

Melody 141

Eternal Melody 141 Fate

"You two were a couple, at least in the eyes of everyone who saw that performance. I'm sure if it was like that for me and the audience then. For the friends who surrounded the two of you, they already knew. . . I was rather envious. Sumire, it shall be even more difficult for you from now onwards. But think about it."

"But I love Yuhi. Sumire clenches her fist. "It may seem strange to say at this stage. But I can no longer return to Arashi's side properly like before. I probably came to that realization back then, too, but I felt as though if I quickly concluded things, somebody else would suffer.

If I got into a relationship with Arashi instead, Yuhi-san would end up suffering the most.

I know plenty of girls like him would have gone out with him. But it was already too late for me to go back when I found out that he was the one who did that painting.

When I realized that all along, I wanted it to be him, even the feelings I ha for senpai seemed so very distant to me. Yet yet, when I heard what the enemy plotted with se,npai, I ended all along up taking many reckless jobs. Tell me, Soujiro, what can I do? Things can no longer go on like this."

At this point, she could no longer hold back the tears from her eyes. Surprisingly she felt Soujiro pull her into his arms.

Her eyes widened. This is the first time something like this has happened. Usually Soujiro is so rigid and formal. He would not even hold her hand in the past. They only met recently again, so how come?

"There are no short cuts in love, my dear; this is just one of the many trials you have to face. I am already at this age. I have already passed the days where I could act boldly and carefree when it comes to love."

"Soujiro, you had foolish days too?"

"You would be surprised." She felt Soujiro combs her hair with his hands,

"You are still young; this is only one of the trials you have to face. This is only the middle of the cliff; you still haven't reached the top."

"It sounds scary. Can anything be worse then what's happening now?"

"Do not think of the future and focus on your present. It's still frightening, so I shall stay with you. Do not hold anything back with me. You can do more than cry when you're with me, Sumire. I shall listen to your wishes, fears, selfish desires. Anything."

Sumire however, pulled away from him and laughed weakly. "I have to refuse you there. This will be the last time I cry in front of you."

Right now, she is barely managing to deal with all her emotions when she is with Yuhi. She can barely cope with her friendships with Asami and Aika. Sometimes it is difficult to speak to Hino, Shin, and Atushi. If she were to rely on anybody else right now, she would break.

"I see, then I shall respect that decision of yours."

...

Iro Road High School Art Main Building Rooftop - Three hours later -

It was time for the long-awaited performance.

Sumire took a deep breath as she glanced down from the ledge. There were many people gathered below.

From the very moment, she met Terashima Yuhi; fate decided it already.

Sumire wanted to see him; for the longest time, she had wanted to see him. She came to Tsukuhara high school indeed to meet with Arashi and sort everything out, but the second she heard of Quarto Lights involvement with the mysterious god of composers. Her attention almost shifted immediately. Before she knew it instead of focusing on Arashi, she desperately searched for any hint. ' You'll have to go to Tokyo, His main base of operation in Tokyo.

It was a stretch to say so the least because even if she went to Tokyo, there would be no chance of meeting him. It's a large place and yet even before she went. During the time, she was making her decision; he appeared before her again. Just like that, he reappeared in her life.

Sumire remembered it quite clearly, how she broke down terribly after Ru passed away, how she was taken away by Aki, and sobbed uncontrollably for days. Her world seemed to turn pitch black, and yet the second she heard was that he had been there.

Had come to see her, she found her strength to stand up. When she received that note, she didn't think he would show up. But he did, and they spoke, spoke quite a bit, and when it was time for them to part. He slyly whispered in her ear, ' I'll be waiting for you in TOKYO.'

Like a fool, she completely fell into his pace.

Had she not come here. Would things have been different when they met? Would these feelings that she could not tell him back then have disappeared? Sumire already knew what the answer was, no. Even if she didn't go, these feelings would not have disappeared. But more people would have been hurt.

Its because she met Yuhi, that she could find what she had been looking for this entire time. Even if they had no connection in their past lives, she is sure in this life they will remain together forever.

"Sumire," Yuhi called out, breaking her thoughts. "You sure?"

He was talking about the curtain. She decided not to use any of the disguise methods Yuhi planned. "I think I can do it since I am in a high place."

From here, she will not be able to see the audience. But she is afraid. "I have always had good hearing." Even if she cannot see their faces, she could still hear.

Sumire recalled it all too well. Voices of dissatisfaction and the disappointment in their voices.

Is it truly okay for her to stand here and sing? What if she makes a mistake again? What if people deny her existence? Ru, this is very scary.

How can I sing when you are no longer here? How can I--

Her thoughts broke off when Yuhi kissed her. It was not a gentle nor romantic kiss but a kiss filled with passion. For a moment, she completely froze, the two of them are a couple. But even now, such kisses surprise her. She is surprised, and yet she is content. The anxious feeling and fear from moments ago vanished in an instance.

When he finally pulled away, she covered her red-stained face with her hands. But Yuhi grabbed hold of it. "Better?" One word escaped his lips, but it was enough for her to want to crawl into a hole somewhere.

Why does he suddenly look more handsome? Is she going crazy? She must be going crazy; otherwise, she would not think such things right now.

Yuhi brushed their foreheads together. "Sumire?"

"Thank--Thank you Yuhi-san."

"Your welcome, good luck."

She can't argue or even act unreasonably with this person. She has a difficult personality, and yet this person makes her submit so easily. He does not have to dominate her as Sano did; no all he has to do is treat her with genuine kindness and affection.

Eternal Melody 142 Reach

From here, she can hear them better than she would normally—the voices of the audience.

She doesn't have to say anything, nor looking at anything. Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

Quite some time has passed since she last sang this song. But why would she forget the lyrics? The lyrics that took her so long to write.

Her debut song superstar of tomorrow received many reviews. There are mixed opinions. Some people saw it as a typical idol song. But there are those analyzed it.

"A star falls down before me at dawn, that's because I miss you.

At the moment, when I don't hesitate anymore, the words I blurt out express what I think."

Happiness, sadness, and anger - emotions that she doesn't very well.

She didn't understand it. But 'he' was the one who helped her understand. How beautiful this world is because of the emotions people feel.

"I have endless words to say.

Without noticing, my cheeks flushed...

I'm in front of you."

"All lights gather into a ray.

I hope you can be a little braver.

Every word you answer is so brilliant and dazzling.

You are like a star in the night sky.

Staying on the horizon

You sparkle for me..."

.....

Two hours later - 8:00 PM

"Is it okay for us to stay up here and not join them?" Sumire asked. Everybody looked hyped up despite the current dull folk song being played at the campfire.

"It's fine, do you want to go?"

