

Memories
of a
Full Moon

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GEKKOU

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Foreword

GEKKOU (a Japanese name meaning ‘Moonlight’) is the pseudonym of Chris Kaipo Quintos van Kampen (born in The Philippines on the 15th of April, 1997).

He is proud to present to you ‘*Memories of a Full Moon*’, his first light novel which he has written in no less than 8 months.

The inspiration to write ‘*Memories of a Full Moon*’ came from *GEKKOU*’s desire to bring his imagination alive on paper, and the will to show others how vivid the imagination of people can be at a young age.

‘I’m sure that many people, just like you and me, when they were still children, made up their own stories using their imagination. But once they grew up, ‘fantasy’ had to give way to ‘facts’. And if a person still had a bit of ‘fantasy’ left in his or her mind, it would be called a ‘perversity’. One cannot express him- or herself anymore without being put to shame. And I find that very regrettable. Therefore, I’d like to give you a story which is everything but a ‘perversity’. Enjoy it.’

-C.K.Q. van Kampen

Translation notes

Since the story is set in Japan, and the characters are of Japanese origin, there is an excessive use of so called ‘honorifics’. Used in Japan, as well as in North-Korea, South-Korea and China, honorifics express one’s relation to or one’s respect towards another person in daily life.

Honorifics are suffixes that are evidently placed behind one’s name. The most common, and the most internationally known honorific, ‘-san’, means Mr., Mrs. or Miss in English. You use ‘-san’ mostly for people you don’t know or are older than you. For example, you work in Japan and your boss’ last name is Saito. If you speak to him, or write to him, or even talk about him in another one’s presence, you address him as ‘Saito-san’. This honorific is also the safest to use in order to prevent being rude. Because, bluntly not using an honorific or using a wrong honorific is considered as inappropriate, and sometimes even as an insult.

List of honorifics used in ‘*Memories of a Full Moon*’:

‘**-san**’ /*sah-n/*

This honorific can be used between equals of any age. ‘-san’ is also used by school students to address their female friends, classmates and underclassmen.

‘**-kun**’ /*koo-n/*

This honorific is commonly used towards male friends, classmates, underclassman or males who are of junior status towards you in general.

‘**-chan**’ /*chah-n/*

Only used towards people, friends and animals that are considered cute or endearing by the speaker. Used towards persons of senior status is considered rude.

‘**Oneechan**’ /*Oh-neh-eh-chah-n/*

Literally means ‘big sister’. It can be used by young siblings to address their own older sister, or a non-related young lady. Names are not used.

‘**Oneesan**’ /*Oh-neh-eh-sah-n/*

A more polite and mature version of ‘Oneechan’.

‘-neechan’ /neh-eh-chah-n/

This honorific is also used to address older sisters or young ladies, but always in combination with their names, just like with other honorifics.

‘-niichan’ /nee-chah-n/

This is the male variant of ‘-neechan’, used towards older brothers or young men. Obviously, that means that ‘Oniichan’ is the opposite of ‘Oneechan.’

Not using an honorific

Dropping the honorific while talking to someone is only done by people who have a very close relationship with each other, like married couples, family, or very close friends.

‘-hime’ /hee-meh/

‘Hime’, which means ‘princess’, is a noun that can be used as an honorific, although it official is not considered as one. It is often used to address women and girls of royal descent. It can also be used as a form of admiration towards someone.

And because of the character, city and building names being Japanese, it may be difficult to pronounce them. So here is a list on how to pronounce every single one of them:

Characters (in order of appearance):



Kyohei Shinka	<i>Kyoh-heh-ee Shee-n-kah</i>
Shizumi Shinka	<i>Shee-zoo-mee Shee-n-kah</i>
Ayako Jogokoro	<i>Ah-yah-koh Joh-goh-koh-roh</i>
Sasa Jogokoro	<i>Sah-sah Joh-goh-koh-roh</i>
Yuma Atsuki	<i>Yoo-mah Ah-tsoo-kee</i>
Itsuhiko Odomo	<i>Ee-tsoo-hee-koh Oh-doh-moh</i>
Mamoru Genkure	<i>Mah-moh-roo Geh-n-koo-reh</i>
Chisaho Meitama	<i>Chee-sah-hoh Meh-ee-tah-mah</i>



