Hi, I’m Gotouge. Lately, I’ve been eating a lot of Chinese onions. What have you been eating? Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for the continuous support through letters and gifts. I apologize for not responding to any of them yet. Please wait a little longer for my response to each and every one of you. (Tears) I want to say “Baby potter anzun,” almond. Keep moving forward, baby potter anzun. I’ll work hard!
THE PATH OF OPENING
A STEADFAST HEART

KOYOHARU GOTOUGE
In Taisho-era Japan, young Tanjiro makes a living selling charcoal. One day, demons kill his family and turn his younger sister Nezuko into a demon. Tanjiro and Nezuko set out to find a way to return Nezuko to human form and defeat Kibutsuji, the demon who killed their family!

After joining the Demon Slayer Corps, Tanjiro meets Tamayo and Yushiro—demons who oppose Kibutsuji—who provide a clue to how Nezuko may be turned back into a human.

Nezuko finally manifests the ability to withstand sunlight, so Kibutsuji comes for her and attacks Ubuyashiki Mansion. The Demon Slayers plunge into Infinity Castle and defeat the Upper Rank 2 and 3 demons—but not without losses of their own. Then Himejima and Shinazugawa, the Wind and Stone Hashiras, clash with the Upper Rank 1 demon, and his strength overwhelms them!!
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AHH! I'M IN PAIN!

CARRY ME!

OW! OW!

IT HURTS!

CARRY ME!

CARRY ME!

WE GOT SEPARATED FROM OUR COMRADES...

THREE SECONDS BEFORE A MIRACULOUS JOINING OF GROUPS...

DRAAG
I'm not blessed with a physique like Uzu's, so I'll die of blood loss in a few hours.

I'm no use with an injury like this.

If I'm going to die, I should do something useful first.

We must at least defeat Upper Rank 1.

Let'sn the burden on those still alive and able to fight.

Tokiito...

Grab
I'M SORRY, BUT...

COULD YOU PUSH MY BODY BACK TOGETHER?

WOULD YOU... BRING IT HERE AND FEED IT TO ME?

UM... THAT CHUNK OF HAIR FROM THE UPPER-RANK DEMON OVER THERE...

YOUR BODY... CAN YOU RECONNECT IT?

GENYA!! YOU'RE ALIVE!

IT COULD BE DIFFICULT...

I WILL... PROTECT MY BROTHER. I WON'T LET HIM DIE...

I WANT TO FIGHT... TO THE END.

LET'S FIGHT TOGETHER UNTIL THE END.
FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN... I'D SAY YOUR AGE...

...IS ABOUT 27?

YOU TOO ARE A MARKED ONE.

I SEE...

TOO BAD.

TOO BAD?
I REGRET THE LOSS.

WHAT OF IT?

WITHOUT EXCEPTION, THE MARKED ONES...

...DIE BEFORE THEY REACH THE AGE OF 25.
IT MERELY REDUCES THEIR LIFE SPAN.

...SO YOU WILL PROBABLY DIE TONIGHT.

...WILL DISAPPEAR FROM THIS WORLD. DO YOU NOT THINK THAT IS LAMENTABLE?

YOUR BODY AND THE TECHNIQUES YOU HAVE DEVELOPED TO THEIR UTMOST ABILITY...
THE MARKED ONES ALREADY UNDERSTAND THAT.

NO, I DON'T.

EVEN IF THE MARK HAD NOT APPEARED, AS LONG AS YOU ARE IN THE DEMON SLAYER CORPS...

...THERE IS NO GUARANTEE YOU WILL LIVE TO TOMORROW.

SO YOU KNEW?

NO ONE BECOMES A HASHIRA WITH SUCH HALF-HEARTED DETERMINATION.

WHY WOULD I CLING TO LIFE AT THIS POINT?
WE SHOULD NOT BE TALKING ABOUT TRIVIAL THINGS LIKE LIFE AND WHATNOT.

...MAKES ME BOIL WITH ANGER.

THAT HORRIBLE INSULT...

WHY DO YOU NOT UNDERSTAND THAT? HOW FOOLISH...

IF YOU BECOME A DEMON, YOU CAN PRESERVE YOUR BODY AND MAINTAIN YOUR TECHNIQUES.

WE ARE PROUD TO LIVE AND DIE AS HUMAN BEINGS.

I DON'T NEED TO UNDERSTAND IT.
DON'T ACT LIKE YOUR WORTHLESS IDEAS ARE SUPERIOR AND FORCE THEM ON OTHERS.

YOU STATED ONE FALSE-HOOD.

I HAVE TOLD NO LIE.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

I NOTICED SOMETHING WHILE WE WERE TALKING.

HEH...
THERE WAS ONE WHO HAD THE MARK, LIVED PAST 25 AND IS STILL ALIVE.

IT APPEARS MY GUESS WAS CORRECT...

I SUSPECT THERE WAS AN EXCEPTION.

THAT SHOOK YOU.
NO?
FINA
AA
THIS MAN ALSO HAS THE MARK.

ARE ALMOST ALL HASHIRA IN THIS TIME MARKED ONES?
HE DODGED AN IRON BALL THAT CAME IN FROM DIRECTLY BEHIND HIM.
...they cooperate!

...and in a battle of this speed...

They are users of different types of breathing techniques...

...they are a Santiys, different users of breathing techniques...

Good thing we trained together as Hashira, Himejima!
The miraculous moment when the groups reunited.
GENYA...

...ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

HUFF

GENYA!

HUFF

HANG IN THERE. YOU CAN DO IT.

GENYA?

HUFF

BA BAMP

HUFF

BA BAMP

HUFF
IT'S BECAUSE OF THE DEMON'S BLOOD CONCENTRATION.

