back into Minoru.

(This is—!)

At the end of Tatsuya's astonished gaze, the hole in Minoru's chest was closing up.

Although he knew that the Parasitized Minoru had a high level of healing power, Tatsuya did not expect it to the extent of regenerating the entire heart.

The wound on the chest is closed and Minoru opens his eyes.

Tatsuya instinctively took a step back a step or two.

Minoru gets up.

“So, that was the case.”

Minoru said as he stood up and gave Tatsuya a smile without any meaning.

After receiving Tatsuya's palm thrust, Minoru had lost his physical freedom, but his spirit was operating normally. The body was simply not accepting the commands of the spirit, but the spirit was caching information of the body.

Tatsuya's left hand was placed on his own right chest.

Immediately afterwards, Minoru felt that Tatsuya had read out the information about his physical body.

Structural information of his body, down to the smallest cell. All the information of his body.

He intuitively realized that it had been stocked inside Tatsuya.

(Could this be the secret of Tatsuya's restoration ability...?)

But what would be the point of restoring his current body?

He held that question for a moment.

Minoru was then struck by an intense pain that seemed to bleach his consciousness.

The signal that his heart had been erased had been sent from his body, along with signals of the painful sensations that had occurred at the same time.

But the intense pain soon disappeared.

The pain was so great that the brain blocked out the pain information.

The heart has been lost, but the connection between spirit and body is still maintained.

The cerebrum is the transmitter and receiver between the spirit, which exists in the spiritual dimension, and the body, which exists in the material dimension.

The cerebrum remains active for three to five seconds, even if the heart stops functioning. So Minoru's spirit can still know about his physical condition.

To the spirit, the body is still alive as long as the brain is active.

However, due to the nature of the initial process of assimilation into the human body by the blood stream, the parasite perceives the loss of function of the heart as the death of the host, even after assimilation, when it is no longer bound to the material existence of the blood.

And the "death" of the host makes the parasite leave its body.

(Was this Tatsuya's aim?)

The parasite actually escapes from Minoru's body.

Tatsuya is about to use a magic that Minoru doesn't know about, toward that Parasite.

Minoru felt that was a magic to bury parasites,

Minoru had a hunch – He doesn't know how it works, but Tatsuya has created a spell to erase the parasite from this world.

He understood.

Tatsuya was trying to save him.

Probably not for his sake. Tatsuya said that he was trying to avoid the consequence of killing him because of Miyuki and Minami.

(But that's not good enough.)

(That's not going to save her...!)

He can't let Tatsuya do what he wants.

The spirit cannot interfere in this world without the body. Having lost his heart, Minoru is rapidly losing the power to interfere in this world.

Nevertheless, Minoru used all his remaining strength to pull back the parasite that was trying to leave him and restore his body.

“So, that was the case, Tatsuya-san.”

Minoru repeated the same line towards Tatsuya.

“Tatsuya-san tried to turn me back into a human. And by doing so, you tried to help me.”

Tatsuya does not respond to Minoru’s words.

He just interrupted his Astral Dispersion, which was in the process of being activated, and discarded the prepared magic sequence for Regrowth, which was on standby to restore Minoru’s body, along with Minoru’s physical structure data.

“After driving me to cardiac death, you would destroy the escaped parasite’s main body, and restore my body. In doing so, you intended to separate the Parasite from me and turn me back into a human, right?”

“Yes.”

This time, Tatsuya responded to Minoru’s words.

He had no choice but to admit it after being completely seen through to that point.

“Tatsuya-san is a kind person after all, even though he seems cold, isn’t he?”

“.....”

Minoru couldn't hold back a smile at Tatsuya's surly face. There was no sign of hostility in that smile.

"But I can't go back into being a human."

"Why not!?" "Why would you not!?"

Their cries were released simultaneously.

Miyuki and Minami immediately asked the reason for Minoru's line.

They blame Minoru in the form of a question.

They want Minoru to change his mind.

"By being killed as a Parasite, I would absorb the Parasite into my spiritual body and use the Parasite's ability to possess the human spirit to submerge myself into the depths of Minami's spirit, and also combine with the Parasite she already possess to become a safety device in her magic calculation area."

This time, there was no room for the question "why".

"This is the only currently viable way to fully treat Minami."

That's Minoru's answer. The reason why he refused to turn back into a human.

Minami vigorously covered her mouth.

"For my sake, you mean...?"

Minami swallowed back a scream and asked sluggishly as she slowly lowered her hand.

Minoru shakes his head sadly.

The denial gesture was not a direct denial to Minami's question.

"...Tatsuya-san, I must confess that it is my fault that Minami-san's condition has deteriorated decisively."

Tatsuya doesn't say anything.

He just stared at Minoru.

Minoru interpreted Tatsuya's gaze as being urged to continue.

"At the U.S. military base, to where we did take Minami-san, we were attacked by American soldiers who were trying to eliminate the parasites. At that time, Minami defended me using a high-powered anti-object barrier magic."

An expression of silent understanding floated on Tatsuya's face.

"That's why Minami's overheating symptoms have definitely worsened.

"Because of that, Minami-san's overheating symptoms have definitely worsened. Even with the knowledge of Zhou Gongjin inside me, it's too much for me to handle. It's so difficult to even buy time."

"Then you're taking the responsibility with your own life?"

Minoru gave a bitter smile that wasn't sarcastic at Tatsuya's words.

"It's not a matter of responsibility."

Minoru hesitates a little before continuing with a shy look on his face.

"I just want Minami-san to live."

His true intention.

"That's why Tatsuya-san, please kill me."

"Do you have to be killed?"

"Suicide would be useless. The parasite's instinct is to avoid suicide. That would create a rift between my spirit and the body of the parasite, making it difficult to absorb it afterwards."

Tatsuya understood that Minoru didn't seem to be pestering towards him, and extended his right arm with a silver band on the wrist, to Minoru.

"Please wait!"

A voice of restraint was raised.

Miyuki was caught off guard, and Lina reached out to stop her, but she couldn't do it in time, so Minami ran in between Tatsuya and Minoru.

With her back turned to Tatsuya, she faced Minoru head on.

"Minoru-sama, I did not wish for that to happen."

Minoru diverts his eyes looking in pain.

"I have no desire to live on Minoru-sama's sacrifice."

".....I know."

Minoru knows that what he is doing is selfish.

He understands that he is putting a lifelong heavy burden on Minami.

Still, he can't think of anything else to do.

"Still, I..."

"Minoru-sama."

Minami didn't let Minoru finish.

"I've made up my mind."

"..."

"I've finally made up my mind."

".....What?"

Minoru didn't play dumb. He didn't really know what Minami was trying to say.

"Minoru-sama, please make me a parasite."

Minami's words were heard not only by Minoru, but also by Tatsuya and Miyuki.

"Minami-chan, what are you saying!?"

Faster than Minoru could react, Miyuki screamed.

“I’m very sorry, Miyuki-sama.”

Minami turned back at the sound of Miyuki’s voice and bowed deeply.

“I didn’t need to hear it from you, Minoru-sama, but I knew somehow. My life as a human being will not be much longer.”

She looks up and reveals what she’s been hiding in her heart.

“So you’re throwing away your humanity!?”

Minami didn’t say “life is unfortunate”.

“I’ve realized that I can’t serve Miyuki-sama for too long.”

This wasn’t an excuse, this was Minami’s true feelings.

“That’s okay. Until just a moment ago I was thinking that. If Miyuki-sama needed me, I would serve her until the end of my life, even if only it was for a short time. That is the only thing I can do to make amends after betraying Miyuki-sama, and it is the only way I can repay.”

“You don’t have to think about atonement! I’m not asking for repayment!”

“Miyuki-sama. Tatsuya-sama. I want a master to serve. And feeling that the master needs me is the happiest thing for me. ...Is that strange?”

Neither Tatsuya nor Miyuki could answer “It’s strange” –regardless of how they really felt about it.

They couldn’t deny Minami’s values, which had been imprinted on her from a young age, probably for Miyuki’s sake.

“I’m very sorry, Miyuki-sama.”

Minami apologizes again.

“I have not been a human being for very long, but I wonder if you could consider letting me retire today, at this moment.

“Minami-chan...”

“I can’t bear to have Miyuki-sama take care of me. It is too painful for me to have you shed tears for me.”

Minami spoke the line with a straight face, making it hard to tell if she was serious or joking.

Naturally, no one could laugh.

In a somewhat awkward and tense atmosphere, Minami turned to face Minoru again.

“Minoru-sama. Please don’t think about dying for me. If you hold me dear that much, please live with me as my master. I would like to respond to the feelings that make Minoru-sama try to save my life, even if it would mean giving up yours.”

“Minami-san, that means...”

Minoru was about to say something thoughtless, but Minami silenced him with a smile.

“If this world won’t allow parasites to exist, will you sleep with me? We will only be together for a moment, but I think that moment will be worth a lifetime.”

Tatsuya, Miyuki, Lina, and Minoru knew that the word “sleep” that Minami said meant “eternal sleep”. Minami’s lines were contradictory on the surface, but the four of them who listened to her words didn’t find it strange.

“—Okay, Minami-san.”

Minoru nodded and stepped forward.

In front of Tatsuya, in a protective stance with Minami at his back.

“Tatsuya-san, I have a favor to ask.”

“If you want me to turn a blind eye, then there is no way.”

Tatsuya didn’t let the atmosphere get in the way. He felt ruthless himself, but Tatsuya knew that if he let them escape here and now, all that awaited them was another day of being driven away by another hunter.

“I don’t want that.”

Minoru’s tone was composed. Instead of a smile, he had a very calm expression with no irritation or despair.

“I will sleep with Minami-san, not in death, but in a dream. The Parasitized Minami and the me Parasitized will share the same dream, and I will keep us in a sleep prison until my life run’s out.”

“Are you saying that you will cast magic of artificial hibernation in yourself and in Minami?”

“Artificial hibernation..., yes, that’s right. It’s the same as artificial hibernation in the sense that the person doesn’t wake themselves up. So what I’m asking is that you make a place for us to sleep.”

“You want me to protect you in your sleep?”

