



# YOTSUGI SNOW DOME

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TRANSLATION: POLARIS TRANSLATIONS

The corpse doll known as Ononoki Yotsugi had become a freeloader in my house, the Araragi household, so for the sake of strengthening our friendship, on a certain Sunday, I decided to build a *kamakura* snow hut.<sup>278</sup> It's possible that you might come to a misunderstanding after taking into account my exceptional capabilities, but no, I wasn't particularly trying to establish a shogunate in the Kanagawa Prefecture...<sup>279</sup> I meant that I was going about diligently building a hemispherical dwelling out of the snow that had piled up at Namishiro Park (which I still didn't know the proper reading of).

If I had the strength of a vampire, this would be a simple bit of light labor (though I figured opinions would be divided on if any labor could be called "light"), but unfortunately, these days I'd fallen under the

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<sup>278</sup> A *kamakura* (かまくら) is a type of traditional dome-shaped hut made out of snow.

<sup>279</sup> Referring to the Kamakura shogunate, which was located in what is now the Kanagawa Prefecture.

circumstances in which I couldn't use such supernatural powers for my own convenience. I had no choice but to build the *kamakura* with the strength of a human and the knowledge of a human, using the arms and legs of a human... Obviously, I couldn't ask Shinobu for help, either. This was some wining and dining I would have to perform in secret, while Shinobu, who had poor chemistry with Ononoki-chan, was still asleep.

How shady of me.

If it were possible, I would have liked to bring some heavy machinery, but partly due to budget constraints, I was able to make do with a single shovel. In the center of the first *kamakura* I'd made in a while, I placed a *shichirin* grill,<sup>280</sup> and after preparing some ice cream and frozen drinks, my preparations were done.

What do you think?

It was the first time making one of these since I'd been on good terms with my younger sisters, but I wanted to say it had come out looking pretty good... And so, I put a blindfold on my guest, Ononoki-chan, and brought her from my home to this guest house.

Or, I suppose, this snow dome.

"Isn't 'snow dome' not the English translation of *kamakura*? Oni-no-onii-chan, with that level of English, it seems like you'll be hopeless for entrance exams,"

said Ononoki-chan, scathingly.

Perhaps it was because I had blindfolded her while bringing her here.

"Visually, it looks too much like a crime. To blindfold a tween girl and drag her off into a deserted park. I might carry around onee-chan in unusual ways, but don't start surpassing that quirkiness so easily."

"Oh, don't get so mad. This is supposed to be a welcome party for you, after all."

"Welcome party? This guy's hilarious,"

said Ononoki-chan, without so much as a smile.

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<sup>280</sup> A *shichirin* (七輪, lit. "seven wheels") is a small charcoal grill.

Well, she was a corpse doll, so her expression wouldn't even waver... She was a dead being, and her facial muscles were dead, too. Even though she might appear to be angry, it was possible she wasn't actually in that bad of a mood.

"I see. It's true that, because I'm a corpse, I like cold temperatures, and I like ice cream. But there's no need to be so eager to please. I don't have anything like a mood."<sup>281</sup>

I don't have emotions or feelings, or even a heart.

So said Ononoki-chan as she sat down on the snow chair (I didn't know if such a term existed, but basically it was snow packed into a square shape) inside the *kamakura*, reaching for the various kinds of ice cream I'd prepared.

Though she could only eat one kind at a time, she was quite dextrous to secure the second candidate in advance.

Thank goodness. That had to mean she didn't hate me so much that she wasn't going to touch the food and drink I prepared.

"I'm not going to hate you. Like I said, I don't have any emotions. No matter what kind of person you are. Even if you're the worst person in the world. Or even if you're the best person in the world."

"The best person in the world usually doesn't end up hated, right?"

"I'm sure you know that that's not the case, oni-i-chan, and of course, I won't come to like someone just because they're the best person in the world."

That sounded even more distressing.

Being unable to think of good things as good, being unable to like someone that you like, being unable to think of interesting things as interesting... Well, I'd had first-hand experience with those twisted feelings up until spring break, though.

Well, it wasn't like she could feel the emotion of distress.

Not in her case.

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<sup>281</sup> Pun between 機嫌 (*kigen*, "mood") and 機嫌取り (*kigen-tori*, "eager to please").

It could even be that she was simply eating the ice cream and frozen drinks reflexively because they were in front of her, and she wasn't actually deriving joy from it.

"There's no need to worry. I won't be blowing away the Araragi household like I've done in the past."

"..."

"This time, my duty is ultimately to keep watch. Whether you pander to me or not, I won't be using 'Unlimited Rulebook' gratuitously... I plan on devoting myself to being Araragi Tsukihi's stuffed doll to the very end. So your concerns are needless... Or rather, your concerns are pointless."

For you, oni-i-chan, who can no longer become a vampire, I may seem like a concentration of violence that you have no choice but to bend the knee to, but even if you bribe me with these, there's no chance of it affecting my judgment or conduct—said Ononoki-chan, licking away at the bottom of the cap of the ice cream pint.

I was impressed that she could say such a long line while sticking her tongue out, but on the other hand, I couldn't help but feel anxious in a way, knowing that the absence of emotions did not necessarily mean that her decisions were always correct—there was a possibility that, due to a miscalculation, I would end up brutally murdered.

Toiling away at building a *kamakura*, borrowing a *shichirin* grill from Kanbaru's room (her room was a black hole, so it contained most things), and preparing ice cream and frozen drinks... Of course, those were indeed all for the sake of buttering up Ononoki-chan—but they were not for the sake of my personal safety.

Ultimately, there was nothing I could do about whatever happened to someone like me—I would have to accept whatever the punishment was for abusing vampiric powers up until now. If she was going to keep watch over me, then I could even say that was more convenient for me. I might have even gone out of my way to ask for it.

However, what were the thoughts of the one watching me?

And this was right after going through all that with Teori Tadatsuru—I figured it would feel like agony to be stuck watching a worthless loser like

me, so I planned this show of hospitality for the bare minimum of repaying her. But it seemed that I was the one that was off-base here.

Regardless of the thoughts of the one watching me.

Or, regardless of the thoughts of this executioner—she had no thoughts at all.

“However, my girlfriend had once been living her life having lost those ‘thoughts’, too. So that’s why I just can’t leave you alone. A corpse like you.”

“Pervert.”

I think I’m learning the feeling of being in danger, said the tween girl in a tone of voice that was below freezing. But even if she was telling a joke as loose as powder snow, it seemed to me that getting her to say that she was learning a new feeling was an accomplishment of sorts.

Well.

I suppose that was where we were at for now.

I could only pray that our relationship didn’t turn ice-cold.

“It seems like we’ll be together for a long time, so I’ll make sure you can freeload without rotting away, Ononoki-chan.”

Even if we weren’t inside the *kamakura*, it was a chillingly bad joke<sup>282</sup>—but I said it anyway, with a dashing look.

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<sup>282</sup> 寒い (samui) means “cold”, but it can also mean “lame” (as in a bad joke).