IS THIS JUST FROM EATING THAT UPPER RANK'S HAIR?

IF I COULD EAT THAT, I'D GET MORE...

THERE'S ONE MORE THING—THE TIP OF THAT DEMON'S BROKEN KATANA.

I FEEL GOOD...

THE SPEED OF MY CIRCULATION IS INCREASING.

UNGH... THAT VOICE AGAIN...

RESOUNDING IN MY HEAD...
HOW MANY HASHIRA HAVE YOU DEFEATED?

KOKUSHIBO...

DON'T LET THEM COME HERE YET.

IS THAT... MUZAN? MUZAN'S VOICE?

AS I BECOME MORE DEMONIC, I CAN EVEN HEAR THE VOICE OF MUZAN.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY BODY?
I SEE...

PERHAPS THESE TWO...

ARE HIGHLY SKILLED EVEN AMONG THE HASHIRA.

HE IS A SWORDSMAN WITH AN OUTSTANDING PHYSIQUE.

ESPECIALLY THIS ONE...

DESPITE BEING BLIND...
...HE HAS AN EXTREMELY ACCURATE GRASP OF SPACE AND MOVEMENT AROUND HIM.

FROM THE ECHOES OF THE SWINGING CHAIN...

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE, BUT IT IS AN INDISPUTABLE FACT.

...FIRST...

...I MUST DESTROY HIS...
WEAPON!

*AKK!MESSATSU, DESTROYER OF DEMONS

...BREAK EASILY WHEN STRUCK FROM THE SIDE.

BLADES...
His reflexes are getting faster.

He turned the blade on edge to repel my attack.
Suffering a fatal wound that would normally have taken him out of the fight...

...and... becoming faster and more accurate!
Dust Whirlwind

Cutter!!

Stone Breathing

First Form:

Seventh Form:
SERPENTINITIE BIPOLAR!

GALE

SUDDEN GUSTS!
PRESS HIM!

NOT YET!!

...TAKE HIS HEAD!

UNTIL WE...

YES. THAT'S RIGHT.

HIS HEAD!!
IMPOSSIBLE!

WHAT DID HE DO TO US?!

HIT US WITH AN ATTACK AT THIS RANGE?!

WHAT...?

WHAT DID HE DO?

WSH
NOT EVEN ENOUGH TO KILL AN INFANT.

YOU MERELY SHREDDED MY KIMONO...

ONCE I DISPATCH YOU TWO... THE REST WILL PROCEED EASILY.
I said I was sorry, so forgive me!!
Tanjiro would forgive me! But he probably wouldn’t let me kick him!!
Ga ha ha!

Kanao making a decision
CHAPTER 172: A WEAKLING'S POTENTIAL
SHINGA-ZUGAWA!!

I WAS BARELY ABLE TO RESPOND!

DAMN!
...I WOULD HAVE LOST BOTH OF MY ARMS AND NOT JUST MY FINGERS.

URGH!!

IF HIMIJIMA HADN'T USED HIS CHAIN TO ALTER THE ANGLE OF THE ATTACK...

MY MARECHI IS BARELY WORKING AT ALL.

...AND THE MORE I HOLD HIMIJIMA BACK.

EVEN THOUGH IT'S SUPPOSED TO WORK PRECISELY ON STRONGER DEMONS! BASTARD!

THE MORE DAMAGE I TAKE, THE SLOWER I GET...

AND THAT MONSTER IS SWINGING THAT RIDICULOUSLY LONG SWORD AT INCREDIBLE SPEED!

CAN I DODGE NEXT TIME?! CAN I CUT HIM?!
GIYU TOMIOKA AND TANJIRO KAMADO CAN BOTH GO.

...SHALL I SEND ANOTHER HASHIRA TO UPPER RANK 1?
NO.

GIYU AND TANJIRO WILL CONTINUE TOWARD MUZAN.

AS FOR UPPER RANK 1...

...THOSE FOUR—GYOMEI, SANEMI, MUCHIRO AND GENYA—ARE SURE TO DEFEAT HIM.
SEVENTH FORM: MOON BREATHING
MIRROR OF MISFORTUNE—MOONLIT.

AND THIS SPEED... THIS IS BAD!!

WHAT REACH!! HIS ATTACK RANGE HAS MORE THAN DOUBLED!
EIGHTH FORM: MOON BREATHING

MOON DRAGON RINGTAIL!
I can't aim for his neck! This is bad!!

I'm using all my strength just to dodge attacks!!

He's too fast! This is bad!!

Moon breathing

Ninth form:
WANING MOONSWATHS!
SHINA-ZUGA WAAA!!

MOON-BREATHEING
TENTH FORM:

THMP

HIMEJIMA! FORGET ABOUT ME!
DRILLING SLASHES
MOON THROUGH BAMBOO LEAVES
You can still swing a sword with both arms!!

I won't let you die!

TOKITO!!
WILL HE NOTICE ME RIGHT AWAY AGAIN...

...AND CUT ME IN HALF TO FINISH ME OFF?

I CAN'T LET HIM DIE... I DEFINITELY MUSTN'T FAIL.

SANEMI...
AAAGH!! DAMMIT!

IF ONLY I WERE STRONGER!! IF I WERE A HASHIRA!!

If only I were stronger... if I were a Hashira!!

I'VE SCARED...

...That I'm of no use and can't protect my comrades.

...Making it difficult for me to move.

The more I want to help, the more my body stiffens up...

It's frustrating to be weak.

Why am I so weak?

It's frustrating!
HAS THE GREATEST POTENTIAL, GENYA.

THE WEAKEST PERSON...

