
蜘蛛
にゃるら
講談社

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About this book

Modern-day Tokyo. A young girl named Kana. She feels a moderate loneliness—not enough to reach despair. Her days pass in a haze of listless meetups with aimless nerds, all acquaintances from the giant social network Tweeter, where anime profile pictures abound. But one encounter with a certain girl brings color to Kana's life. The girl was fleeting, beautiful, like a gift from the heavens. That beautiful girl called herself "Ame."

This is the story, or perhaps the epitaph, of a girl suffering from the curse of mediocrity.

Spider

While the venerable Buddha looked at the state of Hell, He remembered that among those who were being scourged was one who once saved a spider's life. As a reward for this one good deed, if possible, He thought of rescuing this man from Hell. Fortunately, He saw near Him over a jade leaf of a lotus, a single heavenly spider, hung up by a beautiful silver thread. The Buddha gently took the spider's thread in His hand, and like dew falling down from a white lotus, the thread went into the depths of Hell.

Ryonosuke Akutagawa, The Spider's Thread

If no one ever sees me, why was I even born?

I wanted to go off the predetermined rails, because I thought that by doing so I would barge into an uncommon place.

I was not a bad student, despite not having followed my studies into university. I abandoned my parents' house to start living alone. Even though I sound cool saying that, my nosy mother gave me money and food, and paid for all my moving expenses.

Without thinking of the future, I went up alone to Tokyo as an eighteen-year-old to work as a part-timer.

I won't graduate from a university, I won't work for a so-called good company, I won't be a cog in the machine. Live rock 'n' roll!

I dreamt that everyone would admire my punk spirit, and that the praise of the masses would soar me towards a high stage.

As if that would ever happen.

My naivete, sweet as candy, was shattered once I saw the happy campus life of my classmates who I once secretly looked down upon. They went into universities and vocational school, living their lives normally, spending everyday in groups living that idiot "student life".

While those shit-for-brains university students were doing their thing, I was enjoying my exciting rock 'n' roller life, and thought they were burning with jealousy, and would begrudgingly give me likes.

Again, as if.

The life of a part-timer in a tattered apartment is just a cheap moratorium, and it feeds my inferiority complex for those around my age. My real-life friends from my electrifying high school days were now distant since I muted and removed them. All that was left was some tens of thousands of yen in part-time wages earned by wasting my precious teenage years.

When I catch sight of university students having fun forming groups, drinking alcohol and making love, my desire to stab someone to death boils inside me like magma, but before I can throw it up as vomit I realize how stupid it is and hold myself down. If there was a knife and a

university student standing right in front of me, I would... say goodbye to my pitiful self.

For the first time, I got quite a bit of money from my part-time job, so I bought a somewhat expensive camera.

I'm not like them.

I'm not like those guys with anime profile pictures you find in droves if you throw a pebble in the sea of the internet.

I will make videos. I will talk on stream.

With my high intelligence and great looks, my charisma will be all over the world in the blink of an eye. Millions will become followers of my rock 'n' roll. Tonight begins my beautiful legend!

As a test, I tried standing in front of the camera, mounted on a tripod.

Shit.

My hands were shaking.

My legs were shaking.

My voice was hoarse.

My vision was blurry.

Even if that camera would record my true self, I imagined the water-boarding of self-important kindness and tenacious malice from who knows how many people. There's no way that a rock 'n' roller wannabe who went to Tokyo without going to college could endure that.

The truth about me is, I'm just someone who knows a bit about music, manga, and anime, and despite being poor, I have an obsession with lolita fashion[1]. With such awful qualifications, there's nothing to be proud of.

As an escape, I unlocked my phone, and even though I've distanced myself from my classmates by muting them, I go out of my way to look at their accounts and get irritated.

One of them was advancing in art school and posted an indie anime short, that was trending and got thousands of likes. Everybody was amazed at the new talent that was sprouting.

[1]A subculture in Japan that originated in the 1980s, inspired by Victorian and Rococo clothing styles.

In an instant, I threw my phone at the bed. I tore the camera from the tripod, lifted it above my head and smashed the thing right then. In the same day that I bought my expensive camera (well, for a part-timer), I destroyed it. That is my rock 'n' roll.

I struck the Ultraman pose with my right arm, and remained motionless like that for a while. If I were the Giant of Light, the color timer would be flashing and I would have already gone home.[2] I meekly lower down my trembling arms.

Pathetic. Pathetic. Everything's wrong.

To let out all this weight, I annoyed the neighbors downstairs by stomping my feet and putting on some Black Sabbath [3]. Full of tears, I started beating my thighs, but not hard enough to leave a bruise. This is so stupid. I can't even pretend I'm going crazy. The brakes on my mind won't let me step outside of my half-baked common sense and morals.

I want to die. To put it bluntly, I want to die, but I can't do it.

Die. You should die. Everyone, everyone should just die already. After that, I should die too.

