

**ULTRAMAN SUIT
ANOTHER UNIVERSE**

Episode:

TIGA



ULTRAMAN SUIT ANOTHER UNIVERSE - Episode: TIGA

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Chapter 0 - The Starting Signal of Destruction

Once upon a time, gigantic and terrifying monsters appeared on this planet and struck the people down in terror. When there was no weapon that could defeat the monsters, and the word "despair" came to everyone's mind, a giant of light flew from a distant star, battled the monsters, and saved mankind. The people called him Ultraman. After fierce battles, when all the monsters were defeated, Ultraman left this planet.

If a terrible threat comes to this planet again, we humans must protect the peace by our own strength. Because Ultraman is no longer with us.

A world is about to be destroyed.

Burning flames. Scorching skies.

The echoing screams of fear and despair. No, they no longer can be heard.

What can be heard now in the world that was filled with happy smiles and singing voices just a few days ago are the cries of raging beasts. Those who hear it go mad and die one after another.

The masters of these cries roam in a hellscape of reddish-black flames and jet-black darkness. Huge, ferocious, and vicious servants of the darkness. They trample, capture, and devour the few survivors.

The number of these horrifying monsters, like demons, exceeds several hundred.

But there is one being who far surpasses them all. Gatanothor, the absolute ruler of darkness, reigns supreme over all monsters.

Its immensity was extraordinary, its deformity unnameable, and its screams shook the earth. And from the countless holes in its gigantic exoskeleton, reminiscent of a Gatanothor shell, a great amount of darkness was constantly secreted, covering the world in its jet-blackness.

"Hurry! The darkness is almost upon us!"

Three young men and a beautiful woman were running through a nightmarish world overrun by the giant evil god, Gatanothor, and his dependents.

Three warriors, Daigo, Soruka, and Daya, had fought and protected the people until the end. And Yuzare, the priestess of light.

They were all wounded. They had no strength left to run. But now they had no choice but to run. They would get there no matter what it took.

It is the only hope they have left.

“Yes! I can see it!”

“We're almost there!”

There is a giant black pyramid towering above them. It is the gate of the Otherworld, the source that first brought the mighty power of darkness to this world.

If only we had prevented that gate from opening, this would never have happened...

Daigo thinks back to the beginning of the cataclysm that began just a few weeks ago.

“A person was eaten alive?”

Daigo, a member of the Planet Earth Investigation Security Force, received a report of a mysterious incident.

“Was it a wild animal or something?”

“No...”

Soruka, a colleague and close friend of Daigo's, was more equivocal.

“He's definitely a beast, but I've never seen anything like him before.”

“You've never seen anything like it? A new species?”

Daya, who was polishing a light crystal in a corner of the guard station, asks back. He is also Daigo's best friend.

“The best way to describe it is that it's a monster, I guess.”

There was a moment of silence at Soruka's words, and then Daigo and Daya burst into laughter.

“A monster? What's with you?!”

"I get it. You're kidding us!"

"I'm not going to play that game. What day is it today?"

"No! It's the truth! Listen to me!"

Soruka was trying his best to make the point, and Daigo and Daya were laughing even harder.

"You seem to be having a good time."

A beautiful woman, also a member of the security guard, appears.

"It's nothing, Camearra. Soruka's just trying to deceive us."

"Deceive you?"

"Because a monster just killed and ate a man alive."

"Hey! This is not the time to be joking!"

Soruka interrupted the conversation with a straight face.

"The man who was killed by having his jaw bitten off was the senior transport engineer of the joint Miyoku vessel harbor, and the man who killed him was his partner, the deputy transport engineer."

"...Wait a minute. I heard he was eaten alive by a beast."

Finally, Daigo sensed that Soruka was serious and asked that question.

"Yes, it was a beast, but it used to be human."

"What do you mean?"

Daya leaned forward.

"I don't know. But the word I got is that when the night guards came to the scene, they killed the beast, and it took on human form."

"So... you're telling me that a human being became a monster and devoured his comrades. Is that what you're saying?" Daigo confirms.

"That's right."

Soruka answered shortly. It was hard to believe, but they had to see for themselves.

Daigo, Soruka, Daya, and Camearra headed for the location in question.

“What is this?”

In the hall of the security unit in charge of the joint harbor, there was a collection of light-memory mirror surfaces placed at key points in the harbor. The mirrored surfaces store the surrounding scenes in a stacked manner along a time axis. By illuminating them with light waves of the appropriate wavelength, it is possible to project a scene from any given time period into the air. Daigo and his team confirmed the entire tragedy stored on the mirror surface. There they saw a hideous beast, which could only be described as a monster, attacking and devouring the senior transport engineer.

A few hours later, the night security guards rushed in to see the creature roaming around, devouring the wreckage. Light beams shot from the light crystals they wear penetrating the beast's rib cage. Immediately afterwards, the creature took on human form and died.

“What the hell is this?”

Daya muttered, unable to accept the nightmarish reality of what she had just witnessed.

“Anyway, we need to investigate.”

Daigo's words were met with a nod from everyone, and they immediately set to work.

The next day, Daigo and the others gather at the Investigative Guard's office. They were joined by their colleagues Hudra and Darramb, who were also part of the investigation team.

“Found it!”

Daya returned and somewhat excitedly reported the information he had obtained.

“Just before the murder, the transformed senior transport engineer had been in contact with a man in a nearby warehouse tower.”

“A man?”

“I was able to determine his identity from his memory of the mirror.”

Daya held up a light crystal, which was fitted with a palm cuff, similar to a palm cuff in modern times, and projected the scene in the air and a profile of one of the men.

“His name is Dagan. He is an esotericist.”

“Esotericist? What's that?”

“That's very suspicious.”

Daya nodded in agreement with Darramb and Hudra.

“He's a very suspicious man indeed. He has been collecting grimoires on the estate's property.”

“He is completely insane.”

Soruka spat out.

“Really? A portal to another world is a little bit nice.”

Camearra smiles with a twinkle in her eye.

“Camearra. You have such an interest in bad taste sometimes, huh?”

Daigo raised an eyebrow.

“Bad taste? I'm interested in mystery and adventure. You don't understand.”

“Hey, Daigo, you shouldn't make your girlfriend sulk.”

Daya was quick to cool him down, and the atmosphere was relaxed.

“All right. Let's get back to the subject. No matter how insane this case may seem, this is the duty of the Investigative Security Unit.”

Daigo looks around at his colleagues with a serious look on his face.

“Let's find this Dagan guy and see what happened to him.”

Over the next few days, Daigo and his team desperately tried to track Dagan's whereabouts.

What they discovered was even more incredible: Dagan's completely insane research. According to the grimoires he had collected over the course of his life, Dagan was serious about connecting this world to the other world. This would require a special ritual, and Dagan had been meticulously preparing for years to carry it out.

At first, Daigo thought it was a kind of delusion. There is no such thing as a portal to another world in reality.

But the tragedy happened again.

Once again, a human being turned into a deformed monster and ate a man from the same workplace, killing him.

And a few days later, a third incident occurred.

And both cases occurred in faraway foreign countries. Dagan's insane rituals continue to be carried out far beyond the scope of Daigo and his team's investigations.

The blood sacrifices of five people from another world who bear his sins. The pentagram.

The key word in Dagan's written ritual. However, Daigo and the others were still unable to grasp what exactly it meant.

"There is one thing we do know."

Camearra reported the new information.

"All of the people who have become monsters have killed people."

"Killed people..."

Daigo gasps.

"Carrying sins... The beasts of another world."

Apparently, the monstrous humans were not chosen at random, but for a reason.

And five blood sacrifices.

There are now three cases. Two more, and a similar catastrophe will definitely occur. And if the evil deed is not stopped, the ritual will be completed. As for the result...

Dagan's research records state that when the door to the Otherworld opens, a great evil god will appear, darken the world, and bring about its destruction. He said he wants to see a beautiful destruction.

Impossible! Reason denies it. But Dagan is actually turning people into monsters. They must prevent any further devastation.

But the scope of his evil is too wide. There is no clue as to which country or town on Earth the ritual will take place next.

With all sides at a loss, Daigo and his team receive a call from a certain person. She said she could help them with the case.

“Who is it? Who is the one that will help us?”

Then Camearra answers Daigo's question.

“The head of the Planet Earth Security Division. Yuzare.”

“Nice to meet you.”

Yuzare met Daigo and the others in a space surrounded by pure white walls.

“So you are... Yuzare.”

No wonder Daigo couldn't help but ask back. It was because in front of them was a beautiful woman who looked no more than 20 years old.

It had been five years since Daigo and the others had become members of the Planet Earth security team. Although they knew the name of Yuzare, the leader of the security team, they had no idea what kind of person she was. She was never seen in public at any event, and her age and even her gender were kept completely under wraps. It was top secret, so to speak.

In Daigo's imagination, therefore, Yuzare was the image of a man with sharp eyesight even in his old age. He had no idea that she was such a lovely woman...

“I'm sorry that I am not how you imagined me to be. Did I disappoint you, Captain Daigo?”

Yuzare smiles softly.

“I... I'm sorry...”

It made Daigo unusually upset. It was as if she was reading his mind.

“I'm going to tell you where the next ceremony will take place.”

“What?”

They were unintentionally stunned.

“How? It is natural to think so. But believe me, I can see who Dagan's next target will be.”

“You can see? You mean you can see...”

“Yes. I can see the future.”

They were all surprised to hear this.

“Precognition...?”

“No way.”

There are people who have a keen intuition. They are able to sense danger a moment ahead and avoid it. They are able to read the psychology and behavior of their opponents and take advantage of their opportunities. The Earth Star Guard, to which Daigo and his team belong, is a group of brave men and women who have gathered those who excel in such abilities, sharpened them through training, and raised them to a higher level. However, the ability to predict the future, to know when and where things will happen, is a different story. It is too different in dimension to be something that can be managed through training.

Waiting for the voices of doubt to die down, Yuzare speaks again.

“I don't blame you for having a hard time accepting what I have to say. But we don't have much time left. We, the Earth Star Guard, must stop the destruction of the world.”

Her words sent a sense of tension through the group. No matter how many young women they may have claimed to have precognition, Yuzare was unquestionably the head of the Planet Earth Security Team. “Understood. Tell us. Who will be targeted next and where?” At Daigo's words, Yuzare nodded and gave the answer to her future prediction.

"Damn! We almost made it!"

Yuzare's prediction of the future came true, and the fourth tragedy was prevented by Daigo and his men. Just before the murderer was about to be transformed into a monster by the reddish-black crystalline substance that Dagan had drugged him with, Daigo, Soruka, Daya, Camearra, Hudra, and Darramb stepped onto the ritual stage and

caught up with Dagan. But just as they were about to secure him, they narrowly missed him. "We're back to square one again..."

The chase between them and Dagan continued.

Following Yuzare's prediction of the future, Daigo and his team protected a series of chosen sacrifices and thwarted Dagan's plans. And when they had thwarted the seventh incident, they finally caught up with Dagan once and for all.

"It's the end. Your crazy ritual is over."

But...

"The ritual is not over. The pentagram will be completed, and the door of darkness will open."

Dagan smiles a wry smile and drinks his own crystalline body, turning into a monster.

Daigo and the others raise the back of their hand in unison. The hand armor, fitted with light crystals, is given only to the chosen warriors of the Earth Star Guard Corps. The light overflowing from the crystals envelops their entire bodies, transforming them into silver armor. The light of their own life is transformed into power to fight. The monstrous Dagan was so hard, its claws so sharp, and its nature so ferocious that it had to take on this form. But no monster, no matter how evil he was, would be able to take on six warriors clad in light.

Thud! Bang! Bang! Spears, blades, and whips of light shot out from the hands of Daigo and his men, piercing the giant beast. The hideous creature collapses in place, then reverts back to its Dagan form and dies.

"Daigo, look at this face!"

Soruka points at Dagan. The dead man's face was smiling with satisfaction.

"....."

As Daigo gazes at that smile, a bad premonition suddenly strikes him. *The ritual will never end.* Dagan's last words come back to his mind. *No, it can't be. It is already over.*

"Thank you for your hard work."

Daigo visits Yuzare to report the end of the incident.

"With this, the destruction of the world has been averted."

Daigo looks at Yuzare, who is smiling kindly, and says,

"Are you sure about that?"

"...What?"

"I still don't feel like the case is over."

"Do you also have more power than I have to foresee the future?"

"No, it's not that, it's more like a premonition or something..."

Again Daigo was upset.

"I'm just kidding."

Yuzare smiles mischievously. Daigo patted his chest in relief.

"I'm glad to hear that. I was worried that I had really offended you."

"But... It's true that maybe it's not all over yet."

"...What?"

"I see a different black shadow in the future."

"A different shadow?"

"It is not yet clear. But..."

"Understood. If you see anything, please let me know. I'll be right there."

"Thank you, Daigo."

Yuzare smiles, and Daigo smiles back.

Someone was staring at them with hatred from the shadows. It was Camearra.

"Hurry! Darkness is almost upon us!" Daigo and his friends run in the midst of a world headed for destruction.

"Ah!"

Yuzare falls to the ground.

“Are you all right, Yuzare?!”

Daigo goes back and picks Yuzare up.

“I’m sorry. I’m alright.”

“Please don't let go of my hand.”

“Yes.”

Yuzare grabs Daigo's hand and starts running again.

The only way to stop the destruction is to use Yuzare's power to seal the gates of the Otherworld that have been opened in the black pyramid. This is their last hope.

“Hold it right there, Daigo.”

Suddenly, three black shadows stand in the path of them.

It's Camearra, Hudra, and Darramb.

All of them are clad in dark armor stained with black hatred, rather than the armor of light.

“You don't know when to give up. Together we will watch the world fall.”

“Camearra, why did you betray us?!”

“You're the one who betrayed me, Daigo! For such a woman!”

The one who Yuzare saw as another black shadow in the future was Camearra.

After Dagan's death, Camearra, along with Hudra and Darramb, took over his legacy, offering two blood sacrifices and performing a dark ritual to complete the pentagram.

As a result, a huge black pyramid appeared in the immediate vicinity of the Earth Star Guard headquarters, opening the gates of the Otherworld. A massive amount of evil, jet-black darkness overflowed and quickly plastered the world. A strange monster emerged from the gate, and a fierce battle ensued between Daigo and his security team.

But the power of the dark creatures was so great that the guards fell one by one, and countless people lost their lives.

Even so, Daigo and his men fought back desperately. To protect this world. However, the victory was decided at once when the evil god Gatanothor, who rules over monsters, appeared from the gate of the Otherworld.

The overwhelming power of the evil god wiped out the entire security force, leaving only Daigo, Soruka, and Daya.

Still, Daigo does not give up hope, and after rescuing Yuzare from the flames of war, he and his two best friends set out for the final battle.

“Even though I loved you, die!”

Camearra attacks Yuzare with a whip of light. Daigo defends her using his body.

“I... want to be... a light until the end.”

That's right. As Camearra and the other two were deeply involved in the case, they were unknowingly drawn to the darkness of Dagan. To his demonic power that transcended human knowledge.

And their twisted jealousy of Yuzare triggered their descent into darkness.

“Die! Die! Die! Die! Die! Die! Die! Die! Die! Die! ”

A hate-crazed attack struck Daigo and Yuzare.

“Aaaaahhhh!”

It was Soruka who took a direct hit from the whip of light. Soruka risked defending them.

“Get out of the way!”

The whip swung down again. This time, Daya took the blow with his own body.

“We'll take care of this! Hurry and go, Daigo!”

“Yuzare's power is our last hope!”

Soruka and Daya use their last bit of strength to face Camearra and the other two.

To Daigo they are his irreplaceable best friends.

Soruka is the most physically gifted man in the guard unit. When fighting, he uses his amazing leaping ability and agile, quick movements to subdue his opponents.

Daya is the most powerful fighter in the guard unit. Rumor has it that he can even knock down a large tree with his bare hands.

However, the two have already suffered multiple deep wounds and have not been able to draw even half of their usual strength. The battle that led up to this point had already exceeded the limits of the light armor, and Daigo and the others were literally empty-handed.

“Soruka... Daya...”

“Goooooo!”

“Go, Daigooooo!”

Heartbreakingly, Daigo nodded, pulled Yuzare's hand, and ran.

He would never see his friends again.

But for now, he had no choice but to move forward. That was all he could do.

With a cry that welled up from deep within him, Daigo ran with Yuzare toward the black pyramid.

They run, run, and run. And finally...

“So this is... the gate of the Otherworld.”

Daigo entered the black pyramid and was horrified by the horrific sight before him.

In the center was an altar. At first glance, it appeared to be made of stone, but he realized that it was made of bone. Human bones. The altar was built with a large number of human bones.

What was even more hideous was the huge eyeballs dedicated to the altar.

Perhaps the eyes of a large monster had been gouged out. A wave of reddish-black darkness rose from the eyes that stared at Daigo and the others, and there the huge gate to the Otherworld was open.

Even now, the darkness is overflowing unceasingly from inside the gate. Perhaps that is the source of the energy of the evil gods and their dependents.

"I will close the gate. Daigo, go outside."

Daigo looks at Yuzare with a determined gaze and senses it.

"Yuzare. You are going to die, aren't you?"

"If I will, what would you think of saying?"

"Well..."

I don't want you to die. He barely swallowed the words.

"Thank you, Daigo."

Yuzare smiles. She seems to have read his mind again.

"But... I'm not leaving. Let me stay here and see this through to the end."

"...I understand."

After saying this, Yuzare faces the gate of the Otherworld, opens his arms wide, and quietly meditates.

Soon Yuzare's body begins to glow with a golden light.

She is about to strike the darkness with all of the vast amount of light of life that she carries in her body.

Please succeed.

Daigo mutters a prayer in his mind.

"No, you won't! I will kill her!"

Camearra was coming at him fiercely. In her hand was not a whip, but a sword.

"I won't let you!"

Daigo does his best to hold off Camearra's attack. The sword pierces his gut.

"No!"

Daigo continues to hold Camearra off and shouts.

"Yuzareeeee!"

As if in response to this cry, Yuzare's body shined more strongly than ever, and a ray of dazzling light rose up toward the gates of the other world above!

Booooooom.

Light and darkness scatter with an impact sound. And then...

One after another, the monsters that scatter the world disappear with the darkness.

Success.

The last hope. The power of Yuzare has sealed the gates of the Otherworld.

"You bastaaaaard!"

Camearra and the other two are also sealed by the power of darkness, and their bodies are quickly petrified.

"I... will get you all..."

Burning with hatred to the end, Camearra became a stone statue.

And Gatanothor, the giant evil god, was also enveloped in darkness and vanished with a horrifying final scream.

Silence returned to the world.

Daigo was the only survivor.

"In the end... I couldn't save anyone..."