"Well, there are more festivals to come, so I am not worried about not experiencing the campfire."

Yuhi chuckled. "That is a positive way to look at things."

"Yuhi, we won first place for the best event today. I am happy, but I ended up doing nothing to help." She ended up falling asleep again after her meeting with Soujiro too.

"You sure about that? You kept me company."

Sumire rolled her eyes. "How does that help everyone?"

"Because of you, I kept the pests away, and everybody thought I provided good service to one girl for a long time."

She feels terrible for tricking everybody, but if it contributed to good sales, then she supposes it is fine. Her thoughts broke off when Yuhi suddenly rested his head on her lap.

"Are you tired, Yuhi?" Sumire mumbled.

"Yeah, I am."

"Sorry about everything. I keep causing you problems, I know you told me it is okay to do so but--"

Yuhi extended his hand out to caress her face. "I was happy when you said that you would rely on me."

"Yuhi.."

"I love you a lot Sumire. If you still haven't adjusted to me, that is fine. But I want you to understand my feelings for you."

"I do understand, Yuhi."

Sumire lowered her face, and bravely kissed him.

"Mmmmm, good. That's good."

It's good, huh? She still doesn't understand this type of thing very well. But if he is comfortable with this, then she does not mind doing it this way.

Sumire quickly regretted that thought when she realized how passionate the kiss was turning. Uh, it seems like she has underestimated him. She thought Yuhi would hold back kissing her since they are still on school grounds. But it looks like this fool does not care about time nor place.

"Yuhi-san, my neck hurts.."

He broke their kiss and sat back up. He pushed her against the railing and bent down. "Want to continue? Or should we stop now?"

"C-continue."

Yuhi gently kissed her forehead. "Tell me when to stop."

He cupped her cheeks and slowly nibbled on her bottom lip. Sumire managed to open her mouth, and he immediately slid his tongue inside. It didn't take long before Yuhi explored her mouth again. The way he kissed her left her feeling all strange and muddled.

She felt hot all over, her face flushed. How come Yuhi-san can kiss like this? Isn't he a high school student? She felt his hand on her thighs, and she stops him.

"S-stop."

Yuhi pulled back and ran his hands through his hair. "Damn...As I thought, only you can get me this worked up."

"Uhh, right."

That was close, what on earth was he about to do there? She needs to have more self-awareness.

"You know I've been with many girls, Sumire. I won't lie to you about that. But none of them made me feel like this."

"Feel?"

Yuhi grabbed her hand and pulled it towards his chest.

"Yeah."

"Yuhi..."

He bent down and kissed her forehead. "You're so red right now. I guess I can stop." He moved away from her. "Mind if I smoke?"

Normally she would. But, she still felt a bit dazed after that passionate kiss. She slowly nodded her head and watched as he pulled out a cigarette and lighter. 'Yuhi-san doesn't act like a normal high school student. How did he get into the nightclub so easily? Fake ID? How did he have the means to make one--

Ah, it's the same scene as before. Whenever he is thinking about something, it looks dazzling to her. The perfect scene to paint. If she were to capture this moment through a lens and then paint it later. 'What colors would I use?' What is the best color to represent this scene right now?

"You're singing is better than before."

Sumire blinked. "I suppose."

"Not satisfied?"

"I feel overwhelmed. I haven't sung like that in a while, so I can't tell if I did well or not."

All she knew was right; at that moment, she felt a rush of different emotions.

"I see."

"...Say Yuhi-san, could I get closer?"

Yuhi nodded. "Yeah."

Despite his one-worded responses, Sumire saw the way he was looking at her. If he looks at her like that, how is she supposed to stay away from him? Sumire awkwardly positioned herself on his lap, and Yuhi chuckled.

"For somebody so red, you occasionally do these brave things."

Sumire sighed. "I am tired, that's all."

"I see, are you comfortable in my arms?"

"Yes."

Yuhi blinked, and then he suddenly flicked her forehead. "You know, since we are on this subject, let me tell you something. Now that I know you're not doing it deliberately let me tell you something."

Sumire laughed softly. "Wait, I think I understand, and I'm sorry. But don't laugh, okay?" She trailed off. "When I'm close to you, I feel very comfortable. All the worries and fears I have vanished. Even if it's only for a few minutes. I find peace, that's why--" her sentence fell short when he brushed his fingers across her lips. "Yuhi-san..."

"Yeah, I get it. That's fine with me. I figured it was like that. But I end up getting worked up whenever you get near to me... Damn, I'm more nervous than I thought." Yuhi averted his gaze.

Sumire looked at him strangely. Why is he embarrassed? This time around, she did nothing to tease him. But her gaze fell towards Yuhi. A bright shade of red stained his cheeks, no his entire face.

Thump, thump. She felt the sound of her heartbeat increase. It seems like this person keeps defeating her. He has no idea, does he? The effect he has on her.

Sumire caressed his cheeks. "Yuhi-san, I want to do something bad to you."

"...do it."

She brushed their lips together and kissed him. The sounds of fireworks and their classmate's laughter from the campfire drew her attention. But only briefly when she felt his hand around her waist, drawing her closer.

She won't tell him how her heart races and chest aches whenever they are together. Whenever he holds her like this, she feels like crying due to the overwhelming happiness.

From now on, what will their future be like?

Eternal Melody 143 Investigate

Tuesday, April 10th, 2015

Sumire looked around at her surroundings again and sighed. It seems like she managed to lose that crowd. Ever since the performance at the school festival, she did not get a single moment of peace. Her phone kept continually ringing. On the net, she was everywhere. Whenever she went outside, she would end up surrounded. She felt like a huge star when she was still nobody.

So Hino suggested that she wore a disguise from now on. Her gaze fell towards her reflection on the shop mirror nearby and sighed. A hat, large glasses and what is with these clothes? Hino insisted that if she dresses the opposite to her usual style, then nobody would recognize her.

But it seems like that isn't working. Sumire entered one of the stores and picked some simple clothes off the shelves and got changed in the dressing room. She paused, however, when she saw a dark-colored bruise form on her arm.

It's happening again, the injury from that time. When she woke up in the hospital that day, she noticed this injury, but it did not look this large. Over time she noticed how large it became. It concerned her, but she did not want to fuss over it. Now that she got a better look, perhaps it would be better if she got somebody to look.

Sumire quickly got dressed, paid for the clothes, and headed out. She only walked for a few minutes before she noticed somebody. On the pathway that would lead to the outskirts of town, there was Shin. He glanced over at her and nodded.

"Those clothes are better for moving about, unlike the dress from earlier."

She raised her eyebrows at this comment of his. Was he watching her since then?

"You came here to investigate the base Mamoru was investigating before, right?"

Sumire nodded. "I thought I would find something."