“I know it’s a selfish request, but I don’t want my dreams with Minami to be interrupted by anyone.”

“Onii-sama.”

The voice came from just behind Tatsuya.

Before Tatsuya knew it, Miyuki had walked up to him with Lina.

“Can’t you grant Minoru-kun and Minami-chan’s wish?”

“—Okay.”

As a matter of fact, while he agreed to Miyuki’s request, Tatsuya had already decided to accept Minoru’s proposal.

“There is a good place on Miyakijima. It’s an underground prison, but if you keep sleeping, there should be no problem.”

Miyakijima was originally used as a prison for serious criminal magicians. Even now that it had been converted to a research island, an underground prison with a twenty-four-hour monitoring equipment installed was still ready for use at any time.

“Of course, I don’t mind”

Minoru nodded with a two-fold answer. He didn’t know what the “underground prison” was like, of course, but he found himself trapped in a sleep where he had no idea what was going on outside. Any place was fine, as long as it didn’t interfere with his sleep.

“Tatsuya-san, please. Lock us in that underground prison.”

The way he will deal with Minoru has now been decided.

But one parasite remains.

“Raymond Clark, what about you?”

“Do I have a choice?”

In response to Tatsuya’s call, Raymond, who was standing some distance away, approached him.

“You have two choices.”

“Two?”

Raymond chuckled in self-deprecation to himself. He made no pretense of resistance.

“Either I destroy you here, or you’ll be handed over to the USNA authorities.

Tatsuya didn’t waste a word.

“I’ll take the second option, please.”

Raymond answers immediately. Certainly, with this choice between the two, there might be no need to think about it.

“All right, then. Then you’re coming with me. Not behind. Walk in front. Minoru and Minami will follow. Miyuki and Lina will go behind Minoru and Minami. Miyuki.”

“Ye-Yes.”

Miyuki responds to Tatsuya’s unexpected cold voice with a rubbing voice.

At the unexpected sound of Tatsuya’s cold voice, Miyuki responded with a high-pitched voice.

“If Minoru shows a strange behavior, don’t hesitate to use Cocytus.”

“I understand.”

Miyuki turned around and nodded in a tone that suppressed her emotions. Tatsuya silently nodded back in response.

Minoru had no intention of resisting, but he didn’t protest to Tatsuya.

Taking Raymond a step forward, Tatsuya started walking.

Chapter 9

Tatsuya talked openly with Maya and Toudou about the handling of Minoru and Minami's case.

Neither of them objected.

Now Minoru, Minami and Tatsuya were in a prison built deep underground on Miyakijima.

Surrounded by a composite of concrete, resin, lead and iron that was thicker and stronger than the walls of a nuclear shelter, the underground prison was connected to the ground only by a single large spiral staircase. That staircase is blocked by three armored doors along the way, and you have to pass through a total of five doors before you can reach the surface.

This unusually tight prison is where Minoru and Minami will sleep.

Today is August 28th. It has been three days since the night of Tatsuya and Minoru's decisive battle. It took three days of preparing for Minoru and Minami to sleep in this room.

"Minoru, let's get started."

Tatsuya, who had brought them here, urged Minoru.

"I understand. ...Minami-san, it's okay?"

Minoru is about to perform the parasitization process.

At this time, Minami was still human.

"Yes. Please."

There was no hesitation in Minami's answer. This period of three days was a test to her resolve.

"Then, lie down there."

Minami, who was wearing a gown that hid her figure – it was a pure white negligee that remembered a wedding dress–, laid on the bed as Minoru told her to.

“Close your eyes”

“Yes.”

Minami closed her eyelids and her consciousness sank into a deep place.

When she woke up, Minami had become a parasite.

As soon as she woke up, she knew she was a parasite.

(Minami-san, can you hear me?)

She could hear Minoru’s voice from the depths of her consciousness.

She quickly recognized Minoru’s voice at once. She was able to precisely distinguish it from her own thoughts.

(Yes, I can hear you.)

She responded through her heart. Again, there was no mistaking her thoughts with Minoru’s.

“It’s a success. Minami-san’s ego is intact.”

Minoru’s words were mainly directed at Tatsuya, rather than at Minami.

“I’m glad I went well.”

Tatsuya’s appreciation words contained no sarcasm.

“Yes.”

Tatsuya was sincerely glad that he had succeeded and Minoru was relieved from the bottom of his heart.

“Then, both of you. Now, I bid you goodbye. If you wake up by mistake, call me by the intercom.”

“Are you sure that’s okay...?”

Minoru asked back with a surprised expression, and Minami couldn't hide her surprise.

Tatsuya understood what they were trying to say. But Tatsuya didn't admit that he had to see to it that Minoru and Minami had definitely fallen asleep.

Both Minoru and Minami knew that they didn't belong in this world right now.

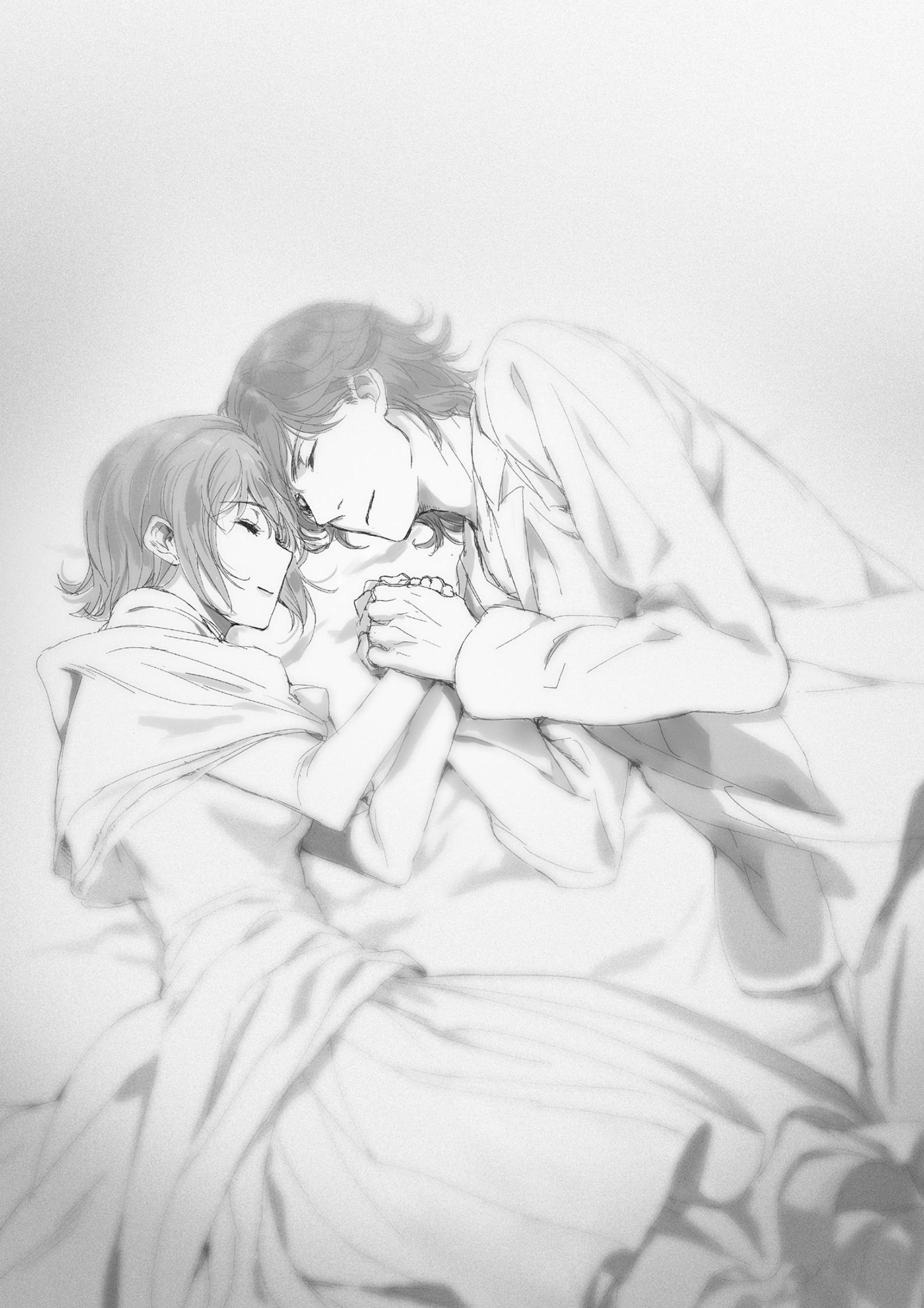
Minoru understands that, and that's why he chose to stay in this underground prison cell.

Minami has chosen to stay with Minoru.

It was unthinkable that their resolve would be shaken after all this time.

"Good night. Have a good dream."

Tatsuya said that and left their new home.



◇◇◇

When Tatsuya returned to the surface, he was immediately notified by the staff member who had been monitoring the underground prison.

Minoru and Minami fell into a deep sleep shortly after Tatsuya left. Their vital signs were stable after dropping almost to the level of apparent death, he said.

Tatsuya had also sensed an inward magic being activated on the way up in the more than two hundred steps. He didn't deliberately read the details of the magic, but it was easy to guess that it was the artificial hibernation magic that he had received detailed data from Minoru the day before yesterday.

Raymond had already been handed over to the USNA military prisoner transport ship yesterday. Tatsuya had no knowledge of what would happen to Raymond after this. Raymond is an American citizen, albeit parasitized. His punishment may be decided by the USNA government or the courts. Tatsuya had no intention of taking responsibility to such an extent.

(So that's the end of the story for the time being.....)

Tatsuya has a plan for after this. But that is matter for the future. It will take at least two years of preparation for this. For now, it should be safe to assume that the situation is settled.

In order to tell Miyuki, who remains in Tokyo, that the temporary separation is over, Tatsuya went to the eighth floor of the Yotsuba residential building, which is used as a separate residence.

Graduation Arc

Chapter 1

March 8, 2098.

The graduation ceremony is only a week away. These days, an unsettling atmosphere filled the First High School Affiliated to the National Magic University High School.