Daigo kneels down and hits the ground repeatedly with his fist.

"That's not true."

Suddenly someone's hand touches Daigo's back.

He turns around and sees a little girl with silver hair standing.

"Are you... Yuzare...?"

The white hooded cloak she wears is exactly the same as Yuzare's.

The effects of consuming so much of the light of life appeared in this form on her body.

“I couldn't save this world. But... there is still work to be done.”

“Work to be done...?”

Yuzare, who nodded her head and became a girl, said,

“I can't see clearly at the moment. But the time will come.”

Yuzare gently holds Daigo's hand and looks at the ruined world.

“Someday, I'm sure.”

Time passed...

The man had a natural talent for attracting people in a peculiar way. His facial expressions, the way he looked at people, the way he spoke, and the way he paused seemed to have the magical power to put anyone who listened in a good mood and make them want to help him, or even think they would be doing him a disservice if they did not. And this talent was put to good use against the bigwigs in certain circles who were playing silly power games, and the man was able to make them untold amounts of untraceable money.

Using his money and connections in every direction, he collected something.

Grimoires.

“The Book of the Dead”, “The Book of Unknown Rituals”, “The Seraenos”, “The Book of Avon”, and “The Nakoto Codex”... He collected these strange, mysterious, and rare books from universities, libraries, museums, and religious institutions around the world, as well as from the depths of the locked vaults of other collectors and occultists, not to mention translations, copies, and even faded fragments. He immersed himself in the research as if possessed by it.

A gateway to another world. Unnameable power. The great darkness. The man wanted to take them in his hands. This world once had a history of frequent attacks by monsters and aliens, which were repelled by the exploits of the Giants of Light. Even now, aliens are roaming around mixed in with humans, and beings called Ultraman are dealing with the incidents and problems they cause.

This is not an urban legend. It is a reality.

Despite this, society does not believe in the existence of other worlds. While being confronted with the existence of extraterrestrial life, it refuses to accept that there is a world beyond it.

All right then, I will prove it. I will prove it clearly, without question, and irrefutably and thoroughly... I think it all started with such an idea. It doesn't matter now.

Eventually, the man gained knowledge of the location of the forgotten ruins of R'lyeh and the forbidden rituals.

South Pacific Ocean, 49 degrees 51 minutes south latitude, 128 degrees 34 minutes west longitude. Aboard two submersibles, accompanied by five assistants and a guide, the man enters an undersea city with a painting like architecture based on a strange geometry. Deep within, he discovers three bizarre stone statues enshrined on an altar of desired human remains, and performs a ritual in which he sacrifices five people and his own blood. His companions must have been shocked to have their hearts suddenly removed, but he had brought them with the intention of doing so from the beginning, and the possibility of life-threatening risks must have been clearly stated in the contract. Probably. Therefore, he did not feel any pain.

The ritual worked, and the door to the Otherworld was opened.

Three stone statues shatter and two men and one woman emerge from within. At the same time, the darkness that overflowed from the door clung to the man and crystallized on the back of his right hand. The same crystals are also attached to the right hands of the two men and one woman. Without exchanging words, they knew that they were allies with the same goal.

Let us begin.

Leaving the altar behind, the four began to walk.

This is just the beginning. There is still more work to be done to revive the evil god and turn this world into darkness.

The undersea city, which had completed its role, was collapsing from within and sinking into the muck, as if warping.

It might never be found again.

Prologue - The Darkness Squirms

Seiji Hokuto was investigating a puzzling case.

The first incident happened four months ago. A horrific killing in a movie theater on a Saturday afternoon in a small town in Illinois, USA. The victims were 13 young men. All of them were murdered, bitten to pieces all over their bodies.

The two officers who responded to the call saw the head of the last victim being devoured by the lizard-like monster. Terrified by the unbelievable sight, the officers turned their guns on the monster and opened fire. Normally, this would be a senseless act. The officers must have been the next victims. But as soon as the monster was hit by a bullet, it collapsed and died. The monster was not the ferocious, horrifying figure they had seen earlier, but the friendly cinema cleaner the policemen knew.

The second incident occurred three months ago in a small fishing village in Fujian, China. The story was almost identical to the one in the United States. This time, as many as 30 people were devoured by a deep-sea fish-like monster, and when the police shot the monster, it died in the form of a young fisherman from the fishing village.

Subsequently, similar incidents occurred in Italy two months ago and in Germany a month ago.

What all four incidents have in common is that the monster that carried out the massacre was neither an alien nor a space monster, but *something* that possessed humans. A mysterious radio wave like a spell was received in the vicinity of the crime scene. Furthermore, a woman and two men dressed in black were caught on a surveillance camera.

Hokuto followed up on this case under instructions from Bemular. Hokuto also analyzed the mysterious radio signals, and also tracked down the three mysterious black men and woman.

And now those three had shown up in Japan and were on their way to a place in the Bay Area. "This place is..."

Hokuto, who had been secretly following them, arrived at a huge shipyard that had already been abandoned. The three in black disappeared into it.

The solution came quickly whether to continue tailing them alone or to request support from Shinjiro and Moroboshi of the Special Forces Unit. He thought of solving this

case by himself. A report will suffice after that. Hokuto entered the ruins and was looking for the three mysterious people when, ZAP! Something moved behind him.

Without hesitation, he put on the Ace Suit. As Hokuto readied himself to intercept the assailant, suddenly a sharp, monstrous radio wave flowed between them, deafening his ears and shaking his brain cells. "Aaaaah!"

Kneeling in intense pain, Hokuto saw a black Ultraman attacking above him in the darkness.

Chapter 1 - Ritual of the Abyss

“Where... am I...?”

Shinjiro stares into the deep darkness that spreads out before him and is stunned. He does not know why he is there. But somehow he knew that it was not the place for him.

I have to get out of here quickly.

As if being urged on, Shinjiro moves forward in the darkness. He feels as if he has wandered into a labyrinth, and memories of being lost in a strange place when he was still a child come back to him, when suddenly the light becomes bright before his eyes.

A *flame*. A bright red flame flares up and illuminates the world that had been shrouded in darkness.

It was a place like a huge temple, with thick, tall stone pillars and eerie reliefs painted on the walls. The form of the temple, however, was completely different from the Greek and Egyptian temples that Shinjiro knew. Otherworldly. As soon as that word came into his mind, his eardrums were shaken by a violent sound and a roar.

What is that...? There were multiple huge shadows in the flames. Aliens? No, no. For some reason, Shinjiro understood. What was in front of him was something else entirely. The figures were all horrifying and had an indescribable atmosphere of madness. Staring. A red eye moved in the black shadow and looked at Shinjiro.

Guoooooo! A huge black shadow looms over Shinjiro as it screams violently. *I have to fight.*

He stuck out his right hand to put on the Ultraman Suit. But nothing happened.

He cannot become Ultraman in this place. Shinjiro instinctively senses this and runs away from the huge shadow that looms over him. But he stumbled, and no matter how much he runs, he cannot move forward. *No. I can't escape!*

A moment later, bam! With a violent crash, the huge black figure collapsed. Shinjiro turns around, not knowing what just happened. In front of his eyes stood a black Ultraman, something he had never seen before.

“Huff!”

Shinjiro raises his upper body in the dim light.

After some time, he calmly looks around and confirms that he is in his room in the special unit.

“So it was just a dream...”

On the bed, he adjusted his breathing and wiped the sweat from his forehead. It was too real to be a dream, and even now he can feel the heat of the flames on his skin.

Was it really just a nightmare...?

Just as Shinjiro was enveloped in an ominous feeling of premonition, the alert went off.

“Sorry, I’m late!”

In the strategy room where Shinjiro rushed in, Ide and Moroboshi were already waiting for him.

“We've been waiting for you, Shinjiro.”

Mitsuhiro Ide led the development of the Ultraman Suits and was once a colleague of his father, Shin Hayata. Ide is the actual commander of the current Special Forces Unit.

“...”

Dan Moroboshi. For Shinjiro, he is a senior member of the Special Forces and his instructor. The tall, good-natured young man silently glared at Shinjiro and grimly pushed up his slender glasses.

“You look pale.”

Ide looks suspiciously into Shinjiro's face.

Apparently, it was in his expression.

It wasn't because Shinjiro was being stared at by a scary senior. It was because of the lingering feeling of the nightmare he just had.

“Okay... So, what is it?”

Shinjiro urged the question. Fortunately, Ide did not pursue the matter further.

“Yeah, look at this.”

Ide nods his head and operates the tablet on his desk.

A large screen on the wall showed a night view of somewhere. There was no sound. It seemed to be a video from a security camera or something.

Today's date and time are displayed at the edge of the screen. It was only a few minutes ago. In the foreground, containers and drums are stacked, and cargo and motor trucks are parked.

"It's right on the edge of the Bay Area."

As Moroboshi had noticed, the view of the building district in the reflection was familiar to Shinjiro as well.

"Take a closer look... here."

Both Shinjiro and Moroboshi were awed by this bizarre sight.

The gasoline drums are bent over, the motor truck's height is lowered, and its roof is dented.

One moment, the next, it bulged from the inside and the tire burst like a balloon.

"It's a sudden change in gravity."

Ide said that this fluctuation started several tens of minutes ago and is gradually getting stronger. There are no deposits or meteorological anomalies in the vicinity of the site that could be the cause, so it cannot be considered a natural phenomenon. Furthermore, similar anomalies have occurred in the past four months in the United States, Italy, Germany, and China, showing a clear similarity between these locations.

It's as if they are responding to each other.

"They have all caused many casualties, and there is no guarantee that this will not happen again."

Ide puts down the tablet and turns to them.

"I need you two to find out what's causing these gravity shifts immediately."

The helicopter carrying Shinjiro and Moroboshi was about to arrive at the bay area in a few minutes. Shinjiro and Moroboshi were alone in the cargo hold. If things were normal, Shinjiro would not be able to stand the awkward silence and would try to talk to

Moroboshi for no reason, only to be ignored, adding to the awkwardness, but that night was different.

He can't get the memory of the nightmare out of his head.

Was it really a dream? He heard that dreams are just random replays of one's memories, impressions, and desires. Is it possible to dream about something one has never seen? Or has he actually seen it before, only to have forgotten it? That strange temple. The hideous reliefs. The mere thought of those gruesome, hair-raising monsters and their deafening roars filled his mind with dread, and he couldn't help but cover his ears.

"What's wrong?"

He noticed that Moroboshi, with his arms folded, was looking at Shinjiro with a sideways glance.

"...No. It's nothing."

Shinjiro sits back down in a clumsy manner.

He thought he was going to get one of his little quips, but Moroboshi simply said,

"I see."

and returned his gaze to the front of the helicopter.

It will be a fun evening.

The man looked at his neat, beautiful face in the mirror and grinned.

He is in the washroom of a fashionable Italian restaurant in the bay area. While carefully washing his hands, Yoshitaro Kuruki thought about the woman waiting for him at a table by the window with a clear night view of the harbor.

What was her name again? Ruki Asaoka, he thinks. When he told her that her name sounded like a heroine in an anime, she smiled happily, baring her white teeth saying, "I get that a lot." To be honest, he thought the smile was a little vulgar, but he shouldn't be so extravagant. As a *catch*, it's a good score.

It was only an hour ago that Kuruki met Ruki Asaoka. When the woman turned around, startled by the blinking flash, Kuruki put on an exquisite smile, SLR camera in hand, and said he had never seen a woman with such a beautiful smile before.

“I'm sorry. It was just that you have such a beautiful profile.”

Normally, a stranger would be outraged by such a rude man taking a picture of him and then spouting such a gritting remark, and the police would be called. However, Kuruki was confident that this would not happen.

“I don't mind.”

Predictably, the woman's cheeks flushed with embarrassment. The women's reactions were almost the same as before. The women were charmed by the smile that Kuruki brought to their faces. After only a few minutes, they are completely taken in by Kuruki's witty conversation, let their guard down, and are invited to share a meal and a few drinks with him. It was just like an insect being lured by the sweet smell of insectivorous plants and falling into a trap.

The woman who calls herself Ruki Asaoka is also completely captivated by Kuruki, and is now sipping a glass of wine as she waits for him to return to his seat. She must be in a happy mood, dreaming of all the things that will happen tonight. She does not know that her life will come to an end tonight.

“What a foolish woman.”

Kuruki mumbles aloud, wipes his hands with a handkerchief, and heads for the washroom exit.

What should the memorial gift be this time? Most of them are watches or accessories, but sometimes nails might be nice. She seemed to be very fond of her nails.

Kuruki imagined the detailed plans of the arrangements for tonight's “hunt.” As he laid his hand in the door knob...

Shiver. Chills he has never felt before.

What is this... feeling?

He feels someone's presence behind him. But that is impossible. Because there was certainly only Kuruki in this washroom. If that's the case, then...

Suddenly, something behind him closed in on Kuruki. Sweat broke out in a cloud of fear.

I'm being hunted!

Ever since his first hunt in his sophomore year of high school, Kuruki has been immersed in a strong, unwavering sense of all-powerfulness. He had never doubted that he was born to be the absolute ruler. Now, his instincts sensed a complete reversal. It is

the first time a predator encounters a being of a higher level than itself. The sense of fear and despair that he had been inflicting on his *prey* until now had taken away even his will to escape.

“Release yourself.”

A woman's voice whispered in his ear.

“Release yourself into your true form.”

A seductive white finger used Kuruki's cheek from behind to make him open his mouth and made him swallow some reddish-black glowing crystals.

“Ugeeeee!”

A black mist-like substance overflows from inside his mouth and covers his entire body. The pain and fear disappear, and his entire body is filled with an intense desire that he has never felt before, not even in his previous *hunts*.

“Zoiger. That is your new name. Now, release yourself.”

As soon as the woman's voice commands it, a change comes over Kuruki's body. His skin pulsates and swells in an ugly manner, his limbs elongate, and his face breaks open, revealing a new face and a beak reminiscent of a ferocious bird of prey.

Kuaaaaaaaaaah! He let out a sharp roar.

Then, spreading his huge wings on his back, he flew through the bathroom door and into the store where piano music was quietly playing.

After that, there were screams and blood splatter.

The first prey of the monster Zoiger was, as planned, Ruki Asaoka. But the way she was killed, with her head bitten off in an instant, was only a tenth of the horror and suffering that Kuruki had ended.

Other customers and waiters fell prey to the Zoiger one after another, not even knowing what was happening. The scene was a hellscape of screaming. A woman and two men dressed in black were staring at them with cold eyes.

The woman's hand holds a strangely shaped crystal that counts the number of people slaughtered by the Zoiger.

“With this, the seal is broken.”

“What’s... going on...?!”

When Shinjiro and Moroboshi arrived in the bay area, they saw people running away from a bat-like monster that had attacked them.

“Is there any connection with gravity shifts and monsters?”

“What are you talking about?! We have to save those people now!”

“...I know.”

As soon as he did that, Moroboshi put on his Seven Suit and jumped from the helicopter. He released a throwing knife while diving through the air.

The blade spins at high speed and flies with unparalleled precision into the back of the monster. It pierces the monster Zoiger's back with unparalleled accuracy.

Gyaaaaah!

With a horrified cry, Zoiger falls to the ground, motionless.

Ahead of them, a young man from a visual rock band was hunched over and trembling with fear. If Seven had attacked a few more seconds later, he would have been dead for sure.

Shinjiro also puts on the Ultraman Suit, and is on the ground late.

“...What?”

Zoiger lying in front of him reverted to Kuruki, his human form.

“How would a monster... become human...?!”

Horrified, Shinjiro rushed over to Kuruki. Then he heard it. The dying Kuruki muttered those words.

“...Still lacks... one...”

Immediately after saying this, Kuruki died.

“Mr. Moroboshi... just what is going on...?!”

“Stop thinking about it.”

“But...”

“Besides, we’re primarily on a mission. Let's get to the source of the gravity shift.”

The cool-headed Seven Moroboshi, with a handy sensor in hand, heads toward the location where the gravity shifts were confirmed.

“Ah, wait!”

Shinjiro hurried after him. Ahead, the huge ruins of a shipyard sat in the darkness.

Moroboshi steps inside the dark ruins without hesitation.

“...The signal vanished.”

He puts the sensor in the case on the Suit and changes the mode of the visor under the helmet by placing his finger on his ear. This operation is done by eye or voice, so there is no need to put his finger on it, but it is his habit.

Shinjiro comes in late.

“There is no doubt about the location. The cars and barrels I saw in the shadows outside...”

“Stop.”

Moroboshi's voice interrupted Shinjiro.

“Huh?”

“....”

Something, or rather someone, is down in the direction Moroboshi pointed out with his chin, to the left front.

“Hokuto?!”

There is no way they could have mistaken him. It's Seiji Hokuto in his Ace Suit. Shinjiro runs up to him. When he touches the nape of his neck, he moves slightly. He seems to be alive.

“...I wonder if the monster from earlier got him.”

“No. He may be a kid, but he's not so weak as to fall behind an opponent of that caliber.” Moroboshi, too, has been on the receiving end of Hokuto's blades.

“Then who could have done it?!”

“I'm just speculating based on the situation though...”

Shinjiro's Suit emits a warning tone and reports the detection of a new motion response.

“...it could be him.”

He's above. Someone stands on the side column of a decaying gantry crane, looking down at them. It can only be described as a shadow. A figure cloaked in a black haze. Even with all the sensors in the Suit, it is impossible to catch it clearly. Shinjiro had never seen anything like this before. Moroboshi must be the same.

“Get down. If you can't get down...”

Moroboshi's specium sword flashes!

“...I'll make you!”

The slash that ran through the air severed the gantry crane. It also sliced through the ceiling behind it. The crane collapses with a rattling metallic sound, still carrying the shadow. The shadow rises up in a haze of dust. As the light of the nightscape shone through the slashed ceiling, the full extent of the shadow was revealed. It was as if a fog had lifted.

“What?!”

The figure was no doubt an Ultraman.

Silver, red, and purple. A three-colored Ultraman.

“I have a lot of questions I need to ask you.”

As Moroboshi readied his sword, the unknown Ultraman also took a stance. A torrent of light erupts from the tip of what appears to be a shield on its right arm, forming a spear.

“...I see.”

Moroboshi initiates. The unknown Ultraman also moved. The brightness of the blades intersected at a dizzying pace. Were they evenly matched? No. Moroboshi is slightly pushed by the onslaught of the flexible light spear.

“Mr. Moroboshi!”

Shinjiro opens the thrusters on his back and accelerates to intervene. This is a flight assistance system added to the Ultraman Suit/B-Type, based on the Ace suit of the Hokuto.

“Kid, don’t do unnecessary things...”

“Are you the one who did this to Hokuto?”

Shinjiro wonders if he can understand the language. The unknown Ultraman did not respond to Shinjiro's question, but looked around his Suit as if inspecting it and touched his forehead with his right hand.