Buildings (in order of appearance):

Amayagami (High)	<i>Ah-mah-yah-gah-mee</i>
Shinjuku (Apartment Complex)	<i>Shee-n-joo-koo</i>

Cities (in order of mentioning):



Kobe	<i>Koh-beh</i>
Myowan	<i>Myoh-wa-n</i>

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 **Memories of a Full Moon** 

CHAPTER ONE

帰郷 *Homecoming*

Saturday, 9:30 am. It was a quiet and ordinary morning in the town of Myowan, a fairly big, but unknown coastal town in Japan. The train from Kobe arrived exactly on time at the Myowan Train Station. The doors opened slowly with a hiss, and people inside started getting out of the train. Most of them were tourists and travelers wanting to escape society. But that did not count for everyone. Unlike on a regular Saturday, a peculiar duo exited the train.

Just as one of the doors wanted to close again, it got blocked by a wheelchair. One of the conductors present noticed it and called for help while he tried to open the door. It was only with a push on the emergency button that the door could be opened again. The conductor then turned to the person sitting in the wheelchair and apologized for the incident. The one sitting in the

wheelchair was a pale-looking girl dressed in a long, black dress. She also had two long braids in her dark blue hair. A leather travel bag was lying on her lap. She just smiled weakly at the conductor and said it wasn't a bother to her. The black-haired boy with dark blue eyes pushing the wheelchair, however, was furious. With wild gestures, he expressed his discontentment about the inattention of the conductor, who then apologized again and asked for forgiveness in the name of the train company. The boy just looked angrily at him and pushed the wheelchair towards the exit, dragging his suitcase behind him.

Once outside, the girl in the wheelchair turned around to the boy and said:

‘That wasn't really nice of you, Kyohei. You didn't need to be angry with that man.’

The boy, Kyohei Shinka, sighed.

‘I'm sorry, Oneesan. But you know how I am. I'm always afraid you might get hurt.’

The girl, Shizumi, Kyohei's older sister, sat back in the wheelchair, facing forward. Another smile formed on her face with sunken cheeks.

‘How many times have I told you not to worry about me? I'm not that weak, you know.’

Kyohei patted her head when she said that. To Shizumi, this has always been a sign of his brotherly affection

towards her.

‘That’s true. You’re very strong, mentally. But physically, you’re as vulnerable as a flower petal.’

Shizumi knew he was right, so she kept quiet and held on to her bag on her lap as they walked through a tranquil road with blooming cherry trees on each side of the road.

Kyohei and Shizumi were searching for their elderly home which they left four years ago after they got into a tragic car accident.

One day, they and their parents were driving along the cliffs of Myowan. At some point, their father abruptly swerved the car, with terrible consequences! The car went through the guard rail and drove straight into the sea! A policeman who was driving a few meters behind them saw the accident and quickly called for help through his radio. When the rescue services arrived, they found Shizumi and Kyohei both lying unconscious on a rock close to where the car hit the water. There were no signs of their parents or the car.

After a long stay in a hospital, they moved in with a close aunt, who loved them like they were her own children. After a while, Shizumi became seriously ill. She was diagnosed with a severe case of pneumonia, combined with myasthenia and anemia. Her condition would not improve with whatever medication doctors

gave her. Doctors said there might not be a cure at all! Kyohei and his aunt were devastated with the bad news, but Shizumi kept her head high and was ready to overcome whatever other difficulties she might have to face.

From then on, because of her muscles which had become very weak, Shizumi spent most of her time in a bed and had to sit in a wheelchair in order to move around.

As expected, her condition did not improve at all. And what was worse, her aunt was diagnosed with cancer and died two years later. She left Kyohei and Shizumi just enough money to pay for life necessities, Shizumi's medicines and Kyohei's education. Kyohei was turning 15, just graduated from middle school and about to attend high school. He chose to attend the local high school in Myowan, which was the reason to return to their hometown.