Within the third-year students that graduated two years prior there were three talented individuals, who were called the “Three Giants” during their enrolment. The current graduating third-years have a wide reputation of being even more outstanding.

In the beginning, the former Student Council President Shiba Miyuki showed outstanding magical abilities that kept even the third year students at the time at bay, and during the course of her enrollment, it was revealed that she was a direct descendant of the Yotsuba family.

And while Shiba Tatsuya, the Secretarial Chief of the previous Student Council, enrolled as a second division student, in the summer of his first school year he demonstrated magic engineering skills unmatched by the other high school students at the Nine-Schools Competition. On the transition of the second to the third year, he was revealed as also being a direct descendent of the Yotsuba family. Later, on his third year, it was revealed his identity as Taurus Silver

The two of them are so powerful that it's easy to get hazy, but there are also other talented aspiring magicians, and more importantly, there are a number of young magicians who are high school students, but are highly regarded in certain circles as having abilities comparable to those of magicians in leading fields.

For example, Angelina Kudou Shields, an, extremely rare in modern times, foreign student that has no particular achievements during her time at school. But her power is regarded as being on par with Shiba Miyuki's.

Like Shiba Tatsuya, Yoshida Mikihiko, entered as a second division student, but rose to prominence in the Nine-Schools Competition, became a first course student when he transitioned to his second year, and even won the position of chief of the Public Morals Committee. Although he is an Ancient magic user, he is also well versed in modern magic, and is expected to be the prodigy child who will revolutionize the Ancient Magic techniques.

In the Monolithic Code Inter-School Matches, held in place of the cancelled 2097 year Nine-Schools Competition, Chiba Erika was one of the representatives of the First High School. And, despite being a girl, she became the leading force behind the victory in the Inter-School Matches. Also, as an unofficial record for her, she also holds the greatest number of defeated opponents in the Inter-School Matches.

There is also Tomitsuka Hagane, also known as “Range Zero”, the fourth best in the High School Magic Martial Arts open tournament. Mitsui Honoka, who has already been praised by professors at the University of Magic and other magicians as one of the best in Japan in regards to her ability in light manipulation. Other students, such as Kitayama Shizuku, Igarashi Yousuke, Akechi Eimi, Satomi Subaru, and Morisaki Shun, are also highly regarded in their respective fields of expertise.

This year's third years are the true golden age of the school. So much that some of the school's staff are worried about what will happen next year, after they graduate. Staff and students alike are trying to congratulate them as best they can, while feeling sad and anxious.

This is the true nature of the unstable and unsettling atmosphere that pervades the school.



On the school route, between the station to the gate of First High.

“Oh, it’s Tatsuya. When did you return to Tokyo?”

A high-pitched voice flew to Tatsuya, who was coming to school after a long absence. There are only a few girls who talked to him so casually when Miyuki, even more so when with Lina, is next to him.

“Erika, that’s not how you greet people in the morning, is it?”

It wasn’t Tatsuya who responded, but Miyuki, who frowned her eyebrows.

“Sorry, sorry. Good morning Tatsuya-kun, Miyuki, Lina.”

Erika quietly starts over the greeting. It was an unwritten rule among First High’s girls, as well as common sense not to disobey Miyuki.

“Good morning, Erika.”

Following Tatsuya, Miyuki and Lina returned the “good morning”.

After the exchange of greetings, Tatsuya was the first one to speak.

“It’s been almost a month since I’ve met you, Erika, hasn’t it?”

“I didn’t know it was that long. Oh, that’s right. I wasn’t at school the last time Tatsuya-kun came to see me.”

Erika was invited to take the test, not only by the Magic University, but also by a standard university, which is known to have many alumni in the police force, asking “Why don’t you come to ours?”. It was extremely rare for a student from a Magic high school to be scouted by a standard university.

“That happened, didn’t. So, what did you decide?”

At this point, Lina asks Erika which university she will go to.

“After all, I’m thinking of going to Magic University.”

“Really?”

Miyuki asked, because Erika’s path for the future had been changed back and forth.

“This time it’s true. But it still didn’t sink in that I’m going to be attending the Magic University.”

Originally, Erika did not intend to go to a University.

She was not kidding when she told them last May that she wanted to go on a warrior training trip after graduating high school. Until summer vacation, she was pretty serious about going on the trip. Much so that she had been seriously researching about the arrangements for leaving the country and looking for a part-time job that would pay for the trip at a good rate.

But things changed when she participated in the Monolithic Code Inter-School Matches.

Erika's abilities had been known to the police and the Defense Force for some time through the students of the Chiba Dojo. But the higher up in the organization, progressively discounted the points of rumors from their own people, the more they heard about it. Or, to put it another way, the more they viewed it through "reverse colored glasses".

However, with the success of the Inter-School Matches, it became clear that her true ability was even more than in the rumors. In particular, the Non-Systematic magic to neutralize the opponent without hurting him [Phantom Edge] - the slash version of the [Phantom Blow], and the non-systematic counter magic that is considered a variant of the [Gram Demolition], [Gram Slash], which shoot a blade made of psions against the opponent's magic. A senior member of the Metropolitan Police Department noted that the magical slashing technique is most suitable for subduing criminal magicians.

Many of them are employed by the police from the Magic University. Immediately after the summer vacation ended, Erika was recruited by an alumnus of a standard university whose martial skills produced many police officers and by an alumnus of Magic University who became a police bureaucrat, and the two sides were in a tug of war.

From such a state as Erika was, it appeared that she finally decided on where to go just before graduation.

"I'm glad to hear that. Then, we'll be together again in April."

"Yes..."

At Miyuki's words, Erika gave a small laugh, as if embarrassed. Probably it was true that she didn't expect to be able to go to Magic University.

"Me too, I look forward to working with you."

"Lina, you really aren't going back to the States, right? I look forward to working with you too."

Lina had previously stated that "At this rate, I plan to enter a Japanese magic university". However, Erika knows that Lina was the USNA's National recognised Strategic Class magician "Angie Sirius". That's why she didn't believe those words by more than half.

Tatsuya's Magic Engineering class is in Class E.

Miyuki and Lina are in Class A.

And Erika is in Class F.

The four of them would be divided into Miyuki and Lina, Tatsuya and Erika at the entrance.

Classroom E and Class F are next to each other. So, Tatsuya and Erika went up to their respective classrooms shoulder to shoulder.

"By the way. What are you going to do about that, Tatsuya-kun?"

"It will be as I said. It won't change my plans to attend Magic University."

In response to Erika's question, Tatsuya replied with a look on his face like "Why are you asking me that now?".

"I know you're going to Magic University., but that's not the only thing you're going to do, right, Tatsuya-kun?

"Oh, that's what you mean."

Tatsuya's changes to an understanding expression at Erika's answer.

"Yeah, that's what I meant. Are you going to prioritize your stellar reactor research? Or will it be military work?"

Erika doesn't know that Tatsuya has quit the National Defense Force. He was not a regular officer to begin with, but the impression she got on the Yokohama Incident in the fall of the first year was so strong that she couldn't shake off the belief that Tatsuya was a member of the Defense Forces.

"I'm going to be researching for a while. There are too many issues that need implementation."

"Heh... So you don't need to go through the university too?"

"I have a lot to learn, so I intend to attend as much as possible."

"You're serious, right? No, you are just being greedy."

“I guess it’s normal.”

Erika’s astonishment is because Tatsuya’s attitude was not unusual from a young man from this era. The speed of the changes in the society also needs to hasten in order to adapt to the advancements in technology. That’s not limited to magical universities, university students of these days have no time to be idle.

—It’s the university students of today who spend their spare time endeavoring a social life.

“Hey, Tatsuya. Haven’t seen you for a while.”

Leo, who was chatting with another student in the hallway next to the Class F classroom, calls out.

“Good morning, Leo.”

When Tatsuya returned the greeting to Leo, Erika, who was walking beside him, said in a low voice “See you later”, waved her hand and walked into the classroom. It’s a huge improvement from before when they would quarrel if they met face to face.

The female student who was talking to Leo also greeted Tatsuya and moved away. She headed for the stairs, so she might be an underclassman.

“Did I interrupt something?”

“What do you mean? I was the one who called out to you, you know.”

Tatsuya wondered if that was the case. He was concerned about the fact that his conversation partner was a female student, he had heard that Leo was popular with the juniors. Surely it wasn’t an regrettable opportunity.

“Well, it’s been, what, two weeks?”

“It’s been exactly ten days.”

Tatsuya corrected Leo’s line in detail. Somehow, it wasn’t out of malice.

“Right. What happened today. Did you get called by the principal again?”

Leo didn’t seem to care about Tatsuya’s curt response, so he asked.

Tatsuya scowled his face lightly at Leo’s question.

“Not the principal. I was called in by the office manager. He said he apparently needed my signature.”

“I wonder if there is such a thing...? Well, Tatsuya’s case is very special.”

—Speaking of special, Leo’s chosen career path is also special. In the end, he will not go to Magic University.

The school he chose to go to was the “Academy of Disaster Rescue training” commonly known as “Rescuer University”.

After World War III, in order to concentrate Japan’s national defense forces to the country defense, a rescue unit specializing in rescue activities in the event of a large-scale disaster, which was previously carried out by the military, was established separately from the fire and police rescue units. Its name is the “Kokusai Rescue Team”. Commonly known as “Japan Rescue Core”. Or simply “Rescue Core”.

Over the years, the Rescue Core has expanded its scope to include sea and mountain rescue, and has now grown to shoulder part of the work of the fire and police departments.

As the name suggests, the Academy of Disaster Rescue training is an educational institution that aims to train highly-skilled personnel for the “Disaster Rescue Team”, also known as Rescue Core. Its position is close to that of the National Defense Academy.

However, unlike the National Defense Academy, it is rare for high school students to go on there to study magic. While magicians also play an active role in rescue activities, in the event of a disaster, at Rescue Academy, they practice rescue activities that do not rely on magic skills, utilizing technological tools. And being able to use magic gives no advantage in the entrance exams.

Leo originally thought of the mountain guard as a career path. It was also because of this career aspiration that he joined the mountain club. He didn’t intend to go on to higher education, but to join the police directly.

