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OUT



"君も投稿をしてみないか!"

6大読者投稿連載企画

- ① 投稿時代
- ② ゆう坊のでたとこまかせ
- ③ 芦田豊雄の人生冗談
- ④ 花小金井C.C.
- ⑤ アニメDJ
- ⑥ Readers' Voices

アニパロ小説
"セイラ翔天"
戦士の座談会
PART2
"美少年編"

Boys, be ambitious!

大特集——燃えろアニメの中の
いい男たち! "Boys '85"

アリオン/Ζガンダム/ダンクーガ
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OUTカワイ娘ちゃんスター2大企画

- Ⅰ おまたせ斉藤由貴まるかじり
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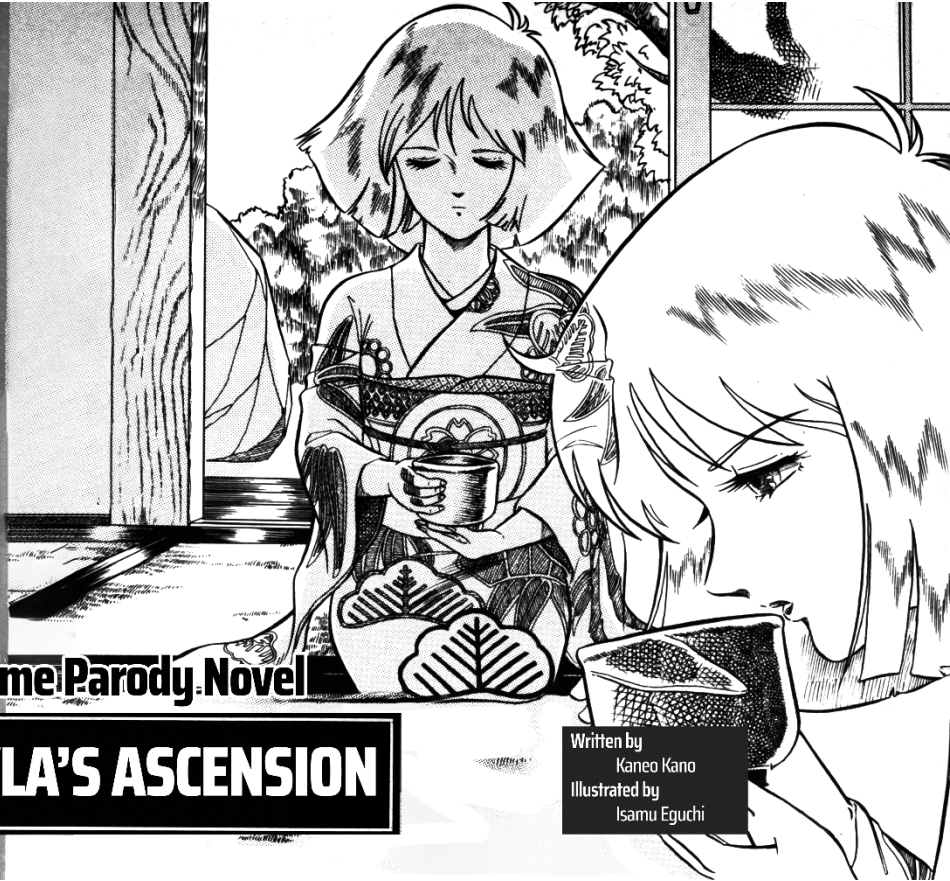
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● Anime Parody Novel

SAYLA'S ASCENSION

Written by
Kaneo Kano
Illustrated by
Isamu Eguchi

In the legendary "Mobile Suit Gundam," she was the beautiful girl who captivated the hearts of all young men—Sayla Mass. Seven years later, what has become of her? And where is she now? Surprisingly, she's found herself in the land of the rising sun, Japan! A veteran scenario writer pens this metafictional parody novel under a pseudonym!

Prologue

A Flower in the Tea Room

The irregular sound of the boiling kettle marks the passage of time.

The rustle of silk and the whisking of tea transform the small tea room into a space of profound elegance.