"Does Yuhi know your ditching class for this?"

At that comment, Sumire flinched.

Shin sighed. "I don't even know if he is attending class this morning. So you have time to stall until he comes back."

"I see." Sumire trailed off. She felt a bit bad; she doesn't even know what his schedule is like recently. But after she got a lead, Sumire decided she would follow up on it. When she paid a visit to Sano's company the other day, she overheard something from the people there.

"Shin, your coming with me?"

"Somebody has to watch you."

"What about school?"

"I have no classes to teach this morning, and I had work," Shin explained.

Work? Ah, that's right Shin is an idol too. Since she normally saw him at school, sometimes she forgets about his real profession.

"Shin, why do you know where the base is?"

"That's because he asked me for help several times. Even though I have nothing to do with the underworld anymore, he was very persistent. He wanted my insight and skills regarding the things he found in the base."

"The things he found?"

"A large number of organs and stress care medication."

"Stress care?"

"There were other things too. But they mixed the substances up, so he sent it to me to investigate. I worked on it during my free time, but I don't know."

Sumire blinked. "Then maybe it isn't a mixed substance, but something new?"

No matter what the substance is. There will always be a reaction if it's something that already exists. If Shin couldn't find out what that something is, then it must be something new. So the person in charge of that base must be a scientist.

"Why are you so interested in this case? Do you think these people have something to do with his death?"

Sumire sighed. "You don't think so? I mean, they were the last person he was investigating."

"No, I do. They are the obvious culprits. But the police overlooked it. Mamoru met with these people the day before the accident."

"Eh?"

Shin continued. "He wasn't there for your final practice, right?"

"That's true. So he went to Tokyo?"

"That's right. He made a quick trip. I was with him at the time. He said he wanted extra hands just in case it was a trap. But the talk went smoothly. They even said they would surrender now that their secret is out."

"Secret?" She repeated.

A dim gaze appeared on Shin's face. "I think there was something he found out but couldn't tell me."

"It sounds like you two were good friends. I had no idea."

Shin sighed. "That's your reaction?"

"Well, when it comes to matters of the underworld, there isn't much to say."

What else could anybody say? There will always be something suspicious and abnormal.

"Then, if you can look at it that way, I will give you insight into what he discovered. The reason Mamoru investigated these people isn't a simple case of drugs like the initial report stated. It's connected to a missing person case."

"Are you talking about what happened three years ago when people started to go missing randomly? It wasn't just one case but several."

"That's right, you know of it?"

"I was also told to investigate it. Several members of Kyofu disappeared."

"That case was closed because the missing people appeared again."

Her eyes widened at that. "But none of the members returned..."

"The ones who came back were normal civilians... The important officials and members of the underworld vanished completely. When we interrogated the civilians, they couldn't tell us much either. The police did not get anything valuable."

She raised her eyebrows as she listened to Shin. How come he knows about the unreleased information from the police? It seems like she does not know anything about this person. He is an idol and teacher. But a crazy idea appeared in her head; maybe Shin is somehow connected with the police force too?

Her thoughts broke off when she hears a clattering sound. She glanced at the source to find a gorgeous maple leaf bracelet on his wrist. "This?"

"It will keep you safe." Shin trailed off when he saw her confused expression. "There is a tracking device there."

"I see." It looked like a normal bracelet, so she is sure that nobody would suspect anything. "Are you trying to dodge my question?" Sumire mumbled.

"Well, you will learn about it sooner or later. Besides, I came along intending to tell you everything. Mamoru gave me instructions anyway, just in case anything were to happen. Not only would I take over, but I would ask for your help."

Sumire sighed when she heard those words. "Normally, the guy is supposed to protect his girl from harmful situations."

"Mamoru was very reluctant. But I suggested it would be better to have you on board. You're smarter than me, and you learn faster than most people do."

She blinked when she heard his praise. Did Shin just admit that she was smarter than him?

Eternal Melody 144 Something abnormal

"Don't let it get to your head." Shin looked away. "You still haven't entered any official tournaments. Until you do, these words are empty."

Sumire sighed at his words. 'This man knows how to ruin the moment. No wonder I don't see any girls around him.' Still, it would have taken a lot to persuade Mamoru to put her in harm's way. Ru didn't treat her like glass and included her in dangerous jobs before. But if it became too dangerous, he wouldn't allow her.

"I don't have any memories before I was six years old. Ru knew about this and said he would help me." Sumire mumbled. She laughed awkwardly. "I know it's strange saying this now, but I figured if I helped you - you would need this information."

She mentioned it casually, but Sumire saw Shin flinch.

"Shin? What's wrong?"

"Nothing. Alright, let me give you some more details on this case. Sumire, do you believe in supernatural powers?"

She blinked when she heard those words. "Uh?"

"Well, this case is linked to something abnormal. The witness reports and according to the victim's memory, state that somebody teleported them to another space. First, they would only be teleported a certain distance from the last spot, but then the distance grew. Soon they would no longer be in the Japan they knew."

"So, you're saying they would end up in a place similar to here, but everything is different? Including people's relationships?"

Shin nodded. "Correct, one example was a particular woman. Her boyfriend was dating another girl, and he didn't know her. She found it strange. 'How can that be? Were childhood friends who live next door.' The girl went to her home and realized it wasn't there. Her home area wasn't a residential area but a shopping district. Her boyfriend lived elsewhere too."

"In the case, this is right. Why would anyone teleport humans like some kind of game?"

"Game?"

Sumire nodded. "It sounds like a game if you ask me. They are teleporting these people with no destination in mind like some game. They even sent some people back."

"I see, that sounds right."

For a moment, it was quiet.

Sumire noticed his change in expression right away. After all, ever since he came in, her gaze had never once left his. Though every single time, her gaze met hers, she would turn away quickly.

They talked this entire time but kept avoiding each other's gaze.

So it's like this, is it, she thought.

It was like that, after all.

Sumire sighed, she more or less suspected that to be the case. After all, she isn't completely dense when it comes to love. Whenever he came near her, Sumire noticed how self-conscious he seemed. Whenever he patted her head, he would avert his gaze from her.

She initially dismissed it and thought it was Nothing. But it turns out that's not the case after all. She figured that it would be like this...however this is a bit ---

"What are you doing?"

Sumire glanced over at the man who occupied her thoughts.

"You don't have to be that surprised. Here, let me help you up." Shin said, extending his hand out.

She stared at it blankly for a few minutes before snapping out of her trance. She stood up on her own. 'When did I crouch down and stop walking?'

Her deep thoughts were broken when he appeared inches away from her face.

Sumire stepped back.

"Hm? Do I look scary to you?"

"N---no, that's not it..."