However, when he started to consider taking the entrance exam for a magical college, he looked at various other places to go to besides the magical college. As a result, he decided on Rescue Academy as his first choice.

The fact that magic couldn’t be used in the entrance exam was not a problem for Leo at all. Even now, he is not good at magic other than hardening magic. The fact that the

parameters of the entrance exam at the University of Rescue consisted of physical testing and athletic skills, was very advantageous for Leo.

“For some reason, you have a different procedure from us?”

Leo was immensely curious on what on earth was the business the manager had to call Tatsuya upon,

“I don’t know the details.”

Tatsuya replied with a blunt response.

“And..., the last time they called you up wasn’t the principal. It was the vice principal.”

Then he adds.

“It’s not much different.”

Leo says so, but the call from the principal, who is the final decision maker, and the guidance of the vice principal have very different implications. In particular, the vice principal’s business the other day was to receive a request from the magic university to hear what Tatsuya wanted to learn. It is quite different in nature from the so-called “call”.

When he was about to object to Leo, they were in front of class F.

“Well, I’ll see you later.”

“Yeah.”

Given that it was not enough to keep him back. Tatsuya left Leo and went into Class E’s classroom.

About 60% of the students of Class E were in the classroom.

“Good morning, Tatsuya-san.”

Mizuki honestly greets Tatsuya from her seat next to his.

“Good morning, Mizuki. I see that quite a bit of the people of this class came to school.”

Just after returning the greeting, Tatsuya said something that he had been wondering about earlier.

The third year students have been free from attending school for a while now. It's a time when their career paths have already been pretty much decided. Not many students, like Tatsuya himself, have paperwork left to do until this close to graduation. There is no such thing as a rehearsal for the graduation ceremony. The only thing third-year students do in advance is to be briefed on the arrangements for the ceremony by video.

In other words, third years shouldn't have to come to school, but there were quite a few of them, not only in Class E, but in other classes as well. Tatsuya wondered about that oddness.

"There's a lot of things we can only do in school. And besides, I'm concerned about the clubs."

"I see", Tatsuya thinks. He did not notice that possibility. now that she mentioned it, that's just the way it is.

Living in a kind of extraterritorial territory like Miyaki Island, it's easy to forget that the use of magic in urban areas is strictly limited. Since the Miyaki Island is practically controlled by the Yotsuba family, he would not be blamed for using magic. Rather, using magic on a daily basis became natural to him. But normally, using magic without permission would be subject to police enforcement.

The premises of the magic university and its affiliated high schools are an exception to the rule, where the use of magic is allowed. However, unlike Miyakijima, if you exceed the permitted range, you will be arrested by the police.

Even so, the freedom to use magic within the school's grounds cannot be compared to outside the school. For many students, if they want to use magic properly, they have to come to school. This means that the only place where you can practice magic is at school, with a few exceptions like Tatsuya and the others

In Mizuki's case, however, she probably has another reason to still come to school so close to graduation. She's a member of the art club. So, does she have some work left to finish, or is she enthusiastic about teaching her underclassmen?

According to her own words, she didn't start seriously painting until she entered high school. When it is said "seriously", it means that it is at a level of a high school club activity. But still is a good fit for her. The school she chose to go to is also related to painting.

She will not go to Magic University. Originally, Mizuki entered the first high school with the purpose of being able to control her eyes –that suffer from Hypersensitivity to

Pushion Particles Emission. Although she had a rare talent as a magician, Mizuki herself was not that concerned about her magical skills and had little conscious desire to become a magician.

If she didn't achieve satisfactory results in high school, Mizuki was looking to go to a magical college, even if it was a bit overwhelming. But she exceeded her own expectations and gained almost complete control over her 'sight'. She still wears glasses that block out the Pushion Light, but she has already reached the level of having a normal daily life without them. As far as Hypersensitivity to Pushion Particles Emission is concerned, as of last September, there was no longer any sense in attending Magic University.

Another thing in terms of higher education was that as of the second semester of his third year, the chances of Mitsuki being able to pass the magic college were low. She had the ability to exceed the passing mark in the written exam, but her practical skills wouldn't reach the passing line. Even so, it was at a level where she might be able to get by if she pushed herself, but her parents, rather than Mizuki herself, were opposed to her taking the entrance exam for the college of magic.

As a result, Mizuki chose a vocational school of design as her career path. Among them, she chose a course to major in CG (computer graphics). In this era, there is no superiority between universities and vocational schools in people's consciousness. Universities themselves are becoming more and more specialized, and the ratio of education directly related to occupations is increasing. There are even companies that profess that they do not hire college graduates in some industries.

However, Mizuki didn't intend to cut off magic completely. She is supposed to continue her magical studies outside of college.

These days, the study of magic is inclined to place more emphasis on the engineering of the operation system than the techniques of the perception system. The curriculum of the Magic University also follows this trend, with a focus on the engineering of the action system. The knowledge of perceptual techniques, in which Mizuki excels, has been accumulated among Ancient style magicians rather than experts in modern magic. It's just not as well theorized as it should be.

Mikihiko, who is set to attend the magic university, intends to work on theorizing and systematizing Ancient style magic apart from his studies at the university. Mizuki was supposed to help her with that. One of the reasons she chose CG design instead of watercolor or oil painting was because she wanted to document the symbols used in ancient magic, such as spells and magic circles, by drawing them instead of using photographs.

Perhaps Mizuki will no doubt continue to walk with Mikihiko on a three-legged race even after graduating from vocational school...

“Um, Tatsuya-san... Is there something on my face...?”

Mizuki asks Tatsuya with an uneasy look on her face.

It seemed that he was looking at Mizuki with an unintentionally cheerful mood.

“No, I was just thinking about how considerate you are for your juniors, by coming to school close to graduation just for the sake of your club”

“No, it’s not like that! I just, I just don’t hate doing it.”

The flustered Mizuki blushed and waved her hands.

Tatsuya’s gaze grew increasingly lukewarm at the reaction, as if he didn’t entirely doubt her words.



Naturally, both the Student Council and the Public Morals Committee have already been replaced.

Miyuki, Honoka, and of course Tatsuya are no longer Student Council officers, and Mikihiko and Shizuku are no longer members of the Public Morals Committee.

Without being bothered to work until lunchtime, Tatsuya and the others were all enjoying their lunch in the cafeteria.

“Did you know, Tatsuya-san? I heard that the graduation ceremonies of the Third and Sixth High have been postponed.”

It was Honoka who brought this information to the table. She is supposed to go to the magic university in April. Naturally, Shizuku will be with her.

“Oh, I heard about it too.”

The one who followed was Mikihiko. He will also be a student at the magic university starting next month, but he happily complained that he’s going to be living a life of going to the college during the day and participating in his parents’ ceremony at night

for a while. It seems that this is an important ceremony for Ancient style magicians, that is considered the first step to be recognized as full-fledged magician.

“Is it because of the New Soviet Union?”

Tatsuya returns to Honoka and Mikihiko’s words in the form of a question.

That’s right. The Japan Sea coast is still on high alert.

As Honoka notes, a state of emergency has now been declared in the coastal areas of Hokkaido and Tohoku on the Sea of Japan, as well as in the coastal cities of Hokuriku and Sanin. This is in measure against the New Soviet Union’s gathering of a large army in Vladivostok.

The government of the new Soviet Union claims that it is doing so “for exercises purposes”, but this excuse cannot be taken for granted. It would be fine if it was merely a demonstration, but the possibility that it was preparations for a full-scale invasion cannot be ruled out.

The new Soviet Union, which was hit by Tatsuya’s counterattack in August, remained quiet for the rest of last year without retaliating afterwards. But, after all, they had no intention of backing down as it was. Since the beginning of the year they have repeatedly carried out large-scale exercises in the Far East region, which are often seen as threats. And at last, the massive mobilization of the army and navy that began five days ago.

Tatsuya was also aware of the movements of the new Soviet army. He was probably more familiar with the movements of the new Soviet army than anyone else present here. He received information from the USNA’s secretary of defense’s aide that the purpose of the new Soviet army was not to invade, but only to intimidate. He probably had a more accurate grasp of the situation than the Japan’s Defense Force and Defense Ministry officials.

So Tatsuya isn’t too worried about the current situation. The only concern is of the frontline soldiers behaving recklessly, which could happen at any time. If it developed into a large-scale attack against Japan, based on the secret contract with Toudou Aoba, Tatsuya would not hesitate to intervene.

“I heard that the Third and Sixth High are planning to postpone their graduation ceremonies until the twenty-fourth.”

Mikihiko adds more information.

“A postponement of nine days... They’re being very cautious.”

That was the honest opinion of Tatsuya, who knew there was no imminent crisis.

“It sounds like they are extending it as much as possible, rather than having to reschedule it again because of a prolonged high alert.”

“I would like to think about extending it as much as possible, rather than having to postpone it again due to a prolonged strict alert.”

But this makes sense, too. It’s nothing more than a nuisance to the people involved to have their plans changed two or three times due to loose predictions.

“I see. It’s not easy for Ichijou and the others.”

They were familiar with Ichijou Masaki and Kichijouji Shinkuro from Third High.

They are also going to the Magic University. Masaki’s thoughts were leaning towards the National Defense Academy in the summer, but he ended up deciding on the magic university. He also asked for advice from Tatsuya on this matter, but he doesn’t know whether his advice affected Masaki’s career path or not.

Kichijouji, who seemed to have no need to worry about his career path at all, actually had some twists and turns. There was some voices from a while ago before that was not a minority group view saying that, Kichijouji, the discoverer of the “Cardinal Code” and a researcher at the Kanazawa Magical Research Institute –that was built on the site of the former First Research Institute. He had thoughts for some time saying that he should stay in Kanazawa and continue his research at the institute rather than go to university, but that was just a minor opinion.

However, this intrusive and self-righteous thoughts became so strong that it could not be ignored with the advent of the strategic magic “Ocean Blast”. A large number of people have emerged who are wondering if it is okay to let engineers who can develop strategic magic play around at the university under this difficult international situation.

In the first place, Magic University is not a place to play, and there is no reason why Kichijouji must sacrifice academic freedom. Such an irresponsible sense of justice should have been ignored from the top of his head, but the serious Kichijouji was worried of being called a “national disaster”.