In the relaxed yet charged atmosphere, even the heat is forgotten. The way of tea. A beloved pastime of the Japanese since time immemorial. Immersing oneself in the strict etiquette, savoring the tea and the moment within the prescribed form. Something quintessentially Japanese.

The sharp clack of the shishi-odoshi, a water-filled bamboo tube striking the stone as it empties, punctuates the tranquil space.

Tea is presented before the guest. Her pale fingers embrace the bowl as she lifts it. The warmth of the tea caresses her palms, conveying the host's

sentiment. Following the precise steps, she brings it to her lips. Her short hair falls around the rim of the bowl, the rising steam gently combing through her golden locks.

Her unpainted lips meet the edge of the bowl as the bittersweet taste and aroma fill her mouth. After taking a sip in accordance with the etiquette, she softly speaks.

"A truly exquisite tea ceremony."

Neither the host nor anyone else realized that this blonde woman, looking remarkably at home in her kimono, was none other than Sayla Mass herself.

Chapter.01

The Days that Followed

For her, the past seven years were anything but easy. Especially that first year was brutal.

Even those once hailed as the miraculous twenty-six of White Base found themselves regarded as peculiar creatures called "Newtypes" as time passed and the fervor died down. Even in the eyes of those who praised them to their faces, there was a glimmer of an oddity, a thought of "this one's a Newtype." Walking the streets, people would swiftly clear a path for them. As if they were untouchables...

And then there were the "Newtype Labs."

Established across various locations immediately after the war, these sorts of institutes did not view them as untouchables. They saw them as subjects to be touched—no, as research specimens.

While allowing them freedom of movement, they were regularly summoned to the institutes and subjected to myriad experiments under the guise of examinations.

Two individuals in particular found even that modicum of freedom severely curtailed.

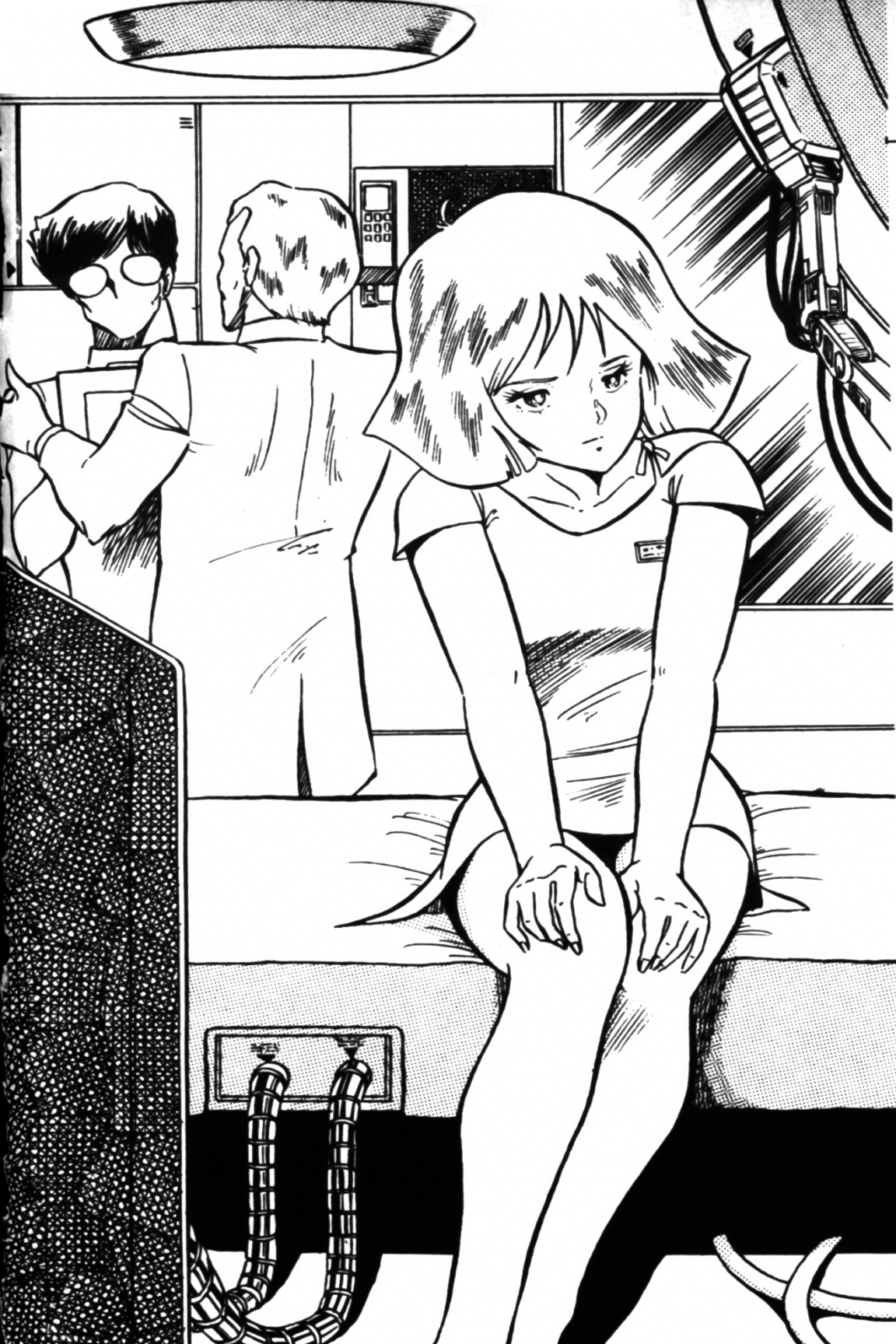
One was Amuro Ray. As the poster boy for Newtypes, having achieved a mental fusion with a woman named Lalah Sune, he was the perfect research material. Rumors circulated that the barrage of tests and drug administrations at one point nearly drove him to the brink of a mental breakdown.