'That's not it, but he is a bit too close for my liking.'

Shin suddenly grabbed hold of her arm, h--old on? She didn't get a chance to speak as he pushed her towards a nearby wall.

He loomed over her and brought his face to hers. "So, since you came back, I wanted to say this to you. Aren't you having too much fun playing around with people?"

He looked into her eyes, and she knew he saw her. She knew that he saw through the strong face she put through this entire time. Deliberately acting strong, acting playful when she would rather break down. He saw through everything she wanted to hide this entire time.

That frightened her more than anything, people discovering her act.

Sumire tried to maintain her composure, but he was so close she could barely breathe. She froze completely and couldn't blink or look away.

"Well? Aren't you going to use this sharp tongue of yours to lecture me again?"

Her eyes widened, alarmed at his harsh words.

This is ---like his behavior back then.

Argh, she knew it. He was still like this, after all. She wondered why he had changed so much after she recalled her memories. But as expected, it was just a front after all. He smirked; she knew he was mocking her. But she couldn't find the strength to respond.

"There is no use acting around me. I know what kind of woman you are. You pretend that you are strong and brave, but the reality is completely different."

These words...why? Why did she have to hear it from him also? It's frustrating.

"...Even if that's the case, you don't have any obligation to care or point it out." Sumire said as she found the strength to talk back.

She wanted to run away and escape this situation. Sumire felt her body tremble, but she shook her head.

'As I thought, I don't want to see it again, see him act this way towards me.'

Since she arrived in Tokyo, the person she got know was so very kind. 'So very kind and gentle.' There is no sign of that warmth; instead, there is Nothing but coldness. What happened so suddenly? Did she say something to upset him?

Ah, what is she saying? Right now, she sounds so childish and silly.

"That's true. I don't anymore. Despite having regained these memories, I have no feelings for you like before. A lot has happened in those years; I have tainted my hands with blood and picked up weapons again countless times."

Her eyes widened alarmed. But it didn't shock her as much as it would have earlier. After that conversation, Sumire figured that he was still involved in this side somehow.

When Shin spoke, she felt a wincing pain in her heart. Even though she already knew. She even understood that it would end up this way... Why? Why does he have to be so cruel about it?

"You are no longer important to me."

At that comment, she finally managed to push him away. "We didn't come here for this." Sumire managed to say.

"Indeed." Shin nodded. "Let's get going. Follow me."

Sumire decided not to walk beside him anymore and slowed down her pace until she trailed after him. Weren't they talking about the investigation and cases then? How did it suddenly end up this way?

Eternal Melody 145 Stain

Sumire felt that something was amiss at the gate. But she didn't think her suspicions would be correct. The entire 'base' deserted. No trace of equipment anywhere, the place was empty. Shin bent down and brushed his fingers across the ground.

"There was a fight here." Sumire pointed out. "A huge fight."

She noticed it, small traces of blood on the leaves of the plants they passed by at the gate.

"They took everything?"

Sumire nodded. "They destroyed some things too, and there are traces of a fire."

"You can tell just like that?"

"Mmmm."

"I see." Shin pulled his phone out. "I will have to report this."

"Can you wait until we leave? I don't want to be here when the police come." Sumire admitted. After how they handled her case, she didn't want anything to do with the force anymore.

"Alright, can you see anything else?"

"Rather than see, you can't smell that?"

"Smell?"

Sumire nodded, and she scanned the room. "There is a terrible stench of something rotting---" She paused in mid-thought when she recalled something.

She rushed over to the entrance, where there was a large box by the door. The door rusted, but she managed to open it. The moment she did, something fell out.

It was a corpse. The people who did this didn't even bother to cover it up. So that explains the smell, the smell of rotten meat. Or rather, the body could no longer be described as a body. It seems like crows came in and picked on the flesh. So what was left were only bones.

The sight repulsed her, but she knew she couldn't look away. This is the reality of the world. No matter how peaceful things look on the surface, there is darkness lurking in the shadows.

There is more darkness at this time than people would think. The fight between Yakuza and Yankees, the underworld. A society that people don't understand.

"Sumire?"

"Is this the person Ru met with?"

Shin walked over, and he frowned when he saw the body. "I can't tell, but he is probably one of the people that came that day."

"I see."

If more things like this happen, she wonders if all those secrets will get exposed? It will one day, and when that happens, she will no longer live a normal life. She is far too involved with the other side, so it will impact her if people find out.

"This is strange," Shin mumbled. "If they wanted to erase the evidence, they could have just blown this place up. Or set a fire or something. Normally one wouldn't leave everything behind like this."

"Then what do you think of this scenario?"

"Scenario?"

Sumire nodded. "The people who owned this base. So the guys Ru met with actually wanted to come to a compromise. I'm not saying all of them agreed, but a selected few did. That selected few are the group of people who you met; they are the ones who own this place."

"You're implying there was a rift in their organization?"

"Yes, and the other side decided to get rid of them. They raided the base, intending to destroy the evidence. But it turns out they were a step too late."

"Those people understood and evacuated everything beforehand?"

Sumire nodded. "I can't see many traces of broken equipment. But I can see bloodstains, torn clothes, and some hair. It implied that a fight took place, but when the base was already empty."

The strange feeling she got from this place earlier was that. It was far too empty. If the equipment got destroyed, one would at least see shards and fragments. Not even a spec of paper or a book either.

"You're smarter than I thought."

Her eyes twitched, annoyed at his words. But she sighed when she saw his expression. "You couldn't figure that out yourself?"

"Well, maybe I would have. But I would only consider it as one of many possibilities. The moment another theory pops up, backed with evidence, I would forget it." Shin trailed off. "This time around, I won't bother with other theories. I trust your judgment on this."

He trusts her judgment so suddenly? But wasn't he lecturing her earlier on? She doesn't understand this man at all.

"I would call the police now since we discovered a dead body."

Shin nodded. "I will do that."

...

Sumire walked down the path back to the park in a daze.

Shin decided to stay behind, so she left alone. 'That sight, I saw something similar before.' It felt like she saw it before. But where? Where did she see it? The sight of an empty thrashed building. The bloodstains and that stench. Sumire felt nauseous when she thought of the blood from earlier.

'That blood was fresh...' It must have happened recently.

It seems like Shin won't be around for a while. Shin having ties to the police force makes her uneasy, but what could she do about that? He is free to decide what to do with his life.

Still, it doesn't sit well with her at all, this situation. What was with that dead body? What kind of crazy things did Ru get involved in? That man, even though he was sick, got involved in something troublesome.

Sumire deeply sighed. 'So troublesome. Even now, I am still clearing after your mess. If he were here, he would laugh like a fool and find some way to bribe me to appease my anger.'