“!”

Just as they thought it was a new attack, the Suit changes. The red part of the body disappears to reveal only silver and purple, and thruster nozzles covered by fairings appear on the legs.

Boom! The unknown Ultraman soars with its thrusters blasting out.

“You’re not running away!”

Shinjiro followed Suit and ran up through a hole in the ceiling high into the night sky.

Two Ultramen engage in a fierce dogfight above the bay area, trying to get behind each other. When Shinjiro fires a specium slash, the unknown Ultraman also fires a light bullet from its right-hand shield.

“Shinjiro, you can't go too far!”

Ide's restraining voice echoes inside the helmet.

“I know! But!”

Contrary to Shinjiro's frustration, the Suit made noise. The thrusters on its back had caught fire due to overload. He had forgotten that the Suit was still in the process of adjustment.

The unknown Ultraman looked back briefly at Shinjiro, who suddenly slowed down, and flew away into the void at full boost.

Without thrusters, Shinjiro could levitate but not fly. Continuing the chase is impossible.

“Could it be... that Ultraman is...”

As he listened to the rotors of the helicopter approaching to retrieve them, Shinjiro ruminated on a suspicion that had been nagging at him for some time.

The black Ultraman I saw in my nightmare...

And that unknown Ultraman...

I don't think it's a coincidence.

However, Shinjiro also did not have sufficient evidence to connect the two.

Not yet.

Above ground. The Ultraman landed in a park pavilion late at night, not far from the Bay Area. He touched the crystal on his forehead with his right hand. Immediately, the Suit is broken down into particles of light, which integrate into a palm cuff on the back of his right hand. The young man, who turned his wrist as if to check its comfort, must have been around 20 years old. Wearing leather clothes, he looked as if he was an ancient man.

“...Welcome back.”

The young lady who stepped out of the pavilion was apparently seven to eight years old. Or perhaps it would be more appropriate to call her a little girl. The pure white hood that completely covers her head and the ornaments on her cloak give the impression of high status, despite her simplicity. Her eyes and voice had a calmness and elegance that was unusual to her age.

“As you predicted, the ritual to break the final seal was obstructed.”

The young man drops to one knee and answers the girl at eye level.

“But... the shift of fate is still in the darkness.”

“So you're saying that the next ritual is going to take place again?”

The young man clenches his fist. The back hand of the palm cuff flicks light.

“The only way to stop it is to defeat those who are trapped in the darkness.”

The girl put her hand on his fist, looked at the young man and said...

“Daigo. By that power of yours, you should do it.”

“I know. Lead me to the next place, Yuzare.”

Chapter 2 - Otherworldly Beings

The sound of quietly flowing water fills the time.

Over there is a subterranean drain called the underground waterway. Rivers that once flowed above ground have been covered up for some reason, becoming invisible rivers that stretch out like a spider's web right under the city of Tokyo. It is like a sealed, ancient underground labyrinth.

Two figures, one large and one small, were moving through the darkness. Strangely enough, the smaller shadow was covered with a pale blue light.

"How is it, Yuzare? Do you see anything?"

"Yes. It's faint..."

Yuzare stopped and quietly closed her eyes. At the same time, the light around her body becomes stronger, illuminating the darkness around her. Daigo also stopped and waited for Yuzare's words. In order to stop the ritual "those beings" were about to perform, it was necessary to identify the next "sacrifice." Yuzare has that power. The power to see the future.

There is a long silence. The sound of running water echoes loudly, and the jet-black time of the night envelops the two.

This underground waterway was a perfect place for Daigo and Yuzare. The darkness and the sound of running water were conducive to Yuzare's concentration, and above all, it allowed them to reach their destination without being seen by the people of this world.

"...Found her."

Suddenly, Yuzare's eyes open and she stares at Daigo.

"I found the next person who will be the sacrifice."

It was 7:00PM. The station platform was crowded with office workers on their way home from work. There were several lines of people waiting for the train to arrive, making it difficult to move around.

Damn you, little bastards. You're getting on my nerves.

A middle-aged man standing at the front of one line glares sideways at a group of high school students making loud noises in a nearby line.

If you were my students, I would make you live in such a living hell that you would never be able to laugh again.

As the middle-aged man was mentally cursing, an announcement was made that a train was arriving soon on the platform. At that moment, someone pushed the middle-aged man's back with a thud.

Ah.

Before he could comprehend what had happened, the middle-aged man's body fell to the tracks as if dancing in mid-air and was swallowed by the arriving train.

"A man fell over!" "Aaaaaah!"

The crowded platform was immediately overflowing with people's shouts and screams. The high school students who had been smiling and making a fool of themselves until a few minutes ago, could not immediately understand what had suddenly happened.

"Did he jump? Suicide?" "Did someone push him off the edge?" "No, I'm sure no one did."

When they finally began to talk to each other, a young woman in plain clothes walked past them as if to slip through them. She was wearing no makeup and had a faint smile on her face.

In front of the screen in the basement operation room, Ide raised his eyebrows and muttered.

"What the hell is going on?"

In front of them is a vast amount of information about last night's tragedy. Security camera footage, the situation recorded by the Special Forces helicopter, recorder data from Suits of Shinjiro and Moroboshi, reports and pathology findings submitted by the post-processing team and the autopsy team. There was also a smartphone video that the victims themselves may have taken.

"If it was an alien mimicking a human, this would be understandable. But this one is the opposite. His cells and DNA are 100 percent Earth human. Its identity and footprints are clear. But this is..."

"It's Zoiger."

Ide's words were interrupted by the strange voice of an oddly shaped alien.

Edo. He is a descendant of the Zetton aliens who cooperate with the Special Forces.

Edo continues.

“They are no doubt the dependents of the beings that ruled this planet some 300 million years ago. An otherworldly creature.... Let's call it an ‘otherworldly beast.’”

“Otherworld...”

Moroboshi repeated it without telling anyone.

“300 million years ago was a time of cataclysmic change, a time of mass extinction of life.”

Ide also ruminates on Edo's words. Shinjiro, however, was concerned about something else entirely.

The words uttered by Yoshitaro Kuruki, the real name of the “Otherworldly Zoiger,” at the end of his life.

“...Still lacks... one...”

What the heck does that mean...?

“So all 13 of them.”

Endo stared at several photo panels on the wall and muttered bitterly. They are all pictures of young women.

There are thirteen subjects. Three pictures of each of them are arranged in a set. The first one shows a face turning around as if surprised. The second is a shy smile. And as for the third one...

“Mr. Endo. Could the women in this photo possibly be...?”

Kurata, his partner, asks with a face as if he is about to throw up.

“Yeah. They were taken right before they were killed. In this room.”

The faces of the women in the third photo are all contorted with intense fear. Some are crying and begging for their lives. The murderer probably took the photographs with pleasure.

He is one undeniable scum.

“Mr. Endo. Look at these.”

Kurata found women's watches and accessories stored in a sideboard. As expected, there were enough for 13 people. They were probably trophies. Endo had confronted this type of criminal several times before. They blend in with the world as ordinary human beings, scrounge for prey, and when the hunt is over, they take something from their victims. Sometimes it is an ornament, sometimes a hair, sometimes a nail. They are the items they need to satisfy their intense narcissism and need for control.

Psychopath. Serial killers. That's what they are called these days. The killer in this case, a man named Kuriki, is no exception. He's that kind of person - no, he's an animal. The only decisive difference is...

“Mr. Endo. I have some information about the incident in the Bay Area the other day.”

“...I know.”

Endo responds to Kurata's words as if disgusted.

There have been several eyewitness reports that it was a monster that killed a total of 12 people, both customers and employees of an upscale restaurant. In fact, the footage has been spread on the Internet. Just a year ago, this would have been viewed with skepticism by the public as a hoax of some kind. Now, however, murders by non-human beings, aliens, are no longer a special occurrence. The first mysterious serial murders that Endo and Kurata were involved in were also perpetrated by aliens who were obsessed with a certain popular idol. Moreover, there is information that the serial killer, Kuriki, was an alien this time. If this is the case, then...

Thud thud thud.

Multiple orderly footsteps approach down the hallway.

“I knew you'd come.”

Endo and Kurata turn around at the sound of footsteps, and men in black suits appear before them.

“I believe you're Detective Endo.”

Moroboshi's cool-headed eyes stare out from behind a thin frame.

“The investigation of this case is now under our jurisdiction, the Special Forces. Please withdraw.”

After school, Shinjiro turned down his classmates' invitations to sing karaoke and hurried to his part-time job at the Giant of Light Memorial Museum, or the Special Forces Base. He is not lying about his part-time job, but he is more concerned about Hokuto's condition at the medical center than anything else.

“So it’s you, Shinjiro. But the three-colored Ultraman is something else.”

He called Ide on his cell phone. Ide started rambling one-sidedly without asking what he wanted.

“Mr. Ide, um...”

“It's very interesting. There are so many things that lack explanation, even though there are obvious signs that they imitated our suits.”

He is probably in the operations room analyzing the video. He is so absorbed in it that he doesn't listen to Shinjiro.

“Especially that flying ability. I can only assume that he saw your suit's thrusters, understood their function, and made a type change on the fly. That's a big deal.”

He doesn't know how agitated Shinjiro is, but for Shinjiro, Hokuto's condition is more important right now.

“Mr. Ide, I have to ask...”

“Anyway, besides that, Shinjiro, I just received a call from the medical center. Hokuto woke up. Go see him as soon as possible.”

“...No way.”

Curse-like words escape from her lips that have no lipstick.

“To think he’s scum... A murderer even...”

In her one-room apartment, the young woman, Kanae Iwatsubo, stares intently at the news headlines on her computer screen.

“Veteran teacher with a passion for education and a love for his students fell to his death from a station platform.”

That is the breaking news of the accident that happened at 7:00PM today. Kanae was on the platform where the accident occurred. She was on the platform because she pushed the veteran teacher from behind into the front of the arriving train.

“That man... is not human... That’s why I killed him... I’m not wrong, right...?”

Without saying a word to anyone, Kanae mutters and looks at the wall.

There were numerous newspaper clippings and articles printed out from the Internet, all of which related to the suicides of boys and girls.

After graduating from high school, Kanae found a job at a funeral service company. Her main job was clerical work, but she occasionally assisted at funerals.

One rainy day, she attended the funeral of a high school freshman boy and learned that he had committed suicide and that the cause was bullying in class. His mother was in tears, screaming at the homeroom teacher who had come to attend the service, asking why her son had to die. When Kanae saw this, she ran away from the scene without thinking. It brought back old emotional scars. The memories of the fierce and insidious bullying she had been subjected to in high school. The days of merciless hell.

None of my classmates or teachers helped her. Rather, they laughed at her. As a single mother, Kanae's mother always came home late.

But every time she saw her mother’s tired smile as she worked hard to provide for her, she held herself back from killing herself just in time. But the year before that... her mother died.

After the funeral of the boy who committed suicide, Kanae investigated the case in detail. Everything turned out as she had expected. The school did not admit that bullying was the cause of the boy’s suicide, and neither the principal nor the homeroom teacher took any responsibility. The bullies were protected by law, their faces and names were not reported, and they continued to target other students as if the suicidal boy had never existed.

After days of hanging on and witnessing this fact, Kanae thought about dying. She doesn't want to live in this ugly world anymore. There is no place for her in this world.

However, while wandering the city looking for a place to die, Kanae happened to come across an incident. The sound of explosions and screams. Burning flames. Aliens were destroying the city. A car that had been blown up by the explosion fell from above Kanae’s head as she stood there. Finally, she could die now.

But Kanae did not die. She was saved by Ultraman. At that moment, Kanae felt a strong emotion that she had never felt before.

“...I’m... not wrong, right...?”

Again Kanae mutters to the wall. With an enraptured smile.

“What I did... was justice... right...?”

At the center of a wall full of clippings was a large article reporting on Ultraman’s activities.

The tablet that Ide handed over was playing a video of the mysterious Ultraman Suit recorded by Shinjiro and Moroboshi’s Suits. Hokuto is half-lying on the bed and wearing a hospital gown looking at it. Ide and Shinjiro are watching by his side. Moroboshi is not there.

“...Is that everything?”

When Hokuto finishes watching, he returns the tablet to Ide with his elaborate mechanical prosthetic arm.

“I mean in terms of footage, it was decently taken.”

Ide replies as he receives the tablet.

“If that were the case, it’s not him.”

“Not him?!”

Shinjiro asked back. He forgot he was in a hospital room and started shouting.

“It wasn’t him who attacked me. It was a jet-black Ultraman.”

Shinjiro cannot believe it.

Was there another Ultraman there? If so, where did he go? What is the connection with the three-colored Ultraman? What is the causal relationship between the gravitational fluctuation and the otherworldly beast?

“Hokuto. The tests did not reveal any aftereffects, but you have suffered direct brain damage. Are you sure you are not suffering from memory confusion?”

Ide asked again, but Hokuto shook his head.

“It is similar, but different. The posture, the body language.”

“What else can you remember?”

Hokuto was silent for a moment and then slowly started speaking.

“Before I lost consciousness, I thought I saw someone. I thought Hayata had come to my rescue but...”

It is true that Shinjiro helped Hokuto, but the timeline does not fit.

“There was a tall man and... a little girl.”

“This is the place I saw.”

“Okay. This is where the new sacrifice is.”

Daigo and Yuzare are standing on high ground.

The former Special Forces Base, the Giant of Light Memorial Museum, is located at the end of the building.

“A little girl? You’ve got to be...”

Hokuto brushes off Shinjiro’s palm that stretches across his forehead and continues to speak.

“I’m serious! I heard them talking about some kind of ‘ritual.’”

“Ritual?”

And then a ringtone rang from Ide's tablet. Ide responded by touching the screen.

“Edo, what's going on? What? Where is it?”

Shinjiro has a bad feeling about this. Ide hurriedly hangs up the phone and tells Hokuto.

“I'm sorry, but I have to go back. Shinjiro, you're coming with me.”

Leaving Hokuto with a dubious look on his face, they leave the room and quickly head for the elevator.

“It seems signs of gravitational fluctuation have been detected again.”

“What? Where?”

“In the central exhibit room... of this museum.”

The Giant of Light Museum features elaborate miniatures and computer-generated images of the brilliant achievements of Ultraman and the Special Science Search Party in protecting the Earth from terrifying monsters and vicious invaders in the past. A life-size Jet Beetle is also on display, attracting the attention of visitors.

However, Kanae does not pay any attention to them and heads straight for a certain place.

“Ultraman...”

With a smile on her face, Kanae speaks to the giant standing statue of Ultraman. Whenever Kanae finished what she had to do, she would visit this place.

“I'm here today to report another one.”

With a slightly proud expression on her face, Kanae was about to say something to the standing Ultraman statue when...

“Release yourself.”

A woman's voice whispered in her ear.

“Release into your true form.”

Before Kanae realized it, a woman was standing behind her. A white, flexible hand was about to place a reddish-black glowing crystal into Kanae's mouth when...

“Stop!”

Shinjiro rushed to the scene.

He is equipped in Ultraman Suit.

“Let go of her and put your hands on the floor!”

The woman in black does not seem to take notice of Shinjiro’s warning.

“Hudra, Darramb.”

The woman calls out their names, and two men with malicious air step out from either side.

These three are the ones in black who were chasing Hokuto...

He knew from the security camera footage that these three had broken into the central exhibit room. That is why he came with the Ultraman Suit beforehand.

“Kah!”

The slender man called Hudra attacked with a strange voice.

He's fast. And light. He repeatedly hit and ran away, kicking pillars and walls with his inhuman leaping ability. And when he's cornered...

“Wan!”

A large man called Darramb was waiting for him.

With one blow, the legs of the standing statue of Ultraman beside him are shattered and the tilted statue crashes into the wall. If he were to suffer such a blow, Shinjiro would be unconscious and would be knocked out even if his suit was intact. In contrast, his attacks, both fists and kicks, were of no effect.

Hudra bouncing around prevented him from firing his large opening Spacium beam. Kanae can barely protect herself from the woman in black.

Rip!

With tremendous force of his fingers, Hudra rips off some of the exterior parts of the Suit. Then he turned around and threw it at Shinjiro.

Not good. Darramb rushes in from the blind spot created by the parts.

But suddenly the full-scale replica of the Jet Beetle fell and crushed Darramb.

“?!”

Looking up at the upper floor of the atrium, Moroboshi, wearing the Seven Suit, sheathed his Spacium Sword. He had cut the wire suspending the model from the ceiling.

“We’re now even.”

Moroboshi’s voice came from a communicator on his helmet.

Darramb stands up, pushing aside the giant replica, which is 18 meters in height. Although the replica does not seem to have sustained much damage, Moroboshi’s entry into the fight has changed the situation dramatically.

With the woman’s instructions, the trio turns to retreat. Moroboshi quickly follows.

“Stay where you are! An attendant will be here shortly.”

Shinjiro tells Kanae where he also follows Moroboshi. He looks off with a smile on his back.

“You saved me again...”

Shinjiro met up with Moroboshi in the parking lot adjacent to the entrance of the museum.

“Where are they?”

“I don’t know. But I don’t think they got far...”

Shud!

Suddenly, Shinjiro was forced to crawl on the ground. It was as if a huge iron ball was placed on his back.

Trucks will soon tip over. The asphalt starts to cave in. His eardrums and lungs start to feel like they are swelling. Blood is rushing to his brain, and he feels like he’s going to be knocked unconscious.

Gravitational fluctuations. This place, at this time.

Shinjiro still can only assume that those three are involved in some way.

As abruptly as it had begun, the gravitational fluctuations stopped. Immediately after, an alarm sounded from the Suit, alerting him to a new moving object. Reflexively, he jumped.

Shinjiro and Moroboshi stepped back.

A light beam pierces the space they occupied a tenth of a second ago, boiling the asphalt.

Behind the strong odor of simmering asphalt and white smoke, he was standing.

“...Jet-black Ultraman!”

The nightmarish vision came back to Shinjiro’s mind. Then he had an intuition.

It’s him. He is the one who attacked Hokuto!

“We sure have a lot of customers.”

Despite the lightness of his words, Moroboshi holds his sword with his senses sharpened to the maximum.

The jet-black Ultraman Suit also stretches out light blades from its arms and takes a stance. The two fork-like edges between the light blades begin to vibrate.

“Guah!”

Shinjiro felt a headache so intense that it felt as if a cone had been driven through his eye sockets, hitting Shinjiro and Moroboshi at the same time.

Deprived of all senses and thoughts, every muscle in his body stiffens. Shinjiro can hardly stand up.

Is this what made Hokuto fall into a coma that night? Although he can’t see or hear, he knows the jet-black Ultraman is approaching them. It is walking towards them, leisurely, to put an end to its prey.