The other was Sayla.

As a female Newtype who had awakened early on, not to mention being Char's sister and the daughter of Zeon Zum Deikun, to the researchers, she was second only to Amuro in terms of value as a research subject.

Test after test, observation after observation, investigation after investigation. Her body and mind were dissected, cataloged, and recorded as inhuman data. The researchers uncovered aspects of herself that even she was unaware of, greedily studying them.

However, before being their research subject, before being a Newtype, she was human. As a human being, tolerating such days, such gazes from others, was unbearable.



And so, with meticulous planning, she escaped from the Newtype Labs.

She got away, but the records remained. As did Amuro, subjected to the drugs. The Newtype Labs made no attempt to retrieve her, merely continuing their observation. Secretly, so she wouldn't notice, with the utmost care—as one would cautiously observe the natural behavior of a wild animal.

The institutes' efforts in this regard would later give rise to the Cyber-Newtypes, such as Four Murasame. And, according to one theory, they even produced second-generation Newtypes using Sayla's harvested eggs and Amuro's sperm.

But these were things that Sayla, having fled, knew nothing about.

Chapter.02

The Four Seasons of Kyoto

She was desperate to evade the pursuing arm of the Newtype Labs. Sometimes she fled from the institute's observers, other times she avoided the gaze of those who knew her past. How many times had she changed her location, her name, her occupation? And so she drifted from place to place across Earth and the colonies, her file at the research institute growing thicker all the while.

Yet, for the past year or three, she had managed to maintain a peaceful existence.

Changing her name to Martha Rustainic, Sayla was living the average life of an office lady in Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan. Kyoto's four seasons are distinct. The snowmelt of spring raises the river's water level, making the willows along the banks bud. Summer is swelteringly hot due to the basin topography, sweat soaking through one's undergarments. Autumn dyes all the leaves crimson, dripping them onto the river's surface. Winter's cold doesn't just nip at exposed skin—it seeps in from the feet and fingertips.

For Sayla, being raised in the artificial environments of the colonies, it was a strange experience. The colonies had seasons, too, but they were controlled—never this hot, never this cold. Here, though, the rain fell without warning, and the clouds raced across the sky.

This is nature, true nature.