The reason why Kichijouji shook off his doubts and decided to go on to higher education was because of Masaki’s words, “I’m going to go to Magic University after

all". And then, Masaki and Kichijouji will go to the same place (the university) in peace, starting from April as before.

If they are going to attend a magic college in Tokyo next month, they will naturally have to find a place to live in Tokyo or the surrounding area. There are a lot of preparations to be made for a new life. And, if the graduation ceremony is delayed, there will be even less time for preparations. But, since it's the heir to the Ichijou family and his friend. Finding a new house might not be a hardship, but the time to move to Tokyo in advance and get used to the new living environment would inevitably be shortened.

Did Miyuki have the same thought?

"Maybe Ichijou-san and the others will be here before the graduation ceremony."

She made such a prediction.

Certainly, the option of starting a new life in Tokyo and returning to Kanazawa for the graduation ceremony is realistic enough, considering the distance between Tokyo and Kanazawa.

"Yeah, that's likely."

So, Tatsuya responded to Miyuki.

There were no objections among his friends.

Chapter 2

Saturday, March 15, 2098.

The First High School affiliated to the magic university finally had its graduation ceremony.

And not just First High, the graduation ceremonies of all the high schools except Third and Sixth High Schools will be held today.

The large contingent of Soviet troops that had been assembled in Vladivostok was gradually reducing in number since March 10, and on March 13 it was confirmed that the situation had returned to normal, but the high alert in the coastal city on the Sea of Japan will not be lifted until tomorrow, March 16. Kanazawa's Third and Sixth High are in no condition to hold graduation ceremonies. The decision to postpone the ceremonies seems to have been appropriated.

A large number of parents and guests are looking on as the graduation ceremony proceeds in a solemn manner. This is the kind of thing that hasn't changed much since the last century.

The number of graduates in the year of 2097 was one hundred and seventy. This means that 30 students have withdrawn from school since the time of enrolment. This number is neither more nor less than in previous years. It had been expected that the number of students dropping out of the school would decrease with the establishment of the Magic Engineering course, and it seems that the effect of this new course will still be felt for some time to come.

On the other hand, one hundred and twenty-eight of the graduates will go on to study at the Magic University, and fifteen students will go on to study at the National Defense Academy. The percentage of graduates who entered the University of Magic increased by about 10%, while the percentage of graduates who chose the National Defense Academy decreased slightly. This could be said to be the effect of the new Magic Engineering course.

The Magic Engineering course had not a single drop out of the department since it was established as a second-year college. The fact that all twenty-five students graduated was the most outstanding accomplishment of the entire class.

Until last year, the students who were deemed to be the best in terms of their grades as well as their extracurricular activities were the first to receive their diplomas, and from then on, regardless of their grades, the A class was the first to be awarded.

This year, however, there was a slight difference.

The first person to be called by name was Miyuki. This was a reasonable outcome that everyone could agree on.

The last, however, was not a graduate of Class H.

The last person to be called by name was Tatsuya.

In front of Tatsuya, who went up on the stage, the principal of the school, Momoyama read out the graduation certificate again.

“—I certify that you have completed the prescribed study course and have graduated from your High School studies.”

The written text was uninteresting and safe, as per the template.

But it didn't end there.

“I would also like to express my gratitude to you for the many contributions you made to various fields during your time at this school, which greatly enhanced the honor of this school. Principal of National Magic University First High School, Azuma Momoyama.”

The only letter given to him was a graduation certificate. But it's an unprecedented event for a graduate to receive a word of thanks from the principal at the graduation ceremony.

There was a brief silence, that was poked first by a sparse applause, that soon burst out.

Tatsuya, who had entered the school as an irregular student, arrived at graduation as a nonstandard student who was beyond comparison in terms of superiority.



Until last year, the graduation party held at the school after the graduation ceremony was divided into two separate parties for first and second course students. But this year's party was held at a single venue, with no distinction made between first course students, second course students and Magic Engineering course students.

Since the number of people have doubled, the party will be held in the courtyard instead of the small gym –of the two small gyms. it was planned to set up a huge tent on the roofs of the main school building, the practical skill building, and the experimental building. Fortunately, today's weather was mild and sunny, so it didn't turn into a garden party under a tent.

After the graduation ceremony, the graduates are moving in large numbers from the auditorium to the courtyard where the party will take place. On the way, the scenery is no different than any other high school, with female students stopping the graduates to say goodbye and shedding tears, and graduates crying over the tears of their juniors.

Tatsuya and the usual members were also in one group, heading to the venue at the same pace as the other graduates.

“That was not terrible, though. It’s unheard of for a principal to show gratitude like that at a graduation ceremony, isn’t it?”

Leo let out an exclamation of admiration with an excited expression lingering on his face.

“That must have been a desperate measure for the school.”

“What do you mean?”

Erika wasn’t the only one who had a strange look on her face at Tatsuya’s response.

“My attendance exemption and exam exemption were on the premise that I participated in the Dione project. I guess they needed another excuse to get me to graduate with my lack of attendance and credits.”

“...I’m sure there’s more to it than that.”

“That’s right! In fact, It was because of Tatsuya-san’s big achievements that you earned the school’s appreciation.”

Following Erika, Honoka eagerly tried to clear up Tatsuya’s misunderstanding.

They all arrived at the courtyard hall in such a fuss, and separated at the entrance. Erika and Leo went to their classmates from Class F, Honoka and Shizuku were called by Eimi and Subaru, who fought together in the freshman division of Nine Schools Competition, Mitsuki went to her friends in the art club, and Mikihiko followed her.

The three, Tatsuya, Miyuki, and Lina, were now alone. Actually, Izumi, the current Student Council President, walks up to Miyuki. She was accompanied by a male student dressed in a red uniform.

“Ichijou-san?”

Just as Miyuki couldn’t help but raise her voice, the boy was a Third High student, Ichijou Masaki.

“...Shiba-san. It’s been a while.”

With an embarrassed look on his face, Masaki greeted Miyuki. Tatsuya and Lina were naturally ignored.

“Yes. It’s been a while. But...”

“I know it sounds presumptuous, but I’ve invited him here.”

Izumi spoke to Miyuki, who swallowed the line “why”, from the side.

“Although it was only for one month, Ichijou-senpai is also a graduate who attended this school. That’s the reason why I asked him to come to Tokyo.”

The graduation ceremony of the Third High has been postponed, so technically speaking, Masaki is not yet a graduate.

“Yeah. Izumi, you’re very considerate.”

However, Miyuki didn’t point out such a trivial subject, but instead worked on Izumi’s attentiveness.

“You waste your words on me!”

Nodding with a smile at Izumi, who expressed her excitement with her whole body, Miyuki returned her gaze to Masaki.

“When did you arrive in Tokyo, Ichijou-san?”

“It was the day before yesterday. As the NSU military deployment has normalized, I’ve decided to come to Tokyo a little earlier than the graduation ceremony.”

For some reason, Masaki acted a bit flustered here.

“Well, I finished greeting the Saegusa and Jumonji families, who are based in Tokyo, the day before yesterday.”

Miyuki looks up quizzical at Masaki. With a face that says, “I don’t know why you would dare to say such an obvious thing at this time”.

“I see. I’m sure that’s why Izumi was the first to know about Ichijou’s arrival in Tokyo.”

“Yeah.”

A relieved look appeared on Masaki’s face at Tatsuya’s helping hand.

That’s when Masaki’s attention finally turned to something other than Miyuki.

He looked suspiciously at Lina in particular.

“Ichijou-san, she’s Angelina Kudou Shields. Given some circumstances she is staying at our home.”

Noticing his gaze, Miyuki introduced Lina to Masaki.

“I’m Angelina Kudou Shields. Please call me Lina.”

After receiving Miyuki’s words, Lina greets him with one of her best smiles.

“Ah, yes. Uh, I’m Ichijou Masaki. It’s nice to meet you, Lina-san.”

Masaki returned with an introduction of himself, a little flustered. While he liked Miyuki, he still couldn’t help but feel nothing about Lina’s beauty.

But Masaki wasn’t just uptight. He wasn’t weak to women. Miyuki is just an exception.

“Excuse me..., but when you mean Kudou...?”

Lina wasn’t surprised by Masaki’s conjecture.

“Yes. As you can imagine, my grandfather is the brother of His Excellency Kudou, who passed away recently.”

Lina considers to what extent the name “Kudou Shogun” is famous among Japanese magicians. Since, there is a precedent with Tatsuya. He also asked her at their first meeting, “Are you related to His Excellency Kudou?”.

“I see... It’s better not to ask why you’re in custody with the Yotsuba family instead of the Kudou family, despite being related to Patriarch’s blood, right?”

There was a “?” mark on Lina’s expression for a moment because of Masaki’s question. The reason for Lina’s puzzlement was because she didn’t understand the term “Patriarch” when referring to Elder Kudou.

“Ichijou-san, Lina is not in the custody of the Yotsuba family.”

While Lina is puzzled, Miyuki intercepts the gap to answer.

A certain someone asked me and Tatsuya-sama to take care of Lena... and we’ve been taking care of her since then.

“A certain someone.....? No, I’m sorry for prying...”

Masaki didn’t step in any further. It wasn’t because the other party was Miyuki. The way she blurred their identity as “A certain someone” smelled a secret, so he avoided touching the topic. It was a natural sense of risk as the heir of one of the Ten Master Clans.

At the same time, Masaki felt a strange sense of defeat for Tatsuya. In terms of combat power, even if his opponent was Tatsuya, who became the “world’s” threat, Masaki thought he was not inferior to him with “Ocean Blast” in his hands. –no, he still thinks so. Since the first time when he used new strategic magic, Masaki has been studying and improving “Ocean Blast” in this short period of time to a level that can be described as “evolved”.

But now, Miyuki hinted at a personal connection of Tatsuya, foreshadowing a deep and ridiculous abyss of power that could not be matched by strength alone. Masaki felt something similar to the inferiority complex that a child has for an adult in Tatsuya, who was the same age as him, yet had cut deep in the society.

“–Shiba. Can you give me some time after the opening ceremony is over?”