Hokuto must have been attacked by the same method. So how was Hokuto able to survive? He said he saw something or someone.

Shinjiro doesn’t know. He can't think of anything because of the intense pain.

Boom!

It felt as if something had exploded in the immediate vicinity. In Shinjiro's ear, he heard a warning tone reporting an alteration in his vitals and Ide's voice calling out desperately.

Soon after, Shinjiro's headache had vanished like they weren't there. He pulled himself out of the daze by force, shook his head, and raised his gaze.

"...Huh?"

In front of Shinjiro are the traces from the explosion, which is still flaming. Two Ultramen face each other across it.

On the other side is the jet-black Ultraman, which had earlier tried to take the lives of Shinjiro and Moroboshi.

On the other side was the tri-colored Ultraman - red, purple and silver - that Shinjiro encountered that night in the Bay Area.

It was clear to everyone that the two Ultramen opposed each other.

And even now, tremendous powers were filling their bodies, ready to clash.

Chapter 3 - Conditions of the Sacrifice

The jet-black Ultraman and the tri-colored Ultraman are staring at each other in an instant confrontation.

“!!”

The two Ultras, who had been staring at each other, moved at the same time. Kicks, fists, and thrusts intersected. The shaking leg of rage shattered the asphalt, and the gale of the hand used like a sword cut down the extension of the outer lamp.

“What are you doing? Seize him!”

“Huh? Which one?!”

“Both of them!!”

Moroboshi pushes aside the puzzled Shinjiro and draws his Spacium Sword. At that moment, the two Ultras, who had kept their distance from each other, crossed their outstretched arms.

Then, pure white rays from the tri-colored Ultraman and dark purple rays from the jet-black Ultraman shoot out from their forearms and collide in mid-air!

“Impossible!”

Ide, who monitors the scene in the operations room, leans back. Edo, next to him, is calmly operating the console and analyzing the images.

“Both of these spectrums are... zeperions. They appear to be isotopes of the element.”

“Zeperions?!”

When Shinjiro recovered from the shockwave caused by the collision of the light rays, that light blade had formed again on the jet-black Ultraman’s right arm. The two edges begin to vibrate. It is an attack that causes a headache.

“You’ve got to be kidding me!”

Shinjiro accelerates the particles collected in the spacium core of his palm to create a halo.

“No, Shinjiro! Spacium and zeperion are gonna conflict with each other.”

“What?”

A moment earlier than Ide’s transmission, Shinjiro had already thrown a halo, an ultraslash.

There was a tremendous roar and a blast. The windows of the memorial hall are broken all at once.

The contact between the jet-black Ultraman's light blade and Shinjiro's halo caused an explosion greater than expected. The four people present were blown away more than ten meters.

“...You idiot!”

Moroboshi, the first to recover, cursed.

“I’m sorry, it’s just that...”

Shinjiro searches for the jet-black Ultraman, without even bothering to defend himself.

He found him. The jet-black Ultraman was already standing up, but the exterior of his right arm, which was thought to be the light blade generator, was severely damaged, exposing his unarmed arm - a human skin.

Whoosh!

The jet-black Ultraman leaps forward, dodging the light blade wielded by the tri-colored Ultraman.

Moroboshi was about to pursue but...

“Wait!”

He was interrupted by Shinjiro's voice as he rushed to the tri-colored Ultraman, which was on Shinjiro's knees.

He appears to have sustained a reasonable amount of damage.

"...Wait."

In Shinjiro's arms, the Ultraman Suit disappeared into particles of light and became the figure of a young man who looked exhausted.

"Let's just be thankful for this one."

Sheathing his sword, Moroboshi also reaches for the young man's arm.

"...Don't touch me."

The young man shakes off their hands and stands up.

"...I wouldn't have let him go if you two hadn't interfered."

"I don't think you understand the situation."

"Mr. Moroboshi!"

Shinjiro hurriedly stops Moroboshi, who is again putting his hand on the sword with a killing intent.

"Fighting each other is useless. We are not enemies."

"Whoa?!"

Before they realized, a girl in a white hood was standing near Shinjiro.

Was she small and out of sight? No, there was no warning from his suit.

The girl proceeds.

"All we have to do now is to secure the people that the dark beings are after."

When they all returned to the exhibition room of the Memorial Hall, which was in a dismal state, the woman - Kanae - had disappeared. The staff member who had been ordered to protect her was also shaking his head. The battle had created a blind spot in the museum's security system, and by the time they arrived, she was already nowhere to be found.

The girl complains to Shinjiro.

“We must find her quickly. Before the ritual takes place again.”

“Ritual?”

“I knew it... I was right.”

In a small, dimly lit apartment, Kanae stares at the newspaper articles pasted on the wall and smiles.

“See? That's why you saved me.”

One year ago, when she was lost in despair and searching for a place to die, Ultraman saved her life.

Why? Why did you save someone like me?

At first, she could not understand why she had failed to die, and was simply confused. However, as she watched the fierce battle between the aliens and Ultraman unfolding before her eyes, an unexpected change suddenly occurred within Kanae. The aliens are destroying the city and slaughtering helpless humans who can do nothing but run away like insects. The sight of these aliens reminded Kanae of her teachers and classmates who had mistreated, tormented, and ridiculed her in the past, and she began to feel an emotional response that she had never felt before. It was a powerful emotion that she had never felt before. It was... the will to kill.

Kill him! Obliterate the alien from this world!

The rays of light emitted by the Ultraman enveloped the alien and annihilated it without a trace. It was as if the cries of Kanae's heart had been heard.

She still clearly remembers the excitement and pleasure she felt at that moment. Thinking about it over and over again, she was so moved that she shed tears. Kanae then murmured words of gratitude.

“Thank you. Thank you... for giving me... a reason to live.”

Yes, since that day, Kanae has been reborn. She finally realized the reason for her existence and immediately took action to confirm it.

The first time, she eradicated a female homeroom teacher - now the principal of another junior high school - who only watched her and, rather, encouraged the severe bullying of Kanae during her high school days. Kanae followed her on her way to work. When Kanae pushed her from behind while waiting at a traffic light on a busy street, she vanished from this world with abrupt ease.

The next thing Kanae did was to eliminate the group of bullies who continued to torment her. After graduation, they continued to find weak people and bully them. They would regularly hang out in the middle of the night at a house where they were making a fool of themselves. When Kanae unleashed hydrogen sulfide at the house during one night, they disappeared from this world quickly.

After that, Kanae continued to exterminate “monsters” in order to fulfill her assigned mission.

The revenge for the boy who committed suicide due to bullying, which she found out at the funeral home, also went off without a hitch. All the people she eliminated were treated as accidents or suicides, and the police never came after Kanae. Of course. What Kanae is doing is “justice.”

Whenever Kanae killed a monster, she always visited the "Giant of Light Memorial Hall" to report to the giant statue of Ultraman. Even if it was not the real one, Kanae believed that her gratitude must have reached Ultraman. A few hours ago, she was proven right. Once again, Ultraman saved Kanae's life.

It was not a coincidence. I was right after all.

The heroic figure of Ultraman fighting to protect Kanae from the three dark aliens.

“Stay where you are! An official will be here shortly!”

As she watched their backs as they ran off after the aliens with a smile on her face, Kanae vowed once again.

I will also do my best so that I will not be embarrassed by you.

In a dimly lit room, Kanae looks through the materials on the next monsters to be exterminated. Seven high school students she has secretly photographed. They had conspired with the male teacher whom Kanae had pushed off the station platform the other day. They had been enjoying bullying as if it were a game. Kanae has spent days carefully studying their behavior patterns. She also knew that tonight would be the perfect time to eliminate all the monsters at once.

“Ultraman, I'm sure you're out there somewhere watching.”

Kanae smiled and murmured, and began to prepare the monster-killing weapon: hydrogen sulfide.

“He is Daigo. I am Yuzare. We have come from another world to prevent an evil ritual from taking place in this world.”

The young man and the girl were ushered into a hearing room at the headquarters of the Special Forces Unit and repeated this to Ide, who was facing them across a table fixed to the floor. Behind them stood two of Moroboshi's trained subordinates.

Moroboshi, Shinjiro, and Edo were in the next room watching the scene.

“We're going in circles. We're not getting anywhere.”

“The Three Dark Ones are trying to break the five seals, four have already been broken, and the last seal is... here in Japan?”

The four seals they describe are strangely consistent with the gravity shift phenomenon and mass murders in North America, Germany, Italy, and China. There should have been no media coverage linking these events.

“What is puzzling is the suit. It is hard to believe that it is something that can be made just by looking at it. Above all, it uses Zeperion elements that should not exist within at least tens of millions of light years.”

Edo's eyes seemed to glow as he said this.

"Did they say 'Tiga's light has only taken its proper form in this world?'"

"But you don't know who the black Ultraman is. How can we believe you?"

No matter how many times Ide asks, the young man and the girl just repeat the same story.

Ide repeated the same proposal.

"We know your motive. If you are not the enemy, then let us help you."

The young man - Daigo also repeated the same answer.

"We refuse. This is our problem"

Sighing, Ide looks up at the camera somehow saying, "Help me."

"...Let's release them."

Edo let out that startling statement.

"Further interrogation would be pointless. Of course, we need to know how they behave."

Moroboshi taps Shinjiro on the shoulder.

"Don't screw it up, kid."

"Me? It would be better if you..."

"I'm going to investigate the woman who disappeared from the memorial. What? Do you want to take my place?"

It has been thirty minutes since they left the SSSP headquarters.

Shinjiro followed Daigo and Yuzare while maintaining a certain distance.

He has only seen tailing in detective dramas, but in reality, it was not as difficult as he imagined. The two seemed completely unaware of Shinjiro's presence.

But still, just where are they going?

As they passed through a narrow, deserted back street, they suddenly leaped over a fence right beside them and disappeared from Shinjiro's sight.

...Ah.

He hurriedly looked directly down from where they had leaped and saw a river flowing there.

He looked around at the surface of the water, reddened by dusk, but Daigo and Yuzare were nowhere to be seen.

...Hey, you're kidding. They came all this way to... Hmm?

Shinjiro, almost in despair, found the entrance to a rectangular tunnel at the end of the flowing water.

I'm sure... they are inside it...

Shinjiro descends to the river and steps into its tunnel without hesitation.

In the darkness, the sound of water reverberates loudly, and a foul-smelling heat envelops his entire body. He feels as if he has wandered into a different world from the one he was in a moment ago, and he suddenly remembers the nightmare he had seen before.

A grotesque temple. Burning flames. The nameless monsters that roam the land. And the black Ultr...

"Aaaaaah."

The arm was suddenly tightened up from behind, and thud! He was held down on the spot with or without saying anything.

"Why did you follow us?"

Daigo's voice echoes close to Shinjiro's face, which is pressed against the surface of the water.

"...I just wanted to thank you"

It is not a lie. Shinjiro heard from Hokuto in his hospital room. Just before he lost consciousness from the black Ultraman attack, he saw a tall man and a small girl.

"You guys saved Hokuto, right?"

"Hokuto...?"

"Our friend."

"..Your friend... eh?"

Perhaps surprised by Shinjiro's words, Daigo's arms relax.

"Yes. We have been tasked by the SSSP with aliens. To protect people's lives. As Ultramen."

Daigo let go of Shinjiro's arm that he was strongly holding and released him. Feeling that this was a sign of communication, Shinjiro stood up, looked straight at Daigo and Yuzare, and said this.

"What is this ritual of unsealing? What are you trying to stop?"

But neither Daigo nor Yuzare answered.

"Um... why don't we fight together! Even if you are from another world, if we are both Ultramen fighting for justice, if we join forces..."

"Justice is not something to be taken lightly."

Daigo's sharp eyes silently glare at him, interrupting Shinjiro's words.

"You still don't get it. Light and darkness are... two sides of the same coin."

"..Light, and darkness..."

“...What do you think?”

Ide asked Edo in his office at the SSSP Headquarters.

“I don't want to sound hasty, but did you investigate their clothes?”

Edo asks back. The fabric fibers and leather fragments left behind in the hearing room have been analyzed and found to contain the DNA of animals and plants that are believed to have become extinct tens of millions of years ago. By now, the Office of Science and Technology is in an uproar.

“They and the otherworldly beast definitely came from the same era. If that is the case, we can't just dismiss the ritual of unsealing and the like as mere falsehoods and delusions. However...”

Ide puts up a world map on the screen. North America, Germany, Italy, China, and Japan are highlighted.

“Why these five locations? What is the significance of these locations?”

“Daigo. Now is not the time. I think we should accept his proposal.”

“Yuzare...”

“Please take me to the place of sacrifice.”

Saying this, Yuzare gently closes her eyes, folds her hands in front of her chest, and unifies her mind. At the same time, a blue-white light shines through the darkness of the culvert. The light radiated from Yuzare's small body.

As Shinjiro gulps at the mysterious sight, Daigo suddenly opens his mouth.

“Our world was destroyed... by the forces of darkness.”

“Destroyed...!”

“One day, the Gates of the Otherworld opened and an evil darkness covered the world. One by one, the people who were swallowed by the darkness became monsters and began to kill their families, friends, and loved ones. In an instant, the world... turned into hell.”

A moment later, the vision of the nightmare flowed again into Shinjiro's mind.

A resounding scream. Monsters overrun an unfamiliar world. Humans being cruelly slaughtered.

Shinjiro struggled to hold back an involuntary scream at the sensation of being so real.

"What's wrong?"

"...It's nothing... I'm sorry... I'm fine."

Daigo, staring dubiously at Shinjiro, who is wiping the sweat from his forehead, continues to speak.

"But... There were others who were not consumed by the darkness, but on the contrary made it their own strength. Camearra, Hudram, and Darramb. You saw the three of them too."

This time, the image of the three black-clad beings he had encountered at the headquarters of the SSSP flashed through his mind.

"Yuzare and I fought them, closed the Gates of the Otherworld, and sealed the darkness. But there are those who want to open the Gates of the Otherworld again in this world."

"Huh? Could... that be... the black Ultraman?"

The jet-black Ultraman, which damaged Hokuto unconscious and overwhelmed Shinjiro and Moroboshi.

Shinjiro had a hunch that he must be the main culprit behind this incident.

"Who is he? Did he come from the world of yours?"

"No. He is probably from this world."

"From our world...?"

“He performed the unsealing ritual with Camearra, Hudram, and Darramb. The ritual requires a darkness equal to or greater than the light that was cast by me and Yuzare at the time of the sealing. In other words, a sacrifice.”

Edo suggested this to Ide, who was staring at the map and trying to wrap his head around it.

“Why don't we look at the details of the rituals first?”

“Details?”

“You could say their conditions too. What is the raw list required to unseal...”

Under Edo's manipulation, photographs of the gruesome murder scene that Moroboshi had confiscated filled the screen.

“Kuruki, the man who turned into an otherworldly beast in the Bay Area, was a serial killer. If this is not a coincidence.”

“Are you saying that the people who have been turned into otherworldly beasts in the past four places are all killers?”

“There is also that.”

“By 'also', that could mean... Ah!”

That woman who was targeted by Kuruki too is...

“Sacrifice? No way...”

Shinjiro thinks of the woman Camearra, Hudram, and Darramb attacked in the exhibition hall of the Giant of Light Memorial.

“Why was she chosen as the sacrifice?”

“Because she has killed so many people.”

“...No way.”

Daigo's words made Shinjiro gasp.

"The woman at the time is a serial killer? She was an ordinary woman, rather plain and quiet. She doesn't look like the kind of person who would kill anyone..."

"Can you see what's in people's hearts?"

"...Huh? ...No."

"The condition for the sacrifice is a person who has a dark creature living in their hearts. The figure that has been turned into a monster by Camearra is the embodiment of the creature that lives in that person's heart. The ritual is completed and the seal is lifted when the monstrous murderer kills the same number of new human beings as they have killed in the past."

"The same number... then during that time in the Bay Area..."

One is not enough...

Shinjiro remembered the last words of the monstrous Kuriki in the Bay Area and finally understood what he meant. Just before he was about to kill as many people as he had killed in the past, Moroboshi had defeated him, and the ritual had failed.

"How many people... did that woman kill?"

"Nineteen."

"That many..."

At that moment, unexpectedly, the pale light illuminating the darkness faded and Yuzare opened her eyes.

"I just saw where she is."

The pale light from the camping lanterns stretches several figures on the peeling concrete wall. When Kanae arrives at the spot, the monsters have already gathered.

The ruins of a hospital that went under a few years ago are the perfect playground for them. The basement is especially airtight, so no matter how much the targets of their torment cry out, they are never heard outside. They can enjoy their cruel games to their heart's content, undisturbed.

But the environment is also favorable for Kanae. It would be a perfect end to tonight's *monster extermination*. She lowered her bag of hydrogen sulfide and gas masks to the floor, and from the shadows, she took another look at those who had gathered for the memorial service. In addition to the seven main members of the bullying group, there were more than a dozen other students. There were probably about 20 people in total. There were far more people than planned.

Kanae was not sure what to do and whether it was right to kill everyone. Just when Kanae was wondering what to do, a female student was pulled out of the center of the group.

A girl who seems very serious and timid. She is definitely a target for bullies.

The monsters assumed that she had pushed the teacher off the platform because of a grudge against her and, instead of listening to the girl's desperate denials, began violating her violently as punishment. When the girl called for help, the people around her just looked on.

The girl is a sacrifice in the ritual of a memorial service. They are bullies, and they will give her any reason to approve of their bullying. Everyone here is just as guilty. They must pay. The sacrifice must be them.

A rage and a desire to kill welled up inside Kanae at that moment,

“Release. Your. True. Form.”

Camearra stood behind her and made Kanae drink the reddish-black glowing crystalline substance.

What, what is happening...?

A black mist overflows from Kanae's bewildered mouth, enveloping her entire body, and a sudden change comes over her. Ivy grows from her skin, and countless more leaves cover her body, and blood-red flowers bloom...

“We’re too late...!”

As Shinjiro ran down the dark corridor of the abandoned hospital, he saw the exact moment when Kanae transformed into the Otherworldly Beast - Bajera.

“No, we can still make it.”

As soon as Shinjiro heard Daigo’s calm voice, it extended from Bajera’s body like a spear and pierced through the bodies of some of the bully group.

Without knowing what happened, the man and woman who were stabbed spit blood from their mouths and died. Numerous screams echo through the underground space. It is the beginning of a massacre.

“Hurry. Stop the ritual.”

“Yes!”

Shinjiro, who was standing there stunned, puts on the Ultraman Suit. Daigo also puts on a tri-colored Ultraman Suit.

“Stop! Stop it!”

Shinjiro runs furiously to stop Kanae, who has turned into Bajera. But then, *thud!*

His whole body was subjected to severe gravitational fluctuations, and moreover...

“!”