...has the greatest potential, Genya.

When I fought that upper rank... it was like that.

Precisely because I was weak, I was able to change the situation.

The opponent can only focus on a certain number of us at one time.
THE ENEMY IS WARIER OF STRONG PEOPLE, SO THE WALL OF THEIR CAUTION IS THICK.

THE REST DEPENDS ON...

...HOW THE ENEMY DIVIDES THEIR ATTENTION.

SO IF A WEAK PERSON TAKES AN UNEXPECTED ACTION AND BREAKS THROUGH THE WALL...

IF THEY THINK SOMEONE IS WEAK, THAT WALL IS THINNER.

...AND A PATH TO VICTORY OPENS.

...THEN ALL AT ONCE THE DIRECTION OF THE WIND CHANGES...
REALLY? IS THAT REALLY TRUE? DO YOU THINK I CAN DO IT?

I'M GONNA DO IT.

I HAVE TO DO IT.

I'LL DO IT.
THINK ONLY ABOUT WINNING.

...OR THE MASTER...

I WILL NOT LET MY BROTHER...

...OR MY COMRADES DIE!

STAY ON THE OFFENSIVE.

BWHM

THOUGHT I WOULD EAT IT WHEN I GOT CUT AGAIN...

...BUT BEING SO FAINT-HEARTED IS OUT OF THE QUESTION.
Aoi’s recommended disciplinary method: spanking

Murata is overjoyed.

Don’t hold back when you do it!

GYAAAH!

Kanao is normally quiet, so Inosuke was caught off guard.
CHAPTER 173:
THE PATH OF OPENING A STEADFAST HEART
FIFTH...
STONE
BREATHING

MOON
BREATHING
SIXTEENTH
FORM:

MOONBOW—
HALF MOON
HE ISN'T RUNNING OUT OF TECHNIQUES.

HE PREDICTS MY EVERY MOVE.

IT'S STRANGE. HE'S TOO FAST.

IF I MESS UP, HE SHUTS ME DOWN BEFORE I CAN EVEN BEGIN AN ATTACK.

I CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT.

HE READS ME THE MOMENT I THINK OF LAUNCHING A TECHNIQUE.

I CAN'T ATTACK.

BUT IT'S TOO FAST.

HOW MANY MORE FORMS DOES HE HAVE?
What is this demon seeing? What is he looking at?

Is he using supernatural powers?

I must focus my senses. Determine the truth of what feels wrong.

Demons...

...are an alteration of the human form.

Breathing techniques literally make humans demonically strong.

A human can do what a demon can do.
THESE EYES THAT CANNOT SEE ARE EYES THAT SEE THROUGH TRUE NATURE.

HE WILL NOT MISLEAD ME.

I HAVE TO OBSERVE MY LIMITS!!
I formed a clear image... this...

I can sense his pulse.

What is this?!
Perhaps this is it!!

Get inside his reach!

If I can weaken his attack's even a little...

A moment is enough. If I can stop the movement of this upper rank 1 for just a moment...

I'm sure of it!!

Either Himejima or Shina-zugawa...

...will cut off his head.
WHILE I CAN STILL MOVE...
WHILE I CAN STILL BE USEFUL...
HURRY!!!
HE READ MY INTENT AND MOVED ACCORDINGLY.
HOWEVER, THIS WAY I CAN FINISH ALL THREE OFF AT ONCE.

HMM... THEY HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO CONFRONT ME TOGETHER...

CATASTROPHE

TENMAN CRESCENT MOON!
GET IN, GET IN, GET IN, GET IN!!

SLIP PAST—INSIDE HIS REACH!!

THE GAPS IN THE OVERLAPPING ATTACKS!!

PASS THROUGH THE GAPS IN HIS ATTACKS!!
THROWN /T
THE MOMENT
HE SWUNG
HIS CHAIN.

HE MUST
HAVE
THROWN IT
THE MOMENT
HE SWUNG
HIS CHAIN.

HOW DID
HE ELUDE
MY FIELD
OF VIEW?

THE ROSARY
OF THE MAN
WITH THE
IRON BALL?!

DUST
WHIRLWIND

CUTTER!!!
AGAIN...
AH, I SEE.
I didn't cut his carotid artery.
THE ROSARY STRUCK ME, DULLING MY ATTACKS JUST A LITTLE, BUT...

THIS WOUNDED CHILD...

IT CANNOT BE... THOSE EYES.

JUST BARELY DODGED MY ATTACK.

THE SAME WORLD THAT I DO?

AND HE...

HE BEGAN SEEING IT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FIGHT.

CAN THEY SEE...

THAT ONE TOO. HE SENSES IT.
HE CONTROLLED HIS OWN BLOOD CIRCULATION AND DISTURBED MY ATTACK.

...NO ONE'S BLADE HAS REACHED MY NECK.

...ARE POINTLESS ONCE I UNDERSTAND THEM.

...DECEIVED MY EYES.

SEVERAL UNEXPECTED THINGS HAVE HAPPENED.

DECEPTIONS AND DISTURBANCES...
SIXTEENTH FORM:

MOON BREATHING

I CAN'T LET GO!! EVEN IF HE CUTS ME TO PIECES!

...TAKE THE SHOT!

DON'T MIND ME.
...SHOOT ME ALONG WITH HIM!

ONCE I’VE STOPPED THIS UPPER RANK 1 FROM MOVING...

I KNOW.

DON’T HESITATE!
CHAPTER 174:
NIGHTMARE ON THE NIGHT OF A RED MOON
LIKE LIVING THINGS, THEY TURNED AND SANK INTO MY BODY.

DESPITE BEING DEFLECTED BY MY SWORD...
IT'S CHANGING!!