Their house became more and more visible when Kyohei pushed Shizumi up the hill. She held her hand above her eyes as she stared at the houses they passed.

'I think I can see our house.'

She said, and pointed towards an old house. Kyohei got excited, and pushed the wheelchair faster now and did not stop until they reached the front gate. The house looked dirty and could really use a makeover, but it still

had the same cozy atmosphere like before they left. Kyohei reached for one of the keys in his pocket and inserted it into the rusty keyhole of the gate. Just before he wanted to turn it, he noticed they were being watched by a girl with short, hazelnut brown hair, dressed in a jersey and a short skirt, and who was standing at the neighbor's house. She was carrying groceries and looked at them with green and curious eyes. Kyohei stared back curiously at the girl.

‘Kyohei...and Shizumi-san?’

The girl asked as she approached them. It took some time before Kyohei realized who she was.

‘Is that you, Ayako? Ayako...Jogokoro?’

Ayako nodded. She had been a neighbor and a friend of Kyohei and Shizumi since kindergarten. But they had never seen each other again after Kyohei and Shizumi left Myowan.

Ayako dropped her groceries and hugged them tightly.

‘You came back! I always knew you would come back!’ Shizumi smiled and said to Ayako:

‘You’ve grown, Ayako-chan. I still remember when you were a little girl. But now you’ve changed into a beautiful teenage girl.’

Ayako blushed.

‘Thank you, Shizumi-san. You and Kyohei have also changed a lot. But what happened to you? Why are you in a wheelchair? Are you injured?’

*'You came back!
I always knew you would come back!'*



Shizumi was hesitant to reply, so Kyohei did it for her.

‘She’s ill, Ayako. Severely ill. That’s why she’s in a wheelchair. And there’s no cure for it.’

Ayako gasped and said almost to a whisper:

‘I’m so sorry...’

Shizumi reached out her hand and took one of Ayako’s. Ayako felt that Shizumi’s fingers were skinny and rough at the same time.

‘You don’t have to be sorry, Ayako-chan.’

Shizumi smiled.

‘It doesn’t hurt. And besides, I am still thinking positively.’

Reassured, Ayako picked up her groceries again and smiled widely.

‘I’m so happy that you two have returned. I will bring these bags home, and then I’ll visit you. Is that okay?’

‘Sure!’

Kyohei answered, and Ayako disappeared. Kyohei opened the gate and pushed Shizumi towards the front door. He took another key out of his pocket and opened the creaky door. Thick dust flew around in all directions the moment the door opened. Kyohei coughed and backed away.

‘Oh, man! I think we need to clean up in there!’

He exclaimed. Shizumi laughed, went inside and immediately vanished from Kyohei’s sight.

‘Hey, Oneesan! Be careful!’

He shouted as he ran after her into the house. Upon entering the living room, he saw her looking at the furniture. It was quite dark inside the house, so Kyohei was surprised that Shizumi found her way into the room.

‘It’s exactly the way it was before we left...’

She said. Kyohei opened the dusty curtains, and sunlight shone on the wrinkled couch on the big carpet, the dining table opposite of it and an old clock which had stopped working for a long time. A feeling of nostalgia overwhelmed Shizumi and Kyohei as they picked up all of their old stuff.

Kyohei was excited to see his old room again and headed upstairs, leaving Shizumi alone. Shizumi noticed his absence and headed for the stairs. She called out to him, but her weak voice did not reach Kyohei’s ears. She then decided to try to climb the stairs herself and pushed her wheelchair exactly in front of the first step. With much effort, she managed to stand up and grab the railing. Carefully, she put her foot on the first step, followed by her other one and continued with the second step. But the higher she came, the more exhausting it became for her. It was too late now to realize it was a very bad idea to go up the stairs by herself. Her anemia just wouldn’t let her.

‘*Bad idea...*’

Those were her last thoughts when black spots appeared in front of her eyes before losing consciousness.