Is that unreasonable?

Even if I were the last person in the world, I wouldn't be able to commit suicide. That's the kind of woman I am.

I should have gone to college.

[2] Ultraman is a popular Japanese tokusatsu (like Power Rangers) franchise featuring a giant alien hero who defends Earth from kaiju (monsters). The "color timer" is a key feature of Ultraman's design, indicating his limited time on Earth before needing to recharge.

[3] Formed in 1968, Black Sabbath is widely regarded as one of the most influential heavy metal bands in history.

"...what is it?"

"Why is OMGkawaiiAngel so amazing?" - it was asked.

"Hmmm..."

"So like, I've been an angel since the moment I was born, right?"

"Of course, it is my fate to be the Internet Angel, descended from the heavens, right? "

"I know it!"

"That one day, I'll be the angel who will bring salvation to everyone who is in front of a monitor."

"Like, it whispers to you, you know?"

"Great people around the world are like 'I found my mission', right?"

"Me? I just believed in mine, that's all."

I want to become someone. Someone, I want to become.
It's a feeling all people around my age have, I believe. Through social media and streaming sites, we have an endless scroll of great people of our generation shining brightly, and we can't help but look up to them. School and work are walled gardens that will never let us have a taste of this. The feeling of superiority for being praised by countless people. The comfort. The raise of self-esteem. The spike of neurotransmitters. I want to taste it just once. No, I want to be hooked to that pleasure until I die. I long for it.

By chance I opened up a stream of a beautiful girl, who was looking kind of dumb with her flashy costume, that was happily chatting with her viewers. She was called "OMGkawaiiAngel", or just "KAngel", for short. Girls like these are very popular. She didn't make her details public, but she seemed to be around 20 years old, like me. Even though I don't like influencers very much, she appeared on my feed, so she must be very popular. Her channel has 800,000 subscribers, and her her basic chat stream gathered around 20,000 viewers.

It must feel good. To be noticed by so many people. To have all the money and popularity you want. To sing, dance, buy things, have fun, fall in love. A fulfilling and glorious life awaits her. Of course, she will experience more worries and troubles than one can imagine since she is a celebrity. But, isn't it better than a life with nothing? Boredom is more cruel than pain.

Kana. That's my name. Normal. A freeter who just turned 20. A girl with no notable achievements who is destined to continue to hover around the average. The difference between my life and OMGkawaiiAngel's is like night and day. Soon, it will be hard for me to still call myself a "girl," and I will have to "try" to be stuck between being a "girl" and a "woman." Even this worry will become commonplace, soon.

My life needs to change, right now.

My internal debate returns to the beginning. "I want to become someone." Or rather, why was I even born? I'm sure the people on the internet would respond with something like, "theres no point for anyone

to be born lmao." I'm going to be cynical now and pretend I know why. In reality, I want to become a star, too. I don't surface this desire, however. I don't want to end up like "Young Girl A" [4] without having done anything.

How to Become Someone

Well, pessimism won't help, so let's think a realistic way to become someone. First, let's close KAngel's stream. Her high-pitched voice is annoying me. Keep being a nerd forever, loser. Actually, I hope she collaborates with me when I become a big shot.

How to Become Someone, Option 1: Effort

Obviously, the best way. Study for qualification exams now and get a rare job, or work hard at illustration or music and become a famous content creator. It seems to be the case that if one works hard towards something for ten years, they can become anything. If I were to sit down and draw in my desk every day from now, I could blossom as an illustrator by the time I'm 30, and influencers and streamers might ask me, "Master, can you do a commision for me?", It would also be nice to provide an avatar to a major VTuber company and become a mama.[5] Uh-huh. Perfect plan.

Except I can't endure a month of practice, let alone ten years!

Of course. If I was the type who could put all my effort into something, I would be in education or working hard as a content creator by now. Don't ever underestimate mediocre people. For instance, I never put effort effort in anything for 20 years just to be a contratian to the adults.

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[4] Young Girl A is a viral Japanese music video. The composer of the song is rumored to have committed suicide.

[5] A VTuber is a YouTuber who uses a digital avatar, often anime-inspired, to create content. Creators of VTuber avatars are sometimes called "mamas" or "papas".

How to Become Someone, Option 2: Become a Streamer

This is a little more realistic than option 1. Of course, this requires effort as well, but what kind of project can I even turn it into? Halt!

How to Become Someone, Option 3: Sell Your Body and Get Rich, and Think About It Later

An even more realistic option.

The so-called sugar daddies. I'm 20 years old, so even if it doesn't reach sex, I might get 10,000 or 20,000 yen just for dinners. But if it does reach sex, hundreds of thousands of yen a month is not farfetched.

Then use that money to get plastic surgery, become cute and then be strong to start a new game in the industry. Or create a selfie account and become the target of admiration of young girls, or become a cosplayer and get lots of money and attention from the nerds. There must be lots of girls in this path... well, since sugar daddying is declining, maybe prostitution...