COULD THIS BE...

HIS PISTOL IS CHANGING FORM!
I KNEW IT! A BLOOD DEMON ART!!

A TREE?! IT PUT DOWN ROOTS—I CAN'T MOVE!!
SOME OF MY HAIR AND A PIECE OF MY BLADE...

HE ABSORBED PORTIONS OF ME!
My life feels threatened as the core of my body freezes up.

This disturbing feeling running from the center of my body to the top of my head.

...is detestable.

This sensation of my composure crumbling up from my feet...

It brings back memories...

...from 400 years ago.
ON THE NIGHT OF A RED MOON.

IT WAS 400 YEARS AGO.
I WITNESS SOMETHING I COULD NOT BELIEVE.
THE AGED AND DECREPIT FORM OF MY LITTLE BROTHER...

SO YORIICHI, WHO HAD STAYED HUMAN, MUST HAVE PASSED 80 YEARS OF AGE.

OVER 60 YEARS HAD GONE BY SINCE WE LAST MET...
HOW ARE YOU ALIVE?

IMPOSSIBLE.

WHY ONLY YOU...

EVERYONE DIES BEFORE THEY TURN 25.

WHY ARE YOU...

...MY BROTHER.

MY SYMPATHIES...
THE OLD AND UGLY CREATURE...

...THAT WAS ONCE MY LITTLE BROTHER...

...HAD PITY FOR ME.

EVEN THOUGH 60 YEARS AGO HE HAD BEEN SUCH AN EYESORE.

BUT...

...I WASN'T ANGRY.

...SO AT THE SIGHT OF HIM SHEDDING TEARS, SOMETHING WELLED UP IN ME FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE.

THE VOICE CALLING ME "BROTHER" WAS TERRIBLY HOARSE.

MY BROTHER HAD NEVER SHOWN THE SLIGHTEST EMOTION...
I was confused...

...at my own unexpected unease.

This old man of brittle flesh past his prime...

I must kill...

...this part of me when I was human...

...and I must cleave anyone who turns a sword upon me.

He was a demon slayer...
...disappeared the next moment.

but his odd sentimen
tality.
There was no opening in his stance.

...like Rock's resting on my shoulders.

His intimidating aura made the air feel heavy...

Here I come.
...ALWAYS THE SPECIAL ONE?

YOU ARE MARKED, BUT YOU LIVED LONG.

WHY WERE YOU...
THE TECHNIQUE THAT OLD MAN USED...

...HAD THE SAME SPEED AND POWER AS WHEN HE WAS IN HIS PRIME.

JEALOUSY THAT BURNT TO THE BONE...

YOU LIVE RECEIVING THE FAVOR OF THE GODS UPON YOURSELF.

YOU ALONE ARE OUTSIDE THE LAWS OF THIS WORLD.

VIVIDLY, THE MEMORIES RETURN.

THE GRUDGE FROM 60 YEARS AGO...
WANT TO KILL YOU.

WOULD CHOP OFF MY HEAD.

BUT I WAS CERTAIN THAT HIS NEXT BLOW...

WITH A FEELING OF UNREST AND DEFEAT...

I FELT LIKE MY INSIDES MIGHT BURST.

HOWEVER...

HIS SWORD TECHNIQUE, WHICH EVEN PRESSED LORD MUZAN.

IT WAS...

...NOTHING LESS THAN GODLY.
...HE NEVER DID RELEASE THE NEXT BLOW.

STANDING UPRIGHT...

YORIICHI DIED.
Tanjirō's crows

Yours is over here!!

Are you all right?

I'm Tanjirō!

Gyu...

Gyu's old man crow

RUB

Ah...

No...
CHAPTER 175: RESPECT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

MY LONG EXISTENCE AS A DEMON MEANS I'VE HAD TO LIVE WITH THAT HUMILIATION FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS.

IF YORIICHI'S LIFE HAD LASTED ONE BREATH LONGER...

...I WOULD HAVE LOST.

NOW THAT THE GREATEST SWORDSMAN IN THE LONG HISTORY OF DEMON SLAYERS HAS DIED...

...I MUST NOT LOSE.

BECAUSE YORIICHI DIED, AN HONORABLE DEATH WILL NOT VISIT ME.

...UNTIL I BECAME...

...UGLY LIKE THIS.

YES, I CHOSE TO CONTINUE WINNING...
CHAPTER 175:
RESPECT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS
Not that way!

No, not that way, Kanzaburo!

Master is calling...

GASP

GRAR

TATMP
...HE MADE AS MANY ATTACKS AS HE HAS BLADES!

HE SPROUTED BLADES ALL OVER HIS BODY!!

AND WITHOUT SWINGING...

HE'S A MONSTER...

NO... I'M GOING TO DIE. IT'S HOPELESS...

AND I HAD SO MUCH TROUBLE AGAINST JUST ONE SWORD BEFORE!

I MUST... PROTECT... EVERYONE...
BUT I MUST NOT LET THEM DIE.

HIMEJIMA AND SHINAZUGAWA WILL BOTH FIGHT TO THE DEATH.

FOR EVERYONE ELSE’S SAKE, I MUST PROTECT THEM.

MUZAN IS STILL LEFT.
I MUST... DO SOMETHING.

HE'S SETTING UP ANOTHER ATTACK.

BEFORE...

...DIE.
THE BLADE... IS RED?

THIS INTENSE PAIN... IT'S LIKE MY INSIDES ARE ON FIRE!

WHAT IS THIS?!

I CAN'T MOVE!
ATTENTION TO

DUE TO EVERYONE'S ATTACKS...

...HE CAN'T PAY ATTENTION TO ME...