After having done her groceries, Ayako wanted to leave again. She told her parents and her 7-year-old little sister Sasa that Shizumi and Kyohei had returned. Sasa insisted to also come with Ayako because she was very close to Shizumi in the past and really wanted to see her too.

When Ayako and Sasa reached the house, they noticed that the front door was left open. Ayako shook her head in frustration because she thought that Kyohei was being reckless again. She pushed the door wide open and wanted to call out to him, but instead she was shocked at what she saw. Shizumi was lying unconsciously at the bottom of the stairs, as pale as a corpse, and Kyohei was nowhere to be found!

‘Shizumi-san!’

Ayako yelled and ran towards her. Sasa, who did not understand the situation, also kneeled next to Shizumi.

‘Aww! Why is Shizumi-nee-chan sleeping? Isn’t she happy to see us?’

Sasa asked Ayako innocently, but she ignored her.

‘Kyohei! Kyohei! Your sister is not well!’

Ayako yelled. Her voice was strong enough to reach him, and he immediately rushed downstairs after he heard her.

‘Oh, no. Not again, Oneesan!’

He said as he picked her up and carried her upstairs to his room. There, he laid her on his bed.

While he was busy, Ayako prepared a moist towel and gave it to Kyohei, who placed it on Shizumi's forehead.

'Thanks, Ayako. That's very thoughtful of you.'

'Don't mention it. I'm used to nursing sick people.'

Sasa, who followed them upstairs, nodded and laughed.

'Yes, that's true! Oneechan always takes care of me when I catch a cold because I played outside in the rain without wearing a coat!'

Her innocent honesty was so adorable, it made Kyohei and Ayako burst out into laughter.

Ayako turned serious again after wiping away a tear and asked:

'Anyway, why did Shizumi-san collapse? Does she suffer from strokes or something?'

'No, she doesn't.'

Kyohei answered. He sat beside Shizumi on the bed and took hold of her hand.

'I've forbidden her to do things that require strength, like climbing stairs, on her own. She always has to be accompanied by someone; otherwise she won't be able to get somewhere. But she's so stubborn sometimes! She must have tried to follow me upstairs. So it was also my fault that she fell. I was longing to see my room so I kinda forgot about her. I never should have left her alone.'

Ayako, touched by Kyohei's story, took his free hand and gently squeezed it.

‘You must have gone through tough times, Kyohei. Firstly, your parents died, and now your sister is sick. I’m impressed that you managed it this far.’

Kyohei looked at her and smiled. Surprised by the sudden smile, Ayako blushed and averted her gaze. Sasa approached Ayako and pressed her forehead against hers. Kyohei looked strangely at them.

‘What are you doing, Sasa-chan?’ he asked.

‘I’m checking Oneechan’s temperature, because she’s all red. I think she has a fever.’

Ayako laughed and swiped her hair to the side.

‘I’m not sick, Sasa-chan. I’m completely fine!’

She said reassuringly to Sasa. Sasa then hugged her tightly and pointed at Shizumi.

‘Shizumi-nee-chan is awake!’

Kyohei turned to her and removed the towel on her head. She blinked a few times and then looked around.

‘What happened?’

She asked slowly. Kyohei stroked her hair and kissed her forehead.

‘You fell down the stairs, Oneesan. Ayako and Sasa-chan found you lying on the floor. It was my fault. I left you alone.’

Shizumi sat up, supported by Kyohei’s and Ayako’s arms. She placed her hand on Kyohei’s shoulder.

‘It was also my fault. Even though you told me not to do things on my own, I was too stubborn to listen. But

you don't have to worry now. I'm not feeling pain anywhere.'

Suddenly, her eye fell on a tall object, covered with an old blanket, standing at the room's window. Kyohei noticed it as well and stood up from the bed in order to inspect it. When he removed the blanket, a telescope on a tripod was revealed. He chuckled when he saw it.

'It's my old telescope.'

Ayako also stood up and came closer.

'I remember this thing. You used to look at the moon through this every day.'