It was the impatience created by this youthful rebellion against the sense of defeat that caused him to say such a thing so impatiently.



After a brief opening address, not too long and not too short, and acknowledgements from Miyuki, representing the graduates, there was free time where the entertainment organized by volunteers within the current students began. Most of the eyes of the audience turned to the stage set up in the center of the courtyard, which looked like a Bon Festival Dance⁷'s Tower. It was the perfect time to slip out.

Tatsuya looked over at Masaki and moved alone to the vacant lot behind the small gymnasium on the opposite side of the auditorium.

“So, what do you want?”

When Tatsuya asked him, Masaki pulled his lips into a tight knot, his hands clenched at the sides of his body, and he poured strength on his back, his stomach, and his eyes.

“Shiba, I like Shiba Miyuki-san.”

Masaki's voice sounded like it was about to start trembling at any moment.

“I know. So?”

There was no agitation or tension in Tatsuya's voice as he responded.

“.....”

Masaki did not immediately continue.

“So?”

“.....”

Masaki remains silent, and Tatsuya turns his back.

“Wait!”

Masaki stopped Tatsuya in a hurry.

Tatsuya, who was in the middle of turning away, turned back with an annoyed expression on his face and faced Masaki head on.

“What the hell do you want?”

“Shiba, do you like her at.....?”

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bon_Festival

“Of course I like Miyuki.”

Tatsuya answered Masaki’s question with a dumbfounded tone.

To Tatsuya, it was a question that was too obvious for him to not remember ever having the need to answer.

“In what sense do you like it!”

But from the standpoint of Masaki, the answer was not obvious, but unclear.

Tatsuya frowned his eyebrows and wondered for about three seconds what Masaki was asking.

“—I love Miyuki.”

Masaki was frightened by the straight-faced answer Tatsuya gave.

But Masaki didn’t back down here.

“Do you seriously love her as a woman?”

“...Miyuki as a woman.”

Masaki didn’t overlook the fact that Tatsuya fumbled for a moment.

“Don’t misunderstand it! You only love her as a sister, not as a woman, don’t you!?”

“—Huh”

Tatsuya’s breath stops for a moment.

Tatsuya does love Miyuki from the bottom of his heart. There is no falsehood there.

—But does he love Miyuki as a woman?

—Doesn’t he just love her as a sister?

It’s a question Tatsuya has asked himself, and he had doubts if he could answer it.

It was a thorn that had been stabbing at Tatsuya’s heart ever since the day he became Miyuki’s fiancée.

Masaki’s words unintentionally hit Tatsuya’s Achilles’ heel.

“You have no right to say such things to me!”

Tatsuya raised his voice for the first time as he was hit in a sore spot.

“Ichijou, you’re the one who’s just attracted to Miyuki’s appearance!”

“Kuh—..... What’s wrong with falling in love with her appearance!”

Masaki, too, was greatly damaged by Tatsuya’s point.

The two of them had their composure greatly scraped off by each other’s words.

“Can I believe you if you say that you like her just because of her looks!”

“It’s not just about looks! I’m sure I can love everything about her!”

“You don’t even know Miyuki well enough to have something to love about! It’s just a frivolous love at first sight, isn’t it?”

Tatsuya’s voice was also followed by Masaki and they became more and more heated up.

“What is wrong with love at first sight? When I saw her for the first time, I knew it was fate!”

“Fate!? Like that’s ground for anything!”

“You were chosen as her fiancée just because you were related to her by blood! That’s just luck!”

“There’s more than a decade of accumulated time together between me and Miyuki!”

“that’s why I’m saying it was just a stroke of luck!”

“What happened in the past is a fact. Fate is just an assumption! The fact that I’m Miyuki’s fiancée is already a fact!”

“I don’t accept facts that were decided by adults for their convenience!”

Masaki shouted.

As if that was a signal, neither the excited Tatsuya nor Masaki noticed that the music that was coming from the courtyard was no longer heard. —At this time, the Tatsuya’s emotions limiter was not functioning. Emotions related to Miyuki were not subject to mental modification. There was nothing to bind Tatsuya’s emotions in this situation where the two men were fighting over Miyuki.

“I am more fitting for Miyuki-san!”

Masaki swings his right hand at Tatsuya and strikes at him.

It's a big swinging punch that lacks composure. It was easy to duck it.

But Tatsuya didn't dodge. He deliberately took Masaki's punch with his face.

“Don't call Miyuki's name so intimately!”

Tatsuya punched back at Masaki.

It was an incredible rough blow instead of what would be expected from someone notable for his fighting skills.

But even Masaki took that fist in the face.

“Let me at least call her by the name!”

Masaki punches back.

“Like you would deserve it more than me!”

Tatsuya punches back.

Masaki stumbled.

“—Don't joke with me!”

Tatsuya doesn't chase after him. He glares at Masaki with furious eyes and shouts at him.

“There's no way I'm joking around!”

Masaki gets back on his feet and hits Tatsuya again.

—You are not going to be able to duck, prevent, or cheat, there is no excuse at all, you must defeat the man in front of you with your own bare self.

—You have to show my opponent that your feelings are stronger than his!

They strongly recited this conviction in their minds

They were strongly reminded and convinced.

They shouted a word at each other, and dutifully took turns in fisting each other, one shot at a time.

Both men's lips were cut and their cheeks were swollen. However, neither of them are seriously injured beyond that, such as a broken tooth, for example. It's probably because they are both clenching their teeth tightly and not using their martial skills. The two of them dare not use any techniques, they just beat each other with their bare strength.

"I'm the one who loves Miyuki the most!"

Tatsuya's fist strikes Masaki.

"I can love her better than you!"

Masaki's fist strikes Tatsuya.

"I love her the most!"

Strike.

"That's me!"

Strike.

"Me!"

Hitting

"Me!"

Hitting.

Just that exchange is repeated over and over again.

Both Tatsuya's and Masaki's fists have lost their initial momentum and have lost their pace.

Both Tatsuya and Masaki exchange punches in silence, as if they don't have the energy to spare to say a brief word now.

Still, the two do not stop.

They don't stop raising their arms.

Both of them are hitting each other only because of stubbornness.

But there is a limit to their energy. No, there may be no limit to the strength of their feelings, but their body can't keep up.

In the trial of strength and endurance..., Tatsuya has the upper hand.

Tatsuya's weak punch catches Masaki's side of the face, and Masaki slowly collapses to the ground.

Tatsuya stepped on his feet, supported his body, which was about to fall, with his willpower, and while exhaling a rough breath, mustered his strength in a shout.

"I won't let anyone else have Miyuki!"

He let out a rough victorious war cry.



Shortly thereafter.

Tatsuya was showered by a thunderous applause.

With his astonishment laid bare he surveyed the vicinity

The vacant lot where Tatsuya and Masaki had been beating each other up was surrounded by graduates and current students who must have been attending the graduation party at some point.

Miyuki, who was standing in the front row, stumbles a step or two forward after her back is pushed.

It was a Honoka smiling through tears that pushed Miyuki's back.

Miyuki's cheeks dyed bright red while she was walking up to Tatsuya

It wasn't just shyness that was making her blush.

'Tatsuya-sama.....'

Tatsuya could not utter a word back right away. He was more shaken than ever before.

"Me too."

"..."

"I also won't let anyone else have Tatsuya-sama."

A wow, and a cheer rises.

A roar of applause reverberated.

After looking around to the left and right, Tatsuya's blood-soaked lips parted in a contemplative smile.

"Miyuki."

He gently called his beloved's name and wrapped his hands around hers vigorously.

"Let's run away."

Tatsuya then announced the shameful line proudly.

"Yes!"

Tatsuya pulled Miyuki's hand away and ran off.

Miyuki followed Tatsuya's back with a smile full of happiness.

There was a crowd of people lined up in the road in front of them.

They were greeted with applause and ran down the single path that had been created between the crowd of people.

They could see Lina's figure in the crowd. When their gazes met, Lina smiled and gave a thumbs up.

I can see Honoka and Shizuku in the crowd. Honoka has her face down on Shizuku's shoulder and is actually gently stroking her head.

Erika and Leo can also be seen in the crowd. They give a teasing, but never scornful, smile.

Mizuki and Mikihiko can be seen in the human fence. Mizuki just clapped her hands incessantly, while Mikihiko went along with it with a wry smile.

Izumi and Kasumi can be seen in the crowd. Izumi glares at Tatsuya in a hushed way, while Kasumi waves at him with a happy, relieved smile, trying not to look at Izumi.

The crowd breaks up.

Ahead of them is a row of cherry blossom trees leading up to the school gate.

They are in early bloom this year, and the cherry blossoms have already begun to fall.

Tatsuya and Miyuki run under the dancing cherry blossoms.

Holding hands tightly, the two run through the flurry of failing cherry blossoms.

Afterword

"The Irregular at Magic High School" is now complete. This is the end of the series.

The first edition of the first volume was published on July 10, 2011... It's been a whole nine years. I can only thank you, my readers, for following me this far.

I'm in a state of being overcome by emotions right now, and not a single witty word has come out of my mouth.

I am simply filled with gratitude for all of you.

For nine years, I've written 32 volumes of the main story, one SS volume, and three spin-off volumes, for a total of 36 volumes. To all of you who have read this book, my heartfelt thanks.

Truly, thank you very much.

I'll sincerely appreciate your continued support in the sequel.

(Tsutomu Satou)

P.S.

Please note that there are a few additional pages following this, if you would like, take a look at them.

This is a later page that I wrote before the afterword.

P.S. 2

The word "sacrifice" in "Sacrifice" is used here to mean "self-sacrifice". It should be "self-sacrifice", but the last scene of "Constantine" (2005) starring Keanu Reeves, in which Lucifer (played by Peter Stormare) mumbles "sacrifice" to himself, was so impressive that I borrowed it.

[Epilogue/Prologue]

Epilogue

The two who entered a high school that teaches magic as a brother, that is an imperfect irregular student, and as a sister, who is a flawless honor student, had graduated.

Not as brother and sister, but engaged to each other.

Not as an inferior student, but as an outstanding student.

As an honor student that remained as an honor student until the end.

