

Subaru's mind was invited to the land ruled by the black shadow once more.

There was nothing. Only his consciousness seemed to hover in space. Subaru dimly realized that he existed.

There was no one. There was nothing. Nothing began. Nothing ended. It was a world of no being at all.

Subaru felt like he had been cast into the sea at night. He let his mind float with the fickle sensation.

Abruptly, a change came over the world of darkness. In front, directly ahead of Subaru's mind, someone stood.

The shadow grew vertically. Before he knew it, a human silhouette stood before Subaru.

He couldn't see its face. The shape was indistinct. But he vaguely thought that it had the shape of a woman.

The shadow wavered and slowly reached out a hand. For some reason, when her fingers gently grazed his mind, Subaru wanted to weep. The wave of strange emotion washing over him suggested that he had always been waiting for her to do so.

He had an instinctive desire for the wriggling shadow to embrace him, to swallow him whole—and then it stopped. Something had stopped it.

Subaru's mind realized that there was another shadow, its white fingers embracing him from behind.

Her touch felt soft, and not just warm but hot. The instant Subaru felt that heat, the shadow before him rapidly faded away.

He faced his front. His heart trembled. He shouted ferociously. But the world of nothingness had no sound.

He was left behind as the shadow became distant, fading, fading away.

Finally, the shadow serenely stretched her fingers out toward Subaru, who was nearly in tears.

“—ve you.”

Even the words he could not hear faded, and the world fell apart.