Kyohei looked around the room in search for an object. He found it lying on top of a pile of books on his desk. It was a diary which had '*Memories of a Full Moon*' written on it. He opened it and smiled. Ayako took it out of his hands.

Upon inspecting it, she smiled as well.

'I remember I used to draw and write in that diary too, every time I looked at the moon through my telescope.' He said as he pointed at one of the first and flawed drawings. It showed a full moon with clouds on each side and the sea underneath. Every drawing on the other pages was exactly the same, only the drawing technique differed.

'Yep, the moon here in Myowan is very mysterious. It stays full every day. Many people believed that the gods have blessed Myowan with eternal moonlight. Everyone

was really amazed. But eventually, they got used to it and went back to living their own boring lives. But you never got enough of it.’

Ayako said. Kyohei took his diary back.

‘I know. There was just something so enchanting about it. I just had to keep watching every day.’

Then, he sadly placed the diary back on the desk.

‘But I guess it’s long gone now. Miracles don’t stay forever.’

Ayako shook her head.

‘No, it’s not gone. It never disappeared. It’s still there.’ Kyohei’s face brightened after hearing that, just like Ayako wanted. He opened the window and looked at the horizon.

‘It’s still there...’ he said softly and smiled.

The rest of the day, Ayako and Sasa helped Kyohei with cleaning and rearranging the house and buying groceries to make dinner. Even when Kyohei thanked Ayako for her help and said she could go, she stayed.

‘I decided that I want to help you every day with the cooking and the household, Kyohei. You won’t be standing alone now.’

Kyohei opposed to it, but Ayako insisted. They kept arguing about this subject for a while, but ultimately, Kyohei gave up. He understood later that Ayako wanted to make up for the time they had not been

together.

After dinner, they chatted and played games together until Ayako and Sasa decided to go home. They said their goodbyes and promised that they would see each other the next day. Kyohei and Shizumi waved at them at the front door. However, at the front gate, Ayako stopped.

‘Oneechan, what’s wrong?’

Sasa asked when she noticed that Ayako did not follow her.

‘Go home, Sasa-chan. I’ll be right there. I have to do something first.’

Sasa obeyed her and went on. Ayako ran back towards Kyohei. Shizumi had already gone inside, but watched them through the window.

‘Hmm? Did you forget something, Ayako?’

Kyohei asked her. She didn’t answer. Instead, she threw her arms around him and did not let go for a long time. Kyohei turned red and froze.

‘Welcome home, Kyohei.’

Ayako whispered in his ear and kissed his cheek.

Then she turned around and left without looking over her shoulder. He was left speechless as he touched his cheek where Ayako had kissed him.

‘Aren’t you coming inside?’

He got startled by Shizumi’s voice. He went inside, still touching his cheek. Shizumi was looking at him with a

gleeful expression on her face. Kyohei frowned.

‘What are you looking at?’

Shizumi just kept smiling at him. Without saying anything, she went to the stairs and held her arms out to Kyohei. She wanted to be carried upstairs by him.

‘I’m not allowed to climb stairs alone, am I now?’

She said to him when she saw his sour face. Kyohei carried Shizumi to the bedroom next to his. It belonged to their parents, but Kyohei and Ayako rebuilt it for Shizumi so that Kyohei could reach her quicker in case of an emergency.

Kyohei prepared Shizumi for bed: that included dressing her up in her night gown, brushing her teeth and giving her medicine. Just before Kyohei wanted to leave her room after wishing her a goodnight, Shizumi mentioned Ayako.

‘Keep being friends with Ayako-chan, alright? She’s such a kindhearted girl!’

Kyohei wanted to say something back, but couldn’t find the words for it, so he wished her goodnight again and entered his own room.

Kyohei didn’t go to bed just yet. Instead, he opened his window and looked outside. Just like Ayako said, the full moon was still there. Its bright light shone on Kyohei’s face. He fetched his telescope and the ‘*Memories of a Full Moon*’. He wrote down today’s date and looked through the telescope.