

## The Calm Before the Storm

Blue skies stretched endlessly in the distance as Inosuke cycled to work that August morning. He'd awoken just as the sun rose, his wife Kumiko was already up, and was preparing his breakfast, as she had every morning since they'd married seven years before. His freshly laundered clothes were ready for him to get dressed.

"Are you ready for tea my dear husband?" She poured the steaming liquid from the pot and Inosuke thanked her. Their two young daughters came into the room and sleepily said goodbye as Inosuke kissed their heads. Stroking their dark silky hair, he told them to be good girls for their mother and to study hard.

Bikes and cars made their way along the road to the city centre. Inosuke recognised some of his fellow workers as they passed. His journey was three miles each way, he didn't mind, it gave him time to think about all sorts and he would arrive for work with a clear head. He was now the foreman at the factory making engine parts, a position of importance. In a year or two he hoped he could move the family into the city centre. He squinted his eyes as the rising sun sent golden shards onto the industrial buildings of the city, windows glinting in the morning light. It was already warm and beads of perspiration formed on his head.

Putting the bike in the allocated shed, Inosuke took his handkerchief from his pocket, wiped the sweat from his face and dirt from his hands. He removed his lunch from the bike's basket, taking one more look at the perfect clear sky without a cloud. He entered the dark factory and was greeted with the constant cacophony of machines running, conveyor belts chugging and orders being barked.

Inosuke put overalls over his clothes and went onto the factory floor. His manager asked him to sort out a problem with machine number 5, it was likely the cam belt needed tightening. As Inosuke turned the machine off, there was a blinding flash and a blue light filled the factory, followed by a tremendous bang. Whilst still conscious he thought, 'this cannot be a thunderstorm, the morning was so beautiful'. He had no idea how long he'd passed out for, but when he came round, he was lying on his back, he blinked and slowly opened his eyes. The factory roof had gone and he was staring at a sky filled with a huge white cloud. Then the rain began, big black, inky drops, like he'd never seen before. Inosuke was suddenly very thirsty, he recalled the tea his wife had served him that morning. Opening his mouth he tried to catch the raindrops on his tongue. The water hit his skin like electric needles. The liquid tasted oily and burnt his mouth, the smell was overpowering, almost like sulphur. His last thoughts were of his wife and daughters as he died in the hell storm.

*The atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima on the 6 August 1945. Between 70,000 and 126,000 civilians were killed.*