She felt it firsthand. And this place had traditions. From the Daimonji Bonfire and Gion Festival to the customs of daily life, countless traditions. And history—the innumerable shrines and temples, the roadside statues offered flowers. Each and every one of these things. History breathed in people's hearts too, shining brightly.

Living here was a constant series of surprises for her. And unbelievably peaceful. The people around her, never imagining this conspicuous foreigner could possibly be the Sayla Mass, accepted her as simply someone who had taken a liking to the place and settled down.

For her, so exhausted from fleeing the Newtype Lab's pursuit, the warmth of such people was immensely comforting. She wanted these days to continue forever.

But she knew it was nothing more than a fantasy.

And it was shattered in a way she never could have imagined.

It happened on her way home from a tea ceremony lesson. That day, too, was hot; without a handkerchief in hand, sweat would have immediately poured down her throat. Her parasol cast a dark shadow over her face. Tilting the parasol, she casually glanced up at the sky.

In the sky, small yet clear, a light shone.

The sheer sorrow of it brought her to her knees right there.

Sound receded into the distance, even her vision fading to white. The color drained from her face, and despite the summer heat, a bone-chilling cold pierced through her entire body.

That light she saw in broad daylight. It was the flash of the Argama and Alexandria opening hostilities.

"More lives will be lost once again," she murmured, finally standing back up. Instead of returning home, a new escape began.

Chapter.03

The Escape

She ran.

Heart pounding, lungs burning, she fled from the shadowy figures, from the piercing gazes of the crowd. This time, her pursuers weren't the cold, clinical researchers of the Newtype Labs. No, it was the Federation Security Organization, the FSO, hot on her heels. The FSO had intensified their surveillance, convinced that former Newtypes were lurking in the shadows of the AEUG. And as if to prove it, Bright made a move, followed by Hayato and even the legendary Amuro.

To make matters worse, the Audhumla, carrying a contingent of AEUG personnel, was steadily making its way north.

The FSO's Japanese branch, dreading the possibility of contact between the AEUG and Sayla, had taken matters into their own hands, issuing a unilateral order for her elimination.

She had fled, anticipating this very scenario.

And so, in the bitter cold of Hokkaido, with the onset of winter looming, under a gloomy sky that seemed to mirror her fate, the Sea of Okhotsk raged, white-capped waves crashing relentlessly onto the shore. There, a solitary figure trudged through the sand.

Collar turned up against the biting wind, her steps heavy with exhaustion, she pressed on.

Her hair had lost its luster, and beneath the dark sunglasses lay eyes weary to the bone, but there was no doubt it was Sayla.

Having evaded the FSO's tenacious pursuit, she had finally been driven to this farthest reaches of the land. Though they had lost her trail in Kyoto, they weren't foolish enough to let her escape the archipelago by plane. In the face of the organization's murderous intent, it was a miracle she had survived this long.

But she was cornered, her mind and body pushed to their limits. Even without falling into the FSO's clutches, she teetered on the brink of collapse. And that was a luxury she couldn't afford.

Sayla's steps faltered, a small bag slipping from her grasp.

Before her loomed a shadowy figure, a black gun gripped in their hand.

The waves crashed between the two locked in a standoff. She no longer had the will to run. All that remained was a quiet, serene acceptance of whatever fate awaited her.

"Sayla Mass, or should I say, Artesia Som Deikun?" the shadowy figure questioned, their voice barely audible over the roaring waves. Something about that voice stirred an ancient, familiar feeling within her. The waves crashed again, as if punctuating the moment.

She nodded silently, a gesture of resignation. And before the waves could crash once more, her body crumpled onto the sandy shore, like a marionette whose strings had been cut.

In that instant of collapse, as consciousness faded, Sayla understood why the man's voice had felt so familiar.



Though his face, his memories, his very essence had been altered, he was a man she knew intimately. Before relocating to Side 7, she had learned the weight of a man from him.

Rumors had circulated about him taking an administrative position within the Federation, but to think he had been altered by the FSO...

Her emotions, raw and powerful, stirred a fragment of his sealed memories, and tears welled up in his eyes, spilling down his cheeks. But even as they flowed, he couldn't fathom why.