MY FLESH BULLETS... INSIDE HIS BODY...

THEY'RE STILL THERE...

BLOOD DEMON...

...ART...
I CAN'T USE A TECHNIQUE!!

I'LL CUT IT IN HALF AND FINISH HIM OFF!

FIXED IN PLACE AGAIN? HOW ANNOYING!
RAAAH!

WHAT A TOUGH NECK!

OUR ATTACK'S STILL AREN'T ENOUGH!!
My body's seizing up due to the intense pain!! Because of the Red Katana!!

I can't use a technique!! The tree in my back is sucking up my blood and extending a trunk!

What do you intend to do about the succession?

A red blade...
The same as Yoriiichi...
THE PERFECTIONED TECHNIQUES WILL DIE OUT.

THE PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESSION TO THE BREATHING ART ARE DISMAL.

THERE ARE NO SKILLED WARRIORS COMPARABLE TO US.

WE ARE Merely one Fragment of HUMANKIND'S LONG, LONG HISTORY.

...WE ARE NOT THAT GREAT.

AT THIS MOMENT, THOSE WHOSE TALENTS WILL SURPASS OURS ARE UTTERING THEIR FIRST CRIES.

THEY MAY COME TO REACH THE SAME PLACE.
CAN DRAW THE CURTAIN OF LIFE CLOSED WITHOUT UNEASE AT ANY TIME.

THERE IS NO NEED TO WORRY.

DOES THAT NOT EXHILARATE YOU...

BROTHER?

GRAAAAAHH!!!
SOMEDAY...

...THE CHILDREN NOW BEING BORN...

GAAAH!

IRON CLASHING AGAINST IRON, TURNING RED...!!
...AND ASCEND...

...WILL SURPASS US...

TO EVEN GREATER HEIGHTS.
NEZUKO'S SWIMSUIT

NEZUKO LOOKS SO CUTE!!!

NEZUKO - Sensitive to air currents. Sense prey. Protect eyes.

HER SWIM-SUUUUT! GYAAAAH!

YOU'RE BOTHERING PEOPLE.

GYAAAAH! SHE'S SO CUUU-UUTE!

PIECE UP.

SHE'S... GYAAAAH!

GAA-BLORRRRT!

SHE'S SO KYOO-OOO...

GRAAAH...

OOOT!

I WAS HAPPY, NEZUKO...

LET'S GET MARRIED IN OUR NEXT LIVES TOO!

TANJIRO'S RESEARCH PROJECT

GYAAAAH!

At corners of mouth

Over eyes

Sensitive to air currents. Sense prey. Protect eyes.

Upper lip

Checkbones

Under head

Whiskers

This is why they stalk so silently!

Convey feeling.

Only this part of their bodies have sweat glands.

Females are right-handed.

Males are left-handed.

It doesn't taste sweet!! That's surprising!

Each one has a unique muzzle pattern just as each human being has unique fingerprints.

WHAT IS THIS? A TSUCHINOKO? A DEEP-SEA FISH?

ARE YOU KIDDING ME...?
...WHEN YOU SMILED, I COULDN'T HELP IT...

...BUT I ALWAYS FOUND IT DISTURBING.
...you suddenly started viewing things with a strange optimism...

...and you smiled.

And when we were talking about how there were no successors for the various breathing techniques...

I felt sick with disgust and irritation.

In my conceit I believed...

...that only our generation was special.

What did you find so amusing?
THAT HUMAN USED A BLOOD DEMON ART.

EVEN CUT IN HALF, THAT ONE DIDN'T LET GO OF HIS SWORD.

AND NO MATTER HOW MUCH I CUT THAT ONE UP, HE STILL WON'T BLEED TO DEATH.

AND THAT ONE'S SPEED OF GROWTH IS COMPARABLE TO A DEMON'S.

HE MOVES IN WAYS THAT SURPASS HIS LIMITS.
BUT THEIR BLADES TURN RED.

SUST THINKING MAKES ME BOIL WITH RAGE.

YES, EVEN IF THEY CUT MY HEAD OFF!

THEY AREN'T USERS OF SUN BREATHING...

WHAT IS SO AMUSING ABOUT IMAGINING SUCH A FUTURE?

I WILL NOT LOSE AGAIN.
DON'T LET UP YOUR ATTACKS!!

KEEP LAYING IT ON!!

SHINAZUGAWA!!

...DON'T LET TOKITO AND GENYA'S LIVES GO TO WASTE!!

HE STOPPED HIS BLEEDING!!

NO MATTER WHAT...
V'LL CUT YOU UP UNTIL THERE'S NOTHING LEFT!!

GRAAAH!! BRING IT ON!

PRIMARY GALE SLASH!

WIND BREATHING EIGHTH FORM:
FIFTH
FORM:

STONE
BREATHING

ARCHER
OF
JUSTICE!
I'M NOT DEAD YET.

IF I PULL THIS OUT, I CAN STILL REGENERATE!

AND HIS BLOOD DEMON ART WILL SOON DISAPPEAR.

THE EFFECTS OF HIS SWORD...

MY BODY ISN'T FALLING APART.

THEY ARE.
THEN I WILL OVERCOME DEATH BY DECAPITATION!
KEEP ATTACKING!!
HIS HEAD'S JUST COME OFF, SO HIS BODY MUST BE FRAGILE!!

THAT BASTARD REGENERATED HIS HEAD!

DAMMIT! ARRRGH!

HE ISN'T REGENERATING AS FAST AS MUZAN CAN!!

GO FOR THE THROAT—AGAIN AND AGAIN!
...IS MEANINGLESS!

I OVERCAME IT.

