

At that moment, Rollins dropped the bottle. He stumbled over and grabbed a thick steel pipe from a factory yard nearby. And then, same as that day I felt that magnificent feeling of breaking my nose, same as the moment that amazing home run ball was hit, he was taking on that same damn stance, right in front of my eyes.

「.....Play ball, kid.」

I was so happy. I started shaking. This former super star wants to throw down with me? No fucking way.

「OK, got it, Rollins.」

In one breath the tension in me reached its peak. I tightened the grasp on my beam katana. With that, we set off into the garden of madness.

In an electrifying match like this, you don't need that second or third pitch. The game ends with one straight throw right down the center. We both knew that. I stabbed straight ahead. And then to meet me, Rollins grit his teeth and let loose a sharp swing, even better than he did in his heyday. Barely dodging it, I let my body sink. The next moment, my beam katana was stuck right through Rollins' ^{strike zone} heart. Game set. I pulled the beam katana out, and Rollins' giant body fell to the ground. Those eyes, they were huge and wide open. It was proof he never took 'em off the ball until the very end.

「Shit, you really were the best batter, Rollins.」

At that place, I left behind my home run ball from back then.

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Afterwards, just as I was heading home and 'cause it would be a waste to leave it there, I took the autograph board and pen back with me.