Was already mentioned what happened to Tatsuya and Miyuki and the people involved with them, but let's look back again here.

While Tatsuya entered the Magic University, he only minimally attends the lectures and spends most of his time in his laboratory in Miyakijima. He often quit midway through the course, and his credits were not good, and he was definitely a poor student in terms of grades at the university.

Unlike Tatsuya, Miyuki continues to be an honor student in the university. However, she and Tatsuya act separately more and more often than not, and Miyuki, who had envisioned a “campus life for both of them”, was getting frustrated in that regard.

Lina, who was entrusted with the role of escorting Miyuki, is always with her at the Magic University. Because of that, the two of them, Miyuki and Lina, were secretly referred to as the “white lily and the golden lily” and were eye candy and a target of delusions of the other students.

Honoka and Shizuku have no distinctive university life at the University of Magic. However, outside of the university, Shizuku began to attend meetings related to the Stellar Reactor Plant, which is sponsored by the Kitayama family, as a substitute for her father, and Honoka began to accompany her as a caretaker and bodyguard during those meetings. And, of course, in Miyakijima too.

In addition to quietly attending the University of Magic, Erika also travels around Japan on long vacations. Her father told her that she “should train in Japan before the rest of the world” – or rather, he had talked her out of it after an argument. Just before her

first summer vacation, she furiously said, “I’ll beat that shitty dad before I graduate from college”.

Leo became alienated from his friends from First High. Erika is not happy about it – though she never talks about it. The magical-related knowledge he learned at the High School associated with the Magic University is of little use in his classes at Rescue Academy. There’s a lot to remember, and it seems that he’s desperate to become a full-fledged rescuer.

Perhaps the most drastic development was the relationship between Mizuki and Mikihiko. At some point, Mizuki began to attend a vocational school from Mikihiko’s parents’ house. Rather than living together as a couple, she began to help Mikihiko and with his family’s work as she learned about ancient magic.

Mizuki’s house and Mikihiko’s parents’ house were close to each other, but, in this day and age it was safer for a young girl to stay there than for her to come home late. So she became a live-in at the Yoshida family’s house.

Mizuki’s parents had taken the stance that as long as they “take proper responsibility”, Mikihiko’s father was more confused than Mizuki and Mikihiko when he heard that statement.

After losing a fist fight with Tatsuya, Masaki was treated by the First High doctor, Asuka Satomi, after that incident, and in April, without any particular hospitalization, he was successfully admitted to the Magic University. He did not completely give up on Miyuki because of the fight with Tatsuya; he takes advantage of Tatsuya’s frequent absence to approach Miyuki and is repeatedly chased away by Lina, without learning a lesson.

Meanwhile, a young girl often enters and leaves the room that Masaki rented for attending the University. When it’s said “frequently”, it doesn’t mean every day or three times a week, in the true sense of the word. But if the other person is a high school student that lives in Kanazawa, you could say “frequently” if it happens even once every two weeks.

Two beautiful girls come and go in Masaki’s room. One of them is his oldest sister, Ichijou Akane, who is in the third year of junior high school. The other, however, is not a blood relative. If you put aside the fact that she is only a third year junior high school student, just like Akane, she was someone who would be considered a concerning company by a third party.

The identity of the beautiful girl who travelled a long way to Masaki's room with Akane, or rather escorted by Akane, is Liú Lì Lěi. She is a former National Recognized Strategic-Class Magician who defected to Japan from the Great Asian Union.

Liú Lì Lěi currently resides with the Ichijou family and attends the same school as Akane.

And naturally, she is remotely monitored by the National Defense Force.

Naturally, when she visits Masaki's room, she is also monitored from a distance. Although accompanied by his sister, a high school girl from Kanazawa commuting to a male university student's home in Tokyo may be a morally dangerous picture, but the fact that it's not a problem under the military's surveillance is, so to speak, like an official recognition of the same. Perhaps the National Defense Force thinks that if Masaki continues to be a close friend of Liú Lì Lěi, they can incorporate this exiled strategic level magician into the Japanese war effort.

Speaking of Strategic-Class Magicians, Major General Saeki's plan for a treaty to control strategic class magicians was eventually abandoned without being signed. Germany, France, and the Greater Alliance moved to promote it, but the USNA, the New Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom, which had promised to cooperate with them in the first place, strongly opposed it, so no agreement was reached.

Perhaps not so much because of this, but because the countries of continental Europe, especially Germany and France, are tightening their hold in regards to magicians.

Saeki was dispatched to Hokkaido and returned to Tokyo within a year, but by then her influence had been wiped out from the central government.

The Independent Magic-Equipped Battalion was expanded and reorganized into the Independent Magic-Equipped Regiment, and Lieutenant Colonel Kazama, Saeki's confidant, was promoted to colonel and then appointed regimental commander. In return, he was asked by the army commander-in-chief, General Soga, to cut ties with Saeki, and Kazama accepted this condition.

Kazama's subordinates from his battalion days, Sanada, Yanagi, and Yamanaka, remained in the Independence Magic-Equipped Regiment, while Fujibayashi, his second in command, retired from service in the National Defense Force.

After removing her military uniform, Fujibayashi accepted Maya's invitation to move in with the Yotsuba family. While working on the "Information Network Research", a project given to her personally by Maya, the head of the family, she often works with Tatsuya and is considered a member of his team.

Two years of seemingly peaceful days passed in this way.

And two years later. The last year of the twenty-first century.



The year 2100 AD.

Miyuki and Lina come to Miyaki Island just as the spring vacation begins.

Tatsuya has passed most of his second semester exams and immediately after holed up (hikikomori joke) on the island. He's allowed such behavior given the huge achievements he has left behind, apart from his college credits.

The year before last, he established a mass production technology for artificial relics with magical preservation effects.

Last year, he proposed and proved the "Theory of Pushion Wave Event Interference strength".

The university authorities couldn't complain about the piling up successive accomplishments he has.

This time, Miyuki and Lina didn't come to this island in the Izu Archipelago for a visit. They both and Tatsuya had been working on some sort of large-scale magic all along.

And today, April 1 at 5:00 am. They were putting the finishing touches on this large magic.

Tatsuya, Miyuki and Lina, consecutively, descend the stairs that lead deep underground. Beyond this, there is a special prison that was built for the confinement of serious criminals with extremely high levels of Mental Interference type magic.

"Minoru and Minami are sleeping here..."

In front of the door, Lina let out a mumble to herself. As she said, this prison had been the bedroom where Minoru and Minami had slept peacefully since the summer of three years ago.

Tatsuya, who was carrying a small travel bag in his left hand, enters after opening the door with his right.

Miyuki and Lina follow with a quiet (meek) expression on their faces.

Out of the corner of their eye, the three of them saw Minoru and Minami sleeping snuggled up in a double bed of good taste.

Minoru and Minami were lying in a sideways hugging position, with Tatsuya and the others facing Minami's back, and Minoru's face.

Minoru and Minami appearances hadn't changed a bit since three years ago. They hadn't consumed any food or water, but they hadn't lost any weight, and they didn't look debilitated from sleeping for a long time.

It was as if time had stopped.

"Tatsuya-sama."

Miyuki refers to Tatsuya in a manner that has finally taken root in the last two years.

"They're both alive, right?"

"They must be alive. Before they fell asleep, I analyzed the magic sequence that Minoru showed me, and it seems that it is magic that slows down the spiritual time to a level that is more like desaceleracion magic than hibernation. As the spiritual activity slows down, the body's physique time also slows down. I would say it has the same principle as your Cocytus."

"Spiritual activity is slowing down? So neither of them does think?"

"Minoru said he was dreaming, but I guess he was really just looking for a peaceful sleep with no suffering. However, Maybe the parasite can dream in this state."

"I see..."

Miyuki mutters in pain. Lina has a similar look on her face.

"We need to wake them up."

"Yeah. They don't have to keep sleeping anymore. Miyuki."

At the sound of Tatsuya's voice, Miyuki nodded firmly. For the past three years, two and a half years to be exact, Tatsuya had managed to find time in his busy schedule to figure out the principles and system of Minoru's hibernation magic.

The results were programmed into Miyuki's CAD system.

“Minoru-kun, Minami-chan, wake up. It’s morning for you two.”

The activation sequence released from the CAD in Miyuki’s hand.

The construction of the magic formula was completed in an instant. It’s the accumulated result of repeated practice from yesterday.

And then Miyuki’s Mental Awakening Magic is activated.

A magic that counteracts the effects of Minor’s Spiritual Deceleration Magic. This was the “solution” that Tatsuya came up after analysing Minoru’s magic.

“U... Hmm.”

Minami was the first to show signs of waking up.

“...Miyuki-san?”

But Minoru was the first to open his eyelids.

“Yes, Minoru. it’s morning already.

“What do you mean...?”

Minoru sat up with a look of confusion on his face as he tried to understand the situation.

Minoru’s movements must have stirred Minami to start moving around.

“...Miyuki-sama?

Minami, who raised her upper body and turned around, muttered Miyuki’s name in a half asleep voice.

“—Miyuki-sama!?”

Shortly afterwards, Minami was fully awakened by the shock.

“Go- good morning... Tatsuya-sama too!? Why are you all here!?”

Minami hurriedly tried to get up, but staggered on the way. Minoru, who has already stood up, supports her from the side. His body does not appear to be affected by long-term sleep.

“Let’s talk about the details after you two change clothes.”

Minami was wearing an elegant negligee, reminiscent of a wedding dress, made of layers of pure white organdy that was transparent but did not reveal any of her skin, while Minoru was wearing a brilliant white, open collar pajama made of glossy fabric.

While their nightwear does not expose skin, it's undeniable that it's uncomfortable to be in front of Tatsuya and the others who are in outside clothes.

Tatsuya handed over the bag that he was holding. There were changes of clothes for the two of them inside.

"We'll step out of the room for now. Call out when you've finished dressing. Don't worry about the time. You can take a shower if you want."

"That's not necessary... No. I understand."

Minoru wanted to hear what he had to say right away, but he felt that Minami wanted to change her clothes, so he decided to follow Tatsuya's instructions.

It took them less than five minutes to get dressed. There is no signal that either of them had used the shower.