NOW ANY KIND OF ATTACK OTHER THAN SUNLIGHT...

...NO ONE CAN BEAT—

NOW...
WHAT IS THIS?

IT'S SO UGLY...

MY BROTHER, IS YOUR DREAM TO BECOME THE STRONGEST SAMURAI IN THE LAND?

I...

I WANT TO BE LIKE YOU.
...WANT TO BECOME THE SECOND-STRONGEST SAMURAI.

...WHAT A SAMURAI LOOKS LIKE?

IS THIS...

IS THIS REALLY WHAT I WANTED?
My body is falling apart where Muichiro stabbed me...
I CAN'T USE A BLOOD DEMON ART!!

USE A TECHNIQUE!
Haven't lost yet. I should still be able to regenerate. You have my sympathies... my brother.
...even though they took off my head, chopped me up and crushed me.

The ugliness of not admitting my defeat...

Living in disgrace.

DID I WANT TO BE STRONG EVEN IF IT MEANT EATING PEOPLE?

WAS I SO AFRAID OF DEFEAT THAT I BECAME A MONSTER?

HAVE I LIVED HUNDREDS OF YEARS FOR THIS?
YORIICHI ...

NO.

DID I BECOME THIS MISERABLE CREATURE BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT TO DIE?

I WANTED TO BE YOU.
When Kokushibo saw his reflection in Sanemi’s blade, it was like a mirror, so it should have been reversed left to right, but I didn’t have the time or skill to fix it.

Please, reverse it in your head.
...WHO HAS RECEIVED THE GODS' FAVOR.

ANYONE WHO DOESN'T GET JEALOUS OF OTHER PEOPLE IS JUST LUCKY.

THEY HAVE JUST NEVER MET SOMEONE...

...WHO HAS RECEIVED THE GODS' FAVOR.

ANYONE WHO DOESN'T GET JEALOUS OF OTHER PEOPLE IS JUST LUCKY.

THEY HAVE JUST NEVER MET SOMEONE...

SOMEONE INTENSE AND VIVID WHO BURNS EVERYTHING...

CHAPTER 177: YOUNGER BROTHER

...LIKE THE SUN.
WERE VIEWED AS INAUSPICIOUS BECAUSE THEY WOULD CAUSE SUCCESSION DISPUTES.

IN THE TIME WE WERE BORN...

TWINS...

SO FATHER DECLARED HE WOULD KILL HIM.

MY YOUNGER BROTHER, YORIICHI, WAS BORN WITH A DISTURBING MARK...

THEY AGREED THAT HE WOULD NOT KILL MY YOUNGER BROTHER, AND THAT WHEN YORIICHI REACHED AGE TEN THEY WOULD SEND HIM TO A TEMPLE.

...HER ANGER WAS LIKE A CONFLAGRATION, SUCH THAT NO ONE COULD CONTROL HER.

BUT WHEN MOTHER HEARD THAT...

MY YOUNGER BROTHER, YORIICHI, WAS BORN WITH A DISTURBING MARK...
OUR UPBRINGING WAS ENTIRELY SEPARATE.

THE TWO OF US HAD DIFFERENT ROOMS, DIFFERENT CLOTHES, DIFFERENT EDUCATIONS...

DIFFERENT FOOD

SEEING HIM LIKE THAT...

PERHAPS BECAUSE OF THAT, YORIICHI WAS UNABLE TO LEAVE OUR MOTHER...

EVEN AS A CHILD, I PITIED YORIICHI.

...AND WAS ALWAYS CLINGING TO HER LEFT SIDE.

IF I GAVE HIM MY OWN BELONGINGS, FATHER WOULD NOTICE, SO I GAVE HIM A FLUTE I MADE.

I WOULD EVADE MY FATHER'S EYES AND GO TO PLAY IN YORIICHI'S SMALL ROOM.
From the time Yoriichi was a baby...

...he never smiled...

...and he didn't speak until age seven, so everyone thought he was deaf.

...and that alone was frightening.

Yoriichi was silently standing in the shade of a pine tree...

I learned he wasn't deaf at about the same time. I was practicing my sword swing in the garden.

My brother, is your dream to become the strongest samurai in the land?
I was so surprised I gasped...

It was the first time I heard him speak, but he spoke smoothly.

And I dropped my wooden sword.

They had decided he would become a priest, not a samurai.

Then he suddenly said that he also wanted to become a samurai.

But when he turned ten, our parents would send him to a temple.

It was disturbing.

...but then Yorichi smiled for the first time.

I didn’t know if he understood that...
...could never become one.

So a boy who clings to his mother at the very sight of her...

My father's vassal, who was teaching me swordsman ship, gave him a practice sword for fun.

However, after that...

With that, my father's vassal took a fighting stance and told my brother to try to strike him.

My instructor casually told him...

...how to hold it and how to stand.
But in the blink of an eye, Yoriichi had landed four strikes and rendered him unconscious.

...I had been unable to land a single blow on my instructor.

No bones were broken...

A seven-year-old child had struck him on the neck, chest, stomach and leg.
THE FEELING OF HITTING SOMEONE WAS UNBEARABLE TO HIM.

AND WHILE I WAS TALKING TO HIM, YORIICHI SAID SOMETHING INEXPPLICABLE.

BUT I WANTED TO KNOW THE SECRET TO YORIICHI'S STRENGTH.

I APPROACHED HIM PERSISTENTLY...

YOU JUST NEED TO LOOK CLOSELY AT THE DISPOSITION OF HIS BONES, THE CONTRACTION OF HIS MUSCLES AND THE FLOW OF HIS BLOOD.