Her gaze fell on the pillar, not too far from where she was. There stood a man with dark hair, smoking and with his hands on his pockets.

'Uh oh, it seems like he already knew.' But is that so surprising already? Yuhi- San knows everything about her.

"Are you done?"

Her sweat fell when she sensed the coldness behind those words. "Uh, I am for now."

Yuhi didn't say anything and walked over. He extended his hand out and pinched her cheeks. "Damn brat, you put sleeping pills into my drink last night, didn't you?"

Sumire averted her gaze. "It's not my fault that it affected you for much longer than it was supposed to."

"Here is the culprit that made me miss my work this morning."

Ah, he missed work? So he wasn't at work but still sleeping?

"Well, you'll pay for it."

Pay for it? Sumire didn't get a chance to question it when he suddenly kissed her. A passionate kiss, and yet when she felt his hands on her clothes, she flinched slightly. 'This is a bit too much.'

"Y—Yuhi-san, stop for a moment."

Yuhi pulled their lips apart. "What?"

"What do you mean, what? You can't just kiss me out of nowhere like that. You have to set the mood for these things."

Yuhi rubbed the back of his head awkwardly. "Do you care about that stuff? I thought you liked me."

"You know, I do."

"Then, do you need to think of the setting? Normally you wouldn't be able to hold back in front of the person you love."

At that comment, Sumire sighed. 'It seems like I made him wait for so long. Yuhi-san loved me for so long, so his reaction is normal. I shouldn't be too mean.'

Indeed, this is a bit overwhelming for her. But it's not like he is forcing her, he stops whenever she asks him too despite his frustration. Sumire clung to his arm.

"Did you come out here to take me on a date?"

"A quick walk, since I have to go to work and all."

"Then let's go."

Yuhi nodded, and they walked down the path. It was oddly quiet this morning, and Sumire looked at her surroundings more. The parks in this place are very beautiful, and yet it is too quiet for her liking.

Eternal Melody 146 Because of him

A long time ago, there was a time where she blindly followed all the rules. Blindly followed whatever her parents had told her to do, lessons in various activities that elite women participate in.

But despite following them, Sumire realized that those things didn't mean anything to her. No matter how much she tried hard in them, she got to work hard on her lessons no matter how motivated.

In the end, it felt fleeting to her. For her, it was something that could vanish at any moment. Something she won't be able to reach, something that didn't have any meaning to her. Whenever she participated in these activities, she realized that her world's colors had become even more monotone.

Like this, there is no meaning in anything. She couldn't understand why the friends she had then were so excited when it came to lessons. She couldn't understand their passion and drive, and along the way, she began to drift off from them. It was like that with Yuri, too, because she could not understand the girl's passionate feelings.

There was the matter with Atushi too, yet the brown hair girl knew what played the most part in the argument. By the time she understood it, Sumire saw no reason to try to approach the girl. 'I don't have anything,' indeed the words she had told Nao weren't a lie. However, there was something that had always been sleeping in her heart.

Those bright feelings she felt when she came to this place accidentally and watched that person's stage.

It was then something inside her heart had stirred up. It was because she saw such a bright world that she could compose that brightness into a melody.

Supposedly she took into account every individual feeling when she composes the songs, All of those traits into a song. It was because of that person that she began to have so many more different encounters afterwards.

It was because she met Terashima Yuhi that day that she realized something she neglected before.

One by one, she slowly realized that people who have dreams are not bad. They aren't superficial; they all work very hard.

"Yuhi-san, your concert was delayed quite a bit, right?"

"Mmm, since I had other things to deal with."

"I see."

"Something wrong?"

Sumire shook her head. "I'm feeling a bit light-headed. Could we rest for a bit?"

"Hmmm?" He brushed his hands across her forehead. "You seem feverish." Yuhi looked around and pointed to the benches. "Sit down. I will fetch you a drink."

Sumire nodded and walked over to the benches. The moment she sat down, she covered her face with her hands. She felt exhausted.

She pulled out her phone and looked at the updated male idol individual rankings. Sumire placed her hand on number seven...even though he hasn't been performing. Somehow his rank has increased a bit. It really is like the fans are telling him to come back.

7: Ichinose Arashi

Come back, huh?

Certainly, that person will be back, because he went through all that trouble.

That person-- the reason why Sano became uneasy and turned into a monster. It was mainly because of Ru, but what caused it was Ichinose Arashi. He was two years her senior and the center of the male idol group Nanairo Feather.

Back when they attended the same school, there were many rumors about them being a couple. Sumire never bothered to clarify them. Why should she? People can think what they want to.

'Even if I explained, there will be those who don't believe.' Why does she have to go through something so tiring? Let them misunderstand. But she supposes it was this attitude of hers that made Sano turn into a monster.

She couldn't blame him too much. What he did to her was terrible. But he wasn't completely at fault. She was the one who drove him to a corner.

Sumire pulled a pendant from her pocket out and clutched it with her hands.

'Everyone's waiting for you to come back, no...everyone's waiting for both our center and composer to come back. we can't be nanairo feather without you two.'

Sumire recalled Masaru-senpai's words after the festival. Her gaze softens, really since when did he become so straight forward with everything? That laughter of his...

For her, that person has always sparkled so very brightly. She ended up saying such words because she could see it clearly—a glowing aura around that person.

Heh, listen to her thinking about some other guy in detail. Yuhi is definitely going to get jealous. Even though she is dating him, perhaps she truly hasn't given him her heart.

Even so, Sumire knew that no matter what happens, she wouldn't break up with Yuhi. When she is with Yuhi, it is warm; it is the only warm place- her only solace. When everything in her life was falling apart, and she could no longer control her longing, he stopped her.

Ever since she came to Tokyo, every day is fun. Her gaze landed on her hand that was in a clenched fist position. It's alright; there is still some time left. She can still make some happy memories.

Her thoughts broke off when she felt Yuhi's warm hands across her cheeks. "You look very pale. Maybe we should go home?"

Her gaze softened when she heard his concerned tone. She shook her head. "It's okay. I have somewhere else to be today, either."

"Not going to school?"

"I have some business matters to deal with." Sumire sighed. "I am not fond of the business world. But my parents and ancestors worked hard on the Ibuki family legacy. So as the only one left, I need to preserve it."

"I see, you'll be meeting with Sano?"

Sumire chuckled when she heard his tone. "Hino-san will be with us, so don't worry."

"That makes me even more worried."

She looked at him, confused, and Yuhi brushed his forehead against hers. Their lips lightly touched. "Yuhi?"

"I can't stop you, but I want you to be very careful from now on." Yuhi sounded very concerned. She could tell from the look in his eyes.