Chapter.04

Ascension

And thus began the soaring of Sayla's soul, free from the shackles of her mortal form.

Hokkaido, the Japanese archipelago, rapidly shrank, becoming a chain of islands clinging to the edge of the continent. Then the Earth itself grew small, until even the moon and the colonies could be sensed. Soon Mars, Venus... Her soul soared through the universe in this manner.

Leaving the solar system behind, she ventured beyond the confines of the galaxy, past the swirling dance of the galactic cluster, even surpassing the very edge of the known universe.

Beyond the edge, beyond the realm of matter, she beheld billions upon billions of souls. The souls of the living, the souls of those who had passed on, and the souls of those yet to be born, all shining with an otherworldly brilliance as they sought to ascend to greater heights.

Among the sea of souls, Sayla recognized some familiar presences.

"Brother," she whispered, her voice echoing in the ethereal expanse.

"Artesia?" A small, flickering soul responded, its light pulsing with a mixture of emotions.

"I'm sorry. I can't see you anymore, brother."

At her words, the small soul trembled, its light pulsating erratically. Sadness, memories, and hatred swirled within its depths, the hue of hatred stinging Sayla's eyes and drawing forth tears. It was a testament to the countless acts of slaughter that had marred her brother's existence, acts that could only hinder the ascent of these souls, dragging them down into the mire of suffering.

"But that doesn't mean I can stop. Humans are creatures that can't escape conflict."

"Yes, I know."

And she did. She understood her brother's actions, his thoughts, his very essence. Without judgment, without condemnation, she accepted him as he was, flaws and all.

Everything, she realized, was fate. Her brother's path, humanity's inability to escape the cycle of conflict, even the ascent of these souls—all of it was part of a grand, inexorable design.

As she drifted among the souls, Sayla encountered other familiar presences. Comrades from her time aboard White Base—Bright, Mirai, Hayato, Frau—as well as her parents and countless others she had crossed paths with, however briefly.

Some souls, she noticed, were oddly intertwined.

"Ms. Sayla?"

"Yes, that's right. Are you Amuro? Or are you Lalah?"

"I am both, and yet neither," the voice replied, a feminine lilt to its tone.

"We're slowly, bit by bit, melding together. The paths we walked in life were different, and we're man and woman, after all."

"Little by little, as naturally as breathing, we're becoming one."

"And when we've fully merged, we'll ascend to the heights of that sky. The very heights you now face."

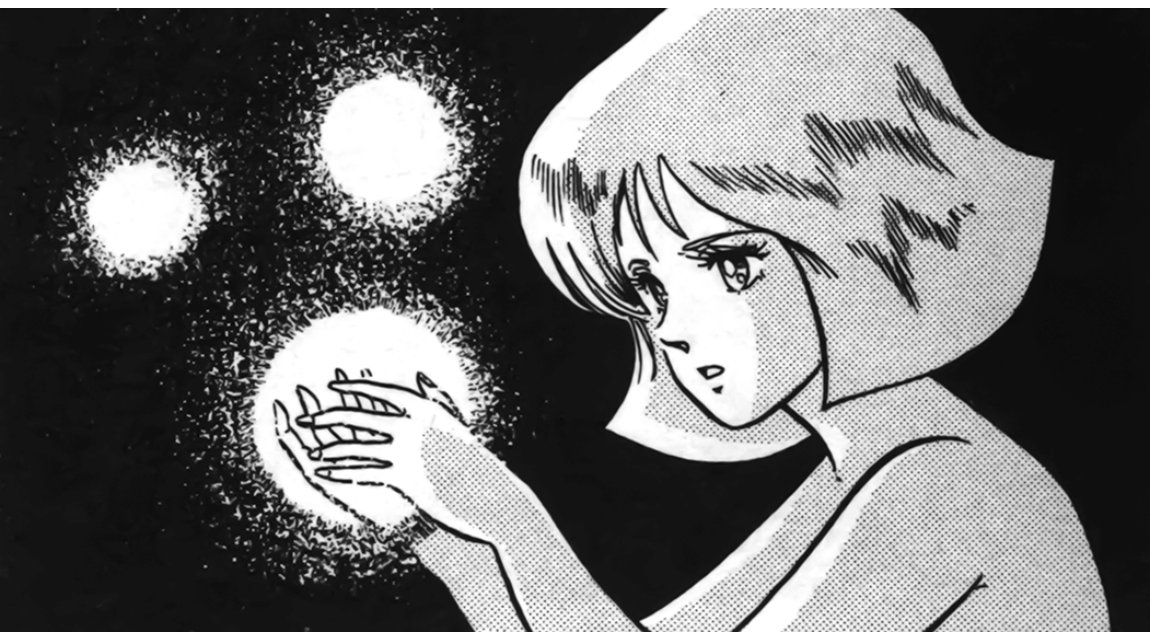
As the voice spoke, it became a harmonious blend of two souls, distinct yet inseparable. Sayla encountered other souls she had never met in life, some bearing the scars of scientific tampering, their essences warped by the hubris of man.