BEFORE YOUR OPPONENT ATTACKS, HIS LUNGS HEAVE.
Along with his birthmark, he had been born with a special sight. Yoriichi could see inside the bodies of living creatures.

It took some time for me to understand.

And he possessed physical abilities that complemented it.

But he was far superior to me.

Until then, I had pitied him...
AND THE HARDER I WORKED, THE STRONGER I GOT.

BUT TALENT HAD BEEN RECOGNIZED IN ME...

I WANTED TO MASTER THE WAY OF THE SWORD.

...I WANT TO PLAY BOARD GAMES OR FLY A KITE WITH YOU.

THE WAY OF THE SWORD REQUIRES PAIN AND SUFFERING...

INSTEAD OF TALKING ABOUT SWORDS...
TO YORIICHI, THE WAY OF THE SWORD WAS LESS THAN CHILD'S PLAY.

...I WAS LIKE A TURTLE.

BUT COMPARED TO A RARE CHILD PRODIGY LIKE HIM...

HOW WONDERFUL IT MUST BE TO HOPE FOR SOMETHING AND BE BLESSED WITH THE TALENT TO ACHIEVE IT.

But when I talked to Yoriichi about swordsman-ship, he looked horribly bored.

TO YORIICHI, HE WASN'T HAPPY ABOUT IT AT ALL.

DESPITE HIS EXCELLENT TALENT WITH THE SWORD...
MY FATHER'S VASSAL MUST HAVE TOLD HIM ABOUT YORIICHI.

...AND WHEN I TURNED TEN YEARS OLD, HE WOULD SEND ME TO A TEMPLE. MY DREAM OF BECOMING A SAMURAI WOULD NEVER COME TRUE.

FATHER WOULD FORCE ME INTO THAT SMALL ROOM...

YES?

BIG BROTHER...
WHAT? MOTHER HAS DIED.

WHAT HAPPENED?

IT’S SO SUDDEN...

IN THE HOUR OF THE TIGER, YORIICHI CAME.

OUR MOTHER’S DEATH WAS A GREAT SURPRISE.

I WILL NOW DEPART FOR THE TEMPLE.

PLEASE, ASK HER SERVANT, ITO, ABOUT THE DETAILS.

I’M SORRY.
BUT AT LEAST I WANTED TO SAY GOODBYE.

WE MAY BE APART, BUT I WILL NOT LOSE HEART...

AND I WILL WORK DILIGENTLY EACH DAY.

I THINK OF THIS FLUTE YOU GAVE ME AS YOU.
...but he wrapped it in cloth and kept it close as if it were a treasure.

The flute was a piece of junk that could only play off pitch...

I didn't say anything back to him, but...

It was disturbing.

...what was so pleasing about that piece of junk.

I had no idea...

He was smiling again.

Then, he walked away...

...taking hardly anything with him.

...Yoriichi appeared satisfied and bowed deeply.
...SO HE DECIDED TO LEAVE THE HOUSE EARLIER THAN PLANNED.

...YORIICHI HAD SENSED THAT FATHER WOULD DESIGNATE HIM AS HEIR...

ACCORDING TO MOTHER'S JOURNAL...

FOR YEARS, SHE HAD SUFFERED DIFFICULTIES ON THE LEFT SIDE OF HER BODY.

YORIICHI HAD KNOWN...

...OF MOTHER'S ILLNESS AND APPROACHING DEATH.

THE LEFT...
YORIICHI HADN'T BEEN TO HER.

She had been weakened by her illness, and he had been supporting her.

FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART, I HATED YORIICHI FOR HIS GENIUS.

I COULD HEAR MY WHOLE BODY BURNING WITH JEALOUSY.

AT THAT MOMENT...
Michikatsu and Yoriichi's mother, Akeno, was so calm and quiet that people say she was like a doll.

For that reason, it must have been shocking to the people who knew her when she flew into a rage at her husband for saying he would kill Yoriichi for being born with an unsettling birthmark. Michikatsu and Yoriichi's mother treated the children with equal affection as much as possible. The horrible stress over Yoriichi wearing shabby clothes and living in a room like a closet worsened her illness. In her will, she expressed concern for her husband's health, and begged that her children be kept together, treated equally and raised in good health. The father named Michikatsu in the hope that he would be strong and always be successful, while the mother named Yoriichi in the hope that he would value connections between people above all.
CHAPTER 178: EVEN IF YOU REACH OUT YOUR HAND

I wish you had never been born.

Your existence defies the laws of nature.

I'm begging you—please die.
...BUT HE WASN'T THERE.

...SENT A MESSENGER TO THE TEMPLE TO BRING BACK YORICHI.

WITHOUT A TRACE.

HE HAD DISAPPEARED...

UNEXPECTEDLY, MY WISH HAD COME TRUE.

KIDNAPPERS? A LANDSLIDE? DID A BEAR ATTACK HIM?
I married and had children.

The next ten years were a peaceful time.

Every day was tranquil and somewhat boring.

The flow of time felt extremely slow.

However...

...a demon attacked where I had camped.

Time had stagnated, but now it began to move.
WE HAD AN UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER.
He had mastered the sword...

He was completely different than when we were children.

...and could easily defeat inhuman opponents.

Again, my stomach burned with jealousy and hate.

The one who saved me from the demon was Yoriichi.

The moment I saw Yoriichi, it destroyed my serenity.

...my brother.

I am sorry...
...AND MY SUBORDINATES DIED, HE APOLOGIZED.

NO MATTER THE COST, I WANTED TO MAKE HIS STRENGTH...

...AND SWORD SKILLS MY OWN.

...AND CHOSE THE PATH OF A DEMON SLAYER—THE SAME AS YORIICHI.