He can't stop her, huh? But he could if he wanted to. Sumire knew that she would listen to him. However, Yuhi will not tell her that he does not want her to investigate; he will respect her decision. What a foolish person. But this is the person she chose to be with.

She chose Terashima Yuhi despite the pain of loving another person after what happened.

Eternal Melody 147 Invisible Light Part 1

A few hours later - Yuhi's apartment -

A simple walk? It didn't end up like that at all. After Yuhi expressed his concern for her, he received many calls which he couldn't ignore. They ended up heading to the same place.

She knew that Yuhi involved himself in business matters too. But, that was the first time she saw him like that.

Yuhi fell asleep at last. It felt like he was even more stubborn than usual. Well, it was probably due to the talk of other men. That didn't stop him from kissing her, though. Kissing is already a problem. Why does he always have to do it without clothes on? A deep sigh crossed her lips. Perhaps she has underestimated this person a bit too much.

No, that's already obvious. But, ahh-- a conflicting thought appeared in her head. She thought she could tease him, but it seems like she can't when he teases her first.

Sumire opened the door and found Yuhi sleeping soundly on the couch. Yuhi curled up in such a narrow space. He looks like a large animal.

When she saw the dog there too, she quickly hugs her.

"Thanks, Aoi, for staying with Yuhi."

The dog woofed in response as though it understood before leaving the couch.

She plops down and stares at Yuhi. 'This is the first time I can look at him like this.' She usually falls asleep before him, so she never has the chance to stare for long.

Pfft, he has creases between his brows. Is he dreaming about work? Those businessmen must have hassled him a lot. It's a good thing he managed to slip away from them. He looks so innocent when he is sleeping.

Mature and child-like. She only briefly got a chance to see these sides of him. But now she could see everything. A part of him, she doesn't know. 'What other things will she learn about him?'

Learning all this makes her feel ticklish. Its amazing isn't it, falling in love with someone? If she confessed to Yuhi sooner, would she have felt this happiness a long time ago? It feels strange still. But she does understand that she doesn't want to let him go.

Her thoughts broke off when somebody pulled her onto the sofa.

"Ah--"

"Hey, are you content with just looking at me?"

"Nope." Sumire bravely leaned forward and brushed their lips against each other. A hum of approval escapes Yuhi's lips. It's embarrassing. But she wanted to do this for a while.

He pulled away. "You seem tired too."

Sumire shook her head and leaned forward again. "I'm okay, I'm more worried about you."

There's a lot to do. A deep sigh escapes his lips. It never bothered him to be this busy before. Being busy meant he wouldn't get a chance to think too deeply about what he can't have. But now that he's formulating on what to start with, everything comes rushing back.

In the end, all humans are weak. The same goes for her. She may be one of the most fragile people out there. But it's exactly because she has both a strong and weak side, that she is still here today.

This is the reason why she chose a path that carries a heavy burden.

'Ru is the one who taught her how to get back up even when things seem helpless.' But, it's because of Yuhi that she found her dream.

As she thought, she still wants to sing. It isn't enough to just perform or stand on stage. She wants to convey these deep feelings that she buried in her heart this entire time.

"Say Yuhi. I want to sing again. But I'm still scared."

Yuhi caresses her hair. "Yeah."

"I want to be on stage, to talk with fans during handshake events again. It makes me very happy. But even more than that, I want the entertainment industry to grow. I want idols to be loved by people for the next decade."

As for her goal, she wants to reach a place no other person has before. If she could do that, then maybe the emptiness she had been feeling would finally go away.

Her current situation is better now. But, there are still many complications.

She wonders if she could meet with that person despite feeling this way. Her dear senpai, the person she respected the most. Takahashi Yumi, she still recalled everything that person taught her.

She recalled everything, but the moment that remains fresh in her mind is that day three years ago. Yumi-senpai invited her to one of her events. It was rare for her to do that, so Sumire decided to go.

....

Three Years ago Tokyo Dome -

A fourteen-year-old girl with long brown hair arrived at her seat. 'I somehow managed to make it.' Sumire deeply sighed. It wasn't easy slipping away.

Her gaze fell on the stage. It seems like she made it on time. Her senpai Takahashi Yumi was amid her speech.

"It's a strange feeling, but I believe we're all connected by that sky above us. I am twenty-one years old now. I have to move forward properly and let all the bad memories of my past stop haunting me. Though it's one year too late, I'm glad I'm becoming a better person during my twenties. Though I'm still not much of an adult, I hope one day I'll become more responsible and fit your expectations.

From now onwards this third chapter, I will make sure to lead it. Though I won't be alone, I'll have all of you to support me now. Many have commented on entering the top sixteen. Yes, I agree with everyone else that this view is truly amazing. But I don't think rank is everything. Hotaru has already said it; we are who we are. No matter what happens, you are you. The other sister groups finally receiving so much attention, I'm glad. Now we can all move forward this third chapter together.

So many goodbyes and so many sorrows, and yet I still can't cry. Aha, perhaps it's that? Perhaps I've finally used up all my tears. If it's like that, then it will be alright. I want to keep on smiling for everyone. Somiyosenpai always told me to be myself, at the time she said that I didn't understand what she was saying at all. But now I suppose I do. I would tell you the answer, but right now I can't do that.

Like Amu mentioned before, this is the present. This present is what matters now. Though that doesn't mean we will forget the memories of the past. Those memories are ones we truly won't forget."

Sumire placed her hand on her chest. Her cheeks flushed. "Ah..."

What is this feeling? What is it? How come this person --can say such things that affect other people? How can somebody smile so brightly?

Eternal Melody 148 Invisible Light Part 2

"At the beginning of my idol career, I showed up out of nowhere. It led to many complaints from fans. Why is this woman suddenly everywhere? Why is she taking up the good slots in the singles? During that time, I felt depressed and thought that I wasn't wanted anywhere. However, this person helped me overcome that thought, and I could sing freely.

I said it in my speech last year that I am blessed to meet so many lovely people. Indeed I've always felt that I took others' kindness for granted. I took advantage of people and could not repay them.

But after singing beside her, after finding her again, I realized that there is only one thing I could do. It may be small, but I will convey my feelings of gratitude and love through my songs."

This person can shine so brightly. How come? Right now, Yumi-senpai isn't singing, and yet she can still sparkle so brightly.

Thump, thump, and thump.

Sumire felt the sound of her heartbeat increase. How come it is like this? Just listening to senpais speech makes her feel this way.

The woman named Takahashi Yumi is amazing.

One day she wonders if she can stand on a grand stage like this. Sumire wondered if she could admit her feelings openly in front of so many people one day. Is it possible for somebody as vile and disgusting as herself?

If she admits everything she held back this entire time, then won't people notice? Won't they say she is strange? She is still too frightened to step out of her shell.