That is not an option, from the get-go. It is wrong. It would violate my ethics, chastity, money, and above all, my soul. There's no point in aiming to become someone for happiness if my soul is tainted. Besides, I haven't given up on romance.

And it's a downwards spiral. A girl I follow, in her lust for money, began working at men's beauty salon, because it was "hands only", but ended becoming a full-blown prostitute. She has the money she wanted, so she's satisfied, for now. But when the fantasy begins shattering, I worry for her... Also, in this path, if you become someone and your dirty past is exposed, your father might commit seppuku.[6]

[6] Ritual suicide by disembowelment.

How to Become Someone, Option 4: Becoming a Public Speaker Online

This is stupidly easy.

Mainly on the internet, you can say things like "As a woman, I can't allow this!", or "Politics for the young!", and wage war against windmills and gains lots of followers fast doing so. Someone's enemy is someone's ally. The bigger the enemy you're fighting, the more people you'll attract. "Twenty-year-old girls are on our side, too!" Old men and women will be delighted and fawn over that. Then, if you effectively distribute your opinions that incite conflict in paid articles, it's perfect. You'll even make money.

I'm sure there's more to be lost doing so that I'm seeing. If I narrow my field of vision this much, I might not be able to see what's around me, and that might surprisingly make me happy. I don't think I need that happiness, however.

Yeah. After thinking about it this far, I realized that people who live proper lives just take action instead of doing something as pointless as "pretending to think seriously about something." I just think a lot and then don't use any option. It's just vanity, to create the appearence of being an introspective person. KAngel's stream is still on my feed, and her viewers have increased by 2,000.

This is what I'm saying, KAngel wouldn't list "How to Become Someone, Options 1 to 4". I'm such an idiot. I guess HUNTER X HUNTER [7] is so cool because the amount of text in a battle makes it more exciting.

[7] A popular manga series by Yoshihiro Togashi, known for its intricate plot, strategic battles, and deep character development.

Up until now, people have been twiting things like, "My grades are in trouble ", "At this rate, my college life is over," or "Seriously, I'm nothing... I'm so jealous of the popular guys." But as soon as they get a job offer, they immediately shift from losers to winners. "Somehow, things worked out! But I'm so incompetent—do you think I'll even be useful in society?" Even now, they make sure to lay down pretenses like, "I'm just as hopeless as everyone else."

It's like turning your brain off. I've wasted my time yet again.

Let's see what the idiots on Tweeter[8] are up to. The anime profile pictures are uppity tonight. Just like my twits, comments from them are just ramblings of mediocre people. Sometimes, if I'm lucky, my twits will go viral and I'll act popular for a moment, but the next day I'm back to being Nerd Exhibit A again. That's how it is.

Out of nowhere, I get angry. In the midst of this sea of idiots who are addicted to the internet (including myself. I'm being self-deprecating), a man has managed to get a job at a major company!

"Don't be ridiculous. Am I really supposed to think that useless lowlifes like *you* had success in job hunting!?!? You've said that you did repeat a year, didn't you? Now you're just going to keep complaining about the company in a humorous way, enjoy a decent life, gain lots of experience as a working adult, and before you know it you're going to be married with a great face, right? Oi!!!!!!"

I can't allow that. I can't allow that, but it is what it is. If I were to post a comment like that, my social status would plummet. "A spiteful, jealous woman." In the eyes of society, those who go out and pay taxes five days a week are by far superior. Insults and slander from the bottom of the internet make you the scum of the scum. One wrong step and you'll be slandered and sent to hell. Ah, I think I'll jump off the window right now and die. I'm on the second floor, however, so I can't die. The best I can hope for is to be the stupid woman who jumped from her

[8] In the case where a brand name appears distorted in Needy Girl Overdose (NGO) and it also appears in this book, the distorted name used in NGO will be used for the sake of consistency.

apartment and broke her bones. I can't even die. That's right. If that's the case, I have no choice but to live in despair.

Still, there are still some people who are hopeless like me. Can they see reality for what it is as well as I do? If a guy says "I'm not popular! I want a girlfriend!" every day, women will just think "Well, this guy is not my target." Don't you understand that "I'm not popular" is effective only when popular guys use it as a trap to attract the opposite sex? That's why you are idiots.

The biggest idiot is me, who can't do anything but look down upon people on the internet like this.

I want to become someone. No, I want to be helpful to someone and be loved.

"...how was tonight's Kangel stream? Haha, y'all understood without my explanation, right? You guys are for real. You really love KAngel. You all have school or work tomorrow, right? Stay warm and sleeeeeep. Those of you who don't have school or work, stay warm too. In fact, you should be the ones to stay warm. Since you're not working, you should stay as warm as possible in your bed. Then the serious guys will get jealous, right? Let's all be happy! And please take a bath! 🙏BLESS🙏"