The only thing is that Minami has properly fixed her hair, and has also done her make-up enough as by etiquette.

Minami didn't seem to care about changing clothes in the same room with a man.

Minoru must have been embarrassed, as his face has traces of blush.

"Now, Tatsuya-san. How did you wake us up?"

"That first? Don't worry, we didn't wake you up in a way that would cause any side effects."

What Minoru was worried about was the possibility of Minami's spirit being damaged by being forced to interrupt the Spiritual Hibernation Magic.

"—I understand. I believe in you."

However, since Minoru didn't feel anything, there is nothing wrong with Minami from a logical standpoint. Minoru accepted Tatsuya's words of "no side effects," while leaving the technical question unanswered.

"then why did you wake us up?"

“We have a new option for you to choose, other than keeping you sleeping. You can choose this option or go back to sleep. I wanted to make sure you had a choice.”

“A new option, is it...?”

Minoru repeated Tatsuya’s words with a look of disbelief on his face.

“If you’re willing to listen to me, follow me.”

Tatsuya signals Miyuki and Lina out of the room –out of the special underground prison first.

Tatsuya, who had his back turned, turned around, holding the open door with his hand.

Tatsuya, with his back facing, held the open door in his hand and turned around.

Minoru stepped a foot out hesitantly, and Minami followed him.

The place Tatsuya had taken Minoru and Minami to was not the West Bank area where the Yotuba family’s facilities were clustered, nor was it the East Bank area where the plants were lined up.

It was the south bank area where no buildings had yet been built, just a flat, cleared area.

A large submarine, about 170 meters long and a maximum width of about 20 meters, is landed there.

“What the hell is this...?”

“The name is “Takachiho”. It was converted into a spaceship from the new Soviet Union’s “Kutuzov” submarine that I sank in an attack on this island three years ago. Even though I said that is a spaceship, it only has a small thrust, enough to maintain itself in the earth’s satellite orbit.”

“...What the hell are you going to do with something this big?”

“I will use it as a satellite orbital station. No, it’s more appropriate to call it a space residence than a space station.”

“Are you going to launch this into... space? How the hell... you are going to do that?”

“We’re magicians. So the means is already assured.”

Tatsuya replied to Minoru’s stunned tone of voice with a natural expression.

“A thing this big, with magic?”

“Of course I’m not going to launch it as it is.”

Tatsuya didn’t show any particular pretence, he just pointed his right hand toward the giant submarine that had just landed on land.

The submarine “Kutuzov”, or the spaceship “Takachiho”, is quietly being disassembled.

Instead of falling wildly, each part is arranged on the ground in an orderly fashion, as if laying out the parts that are about to be assembled.

It took about a minute or so, and “Takachiho” was transformed into parts up to ten meters square

“We will move the parts in this way to an altitude of 6,400 kilometers and reassemble it there.”

Tatsuya now points his left hand at the parts lined up on the ground.

Then the large spaceship is assembled, as if the scene we just saw was played backwards on a 3D video.

The time required for the assembly was about half that of the disassembly.

As expected, Minoru was also at a loss for words as he and Minami looked up at the submarine-looking spaceship with a dumbfounded expression on their faces.

“Minoru, Minami.”

“Ye- Yes. What is it?”

It was Minami who replied disconcerted She had not yet forgotten the customs of her maid days.

“Unfortunately, there is no place on earth where you both can live in peace.”

“...Yes.”

Minami nodded, her expression disappearing.

Minoru pondered with a serious look, as he seemed to have an idea of what Tatsuya is going to say by now.

“Indeed, you could continue to sleep like before. If the times change, there may be a country where parasites can live normally.”

“But it’s not now. In this age we would become wandering exiles.”

Minoru anticipates Tatsuya’s line.

“That’s right.”

“Then why don’t we try living in space... Tatsuya-san wants to say that?”

“It’s a little different. Even if you go into space, it doesn’t mean you can’t come down to earth. If my calculations aren’t wrong, you should be able to come and go from here to here pretty freely – five times a day, to be specific. It’s just a safe place to live... Well, for lack of a better word, I’m suggesting that you have a ‘safe house’ in space.”

“Aren’t we going to be trapped in space forever, right?”

“I don’t plan to exile you out to space.”

Firmly holding Minoru’s gaze, Tatsuya gave an emphasis in this statement.

However, there was some hidden meaning in Tatsuya’s words. He wasn’t trying to hide something, rather it was the USNA government’s action against the Parasites that was on his mind.

The U.S. government had sent Raymond and the other parasite survivors into space one by one aboard a Mars exploration vessel. It was a blatant expulsion from Earth, provided with life support and the means of communication, but not with means of return.

“Nevertheless, I hear that Raymond was happy to get on a spaceship. He originally had a dream of exploring space through magic. That had come true in an unexpected way. He might be happy now, in a way.”

But Tatsuya had no intention of letting Minoru, or even less Minami, fall into that kind of circumstances.

“Takachiho’s power source is the stellar reactor. With Minoru’s magic power, it should work just fine. The ship is also equipped with a solar power generation system as an auxiliary energy source. The interior of the ship is designed to maintain the same

gravity as the ground through an artificial gravity system that uses an artificial relic. You should be able to live comfortably for about a hundred years.”

“Can we get supplies from the surface?”

“That’s why we developed the magic of the virtual satellite elevator. This elevator can be used to move goods to and from the ground as well as to travel back and forth.”

“Even this... You mean that, it is for our sake?”

Tatsuya nodded silently, without looking away from Minoru’s gaze.

“Tatsuya-san...”

Minoru turns away and wipes his eyes with his sleeves. When he looked to his side, he saw that Minami was silently crying.

“...Minoru-kun, Minami-chan, please take a look inside. I designed the interior. I hope you like it.”

Miyuki’s eyes were a little red, probably because of infectious crying, but she smiled brightly and invited Minoru and Minami into the spaceship “Takachiho”.

When they came out of “Takachiho”, Minoru and Minami stood side by side in front of Tatsuya and looked straight up at him.

“Tatsuya, we’re going into space. No, please take us to space.”

“It’s not up to me to send you up into space. I’ll just build the ship there. It’s Miyuki and Lina who will take you into space.”

“I understand. Tatsuya-san, Miyuki-san and Lina-san, I’m looking forward to your help.”

Minoru and Minami happily bowed together.

The parts of the disassembled spacecraft were laid out on the ground again.

One of them is an airtight chamber that can be re-entered into the atmosphere, which Minoru and Minami had entered in it.

“Then, I’ll start the countdown.”

As soon as Tatsuya announced that, psion light flooded out from the entirety of Miyuki and Lina bodies, who were facing each other about two hundred meters away, with the group of parts in between.

As the light seared, a huge geometric pattern emerged on the flat, leveled ground. The shape, which was based on a regular octagon inscribed in a circle, contained all the parts of a spaceship inside.

It was a huge magic circle.

It wasn't a magic circle handed down in ancient magic, but an engraved magic circle that Tatsuya had designed from scratch.

"...eight, seven, six, five, four."

As the countdown progressed, the magic circle was filled with event interference strength.

When Minoru entered the airtight room, he understood what this magic circle was.

This was a magic circle for super-large, super-long distance "Mock-Teleportation".

In addition to the "Mock-Teleportation", it also incorporates a process that gives speed to orbit a satellite after the movement is complete.

"Three, two, one."

Tatsuya's count goes on.

"Zero."

At the moment the final count was announced.

Minoru and Minami are enveloped in an unimaginable massive magic.

The parts of the spaceship "Takachiho" disappeared one after another from the ground.

Finally, just as the airtight chamber with Minoru and Minami on board disappeared, Tatsuya extended his left hand to the heavens.

His "eyes" continue to trace Minoru, Minami, and every single part of "Takachiho".

The magic is released from Tatsuya to the top of the heavens.

“Regrowth” is activated.

His unique magic reconstructed a spaceship of 170 meters in length, 6,400 kilometers away.

—A minute later, Tatsuya’s transmitter received a call.

“Tatsuya-san, this is Minoru.”

As expected, it was the voice he was waiting for.

“Miyuki-sama, this is Minami.”

Miyuki’s terminal received a call from Minami.

“Everything is fine. The solar panels have also finished deploying normally.”

“The Stellar reactor has safely started up. Artificial gravity is also occurring without problems.”

The voice was received by all three of them, all three on earth.

Tatsuya, Miyuki, and Lina sincerely patted their chests.

Thus began a new “era” for these Magicians, spanning the world and the space.

[Continued in “The Magian Company”]



Extra Illustrations by the Manga Artists

電撃文庫

魔法科高校の劣等生

The irregular at magic high school

高校生編完結！

著／佐島 勤 イラスト／石田可奈

劣等生の兄と優等生の妹による、
伝説的スクールマギックスバトル

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また別の舞台での達せたちの活躍、期待しています！

佐島先生、石田先生、お疲れ様でした！

さだみや

魔法科高校の劣等生

完結おめでとうございます!!

毎巻、ワクワクしながら楽しませて頂きました。
この作品にコミカラーズ"という形"で
関われてとても幸せです。

佐島勤先生、石田可奈先生
お疲れ様でした!!

袖木N'





天羽記。

おめでとうございます!!
おめでとうございます!!
おめでとうございます!!

Reform

魔法科高校の少女達

完結おめでとうござりほす!



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描かせていただきまして、有り難うございました。
魔法科の連載は私にとって大変思い出深く
感謝ばかりのものとなりました。

佐島先生、長い間お疲れさまでした。
そして本当にどうも有り難うございました。

マジコ！

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お疲れ様ございした!!!
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毎巻熱血バトルシーンは
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しまいます。

この作品に限ある
ことが出来本当に
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ありがとうございました
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完結

おめでとうございます!!

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今からすごく楽しみにしています!!



魔法科高校の劣等生

完結!!

長期間の執筆、お疲れ様でした。
イチ読者として楽しませて頂いていた
私にとって、
“暗殺計画”コミカライズとして
少しでも関わることができたこと、
大変光栄に思っています！
魔法科は完結しても、一生忘れられない、
色褪せることのない物語です。

最高の作品もありました
ございました！！

—乃ゆゆ



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