Amidst the sea of souls, one in particular caught Sayla's eye—a brilliantly shining presence that, while unfamiliar, bore the traces of her brother's touch and the influence of others she held dear. Gently, she cupped the soul in her hands, and it danced playfully in her palms, eliciting a smile from her lips.

If this soul could continue to grow, to flourish in the light, Sayla knew it would ascend to heights greater than any other. Such was the purity of its radiance, the strength of her belief in its potential.

In this way, she soared through the sea of souls.

The souls ascended, some with a dim glow, others with a piercing brilliance. Their ascent, too, varied in speed, with some even sinking. Seen from afar, the souls might appear to neither rise nor fall. Yet as a whole, they were ascending, slowly but surely. Only, the heights they sought were far, far beyond.



Chapter.05

Embrace

Sayla's soul eventually emerged into a place of nothingness. Having already transcended the very concept of space, it was a realm that couldn't even be called space.

There, she pondered. Why was it that only her soul could ascend to these heights? Was it because she was a Newtype?

Because she was the daughter of Zeon? Because she had been slain by that man?

The answers to such questions remained elusive. And to find those answers, she continued her ascent.

However, one thing could be said with certainty. Regardless of whether one was a Newtype or not, anyone had the potential to ascend to these heights while still living, and to leap to even greater heights. But humans and the flesh, or perhaps matter itself, hindered it. And human thought itself prevented it.

If humans lacked intelligence, the very desire to ascend to these heights likely wouldn't have arisen. But humans had directed the bulk of their intelligence toward tools.



If the effort poured into advancing science and technology had been channeled into purifying the soul, perhaps humans would have already reached these heights.

Instead, humans crafted notions of language, ethnicity, nations, shackling themselves. Toying with such constructs while knowing they held no substance, were mere figments of their imagination.

Even so, the human soul was slowly ascending.

The moment she realized this, a single phrase naturally escaped her lips.

"Ah, I can still love humans this much."

Instantly, a light appeared before Sayla.

At its sudden manifestation, Sayla curled up, halting her ascent. But the light's warmth unraveled her form, and Sayla surrendered herself wholly to its embrace.

As she drew closer, the light grew warmer, stronger. Simply by being exposed to it, the last impurities, the last traces of murkiness clinging to Sayla's soul melted away.

Radiant beings appeared around Sayla. Too brilliant to be called souls, too sacred for the term "gods." They were likely souls that had ascended to these heights from Earth, or perhaps other celestial bodies.

Surrounded by them, Sayla approached the light. Beyond it lay all the answers.

Sayla took a step.

Beyond good and evil, beyond the thoughts of gods, beyond the very essence of the soul.

Eventually, Sayla would...

Eventually...

Final.Chapter A Single Snowflake

The lapping waves yearned to draw her body into the motherly sea. Her sunglasses had already been carried far out to sea.

Her face, caressed by the waves, was beautiful, bearing no traces of hardship, as innocent as a maiden's. Snow began to dance down from the heavens. The first flake came to rest on her face, remaining there without melting.

And on her face was a blissful smile.

And...

The End