I ABANDONED...

...MY HOME, MY WIFE AND CHILDREN...

BECAUSE YORIICHI ARRIVED LATE...

YORIICHI WAS STRONG...

...AND WAS A PERSON OF FAULTLESS CHARACTER.
TO SUIT EACH PERSON'S SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES...

BUT NOT A SINGLE PERSON COULD MATCH HIM.

YORIICHI CHANGED THE BREATHING TECHNIQUE AS HE TAUGHT.

THE NUMBER OF MARKED ONES INCREASED, AND THE POWER OF THE DEMON SLAYERS ROSE.

A MARK IDENTICAL TO YORIICHI'S.

THUS, TECHNIQUES DERIVED FROM SUN BREATHING CAME ONE AFTER THE OTHER.

BEFORE LONG, I MANIFESTED THE MARK.
I COULD ONLY USE A DERIVATIVE LATER NAMED MOON BREATHING.

...I COULDN'T USE SUN BREATHING.

As I languished in frustration...

I thought I would catch up to Yorichi if I continued training.

...the marked ones began dying one after the other.
I don't have time left for the requisite training.

The Mark merely gave you power in exchange for your life span... so the Golden Era would soon end.

I have no future.

Then you should become a demon.
AND I WANT TO MAKE A DEMON OUT OF A SWORDSMAN WHO CAN USE THEM.

IF YOU BECOME A DEMON, YOU CAN LIVE FOREVER.

YOU WANT TO MASTER BREATHING TECHNIQUES.
YOU CAN CHOOSE, UNLIKE THE OTHER SWORD WIELDERS.

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

I WOULD BE FREE OF ALL FETTERS.

THE PATH I HAD HOPED FOR FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART HAD OPENED.

OR SO I THOUGHT.
YOU TRANSCENDED THE LAWS OF NATURE...

...AND THEN LIVED OUT YOUR LIFE, DEFEATING ME AGAIN BY ESCAPING DEATH AT MY HANDS.

NO SINGLE PERSON WAS EVER ABLE TO HARM YOU.

WHY DO YOU ALWAYS MAKE ME FEEL MISERABLE?

YOU APPEARED BEFORE ME AGAIN.

NO ONE... NOT EVEN LORD MUZAN...

...COULD DEFEAT YOU.

WHY?
"I THINK OF THIS FLUTE YOU GAVE ME..."

"...AS YOU."

I HATE YOU.

ENOUGH ALREADY.
JUST HEARING YOUR VOICE MAKES ME SO ANGRY MY HEAD HURTS.

JUST SEEING YOUR FACE MAKES ME SICK.

...WHAT I REMEMBER VIVIDLY IS YOUR FACE, THE THING I MOST WANT TO FORGET.
MY FATHER'S FACE OR MY MOTHER'S FACE OR MY WIFE'S FACE OR MY CHILDREN'S FACES.

I CAN'T REMEMBER...

YOU ARE LIKE THE UNEQUALED SUN...

AND ALL THE HUMAN BEINGS AROUND YOU...

AND WRITHING IN AGONY...

...HAVE NO PATH OTHER THAN YEARNING, REACHING OUT THEIR HANDS...
...UNTIL THEY BECOME ASHES.

ABANDONED MY HOME.
ABANDONED MY WIFE AND CHILDREN.

OF ANYTHING. ANYTHING AT ALL.

I COULD NEVER GRAB HOLD...

I ABANDONED MY HOME. I ABANDONED MY WIFE AND CHILDREN.
...AND ABANDONED BEING A SAMURAI.

I CUT DOWN MY DESCENDANTS...

...WASN'T ENOUGH.

BUT EVEN ALL THAT...

BUT I NEVER DID.

YOU SAID THAT THOSE WHO MASTER THEIR PATHS ALL REACH THE SAME PLACE.

I COULD NOT SEE THE SAME WORLD THAT YOU DID.
AFTER YOUR DEATH, LORD MUZAN AND I MADE SURE...

...TO KILL THE SWORDSMEN WHO KNEW SUN BREATHING AND ITS FORMS.

WHY ARE WE SO DIFFERENT?

WHY COULD I NOT LEAVE ANYTHING BEHIND?

WHY COULD I NOT BECOME SOMEONE?

WHY IN THE WORLD WAS I EVER BORN?

TELL ME...

...YORIICHI.
Obanai Iguro. Chemistry Teacher
He’s allergic to women, so he always wears a mask. People say he also wears the snake to keep women away. He often goes to the diner run by Aoi’s family, but he only drinks tea. He frequently calls ahead to see if the girl with the braids is there. When students get failing grades, he strings them up and fires plastic water bottle rockets at them.

Gyomei Himejima. Civics teacher. Bamboo Shoot Class, Year 1. He’s so muscular that people were scared of him at first, but he often had items with cats on them, which was incredibly cute. Everyone soon thought, “Huh? Is he a gentle guy who likes cats?” Students often call him “father” by accident.
These two are married!

Hakuji Soyama (18), Eboshi Class, Year 3. Koyuki Soyama (16), Hydrangea Class, Year 1. As children, they lived in neighboring houses and promised to marry each other. Their parents approved, so they got married. Their pet names for each other are Princess and Lord Hakuji. They’re both in the Handicraft Club.

Hakuji will inherit Koyuki’s family dojo.

He’s a con man who performs marriages, among other things. He’s notorious enough that there have been special programs about him on television. He has been involved in many scams, but there is never enough evidence to prosecute him. He spoke to a girl whose hair color gradually changed from green to pink and who later disappeared. An altercation between a man and woman that was overheard at the scene of the incident went like this: “I think you’re lying!” “Guh!”