In front of them were Camearra, Hudram, and Darramb. And a jet-black Ultraman stood before them. The Ultraman’s blue eyes glared at Shinjiro.

“Do not interfere with the sacred ritual.”

Chapter 4 - The Dark Pentagram

“The suit has been transported!”

An operator shouts from the control room adjacent to Ide and his team's office across the plexiglass.

“Shinjiro’s suit? To where?!”

Without Ide having to ask, the operator sent the location to the display in his office. It was an abandoned hospital in the suburbs. It was the site of a medical institution that had fallen into bankruptcy due to the closure of a nearby factory and a sharp decline in the number of residents, and the building was well known as one of the most haunted places in Tokyo.

“Is he there to play a test of courage?”

Ide calls Shinjiro from his tablet. However, his call is not connected.

“This is bad...”

Spurred by Ide's concern, another operator shouted.

“Gravity shift detected! Just now at the same abandoned hospital!”

“Go. I’ll take care of them.”

“But...”

Before Shinjiro could say anything, the tri-colored Ultraman, Daigo kicked the ground and was furiously challenging the jet-black Ultraman, and the black-robed trio standing in front of him.

That’s reckless. He can't fight four people by himself. I'll fight with him.

“Aaaaaaaaaah!” “Noooooooooooo!”

Multiple screams echoed in Shinjiro’s ears, reminding him of the current situation. The basement of the abandoned hospital had been turned into a

screaming hell by Bajera, a plant-like creature which was originally Iwatsubo Kanae.

One by one, the snake-like ivy seizes the boys and girls who are desperately trying to escape, drags them around in a pool of blood, and finally stabs them with another ivy that has turned into a sharp spear. Within minutes after Shinjiro, Daigo, and Yuzare's arrival, more than ten people had already been killed.

"... Stop... Stoooooop!"

Shinjiro yelled as he ran towards the otherworldly beast, Bajera, continuing its slaughter.

Shtlup. At the same time, several vines extended from Bajera, noticing Shinjiro, entangling him in the Ultraman Suit he was wearing.

These stupid vines...!

Without hesitation, he severed them with the Specium Blades on both arms. However, more vines wrapped around his arms, legs, neck, and then...

"Why are you getting in my way?!"

Suddenly, along with Kanae's voice, a vivid vision flooded Shinjiro's mind.

"W-What is this...?!"

A girl was crying. Her face and clothes were covered in mud, pitch black. Did she fall? ...No. She was pushed down.

"Gross." "Annoying." "Disappear." "Die."

Several elementary school students surrounded her, pushing her one by one, laughing gleefully, and mocking her. It was the schoolyard of an elementary school. Other students were nearby. Teachers were present too. The girl cried out for help, but no one came to her aid. Intense despair washed over her.

This is Kanae.

Shinjiro felt as if he were right there, engulfed in a realistic sensation. He tried to reach out to the crying Kanae, but his body wouldn't move, and no sound

came out, as if he were paralyzed. All he could do was watch the cruel scene unfolding before his eyes.

Eventually, the elementary school Kanae turned into a middle schooler, then a high schooler. But the situation remained unchanged. The brutal and insidious bullying continued without end.

The only thing that changed was that Kanae no longer cried. Regardless of what was said or done to her, she remained expressionless. Sometimes, she even wore a faint smile. This displeased the bullies, so the harassment escalated. But Kanae didn't cry. She knew it was pointless to do so. Instead, she smiled a little, thinking about her beloved mother who passed away last year. She remembered the happy times from her childhood.

Snip, snip. Snip, snip.

Beautiful flowers have bloomed.

Bright red flowers have bloomed.

In a room of the apartment, whenever her mother cut Kanae's hair, she always hummed the same song. Kanae loved that song and sang it with her mother.

And even when exterminating bad people, she sang that song in her heart.

When she pushed those who bullied her, those who pretended not to see, onto the road, in front of the train. When she annihilated them with hydrogen sulfide. She sang it even now.

Snip, snip. Snip, snip.

Beautiful flowers bloomed.

In the basement of the abandoned hospital, students distorted with fear, fleeing and crying out. To Kanae, their faces overlapped with those of the people who bullied her in the past.

Spear-like vines pierced through another boy's body, and fresh blood splattered on the wall.

Snip, snip. Snip, snip.

Bright red flowers bloomed.

Shinjiro knows. Kanae has no hesitation or sense of guilt when it comes to killing people.

Because for Kanae, murder is about exterminating evil monsters. In other words, she believes it's justice. The one who taught Kanae that was...

No way...

Once again, vivid memories flood Shinjiro's mind.

A burning city. Rampaging extraterrestrials wreaking havoc and destruction. A truck flies through the air, about to crash down on a woman who couldn't escape in time. With a crash, just in the nick of time, Shinjiro - Ultraman catches it.

The woman whose life he saved is watching, with a smile, with eyes full of admiration. It's Kanae.

Was it... me?

At that moment, Kanae understood her reason for living, what she must do.

What is I... the one who turned her into a serial killer?

“What are you doing?!”

Daigo shouts as he desperately fights against the jet-black Ultraman and the black-robed trio.

“Snap out of it! Stop the ritual!”

But his voice doesn't reach Shinjiro, who is in a daze.

Daigo was occupied with his own battle. The right arm of the jet-black Ultraman still showed noticeable armor damage. It probably wouldn't be able to form a Light Blade. Though not in perfect condition himself, Daigo would have had the upper hand in a one-on-one physical fight. However, the presence of Hudra, jumping around the walls and executing hit-and-run attacks, and Darramb, crushing concrete and tearing through steel with one hand, severely restricted Daigo's movements. Unable to find a chance to counterattack, the strikes of the jet-black Ultraman, the claws of Hudra, and the powerful arms of Darramb gradually, but surely, depleted Daigo's strength. And the damage accumulating on his Suit was becoming increasingly severe.

"A pitiful sight. You're truly a foolish man."

Camearra murmured coldly to Daigo, then turned her gaze to the dark red sphere in her hand.

The great slaughter by Bajera. The sphere constantly counted the number of victims. When the growing number reached nineteen, the ritual would be fulfilled, and the seal would be broken.

However, Daigo was battered and bruised. Shinjiro was still immobilized by the vines.

"These are monsters! What I'm doing is justice! Die, die, die, die!"

Kanae's anger and hatred flowed into Shinjiro like a dark torrent.

"...No."

When another victim was sacrificed, Shinjiro resisted Kanae's consciousness which was binding him. He shouted.

"No! What you're doing isn't justice!"

At the sound of his voice, Kanae - or rather, Bajera - turned around, and the grip of the vines loosened slightly.

"...It's not... justice?"

Shinjiro heard Kanae's bewildered murmurs.

“That's right. What you're doing is just revenge.”

“...No, that's not true... that can't be...”

Kanae's voice trembled, filled with agitation.

“Why are you saying that? You're the one who taught me! You told me to protect someone! That's the reason I should be alive in this world!”

Shinjiro felt intense emotions rising again within Kanae.

“It's not revenge! It's not revenge!”

Pain, anger, fear, hatred - the various emotions accumulated within Kanae ignited like magma, forming a single emotion. It was a desire to kill.

“This is justice! This is justice! This is justice!”

In the sea of blood, Bajera glares at the cowering figure in the corner of the room.

“Stop...!”

Shinjiro tries to cut through the vines entwining his entire body, but Kanae's emotions won't allow it.

“Don't get in the way!”

Bajera's vines coil around the last survivor's legs and swiftly pull them in.

"No, help!"

The desperate cries come from a plain-looking girl who had been tormented by the bullying group until just now.

“I'm scared, it hurts, help! Someone, please help!”

The tear-streaked face of the sobbing girl overlaps with Kanae's past self in her mind.

"...No... She's different... This girl is different... I don't want to kill her!"

But regardless of Kanae's will, Bajera continues to drag the girl around. The murderous impulse of Bajera is now in a state of frenzy beyond control.

"I don't want to kill her! I don't want to kill her! I don't want to kill her!"

Kanae's intensely shaken emotions flow into Shinjiro.

"Please! Stop meeeee!"

As Bajera's spear-like vines approach the girl...

"Uooooooooohhhhhh!"

The Spacium Core on Ultraman's chest glows red. The fairing opens, and the heat-dissipation plates rotate. The limiter of the Suit is released. It's a dangerous system that disregards the burden on both the SUIT and the wearer's body to maximize the potential of the Ultra Factor possessed by the wearer for a certain period. The entire Suit heats up to red-hot levels due to the sudden increase in load. The entangled vines cannot withstand the high temperature and ignite. Shinjiro effortlessly tears apart the charred vines and crosses his arms. He fires the Spacium Beam. A beam of energy strikes Bajera, engulfing its grotesque body in crimson flames.

In the nick of time, the girl is protected, and Shinjiro hears Kanae's final words from the burning Bajera.

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

A gentle mother's smile. Memories of happiness as her final moment - Kanae's consciousness fades away.

Crash. The time limit expires, and Ultraman kneels down on the spot. Immediately afterward, the helmet is removed from his head, revealing Shinjiro's bewildered face amidst the glare of the flames.

"Stop messing around!"

Shinjiro, upon hearing that voice, turned around to see what was happening. It was the jet-black Ultraman, glaring over his shoulder while tightening the grip around the neck of the tri-color Ultraman, who appeared to be barely alive.

“Daigo...?”

Thud. The jet-black Ultraman released his grip, and the tri-color ULTRAMAN collapsed on the spot. The lamp on his chest was flashing red.

“...Wait!”

Nevertheless, Shinjiro reaches out his trembling right arm, as if to pursue the jet-black Ultraman.

"Keeeeh!"

That back is trampled by Hudra, emitting strange cries.

"Hmph!"

Darramb, carrying a meter-wide reinforced concrete pillar on his shoulder, snapped it in half and, along with the jet-black Ultraman, headed towards Shinjiro.

Hudra picked up the broken steel bar and trailed its tongue along its pointed tip.

“...Guh!”

Shinjiro can't move. He has exhausted both his strength and the energy of his Suit.

The jet-black Ultraman prepares a knife-hand strike right in front of him. Darramb brandishes the pillar. Hydra thrusts the sharp end of the steel bar against the tri-color Ultraman's throat.

In this desperate situation...!

Thud! Hudra's arm holding the steel bar is severed by something that flies in. Stuck into the floor is a throwing knife with a unique curved shape.

Meanwhile, the concrete pillar thrown towards Shinjiro is torn apart by a torrent of light connecting the wrists of a shadow that blocks its path, separating into right and left halves.

Vertical Guillotine. It's Hokuto's specialty move, wearing the Ace Suit.

“...Hokuto?”

“Sorry for the wait, Sir!”

Clang! Following this, Moroboshi lands beside Daigo, wearing the Seven Suit.

“...so it was shallow.”

“!?”

A crack runs across the mask of the jet-black Ultraman. Human eyes peer out from the gap.

Pshh! As if remembering, fresh blood spurts from Hudra’s arm. Of course, it was Moroboshi who threw the throwing knife.

“Mr. Moroboshi!”

Shinjiro stands up with Hokuto’s support.

“Then, shall we go for round two?”

With a creak, Moroshi slashes the tip of the Spacium Sword.

Darramb, who was growling fiercely and preparing himself, but...

“What a shame. We don’t need to be here anymore.”

With Camerra’s words, Hudra, who was shrieking and struggling, is held back, and he kneels behind her.

“Even if one is not there, we have it here.”

The moment Moroboshi was about to release the sword, Camerra raised her palm.

Thud! Gravity shifts again. When the gaze returns, the trio and the jet-black Ultraman are nowhere to be seen. From above, below, and all around, steel bars creak and concrete shatters. The abandoned hospital building cannot bear its own weight. Its collapse is only a matter of time.

As soon as Shinjiro and the others emerged from the abandoned hospital with the surviving girl and the immobile Daigo, the building collapsed completely.

“I’m glad we made it in time.”

Hokuto, having removed the helmet of the Ace Suit, smiles at Daigo.

“You helped me before, didn’t you?”

But Daigo remains silent, staring fixedly at one point.

“What’s that...?”

Moroboshi mutters. Where Daigo is looking, a gap like black mist rises from below the ground, engulfing the place where the hospital once stood.

“Unfortunately, we didn’t make it in time.”

Yuzare suddenly appeared behind them unnoticed.

“There were nineteen victims. The ritual has been completed.”

Shinjiro listened to those despairing words with a vacant expression.

“Now that the final ritual has been completed, there is not much time left.”

The group listened to Yuzare’s words not in the interrogation room of the SSSP base, but in an office. The girl with the white hood appealed for their help to resolve the situation.

“Does that mean you’re willing to accept our cooperation?”

After a brief exchange of glances, Yuzare and Daigo turned to Ide.

“Excellent.”

With Edo’s applause, the debate over the matter was abruptly ended. Now it was time for action.

Daigo's heavily damaged Suit was assigned the identification code name of Tricolor Individual Guard Armor = TIGA Suit, and the SSSP's technical team quickly began analyzing and repairing it.

"We also need to consider the affiliation code. You guys are merely collaborators, not members of the SSSP. How about..."

"GUTS."

Unexpectedly, at Daigo's suggestion, Ide looked at him with surprise.

"...It slipped my mouth. Forget about it."

"No, it's not bad. In any case, a team to manage your suits will be necessary. Group of Ultraman TIGA Suit = GUTS. Let's go with that!"

And so, the Group of Ultraman TIGA Suit = GUTS was established within the SSSP.

"I wonder where Sir Hayata went?"

Hokuto mutters to himself, realizing that Shinjiro is not back at headquarters.

"Come to think of it, he seemed a bit off."

Ide recalls the moment he passed Shinjiro in the corridor on his way here. Shinjiro's complexion seemed pale, and he spoke in a strained, soft voice.

"I saw them. I saw her memories."

"What...? What do you mean?"

When Ide questioned further, Shinjiro had already walked away without turning back.

“There was another time when he seemed off.”

Moroboshi recalls Shinjiro’s demeanor on the day abnormal gravity fluctuations were first confirmed in the Bay Area. At that time too, he had a pale face and tried to brush off concerns from Ide.

“Did he mention seeing something back then too?”

Suddenly Daigo joins the conversation, and Moroboshi displays a faintly surprised expression, which is quite unusual for him.

“No, but he looked as if he'd seen a nightmare.”

“A nightmare...”

Daigo mulls over Moroboshi’s intuition and falls into silence, contemplating something. During that time...

Shinjiro stood alone on the rooftop of the SSSP headquarters.

“Thank you... Ultraman...”

As he murmured, vivid memories flooded his mind, memories that had been transmitted from Kanae. The intense bullying. The murders that were driven by revenge. And what had convinced her that it was all justice...

“What does she mean ‘thank you’...?”

Shinjiro had always felt happy when someone he had saved thanked him. It had even made him proud. But this time was different. The words “thank you” felt like a curse, weighing heavily on Shinjiro’s heart and causing a piercing pain in his chest.

“Why are you thanking me?!”

When he inadvertently shouted out,

“Don't speak of justice so lightly.”

Suddenly, the words Daigo had said in the dark alley came back to him.

“You still don't understand anything. Light and darkness... they are two sides of the same coin.”

The pattern drawn by Yuzare on Ide's tablet appeared on the screen.

“We call it the ancient seal.”

It was what's commonly known as a pentagram, with a symbol resembling an eye or a pillar of flame at its center.

By unlocking the five seals through the ritual, a gate to the otherworld would be opened at the five points of the gigantic pentagram, awakening something that must not be awakened.

However...

“Where are the parts of this pentagram located?”

In front of a world map, Moroboshi raises objections. Yes, the ritual took place in North America, Germany, Italy, China, and Japan. The shapes Yuzare drew bear no resemblance to these locations.

“That's right, the theory of continental drift, where the terrain changed 300 million years ago.”

“It's unlikely that there would be such drastic changes in just 300 million years. It doesn't align with predictions based on plate tectonics.”

Hokuto's hypothesis is shattered to pieces by Ide.

“When did we ever say we came from the past?”

Everyone in the room turns to Yuzare in surprise.

“If we replace the locations of the ritual with our world, this is how it looks.”

Yuzare runs her finger across the tablet, and the points on the map move dramatically, forming a magnificent pentagram that covers half the Earth. It perfectly overlaps with the pattern of the ancient seal.

Bam! Ide smacks his own forehead with his palm.

“Not a different time, but a different universe... That's what it means!”

Ide snatches the tablet from Yuzare and starts operating it.

“In that case, the center of the pentagram, where the gate to the otherworld opens...”

The pentagram on the map distorts and returns to its original positions. And the point where what looks like an eye or a pillar of flame overlaps is...

"...Shanghai, huh."

Shanghai, the world's ninth-largest global city, experiencing rapid growth in recent years, situated at the mouth of the Yangtze River facing the East China Sea. There, a gate to the otherworld is on the verge of opening.

At the same time, in the tourist area of the central part of Shanghai, known as the Bund.

In a district overlooking the west bank of the Huangpu River, lined with many Western-style high-rise buildings, distinctly different from the surrounding scenery, stood a man alongside the trio of darkness, Camearra, Hudra, and Daramb.

As Camearra looked up at the sky, rapidly, dark clouds began to gather. As if anticipating this, the man clenched a small crystal in his hand. Darkness spewed forth, enveloping the man's body, coalescing into the form of the Ultraman of Darkness, just as it should be in each part of his body.

"Aaaah!"

Shinjiro let out a cry of anguish and collapsed on the spot. Suddenly, the vision of a nightmare flooded back into his mind.

An unfamiliar ancient temple. And there — giant eyes and pillars of flames appeared!

Yuzare suddenly raised her head, frowning her brows.

“It has begun.” she said.

Almost simultaneously, an alarm sounded. An operator shouted, “Gravity anomaly detected in Shanghai! It's of a magnitude unlike anything we've seen before! The scope and scale are unprecedented!”

“What's the situation on the ground?” Yuzare asked.

“We're switching to fixed-point camera footage!”

The screen changed to show the footage.

“What is this?!”

A colossal silhouette stood towering over the 52 buildings of the Bund, spanning across the Huangpu River.

Pyramid. A perfectly black square pyramid that reflected no light at all. However, the buildings at its base remained intact, reflecting its form on the surface of the Huangpu River. It has no material presence. Yet, unquestionably there stood a black temple. Perhaps an altar. Or a tombstone.

At the top of it, the dark ULTRAMAN stood. Just like when he appeared at the abandoned hospital, his wounds were still unhealed. However, as the torrent of plasma, resembling a waterfall flowing in reverse, surged up the sides of the pyramid and poured into the dark Ultraman, his appearance changed completely.

His body was fully repaired, and his body color changed from solid black to three colors: silver, red, and black. His entire being was filled with overwhelming and alien energy.

The other Ultraman Tricolor Individual Guard Armor.