.....

Her thoughts broke off when she felt Yuhi kiss her forehead.

"Yuhi?"

"I want to ask you something, Sumire. Surely you know what they say about me? Do you know the rumors?"

"Are you close to them? the girls you mess around with?" Sumire asked.

"I don't see myself as close to them."

"Then, why are you together? Does this not only increase your loneliness?" Sumire questioned.

"It's better than being alone," Yuhi said, and leaned towards her neck, gently kissing it. He did this for a few minutes before he to her again. "Are you different? From those girls. Were you any different? Weren't you just filling in your loneliness? Makino was the same. Even if she did appear to have feelings for me, for a while, it worked. She forgot about her ex.

She could pretend and stay with me. However, I could tell, whenever we were together, she looked at another person. She was just filling the void, trying to love me. My friends were the same, too, even though he liked somebody else from the beginning. All of them were all telling lies, in order to fill the void in their hearts. Sumire weren't you doing the same thing too?" Yuhi said.

His words are so very cold, and yet there is a meaning to them. A meaning to them, huh?

She is seventeen years old now; love shouldn't be something new. She should be able to handle these types of situations. But that doesn't seem to be possible. This guy's has always been reckless, but he's always done things for her sake.

Even though he behaves this way, she knew the truth. Yuhi-san is very clumsy at expressing his feelings; sometimes, she thinks he is worse than her. He is clumsy and awkward at times, but Sumire understood already. From now on, she will continue falling in love with him. She may have accepted his confession on a whim, but she is relieved.

'If I didn't say yes, then even now this person would put up with this pain all alone. I can't leave him be.' Sumire parted with a strand of loose hair from Yuhi's face.

His gaze softened. "What are you doing now? I thought you would listen to me rant a bit more."

"I'm listening."

She is listening to every single word.

He already made so many kind and gentle expressions in front of her. When it came to her, Yuhi is honest, kind, and gentle.

Yuhi is always there for her whenever she is sad and lonely; whenever she needed somebody, he is there. It was the same back in the past too.

That conversation she had with Atushi awhile back replayed in her mind.

'I didn't know what to do when you ran away at that time. I was confused and lost. I didn't know how to go about the situation, even though I loved you. In the end, the person who told me to get you is that guy. Even though I hate him, even though he loved you, he helped me out then. It was Yuhi, Sumire.'

She could see through this person already. "What's wrong? You're so slow even now. If you're not careful, then I will make a move." Yuhi said.

She placed a hand on his face, causing his expression to change. "I see you. That's why I know you are forcing yourself."

Yuhi sighed. "You paid attention to me properly; it seems. Sorry."

Sumire laughs. "No, it's fine."

So clumsy and awkward. But this is one of the many things she loves about him.

"I should make it up to you."

"Then carry on."

Yuhi blinked, and he rubbed the back of his neck awkwardly. "Well, as much as I want to kiss you, don't you think this is fine? What do girls call this kind of thing, cuddling?"

Sumire rolled her eyes when she heard those words. "Since when did you become such a boring guy, Yuhi-san?"

"Since I started dating you."

She immediately got offended. "Hey, are you blaming me?"

Yuhi chuckled. "Just joking, Sumire."

A joke, huh? Then again, maybe it is true. Since she started dating Yuhi-san, he has held back with her and not done anything. Sure there was that promise with Hino, but Sumire understood it was unnecessary. He already seemed to regret it the second time.

This person intends to treat her precious. She does not know what to think about that. Nobody has treated her this way before and with so much affection. Sumire is used to people ignoring and not listening, she is used to being alone. How can she adapt to this?

Eternal Melody 149 Invisible Light Part 3

"Damn my phone." Yuhi sighed and pulled away. "Hold on a moment Sumire, let me take this call outside."

Sumire nodded and watched as he walked over to the balcony area.

A deep sigh passed her lips. That caught her off guard a bit, she did not think he would suddenly do that. But then again what does she expect to happen when they are here all alone? She previously thought of Yuhi-san as a gentleman. Back then he did not do anything to her, so she assumed he was safe. But Yuhi-san is still a guy after all. In front of the woman he loves, it is normal not to have self-control.

Sumire scanned the room and noticed how messy it was. She supposes it would be okay to clean up. She quickly left the bed and walked over to the desk area. So much paper...from a glance she could see many papers written in English. Are these business documents? Unfortunately for her, she does not understand the English language very well. It was the only thing that hindered her when it came to business meetings. Maybe she ought to start to learn it. She maybe able to help Yuhi.

She recalled what he whispered in her ear a few minutes ago. The words I love you, huh? Whenever she heard Yuhi say it, she still felt peculiar. To think they suddenly became a couple. Quite some time has passed since they started to date, so now she could look back on things properly. It is hard to believe that she stubbornly gave up and surrendered to him.

No matter what he said before, she never took it seriously. When he confessed to her, she hesitated but ended up rejecting him. It's not possible for Yuhi to love her. Maybe he noticed her feelings and is pitying her? A part of her knew that was not true.

Yuhi is not the type of person who would do something like that. He would not pity another person like that since it would degrade them. Back then she already suspected that something was weird about him, about their relationship - the way he looked at her.

Sumire paused when she saw several sheets of papers. All of these sheets contained sketches of her.

Yuhi is too sly, when he does things like this how can she push him away?

She thought so before. But recently that word always comes to mind. He's too sly..saying that he loves her before they kiss. No matter how many times she hears it, her heart feels like it's about to burst out of her chest. So sly, saying words like that - even if she doesn't want to, she will be dragged in to his pace just like that.

She knew even without looking at the mirror how flustered she was. This is embarrassing. Seventeen years old and yet such a thing still makes her feel embarrassed. Just hearing the words ' I love you' from Yuhi makes her heartbeat. He says it a lot these days, or rather she can't even remember a day now where he doesn't say it. The reason he says it so much is it to reassure her?

Her thoughts broke off when Yuhi suddenly appeared behind her. "What are you doing?"

"Cleaning."

Sumire didn't notice that something was wrong until she suddenly found herself on the ground. "I think you're tempting me."

She blinked puzzled at his actions. What is this man talking about? Tempting? Who is tempting who-- Sumire paused in mid thought when she realized something. Yuhi-san was gently kissing her neck. Even for a person who is usually so calm, anybody would end up flustered.

The heat slowly crept onto her skin. It seems like she provoked a beast. Maybe she shouldnt have worn these clothes? Her current outfit was a normal nightgown but with her shoulders and legs exposed.

"Mmm, you smell sweet."

Should she stop him? Or maybe she should let him be. Sure there is that promise with Hino-san, but its not like anything bad would happen if they broke it. "Alright---come at me!" Sumire declared.