It was the moment of the birth of the evil dark warrior — Evil TIGA.

Chapter 5 - Conflict of Light and Darkness

Standing against the backdrop of the beautiful night view, Shanghai Center, Jinmao Tower, and Shanghai World Financial Center lined up. Beyond those skyscrapers stood a massive black pyramid, emitting pulsating waves of plasma.

On the ground, Camearra, Hudra, and Darramb bathed in those waves with expressions of ecstasy. Then, as Camearra produced a reddish-black crystal, Hudra and Darramb gnawed at it like starving beasts, splitting open their foreheads to reveal darkened crystals. From there, darkness spewed forth, enveloping their bodies and transforming them into armor reminiscent of the Ultraman Suit. On Hudra's right arm, which was recently severed by Moroboshi, elongated and sharp claws sprouted where the radius and ulna extended, with a gaping black hole in between.

The revolving lights spin and sirens blare. The rotor noise of Z-19 attack helicopters is drawing near, while military trucks carrying armed personnel and new equipment such as the three-day armored vehicles are assembling. Camearra, Hydra, and Garramb find themselves immediately surrounded by the muzzles of S9 submachine guns. It's the Shanghai Garrison of the People's Armed Police Force of the People's Republic of China.

Warnings in multiple languages are broadcasted from a helicopter, along with searchlights, directed towards Evil TIGA standing atop the pyramid. However, Evil TIGA merely fires a burst of light from one hand, piercing through a helicopter which loses control and crashes into the Oriental Pearl Tower.

This signals the start of an attack by the armed police on the pyramid, Evil TIGA, and the three in between. However, bullets and missiles seem to have little effect, either being deflected or absorbed, only exacerbating the damage as Shanghai's streets, bustling with civilians and tourists with no proper evacuation or blockade, swiftly turn into a chaotic inferno of screams, gunfire, destruction, and bloodshed.

“Be engulfed by darkness.”

Upon Evil TIGA's command, swarms of winged insects that had been gathered around the exterior lights scattered, and from the surface of the black pyramid, hordes of otherworldly beasts took flight in all directions. They were small Zoigers. Zoigers swarmed around fleeing civilians and soldiers, devouring them indiscriminately. At times, they flew into the mouths of victims, transforming

them into otherworldly beasts. They infiltrated buildings, vehicles, ships, underground passages, and even underwater, preying on people of all ages and genders.

With the Evil Fork equipped on its right arm, Evil TIGA raised it and vibrated the two edges extending from its tip. It was a technique to directly attack the brain, the Evil Resonance. However, its power and effective radius were on a different scale altogether. Amidst the survivors fleeing in agony, some underwent a transformation into a different form, unlike Zoigers. The mimicry of the aliens in the crowd had broken free. Shanghai is home to one of East Asia's largest alien cities.

As the city burned, Evil TIGA, surveying the cityscape from atop the pyramid, turned its head left and right, as if searching for something or someone through the sensory organs of the Zoigers.

“It’s hell.”

In the face of the devastation in Shanghai, Ide couldn't help but avert his gaze from the screen.

“So, this is their objective. To create this hell.”

Even the calm and collected Moroboshi was gritting his teeth.

“No, this is merely a means to an end.”

Ide recalls his memory. There are many cultures that use eyes as symbols of power. The Eye of Horus. The Eye of Udjat. The Eye of Providence. But when it comes to searching in Shanghai...

Smack! Ide struck his forehead with the heel of his hand.

“Alien Ruboian! Extraterrestrial beings with eyeballs comprising over sixty percent of their body weight and the ability to connect to space!”

Ide’s fingers swiftly typed on the keyboard. The appearance and registration information of Alien Ruboia, resembling eyeballs with limbs sprouting out, appeared on the screen.

“There is one registered individual matching the description, residing in the Shanghai Extraterrestrial Residential Center!”

There’s no mistaking it. They needed to protect him immediately and prevent the opening of the gate.

“What if we can’t? What if this eyeball guy falls into enemy hands? It's not like delivering a visa. 'No payment if delayed' won't cut it.” Moroboshi's point was valid. 1,760 kilometers from Tokyo. Shanghai was too far.

“...There is a way.”

Yuzare’s expression indicated that this ‘way’ was far from straightforward.

“...Understood.”

Sensing her determination, Moroboshi refrains from further inquiry.

“Perhaps we'll have to deal with that black Ultraman... no, let's call it Evil TIGA. We'll likely have to deal with him and those three as well. Plus, there's the presence of numerous otherworldly beasts. It's a risky mission, but can you handle it?”

“Of course!”

“No problem.”

Both Hokuto and Moroboshi respond to Ide’s final confirmation.

They quickly prepare for deployment.

“...Huh? Where's Sir Hayata?”

Hokuto scans the room.

“Come to think of it, he hasn't returned yet.”

As Ide murmurs with concern,

“He's not here either.”

Moroboshi mentions 'him,' referring to Daigo, who was with them until a moment ago.

It seems like they left while everyone was preoccupied with the bizarre sight of Shanghai displayed on the screen — a pitch-black pyramid capturing their attention.

“We should search for them right away. Both of them.”

“No.”

Moroboshi overrides Hokuto’s words.

“We don't have time for that right now.”

“...You're right. Indeed, there's no time to spare.”

Ide nods, then continues.

"Moroboshi, Hokuto, I need you to head to Shanghai ahead of us and secure the Alien Ruboia."

Moroboshi and Hokuto nod, then hurry off to the hangar.

“But what about Shinjiro?”

As Ide mutters, Edo remains silent.

Beside them, Yuzare, gazing at the screen, murmurs.

“The most terrifying darkness lies within the human heart.”

Night. The rooftop of the main building of the SSSP base. Despite the surroundings being completely shrouded in darkness, Shinjiro remained kneeling, unable to move.

It was due to the vivid vision that appeared in his mind.

“...What am I...”

The vision strikes again.

Inside the dark temple, flames rise, revealing a silhouette.

An Ultraman. A jet-black Ultraman.

Around him, a sea of blood spreads, with many humans fallen and struggling.

“Hmph.”

The jet-black Ultraman sneers, slicing through the humans with light waves.

Screams echo, and blood splatters.

“They are sacrifices. Your blood, your flesh, opens the gate to the otherworld.”

One by one, the sacrificial victims are slaughtered. Among them is the figure of Kanae.

“...Thank you... Ultraman.”

Kanae smiles before being bisected by the light waves.

....Stop. Stop. Please, stop!

Shinjiro shouts, and the jet-black Ultraman turns.

“Stop? Why? Isn't this what you desired?”

...Me?

Shinjiro mutters in bewilderment. Then,

“Well, because you are me after all.”

As the jet-black Ultraman opens its mask, Shinjiro's own face, twisted with an evil smile, is revealed.

“Aaaaahhhhhh!”

Shinjiro screams in fear when suddenly, someone grabs him by the collar and lifts him up.

“Let go! Let go! Let g—”

Thud. A fist plunges into Shinjiro's cheek in his panicked state.

"..."

Shinjiro, snapped back to reality by the pain, looks ahead.

“Since when?”

Quietly looming over Shinjiro is Daigo.

“Since when have you started having those nightmares?”

...Since when...?

Asked by Daigo, Shinjiro recollects. Certainly, it was...

That's right. It was the first time gravitational anomalies were observed in the Bay Area. In other words, it was the night when the otherworld first appeared, and the ritual to break the seal was performed.

“Shinjiro Hayata.”

Daigo called Shinjiro's name for the first time.

“I heard you have a special Ultraman factor. That's what caused you to have those nightmares.”

Because of the Ultraman factor? But...

“You inherited the genes of Ultraman, who came from the distant reaches of the universe to this planet. And in the world I come from, Ultraman also visited.”

“Ultraman in your world too...?”

“That's right. We called it 'light.' But depending on the state of the person who harbored it, the light could also be tainted by darkness.”

“...!”

Shinjiro recalls the terrifying vision he saw earlier. And then—

Light and darkness are two sides of the same coin. Shinjiro understood the meaning behind Daigo's words from earlier.

“In my world, many warriors wavered between light and darkness, fighting each other with the power of Ultraman. So you synchronized with that, and saw it as a nightmare.”

...So that's how it is.

The vision Shinjiro saw was something that actually happened in Daigo's world. ...No, but Kanae was also there. The sad figure of the woman who became a serial killer because of Shinjiro.

“It's not your fault.” Daigo says as if he's reading Shinjiro's mind.

“Sooner or later, that woman would have started seeking revenge for something. It just happened to be you.”

“But...”

“Even if it were your fault, then what? Are you going to stop fighting? Run away from your duty as Ultraman?”

“If you run away, more people will die. They'll become fodder for the creatures in between, without anyone to protect them. Just like many people did in my world.”

The scenes from his nightmare come back to Shinjiro.

“What you can do as a human. What only you can do.”

“...Huh?”

“Whether you do it or not, it's up to you to decide.”

Daigo's words make Shinjiro snap into realization. He's been forced to make that choice many times before. When he first fought as Ultraman against Bemular. When he saved the driver just before the highway was engulfed in flames. When he protected Rena from the alien Adacic.

Shinjiro had decided to fight on his own. As Ultraman.

"If the gate to the otherworld opens, this world will be engulfed in darkness and perish."

Daigo directs a strong gaze at Shinjiro.

"To stop that, your help is needed."

...That's right. I have to protect them. As many lives as I can.

"Daigo."

Shinjiro nods firmly and stands up.

"I'll fight. As Ultraman."

Then, a low growl could be heard from the adjacent building below. As Shinjiro leans forward, the helipad on the rooftop of the adjacent building splits apart, and a silver aircraft with red accents rises up.

"The Jet VTOL... it's not a replica, it's the real deal!"

The Jet VTOL, a versatile VTOL aircraft that was once synonymous with the Science Special Search Party. Despite being designed over fifty years ago, it has undergone updates to its engine, armament, avionics, etc., and is still fully operational. While conventional transport helicopters are limited by their rotorcraft nature and take over five hours to reach Shanghai, the Jet VTOL can do it in less than forty minutes.

Tearing through the darkness of the night, the Jet VTOL ascends and swiftly flies off into the western sky as if propelled. Following that, a thunderous roar reminiscent of distant thunder reverberates. It's the sonic boom generated when breaking the sound barrier.

“I’m sorry for being late.”

“Oh, Shinjiro.”

Ide looks at Shinjiro and Daigo, who have returned to the office.

“Yuzare.”

Daigo addresses the girl standing quietly in one corner of the room.

“Let’s stop it this time... the destruction of the world.”

“Yes, Daigo.”

Yuzare nods, then heads to the hangar with Daigo and Shinjiro.

“Ide.”

Just after the three have left, Edo speaks up.

“Have they identified the person who gained the power of that jet-black Ultraman?”

Ide shakes his head.

“Not yet. We’re investigating using every means available.”

“I see...”

Edo sighs and looks back at the screen.

There, still standing atop the black pyramid, is Evil TIGA emitting the Evil Resonance.

In the cargo room of the small beetle heading towards Shanghai, Shinjiro speaks to the silent Daigo sitting beside Yuzare on the additional seats.

“Daigo. Thank you earlier.”

“...”

Daigo nods silently.

“About what we talked earlier, you mentioned there were Ultramen consumed by darkness, right?”

Daigo remains silent.

“Could it be that those three are...?”

Shinjiro's mind was filled with images of Camearra, Hudra, and Darramb he had fought twice before.

“They were once allies of Daigo.”

Yuzare speaks up in place of Daigo.

“They were fighting alongside us against those who sought the power of darkness, trying to stop the ritual that would lead the world to destruction. But in the process, they were seduced by the power of darkness. And they completed the ritual, releasing a huge darkness upon our world.”

“...But.”

Suddenly, Daigo mutters.

“There were comrades who weren't consumed by darkness till the end.”

Daigo says, as if recalling something, then falls silent again.

“It's thanks to them that I'm alive. Their souls... they're still within me.”

“...”

Shinjiro thinks. Surely, what Daigo experienced in his original world must have been incredibly intense and filled with sorrow, far beyond what Shinjiro could imagine now.

The Shanghai Alien Residential Center was hidden deep in the labyrinthine alleys of Nanjing East Road. It was not marked on any map and cleverly concealed

so as not to be visible from above. However, even here, the otherworldly beasts had invaded. Tents and stalls set up by visitors from various planets burned, the collective housing provided by the authorities was destroyed, and flocks of Zoigers fought over the piled corpses of overlapping aliens with their beaks.

“Hmph!”

With a grunt, Darramb ripped off the heavy iron hinges of the door and squeezed into the narrow space that served as an infrastructure inspection port.

“#%\$¥=&@*=”

The man hiding there shouted in an alien language, expressing denial and rejection with gestures. However, unable to withstand the Evil Resonance emitted by Evil TIGA at the top of the pyramid, the man's disguise was exposed. He was an Alien Ruboia.

As Darramb reached out to capture him, the Alien Ruboi's eyeballs rotated, and he disappeared from the spot, instantly reappearing behind Darramb, outside the inspection port. It was the Alien Ruboia's spatial connection ability.

Attempting to escape like a startled hare, the Alien Ruboia found his path blocked by Hudra this time. Once again, the Alien Ruboia attempted to escape through a spatial connection.

“Gah!”

However, gas emitted from the hole in Hudra's right arm, which was lying in wait, rendered the Alien Ruboia unconscious. It seemed to be some kind of tear gas, highly effective against the Alien Ruboia.

Darramb, who had recovered from the nausea, also approached from behind. With the Alien Ruboia unable to even stand up, he was not able to escape.

Blam! Blam! Blam! Blam! Blam!

A fierce barrage of bullets rained down on Darramb and Hudra from above.

“What's the meaning of this?”

As the dust cleared, there stood Moroboshi and Hokuto, both donning Ultraman Suits. Moroboshi held a large-caliber EX rifle in his hands. It seemed they

had descended from the Jet VTOL and landed by punching through the ceiling with the rifle. Indeed, it was the shortest route.

“There seems to be an increase in Ultraman imitations.”

Moroboshi remarked as he looked at Darramb and Hudra clad in dark armor.

“Huh? Aren't these two...”

Hokuto seemed to have realized the identities of the two.

Darramb opened his mask and chuckled.

“What you can do, we can do too.”

“Oh, surprised, aren't you? Didn't expect us to be able to talk?”

Unfazed, Moroboshi replied.

“I'm gonna kill you!”

Hudra accelerated, evading the fist. It was employing hit-and-run tactics, making the most of its agility. Clad in dark armor, its speed was further increased. Despite guarding with the gauntlet, Hokuto was pushed into a defensive position, unable to counterattack.

Hudra's claws closed in on Hokuto's unprotected back. But this time, the claws missed their mark.

Bam! Unexpectedly, Hokuto's fist struck Hudra's face from an unexpected angle. Hudra, caught off guard, accelerated momentarily, searching for Hokuto.

Bam! Once again, a fist drove into its face. Hudra was bewildered by what was happening.

Accelerating further, Hokuto positioned himself behind Hudra, whose thrusters on the gauntlet's side had deployed. He had been using them to accelerate and follow Hudra's movements, consistently since earlier.

“Kyaaaaah!”

With blood boiling in his head, Hudra screamed, pushing its acceleration to the limit.

Surpassing even that, Hokuto circled around to the front of Hudra, crouched down, and delivered an uppercut with full thrusters aimed at its face.

“I’m faster.”

Using his spatial connection ability, the Alien Ruboia continued to flee from shadow to shadow, avoiding the gaze of the Zoigers. He couldn't fathom why he was being targeted or where he should run to escape. He wasn't even sure where he was right now.

His consciousness was becoming hazy. It was the influence of the Evil Resonance.

As he attempted one final spatial connection with all his might, he felt as though he understood his own fate.

He found himself on the bank of the Huangpu River. With the towering black pyramid against the night sky behind him, stood a woman.

“The game of tag is over. Now, let’s go together.”

The woman, Camearra, gestured with her right hand. On her forearm, golden ornaments adorned the black crystal. Clad in armor of darkness that emanated from there, Camearra’s appearance was, succinctly put... beautiful, compared to the two assailants who had attacked him.

Chapter 6 - Resurrection of the Evil God

Receiving the waves of the jet-black pyramid towering even darker than the swirling night sky, a light whip extends smoothly from the right arm of Camerra's armor, emitting a dull gleam. Swinging her hand horizontally, the whip coils around the body of the Alien Ruboia, wrapping around the torso with a mass that is trivial compared to its giant eyeball.

The Alien Ruboia has no strength left to resist. Even before that, it instinctively understood the futility of resistance.

Evil TIGA, standing atop the black pyramid, lowers his raised right arm upon confirming it. Then, it smirks beneath its silver mask, as if even the mask itself is smiling.

"Everything is ready."

In the center of the alien residential area, Moroboshi's Suit, who returned his depleted EX rifle to the mount on his back, reports an anomaly. The Resonance Shammer, which was integrated before this mission, has ceased its protection against Evil TIGA's brain attack.

The assault has ceased. It signifies that the enemy's objective has been achieved and there is no longer a need for attack.

"Hey, hey... VTOL 1!"

Moroboshi's hand stops as he is about to call the Jet VTOL in the sky to confirm the situation. Darramb, who had already lost his human form and was crumpled like crushed aluminum foil, rises up, making creaking sounds, and begins to regenerate.

"...Hey there."

Darramb, who is somewhat distorted, returns to humanoid form and cracks his shoulders with a pop.

In a somewhat distant place, Hudra, whose jaw should have been shattered and whose cervical vertebrae should have been broken, forcibly twisted his wobbly neck between its shoulders as if jamming the head of a broken doll. Its jaw fell off with a clatter, and a long tongue dangled from the jawless throat.

“...So, it's the second round, huh?”

Hokuto readied the Metallium Hammer again.

Moroboshi reached for his Spacium Sword at his waist.

However, Darramb and Hudra scattered in different directions like startled rabbits.

“Leave them, let's go!”

“Huh, aren't we going after them?”

“It's obvious they are trying to buy time. We're not obliged to play along.”

Drawing his sword, Moroboshi cleaved through the rubble blocking the shortest path to the pyramid.

“I sense it. A massive, dark energy wave.”

In the cargo room of the small VTOL heading towards Shanghai, Yuzare murmurs unexpectedly.

“A wave... of darkness...”

Yuzare quietly gazes at Shinjiro, who listens in astonishment.

“It's a bad sign. It's likely that the Alien Ruboia has fallen into their hands.”

“No way...!”

From the moment they left the SSSP base, Yuzare kept her eyes closed, remotely scanning Camearra and the others' movements. She had just sensed the worst vision.

"So, does that mean we're too late? If they open the gate to the other world, this world will..."

"No. Not yet."

Daigo, sitting right beside Yuzare, faces Shinjiro directly as he speaks.