At that comment Yuhi burst into laughter. "I understand, sorry-pffft hah." Yuhi laughed. "Seriously Sumire your too funny."

Sumire looked at the man puzzled. Yuhi was laughing very hard and she does not understand why. Maybe he is teasing her again?

"Thank you for thinking of me. But mmm, not yet." He suddenly changed his tone to a serious one and looked over at her. His gaze gentle and filled with warmth.

"With the current situation, I may have to go abroad a bit."

"Ah."

So thats why he has all those english documents, something big must be occurring over there.

"There is the option of taking you with me. But with your current situation it would be hard to."

Sumire looked down. "When do you have to go?"

"Usually around summer. But I want to delay it for a bit. If I dont I will be gone for at least a year or so. I want to be able to graduate in Japan."

"Yuhi-san."

"So don't blame yourself. I will stay here for you and for graduation."

This person is truly willing to sacrifice anything for her sake huh? She does not understand why he loves her so much, but maybe one day she will find the answer to that question.

"It's during nights like this where I wonder about my parents."

"Your family?" Sumire asked.

"Yes."

Yuhi-san was abandoned when he was a child. He grew up without the warmth and love from his parents. Does he miss them?

"I actually met my mother a few months ago."

Eh?

"But she was on her death bed. Her last words to me before she passed away was about father. She explained how she was pregnant with me before my father married his current wife. When they found out about me, they wanted to get rid of me. So my mother did her best to let me escape. She ran into the woods and decided they would go after her and not think that she would leave me somewhere."

That sounds like the type of stories one hears about in movies. But Sumire knew how insensitive that would sound if she said those words now.

Eternal Melody 150 Invisible Light Part 4

When she was together with Ru, it was easy for her to push him away. It was easy for her to remain normal. But it is different with Terashima Yuhi. How does she push away somebody who likes her this much?

The stories people see in movies; everybody assumes it is fiction. If the director said it is fiction and resembles nothing in real life, people could enjoy it more. It will generate more profit. Those who claim their movie based on real-life events and experiences will invite criticism. Sure, many watch it and enjoy it since it is real and not made up.

But the majority will criticize it if it is a movie about an individual's emotions, a bad past, for example, Yuhi-san's situation. If the rest of the world learned his background, they would undoubtedly mock and insult him. Sumire understood that better than anybody.

The Ibuki family mansion that caught on fire and the death of her parents.

It was a story nearly everybody knew about. Their daughter, the sole survivor, where did she disappear to? Who is looking after her? When she re-appeared in front of people after the accident, many people were surprised.

Her other relatives were amid dividing the assets among themselves. Sumire sighed at the memory. When she appeared, all of them looked guilty. Instead of using the resources to see if anybody survived, they decided to use it for themselves? That was the first time she saw how black humans could be.

Yuhi-san's family situation and hers differ entirely. But they both decipher how dark the world can be.

"Now that I think back on it, humans are so screwed up."

Yes, they are. Sumire silently agreed.

Humanity itself is messed up. But people still live their lives; they still keep walking straight ahead despite the pain the world brings them. Sumire buried her face in his back.

"Sorry about this. I know I am rambling right now."

"It's okay; usually, it's me," Sumire mumbled. Usually, it is her rambling on about her issues, her fears, and her concern. "Yuhi-san, you can be selfish when you want to. Im always causing you trouble after all."

"Well, I can't disagree there, since you appeared my life has changed."

"Is it a bad chance?"

"How could it be? Now I have a girlfriend who I can attack with kisses every day."

"Idiot." Sumire scolded, but her gaze softened. "I want to learn more about you. So I don't mind if you ramble or whatever you call it."

"I guess we can start with my business matters; you can't read English after all."

Sumire sighed. "I will learn, but were those documents.."

"Mmm, some proposals and other events I have to approve of. Realistically I should be at the exact location and approve of it. But I am still a student, at the end of the day, my main concern should be my education. Even if I am not there, they will do fine. I made sure to hire capable people. I might have the world in my hands, but I would sacrifice the world to be with you."

That last line is unnecessary. See? If he does sly things like this, how is she supposed to refuse him?

"Honestly, I did not intend to stay in Japan long. My involvement in the underworld society was supposed to be small. I intended to help out a few times and then leave, but then I met you."

At that comment, she recalled how they first met again. Her cheeks turned crimson at the memory. When she saw him at the festival before Aki introduced them, she could not help but think how beautiful.

"I genuinely thought there was something wrong with your head when you said that. I shouldn't have gotten involved with a girl purposely causing trouble."

"I was helping somebody."

"Help yourself, first idiot." He trailed off. "Well, it was good for you to help that girl out. But did you think about what would happen to you?"

When she met Yuhi again after their meeting five years ago, it was during a summer festival. Aki-san was running late, so she decided to walk around the stalls herself for a while until he arrived. It was then

when she noticed a group of guys surrounding a defenseless woman. Naturally, she stepped up and got involved. If she did not do at least that much, then she would never be able to forgive herself if something terrible happened to the girl.

"I thought it through but still concluded that I would help her." How could she possibly turn a blind eye and ignore when somebody needs help?

If a person has power and strength to help, they should use it. It is a sin to have power and not use it when others are in need. Sumire understood that not many people thought the same way as her.

"So when I saw you like that, I thought you were the kind that gets into trouble easily, making it impossible for me to leave you alone. Yet not only did you think I was one of the bad guys, punched me and gave me a roundhouse kick--"

"Stop stop. I am sorry, already!" Sumire exclaimed.

Just the mere mention of it made her feel embarrassed. "Yuhi-san you were dressed head to toe in black, of course, I was suspicious!"

"Eh, were you the type of person who would judge based on appearance?"

"No!"

Yuhi laughed. "Just joking Sumire. You know because you hit me that day I remembered the real reason why I entered the business world too. For money? For fame? I already make millions as an idol, why did I have to do business too? I pondered about it for so long, but you gave me a bit of a wake-up call." He extended his hand out towards the balcony.

From this distance, they could see the stars sparkling brightly in the night sky.

"I want to see exactly how far my hands could reach despite having no place to call home. I want to see how far I could go with my strength."

"Isn't Japan your home?"

"My mother was, but my father was American. My great grandmother and father also have some Spanish blood. So what do you think I am?"

Sumire scanned his face for a moment. "Does it matter? You have the type of face that I like, so that should be the only thing on your mind."

She does not want him to think too deeply about anything else. She does not want to see that look of sadness on his face anymore.

Yuhi blinked before he burst into laughter. "Indeed, I should only care about your preferences, my lady."

For her, all that matters is seeing this smile on Terashima Yuhi's face.