"They've only got a little time left before they unlock the ancient seal inside the pyramid and revive the dark god, Gatanothor."

Yuzare nods in agreement with Daigo's words.

"Indeed. The dark energy is growing stronger. But I also see a faint light that can control it, albeit dimly."

"The light... that controls the darkness."

Shinjiro mutters, and Daigo lightly punches Shinjiro's chest.

"Don't lose hope until the very end. If you give up, it's all over."

".....Yes."

As Shinjiro nods at Daigo's words,

"We're three minutes away from reaching Shanghai."

Upon hearing a voice from the cockpit, Shinjiro focuses his gaze on the scenery visible through the small round window. Through the gaps in the night clouds, he sees the silhouette of Shanghai's skyscrapers in the distance. However, some of them have already been ruthlessly destroyed by Evil TIGA's attacks, enveloped in flames of crimson and black smoke.

And then,

".....!"

Finally, within Shinjiro's field of vision, he sees the towering black pyramid reigning supreme directly above the city.

“...What a massive sight.”

The pyramid he sees in person, compared to what he saw on the SSSP's monitor, emanates an overwhelming sense of dread. Moreover, it is shrouded in malevolent and ominous energy, devoid of any divine or holy aura.

“...Ugh.”

Once again, a vivid vision floods Shinjiro's mind.

A grotesque temple towering in darkness. The writhing shadows of several gigantic beasts. Screams. Wails. Humans being consumed by flames. Overlooking it all with a mocking laugh, ULTRAMAN of the darkness. That was the world where Daigo and the others were. No, it was the future of the world where Shinjiro and the others live. As pillars of flame rise from gigantic eyes, illuminating the darkness, an exceedingly massive figure appears before them...

Beep beep.

Suddenly jolted back to reality, Shinjiro hears the alert warning of danger sounding throughout the cabin.

“Those are...!”

Something massive approaches from the darkness ahead. The Zoigers. Emitting unpleasant cries, the flock of otherworldly beasts immediately surrounds the small VTOL.

“We need to make an emergency landing!”

However, the aircraft is violently shaken by the attack of the Zoigers. With no weaponry, the small VTOL can't fight back, and it's on the verge of crashing.

“Let's go.”

“Right.”

Shinjiro nods to Daigo, then crosses his arms to equip the Ultraman Suit. Almost simultaneously, Daigo also equips the TIGA Suit.

“The Ultraman Suit and TIGA Suit have been transported!”

The voice of an operator echoes in the SSSP’s command room.

Ide and Edo were staring at the situation in Shanghai on the monitor. Through multiple cameras, they see the small VTOL surrounded by the swarm of Zoigers, and in an instant, two dazzling flashes cut through the darkness.

“We’re counting on you, Shinjiro, Daigo.”

Ide murmurs almost like a prayer. On the monitor screen, they see Ultraman and TIGA tearing through the swarm of Zoigers.

On the Bund, across the sea of fire, there is a relatively unaffected green area on the south side of the Lujiazui Peninsula. The small VTOL should be able to land there somehow. Deciding that there's no need to switch to his aerial combat style (Sky Type) as he did during their first encounter, TIGA, having jumped out from the canopy hatch, attracts the swarm of Zoigers and lands on the green area they’re aiming for. Extending the Zeperion Spear, a spear of light, from the gauntlet on his right arm, TIGA sweeps through the Zoigers. The rushing Zoigers explode radially around TIGA, turning the green area into a black stain.

Ultraman wielded the Ultra Slash to secure a route there. With his extensive training, Shinjiro could not only generate the ring of light with his Spacium Core but also control its trajectory to some extent. However, some Zoigers managed to dodge the rings of light. When the lift jets were blocked and the small VTOL had no choice but to fall, TIGA and Ultraman dove under it and supported it at a height of five meters above the ground. They opened the thrusters of their Suits to full throttle, slowing down just enough for a successful soft landing. After confirming the safety of the pilots and Yuzare, the two Ultras exchanged a slight nod before rushing towards the towering black pyramid they were aiming for.

“How long have I waited for this moment...”

Evil TIGA had already landed on the ground.

“From now on, the world will be enveloped in darkness. With the resurrection of the Great Old Ruler...”

Evil TIGA muttered with a sense of relish, his gaze fixed on Ceamarra and her two companions, as well as the Alien Ruboia captured by the light cages.

“Now, let us begin the final ritual.”

As he stared at the slowly approaching Evil TIGA with wide eyes, the Alien Ruboia attempted to escape using his spatial connection ability.

“Didn't you hear?”

With a firm grip, Evil TIGA seizes the Alien Ruboia.

“It's the beginning of the ritual.”

Sharp fingertips dig into the large eyeball.

Eeeeeee! Despite the violent screams, Evil TIGA drags the Alien Ruboia without a care, heading towards the only gate leading into the black pyramid's interior.

“Heh. Looks like we've arrived.”

Ceamarra smiles as she watches Evil TIGA disappear into the pyramid.

Simultaneously, Hudra and Darramb turn to look behind them.

Their gaze falls upon Ultraman and TIGA, standing against the backdrop of the burning city of Shanghai.

“Hey, Daigo. Don't you think it's wonderful?”

Ceamarra gazes at TIGA and murmurs enticingly.

“Together, we will witness the world's destruction once again.”

Daigo and Shinjiro, Ultraman and TIGA, slowly begin to walk forward.

“Ceamarra, this world will not perish.”

Daigo and Shinjiro stride straight further ahead,

“We will protect it, no matter what!”

Grunt! They burst into a sprint and leap high into the air! They chase after Evil TIGA, soaring over Camearra and the others.

“You’re not getting away!”

Camearra’s whip of light, wrapped around Ultraman’s neck from behind, halting his movement.

Hudra circles around in front of TIGA, licking the claws of his right arm with its tongue extending from its jawless throat. From behind, the heavy and unsteady footsteps of Darramb draw near.

“Why do you interfere with the destruction?”

Ignoring Camearra’s words, Ultraman deploys the Spacium Blade hidden in his arm, cutting through the whip entangling his neck. TIGA also extends his Light Sword, preparing for Hudra’s attack. The two naturally lean against each other, poised for action.

“I would also want to avoid wasting time and energy here. But it doesn't seem like they'll let us through easily either.” Daigo said, sensing Shinjiro's impatience.

“I’ll distract them. Go ahead.”

“Alone against three? That's reckless.”

“I'm not alone.”

Before Shinjiro had time to ask the meaning of those words, Darramb rushed forward. Just as he did, a red projectile flew in from the side, knocking Darramb aside right in front of Shinjiro’s nose. The boy with the projectile arm spun around and landed gracefully.

“Hello there. Pizza delivery!”

It was Hokuto.

Clash! Behind them, Moroboshi pierced through Hudra's vulnerable throat and flank with two swings of his Spacium Swords.

"This one's on the house. Keep it."

He flowed Spacium into the blades and pulled them out. Boiling blood droplets and Hudra's screams erupted.

"Hokuto! Mr. Moroboshi!"

"Where's eyeball?"

"They're in there."

In response to Moroboshi's question, Daigo gestures towards the pyramid.

"Now it's four against three, and we'll crush them in seconds and go after them."

Hokuto is talkative like always.

"Four against three? You're wrong."

Crackle, crack. Darramb and Hudra have already recovered and are standing up.

"Four against... roughly around twenty-five thousand, I'd say."

Camearra raises her right hand, holding up the crystal.

From the sky, underground tunnels, and the waters of the Huangpu River, countless Zoigers fly in, crawl out, and creep closer. Some of them were entangled with the remnants of clothing, pitiful victims whose bodies had been taken over, turned into otherworldly beasts. None of the four seemed to have the luxury of conserving energy.

"What's the situation?"

Entering the SSSP command room without any formalities was Shinjiro's father, Shin Hayata.

“Hayata? Why are you wearing the...”

Hayata intervened between Ide and Edo, who looked back at the main screen displaying images from drones and fixed-point cameras.

He saw the devastation of China’s largest economic city, which until just two hours ago was enjoying a prosperous time.

It was hopeless.

No matter how hard the Ultras tried to cut and burn, the otherworldly beasts kept coming up one after another. Trouble was, most of them were not looking to attack. They were assembled to block the gate leading to the inside of the pyramid. They stuck to their own ends, folded over, turned black, and hardened. The thickness of the gate was now more than ten meters, and it was no longer even possible to tell where the gate was.

This is not good. We're running out of time. Shinjiro feels intense panic rising in his chest.

“We have to... somehow, we must get in there!”

As Shinjiro shouts while defeating the Zoigers attacking one after another with the Ultra Slash, another vision floods into his mind. This vision is clearer than ever before.

In the space enveloped by darkness, he sees a grotesque altar. There, a gigantic eye — an Alien Ruboia — is bound as if a sacrifice. That must be inside the black pyramid.

It was as if Shinjiro felt as though he was actually present at that moment. He keenly sensed the fluctuations in the atmosphere surrounding him, even feeling the terror of the Alien Ruboia, who would soon be killed as a sacrifice.

“How can we break into the pyramid under this situation?”

Time was ticking away, and Ide muttered to himself as if he was roaring,

“There's only one way.”

Shin Hayata speaks up in the command room.

“But it's extremely dangerous.”

“...Could that be...”

As Ide realizes what Hayata is implying,

“It's indeed dangerous. There's a high chance he would lose his life.”

Edo says in a dispassionate tone.

“But if he realizes how to do it, he probably won't hesitate to do it.”

At Edo's words, Hayata stares at Ultraman on the monitor and mutters.

“...Shinjiro.”

“...What's this? It feels like someone is calling out to me.”

As Shinjiro is perplexed by the strange sensation in the vision,

“It's resonating. With the will of light.”

“Yuzare...”

Shinjiro senses Yuzare's presence nearby and hears her voice.

“Inside the pyramid, there isn't just the malevolent intent, but also the will of light that sealed the seal — that is, the will of Ultraman.”

“...The will of... Ultraman...”

In the darkness, Shinjiro faintly sees several lights.

“They are now trying to guide you.”

The lights increase in number, and Shinjiro senses and becomes certain of their will.

“...I can go. I am meant to be in this place.”

“Shinjiro’s vital signs are changing drastically! They're exceeding the threshold!”

The operator monitoring the wearer’s condition through the Suit reported.

“It seems he has realized it after all.”

Nodding at Edo's words, Hayata asks Ide,

“Can I talk to Shinjiro?”

“But Hayata—”

“We're running out of time!”

While Shinjiro is busy dealing with the Zoigers, a voice communication reaches his ears.

“Shinjiro.”

“Dad?”

“I’m about to ask you to do the worst thing as a parent.”

“Teleportation, right?”

Teleportation. It's a major technique that Hayata used only once when he merged with Ultraman in the past. During the battle with the Alien Baltan, he instantly moved from Planet R to Earth using his mental power. However, the damage to his mind and body was severe, ultimately drastically shortening Ultraman's lifespan.

Bio-teleportation remains one of the technological frontiers that humanity has yet to explore. Limited substance transfer has been achieved without even mentioning the Ultraman Suit, but this requires precise error correction through numerous markers embedded in the Suit and an external positioning system. There have been no successful cases of biological teleportation. While object teleportation is feasible, vital functions are lost in the process. It is believed that this is due to missing quantum information required for reconstitution at the destination, although the mechanism remains elusive.

Ide believes that the key might lie in the Ultraman Factor. He speculates that the Ultraman factor integrated into the genetic makeup of the Hayata family might compensate for the missing quantum information.

However, this is merely a hypothesis. Experimentation is not feasible. "Knowledge without God creates a wise demon." The thought of sacrificing the lives of dear friends and their beloved child to scientific inquiry sends shivers down his spine. Yet, Hayata is willing to subject his son to this.

Moreover, mere biological teleportation won't suffice this time. It must be teleportation of the entire Ultraman Suit once worn, or else it won't be operable at the destination. Even Shinjiro, who inherits the Ultraman Factor, cannot confront Evil TIGA without the Suit.

"It's okay to refuse, Shinjiro. No one will blame you."

"No, Dad... If I refuse, you're going to do it, aren't you?"

That's correct. In the command room, Hayata was wearing the prototype Suit under his jacket, just like when he fought Bemular and suffered life-threatening injuries to protect Shinjiro.

"Even though those injuries haven't fully healed... You'll end up dead."

"It's better than you dying."

“...I'll do it. I'll do it, Dad. If it's something I can do as a human. It's just a sin to have the ability to do something and not do it.”

Daigo says this to the determined Shinjiro.

“I'm counting on you, Shinjiro. For the future of this world.”

“...Right.”

Seven's double sword intercepted Hudra's claws and Camilla's seeds, Ace's hammer repelled Darramb's charge, and TIGA's lance mowed down the swarm of Zoigers. It was a momentary respite created by Shinjiro's teammates. Shinjiro crossed his arms on his forehead, focusing his mind. With a swift motion of his arms, he simultaneously executed teleportation.

The scene inside the pyramid overlapped with his current surroundings. At this moment, Shinjiro existed in two places simultaneously, and yet he was nowhere.

Consciousness flickered. Hearts stopped. Fingertips froze. Cells, no, the fundamental particles constituting the body, fragmented. Sensations faded. Ego vanished. Dragged from the abyss of suspended thought, Shinjiro opened his eyes. He observed himself. Quantum states stabilized, wave functions converged.

Light, sound, time, life returned.

“Haaah!”

He gasped for oxygen like a survivor emerging from the abyss. He was alive. The Suit was intact.

And before him stood Evil TIGA, observing him with curiosity, and the Alien Ruboia bound to the altar.

“Success! Coordinates detected, connection restored, and vital signs of the wearer confirmed!”

Upon receiving the operator's report, Hayata slumped back onto his seat.

Ide wipes the sweat from his face.

“But the main problem starts here.” Edo says.

“Evil TIGA was born from some kind of energy flowing out of the pyramid. In other words, his power inside the pyramid is unpredictable.”

On the monitor, the footage from inside the pyramid transmitted from the Ultraman Suit shows the eerie figure of Evil TIGA smiling menacingly.

“What brings you here, Ultraman? No, you stupid old humans should be weeded out.”

“It's obvious. I'm here to stop your mad ambitions.”

They close the distance between them.

“To protect the lives of many people, I will defeat you!”

“How amusing!”

Shinjiro extends the Spacium Blades from both arms. However, the light quickly fades away. There's hardly any Spacium left. He's depleted it all in battles against the trio and the otherworldly beasts.

“Out of fuel? You think you can defeat me in that condition?”

“...I will defeat you. That's what Ultraman does!”

Before the altar, the two clash. It's Shinjiro who's sent flying. With that single blow, a dozen alerts signaling damage to the Suit begin to blare. Shinjiro silences all the warning sounds and dives back in. Perhaps not wanting to damage the altar, Evil TIGA refrains from using its beam attacks. Nevertheless, there's a stark difference in power between an adult and a child. Cracks form in Shinjiro's Suit. It won't hold up for long. But Shinjiro has a plan. If the enemy's Suit has the same basic structure...

Seizing a split-second opportunity, Shinjiro dives into close range, placing his palm on Evil TIGA's chest crystal, presumably the energy control core, and

unleashes all the remaining Spacium at point-blank range. Flames erupt from his chest, and Evil TIGA staggers back.

“Alright!”

However, *thump* — just as darkness seems to pulse — his chest immediately repairs itself.

“?!”

“Is that all you've got?!”

Evil TIGA's powerful counterattack sends Ultraman crashing to the ground.

“Behold and witness. At last, the revival is upon us. The one who shall engulf this world in darkness, the great ancient ruler, shall reveal its form!”

As Evil TIGA spreads its arms wide, the floor of the palace, the walls, begin to squirm, emitting an eerie discordant melody. It's an unpleasant and grotesque orchestra accompanied by gravitational waves. Like a conductor wielding a baton, Evil TIGA directs these waves towards the Alien Ruboia, who appears to lose all resistance, squirming in agony, then unleashing a pillar of flames from its eyes with a scream.

Within the flames, its eyeballs rotate at abnormal speeds, pupils dilating.

“Uooooooooohhh!”

The roar, driving those who witness it into madness, echoes, and the fabric of space-time warps.

Beyond the altar, at the heart of the pyramid, something colossal begins to emerge.

It is none other than the monster that once destroyed Daigo's world: Gatanothor.

Chapter 7 - The Final Showdown

Shinjiro, Moroboshi, and Hokuto all saw it at the same time. But no one could describe it. A jet-black pyramid looming over the streets of Shanghai. Emerging as if oozing from its surface, or like a chick breaking out of its shell, it was too immense, too grotesque for them to grasp its entirety from up close.

“Hnnggh?”

One of the operators controlling the camera drone in the command room let out a strange cry and fell from his chair. As everyone looked on in concern, the fallen operator’s eyes rolled back, and his entire body cramped.

“He must have seen its form. It’s not surprising that even Earthlings’ mental strength might not withstand it.”

Upon hearing Edo's analysis which sounded casual, Ide immediately issued instructions.

“No observation in the visible light from now on! Continue observations masked in the infrared and X-ray spectra! Under no circumstances should there be direct visual contact! Relay this to the local combatants and pilots as well!”

“...So it seems that it will come out?”

Hokuto tells Moroboshi as if it were someone else’s concern.

“From here, it might only look like a monster of squid or octopus.”

Despite his words, Moroboshi also felt his entire body shivering. It was likely the same for Hokuto.

“It can't be stopped anymore. The world will perish under the evil god Gatanothor and return to the chaos of the first age!”

Camearra raises her right hand as she speaks. Even through her armor, you can see the joyous smile on her face.

Gatanothor swung its enormous tentacles, likely exceeding 1000 meters. The center of Shanghai, the Jin Mao Tower, and the Shanghai World Financial Center were all swept away at once, colliding with each other and collapsing. Inside the buildings, there should have been many people who were too late to escape or were left behind, trembling in fear of the otherworldly sight, waiting for rescue. With them still inside, the buildings collapsed, raising smoke and splashes of water as if a beach's sand sculpture were being washed away by waves.

“.....!!”

A gust of wind and shock containing rubble from the collapse of a massive mass was approaching them like an avalanche, leaving the Ultramen speechless. There was no time to mourn the deaths they could not save, nor was there room to tremble with anger at the atrocity.

Danger was also closing in on the green area where the small VTOL had crash-landed.

“We're taking off! Fasten your seatbelts!”

Yuzare obeyed silently and looked out of the porthole below.

The city was no longer there. Like a fresco depicting hell, people, the city, and otherworldly beasts were all painted in a deep crimson mixture of flames, screams, blood, and corpses.

“It's like that time.”

Yuzare murmured.

“But this time...”

The whispers of Yuzare echoed in Daigo's ears as he chased after Camearra and the others who had deviated into the sky.

There was no despair in the eyes beneath the silver mask.

...Yes. This time, he's here. Shinjiro Hayata. The one who inherits the light of Ultraman.

“Behold, the power of the great darkness!”

Evil TIGA gazes at the world being destroyed by the ancient ruler, Gatanothor, reflected in the darkness within the pyramid, not hiding their exhilaration as they shout.

“Beautiful! What a beautiful sight, don't you think so?”

Evil TIGA turns around and addresses Shinjiro, who is still lying motionless on the floor as Ultraman — without any reaction from him. Has he exhausted his energy, or...

“Hmph. He's probably dead.”

Evil TIGA, as if losing interest, turns his gaze back to the majestic figure of Gatanothor reflected in the darkness, and mutters to himself without saying a word to anyone.

“It's overwhelming. When this overwhelming darkness envelops the world, everything will end. The foolish humanity will face its demise.”

And then,

“No... It's not over yet.”

A voice echoed from the unmoving Suit. It was Shinjiro's voice.

“...?”

As Evil TIGA turns around, Ultraman slowly rises.

“I won't... let it end!”

With determination, Ultraman — Shinjiro — shouts, and Evil TIGA tilts its head.

“What was that? A death wish?”

Once again, Evil TIGA's immensely heavy punch is unleashed at Ultraman's already cracked face.

Crash! Ultraman — Shinjiro — crosses his arms in front of his face to stop it.

"This is... the final... Uooooohhh!"

Shinjiro stood still, waiting. It was the moment to expend the last of his strength, to confront evil.

The Spacium Core in Ultraman's chest glowed red. The fairing opened, and the heat dissipation plates began to rotate.

"The request for limiter release has been confirmed and authorized!"

A young officer, who had taken the seat as a replacement operator, stiffened and reported as he was brought to the medical room. On one of the monitors, a countdown to the time limit was displayed.

Ide glanced at Hayata.

"Are you okay with this, Hayata?"

"Shinjiro has made his decision. I want to let him do as he pleases until the end."

"...I have to agree."

The fight will last three minutes. That's how the fate of humanity will be determined.

However, Shinjiro was utterly exhausted after teleportation, and the Spacium in the Suit had already been depleted. He had no choice but to face the situation empty-handed. Releasing the limiter would impose even more strain. He had to defeat Evil TIGA and seal Gatanothor within these three minutes. It can be said to be a seriously harsh condition for victory.

Outside the pyramid, the battlefield had shifted to the skies, where three Ultramen continued their relentless battle. Seven perched atop the canopy of the Jet VTOL, Ace unleashed the thrusters on his back and arms, while TIGA changed to Sky Type, repeating attacks to hold back Gatanothor's onslaught as much as possible.

Refusing to allow even that, the trio of darkness danced in the air. Darramb carried the legs of Zoigers, Hudra leaped from Zoiger to Zoiger, and Camearra stood on the back of an especially large Zoiger, wielding her whip.

Gatanothor itself paid no heed to the various entities flying around it, roaring, thrashing, and swinging its tentacles. Its ever-growing mass seemed ready to overflow from the pyramid at any moment.

Meanwhile, Yuzare, inside a small hovering VTOL keeping a distance from the battlefield, silently offered prayers. At least, that's how it appeared to the pilot holding the controls.

Two minutes and thirty-eight seconds left until the time limit.

There was no strategy. Just relentlessly pounding fists, elbows, knees, without giving any opportunity for counterattack. Evil TIGA's armor creaked, shattered, and burst apart, but his regeneration was faster. However, it was Shinjiro who was pushing forward.

One minute and forty-two seconds remaining.

Evil TIGA staggered in the distance. The path to the altar was clear. The Alien Ruboia is engulfed in flames. If they could pull him down from the altar, the ritual would be interrupted, and the resurrection of the evil god would be thwarted.

Amidst the flames, the Alien Ruboia's eyes faintly turned towards them. As if seeking salvation.

—Save everything. Save him. Save the world.

However...

Boom!

At the tip of Shinjiro's outstretched hand, the Alien Ruboia's body exploded into pieces. Evil TIGA had fired a light bullet.

"What are you so surprised about? Did you really think that destroying the altar would stop the ritual? Too bad. The ritual ended long ago, the moment Gatanothor was resurrected!"

One minute and eleven seconds remaining.

As Shinjiro collapsed in shock, Evil TIGA laughed silently behind him.

"Aren't you a masterpiece, Mr. Ultraman? Your splendid rhetoric and valiant actions were all just a one-man show."

"..You bastard!"

Evil TIGA caught Shinjiro's fist with one hand as he turned around.

"Well then, I suppose it's time to get serious."

A light blade extended from the gauntlet on his right arm. The reason he hadn't used energy beams until now was simply for entertainment.

Fifty-four seconds remaining.

The tables had completely turned. Shinjiro was pushed into a defensive position by Evil TIGA's fierce attacks. He managed to avoid fatal injuries, but the Suit, with the limiter released, was in overload, and its armor durability had decreased. Of course, it didn't have the regeneration ability like the Suit of Evil TIGA.

"Twenty-eight seconds remaining!" "Right arm Spacium Blade fully damaged!" "Composite armor on the chest front is compromised!"

Operators shouted one after another. The status display of the Suit was filled with indicators of malfunction or complete shutdown.

"Divert all resources to life support! Shinjiro! Can you hear me, Shinjiro?"

There was no response to Ide's call.

Zero seconds remaining.

Exceeding the time limit for limiter release, the Suit entered the forced cooling phase. At the same time, the blow unleashed by Evil TIGA sent Shinjiro flying. The face guard shattered, exposing his bare face. The Ultraman Suit was no longer an enhanced suit but merely a heavy armor.

“Who are you...?”

Shinjiro, exerting all his strength, asked Evil TIGA as he was slammed into the ground.

“You’re human too, right? Why do you desire for the destruction of this world?”

But Evil TIGA simply stared back at Shinjiro in silence.

“Answer me... Who are you?”

In response, Evil TIGA spoke with cold detachment.

“I am you.”

“...!”

“You should know. Humans seek the power of darkness. The immense power of darkness.”

“Seek... the power of darkness...”

“You see, that woman was the same, wasn't she? Kanae Iwatsubo. The serial killer who became a sacrifice to unlock the final seal.”

Memories of Kanae resurfaced in Shinjiro's mind.

Subjected to brutal bullying since childhood, she lost her humanity within that living hell and began seeking revenge. Eventually, she was consumed by the

power of darkness, becoming a monster from another world and slaughtering many boys and girls. She believed it was her justice.

“Those without power are oppressed, even robbed of their lives. That's the way of the world. So, if you want to survive, you have to gain power. Without Ultraman's power, you're nothing. You can't protect anything. You're just a weak, controlled human. But I have obtained it. Absolute power. The power to change the world itself.”

Evil TIGA looked down at Shinjiro and continued.

“You should come over here too. The world in between is very pleasant.”

“..”

“Uoooooh!”

Gatanothor roared. From the countless holes scattered throughout its shell, black masses were expelled, reminiscent of snail shells. The masses, suspended in the air, expanded and did not reflect any light at all. It was as if holes had opened up in space. The swarm of Zoigers surged towards them.

“What's wrong with VTOL 1?!”

Moroboshi asked the pilot of the Jet VTOL.

“I don't know! The command center is in chaos too!”

The command center was on the verge of panic as they dealt with a flood of incoming calls.

“Incoming call from Paris headquarters” “Emergency contact from the Bolivia branch!” “Abnormal incidents reported at the India branch!”

Reports were coming in from around the world about gravity fluctuations, the appearance of otherworldly monsters, and a surge in crazed individuals.

“What's going on?”

In response to Ide's question, Edo presented his hypothesis.

"Gatanothor exists across various dimensions of time and space. It likely connected geographically adjacent spaces to send in its minions."

Ide ran simulations on the tablet. If the erosion spread from multiple starting points, not just Shanghai, calculations showed that the entire surface of the Earth would be consumed in less than half a day.

"...Connect me to Moroboshi!"

"...Roger."

After ending the call with Ide, Moroboshi called out to Daigo, who was equipped with an earpiece.

"I want to hear about Plan B."

Daigo didn't understand what he meant.

"That girl — Yuzare said it. If we can't stop its resurrection, there might be a way out. It might be time to rely on that."

"So, there's still a chance?"

Hokuto interjected, but Daigo was blunt.

"I refuse."

While fighting Camearra, Daigo kept his eyes on the small VTOL that Yuzare was riding. This communication shouldn't have been audible.

"She has already paid more than enough of a price. I won't let her do something like that again."

In his mind, the words Yuzare prophesied when she first came to this world resurfaced.

...Daigo. In this world, there are those who inherit the light.

...Inherit... the light?

...Yes. That person is the last hope to save this world from destruction. They will eventually cross paths with us.

When Shinjiro first appeared before Daigo in the dark alley, Yuzare immediately discerned that he was someone with the Ultraman Factor.

...But if that person's light is consumed by darkness... this world will also perish.

Camearra's whip of light wraps around TIGA's neck and tightens it.

"Daigo. This time, I'll kill you. With my own hands."

"I believe..."

Daigo severed the whip with his sword of light, then, getting behind Camearra, he tightened his grip around her neck.

"...in his light!"

"...Understood."

After ending the call, Moroboshi prepared another optional equipment, the large rupture sword "Eye Slugger". Ahead, Darramb, his muscles tense, was about to leap, while grabbing onto the legs of the gliding Zoiger.

"Let's create our own chances."

Standing atop the collapsed steel frame of the Jin Mao Tower, Hokuto readied his Metallium Hammer. He deployed the arm's beam generator to form a curved blade, confronting Hudra, who stood on another steel frame.

“Now, speak. Do you desire the power of darkness?”

Evil TIGA extends a hand towards Shinjiro, as if tempting him. But...

“I... am different from you.”

Shinjiro responds sternly, glaring back.

“No. You’re not different.”

Evil TIGA retorts mockingly.

“You know, don't you? How the world where a man named Daigo existed was destroyed.”

“...”

“Yes, in that world, the light of Ultraman arrived, and many warriors fought against the forces of darkness using that power. However, many of them couldn't resist the allure of dark power, turning into warriors of darkness themselves, betraying their comrades and crushing them.”

Indeed, Shinjiro knew about it. No, he had witnessed it firsthand as a nightmare vision. However—

“Come, I’ll say it again. Come over here. Witness the world’s destruction with me.”

Evil TIGA insisted.

“...You’re weak.”

Shinjiro murmurs.

“...What?”

Evil TIGA tilts his head, puzzled by the meaning of those words.

“I said you're weak. That's why you let darkness consume you.”

"Don't you dare!"

Evil TIGA shouts angrily, kicking Shinjiro up.

"I am strong! I am a genius who continues research while also training my body. I am resilient enough to crush you like a baby's hand!"

But Shinjiro stares straight at Evil TIGA again and says this.

"I'm talking about the heart."

"...!"

Shinjiro rises to his feet. He strengthens his wobbling legs and firmly plants them on the ground.

"The truly strong humans are not like you. The truly strong ones are like Daigo and his comrades who fought to the end as beacons of light, never consumed by any deep darkness, to protect someone's life!"

Indeed, Shinjiro had seen it in his vision. The sight of Daigo and his comrades, who never faltered in the face of overwhelming darkness, who never gave up, and who fought to protect until the end.

"Shut up, shut up, shut up, shut up!"

Clearly unsettled, Evil TIGA takes aim with the Zeperion Beam.

"I'll eradicate you from my sight!"

At that moment, Shinjiro, who should have already run out of energy, also takes aim with the Spacium Beam, as if compelled by some invisible but immense force.

"Spacium reaction detected! It's rising!"

From the command room, all they can confirm is the camera footage from Shinjiro's Suit, and that too only in the non-visible spectrum. Shinjiro's own condition can only be inferred from the data. Despite the increasing reaction, the

storage for Spacium remains empty, indicating that the emitter, the device for radiation, is also inactive. In fact, the Suit itself was barely functioning.

“It’s just like last time...”

“There shouldn’t even be enough power left for Spacium, let alone to stand up.”

The observing operator continues.

“The reaction is still increasing, and the enemy is in Zeperion-excited state. At this rate...”

The two interfere with each other and will cause a massive explosion on an unprecedented scale.

“This is energy that could tear apart spacetime. Or perhaps it could even force Gatanothor out of this world.”

Edo said calmly.

“Could it be that Shinjiro is aiming for this...?”

Ide, realizing the implications of what is about to happen, hurriedly gives instructions.

“Evacuate the team members in the area! Search for cover, whether far away or nearby—”

“What about Shinjiro?”

A female operator interjected. Silence fell over everyone.

Hayata spoke up.

“...We have no choice but to believe in him.”

The sudden spike in reaction inside the pyramid was also picked up by the sensors in Moroboshi’s Suits.

“That stupid brat!”

“We have orders to evacuate! Changing course!”

The pilot of the VTOL pushes the control stick forward and pushes the throttle.

The small VTOL hovering away also attempted to depart from the scene.

Yuzare, who had been silently praying, spoke to the pilot.

“...I must go. Please take care.”

When the pilot turned around in surprise, Yuzare’s figure had already vanished.

As Daigo retreated alongside Hokuto, he felt something.

“No, Yuzare!”

A white light emanated from Shinjiro’s right hand, crossed in front of him.

From Evil TIGA’s left arm, a black torrent also erupted.

When the two collided, Shinjiro felt as if time had momentarily stopped.

The air turned into plasma, and sound disappeared. A split second of white silence.

In the fading consciousness, Shinjiro felt as if someone had taken his hand.

“Ugaahhhhhhh!”

The light sphere produced by the interference of Spacium and Zeperion engulfed Evil TIGA, illuminating Shanghai brighter than daylight, turning it into hell. The dark clouds that covered the city dispersed, organic matters charred, and anything tangible was pulverized. The resulting vacuum caused the explosion to reverse, creating an updraft that formed a mushroom cloud, its apex reaching into the stratosphere.

“Daigo. I will make sure you regret this.”

Daigo thought he heard Camearra’s voice saying that, but he couldn't be sure. The Dark Trio disappeared into the flames along with Gatanothor. At the same time, gravity fluctuations around the world vanished, and the otherworldly beasts solidified into black, lifeless forms, succumbing to destruction.

At the epicenter in the Bund area of Huangpu District, a massive crater measuring twenty kilometers in diameter had been gouged out, with seawater from the Yellow Sea flowing in to form the Shanghai Bay. At its center, only a portion of the base of the obsidian-like black pyramid remained, emitting a dull gleam. There were no remnants of Gatanothor, not even a single tentacle in sight. However, thorough investigation would be required to confirm this conclusively.

“Where is Sir Hayata?”

“.....”

As Hokuto and Moroboshi gazed at the traces of the collapsed pyramid, Moroboshi muttered.

“What's that?”

Wrapped in a beautiful light, the unconscious body of Shinjiro emerged from the smoke.

“Yuzare...”

In that light, Daigo saw her. The figure of Yuzare, who had saved Shinjiro, was visible.

Her body seemed to be on the verge of disappearing.

“You used that power... to save Shinjiro?”

“This is goodbye, Daigo.”

Yuzare entrusted Shinjiro to Daigo and she smiled gently.

“Please don't be sad. Because of this, the world has been saved.”

“.....”

Under Daigo's watchful gaze, Yuzare turned into particles of light and disappeared.

“.....Ugh.”

Shinjiro regained consciousness.

In the sky, where mushroom clouds were rising, the morning sun began to shine. It was dawn.

And thus the battle came to an end.

The evil god vanished, and the world's destruction was averted.

However, the sacrifices were too great and too heavy.

Shanghai, annihilated. Estimated casualties and missing persons, over 20 million. Economic losses are incalculable.

Shanghai Bay was closed off under the guise of investigation and quarantine, and all approaches by sea and air were prohibited.

—*Several weeks later.*

Clang. Suddenly, a metallic sound echoed in the darkness.

In a dimly lit place resembling a warehouse, lined with racks containing various equipment, “it” awoke.

However, “it” remained silent.

Without a word, “it” began to touch its own body and face with its hands, tracing its movements slowly as if confirming its own existence.

Eventually, as if having made a decision, “it” stood up and started to walk. At that moment, the sound of a door opening and lights turning on could be heard. A man in a white coat, holding a tablet, entered the room humming a tune.

“!?”

In the next instant, the man screamed and scrambled out of the room.

Left behind, “it” stood there, looking perplexed.

Its attire resembled armor, with some characters engraved on its surface.

The characters could be read as “Ultraman Suit Ver 0.”

Afterword

This novel is another story depicting mysterious incidents and the activities of the SSSP team led by Shinjiro in a world that branches off from the original, based on the world view of the manga "ULTRAMAN" made by Eiichi Shimizu and Tomohiro Shimoguchi. The original story mainly features the Showa-era Ultra Warriors acting as life-size suits, but in this novel, the suit of Tiga, the flagship character of the Heisei Ultraman series, appears. Wearing that suit and battling terrifying monsters from another dimension is none other than Daigo.

However, his personality and background are different from the television version. He is Daigo living in the world of ULTRAMAN. Yuzare also appears alongside Daigo. Surprisingly, she is a 7 or 8-year-old girl. This idea came from Akira Tanizaki, who co-wrote this novel in tandem. Tanizaki provided much of the scientific verification, settings, battle scenes, and more. Additionally, in this novel, as mysterious enemies who corner Tiga, Evil Tiga appears, and furthermore, the three ancient warriors, including Camearra, also make an appearance. Their characters are also uniquely set within this novel.

There are many aspects that differ from the television version, but I intended to preserve the essence of the work called "Tiga" and write it as a character inheriting that light. It is my earnest wish that many Tiga fans who have picked up this novel will also enjoy it. By the way, this work is a compilation of a serialized novel published in Monthly Hobby Japan, but currently, in the ongoing series, Ultraman Zero is also active as a life-size suit following Tiga. I would be delighted if you could also read that.

Keiichi Hasegawa
October 2020

Hello! This is Shimizu and Shimoguchi speaking. We sincerely appreciate your purchase of "Ultraman Suit Another Universe." How was it? Wasn't it incredibly enjoyable?

Of course! We ourselves eagerly anticipate each new episode every month and can't help but feel a pang of jealousy at how entertaining they are! It's truly, incredibly enjoyable!

We apologize for the lack of vocabulary to express how entertaining it is, but it's just too good!

We took a shot in the dark and conveyed to Tsuburaya Productions, “We would be so happy if Mr. Hasegawa wrote for us,” and unbelievably, Mr. Hasegawa ended up writing for us!

And not only that, it has become a single book like this! Yes, without a doubt, we are now savoring happiness...

Our hope is that everyone who picks up this book will find happiness as well.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Eiichi Shimizu × Tomohiro Shimoguchi
November 2020

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