

Melody 381

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 381

Chapter 381: Searching for answers

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Hino extended his hand out. "Hold on. It'll be difficult getting on normally with this crowd."

Sumire blinked, startled, but she accepted his hand.

See? The gentleman type. Yuhi can use some lessons from Hino. Once they were inside, he let go of her hand and yet remained hovered over her as though to ensure she wouldn't fall. Unfortunately, there were no seats, and thus they both stood up. For her, who had a serious injury, standing up took a great deal of her strength.

Then again, it is her fault for getting injured.

"Sumire? Are you alright? Do you need to hold onto me?"

Sumire didn't get a chance to respond as the train shook, and she hit her head against Hino's back. She rubbed her nose.

"My bad."

"It's alright. Hold onto my jacket."

Sumire slowly extended her hand out and clung to the edge of his jacket. If this was Yuhi, then for sure, this moment would be more romantic. She could imagine the scenario perfectly well, just like the events that just happened. They would end up blushing and looking away, but despite the battle of nerves, nobody would pull away.

It would be one of those cute moments from a shoujo manga. But there is a reason why such things are fiction, and there is no chance for it to happen in reality.. Sumire sighed; life isn't fair after all.

Hino noticed her odd behavior and asked. "Is there something wrong?"

"I just thought that Yuhi could use some real tips from you."

Hino stared at her for a few minutes before he nodded. "Ah." He started, "You spent some time with Yuhi today." Sumire nodded in response. "I'm guessing that once again, you had to lead. Even when he did suggest something, and you guys went through with the idea, it was dull and boring? Like taking you to that pie place?"

Sumire looked at him, startled at those words. That is spot on, but how come he knew that? "Like Hino, do you have esp?"

Hino chuckled "You could say that, or you could say I got it from watching him and his ex.."

Oh, that's right, during the time frame, Yuhi was dating other girls. So Hino must know all about Yuhis past relationships.

"So was Yuhi always like this?" Sumire asked.

Hino knowing everything about Yuhi, at least since Yuhi parted ways with her to return to Tokyo, is not new to her. Despite how curious she is, she knew better than to ask such questions. Hino treasures Yuhi a lot, so if she asked such questions, it would make her the same as those other girls who snooped around instead of getting to know Yuhi.

She is very curious, and it would be a lie to say she never thought about it. But even more than that, she wants to treasure the current situation.

Hino nodded, "You could say so. Touko would often - as in complain every day about how clueless he was. She said, "Even though I give him the most obvious of hints, he doesn't seem to get it""

At that, her sweat dropped; she could imagine it now. Yuhi, what on earth did he do?

Hino continued. He doesn't seem to know the timing for a kiss too" I often heard such stories, and well, I would also see it.

The timing of a kiss, huh? Perhaps that might be the case. So much time has passed, and yet Sumire still felt it, his lips on hers and that same warmth. He should have kissed her before they parted ways, but the earlier kiss in school remained firm in her mind.

Yuhi-san is not the only one at fault but her; she allows him to go at his own pace.

"I don't think he does it on purpose, though." Hino said, "After all, he loves you a lot."

Her thoughts broke off when she heard those words and saw his warm-hearted expression. "Eh? Wait !!! Did Yuhi say that to you?"

"Yeah. Rather he more or less announced it in the assembly when he came, didn't he?" Hino said.

Sumire blinks, the assembly? He did say a long and grand speech. But she spent far too much time annoyed why he didn't tell her. As well as what she would say to him when they got around to talking. "

"I guess since you were so distracted, you didn't hear a thing." Hino sighed deeply. "Aren't you two just misunderstanding each other? It's easy to make that mistake since it's been such a long time."

Come to think of it earlier, and it did seem as though he was trying to say something. A misunderstanding, huh?

"Then Hino, if you saw the girl that you liked again, would you misunderstand her?"

Hino scratched his hair. "Well, it will probably be different."

"Different?"

A gentle smile appeared on his face. "The answer for us won't be the same as you and Yuhi. That's why you have to search for the answer yourself."

Search for her very own answer, huh? But that sounds like so much work. Aha, she supposed love isn't an easy matter. It's the first time she has ever fallen in love with someone, after all.

True love, the love that she sought, is within arms' distance and yet still seems to be so far away. Up until now, she never thought about things like true love. After all, she's a daughter from nobility, isn't it only normal that she would get matched up with a son from a noble family?

That's why she didn't bother to seriously fall in love. There was never anything like that. She dated many guys but not for love. It's because they asked her.

Yuhi differed from all the others. From the very start, he was different.

"By the way, have you met with Sano lately?"

At that comment, Sumire turned to the door. "Maybe I should get off at the next stop."

Hino rolled his eyes and sighed. He rubbed the back of his neck awkwardly. "Hold on, don't run away."

"But every time we see each other, you mention him." This was the main reason why she stopped hanging around Hino's place. She did not want to end up in this awkward situation again.

"If I do, it is because I'm concerned."

".."

"He is having a hard time recently; why don't you go and see him? Say you are going for a check-up."

Sumire recalled the last time she saw him and sighed. "Right now, I can't." She felt very bad about what she did to him.

"You ended up missing your life because of him; he wants to make it up to you."

She shook her head. "I know him well; that is not the reason he wants to see me."

"I already said before that I would not concern myself further. You already frightened me away with all that talk about using him like a doll."

Her sweat fell when she heard those words. Indeed she said something like that, but now that she is in her right mind, she felt bad about it. At least in front of Hino, she does not want to act evil.

He was her first good male companion in a long time, and she did not want to lose that friendship.

Her thoughts broke off when Hino patted her hair. "You don't have work?"

"I don't."

"Then, let us go bowling."

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Chapter 382: Who is more important?

If audio player doesn't work, press Stop then Play button again

Bowling must be a thing for Yuhi and Hino. But unlike the empty place she went to with Yuhi before, this one had many people. Sumire did not think they would get in, but the people inside led them away from

the main bowling alley when they approached the counter. She blinked when she saw the room on edge.

A private place?

Hino opened the door, and she followed him inside. The room was a lot larger than she thought; there were comfortable-looking leather couches and a large aisle in the center.

Hino slumped on the couch, and Sumire laughed. "If you are tired, why did you suggest bowling?"

"It is an excuse for me to slack, but if you want to bowl, go ahead."

"This is only the second time I have done this."

He raised his eyebrow before nodding. "Right, Yuhi must have taken you around on a quest."

"A quest?" Sumire repeated.

"Or more like a right of passage. You told me before you didn't have much of a childhood, right?"

"Yes."

"Yuhi probably took you around town and made you do things you have never done before." Hino trailed off. "By the way, I am not saying this because he has done this before with another person."

Sumire laughed softly when she heard him say that. "You know him very well."

"I told you before that I treat him like family." Hino trailed off. "Are you two doing okay? All that stuff happened recently."

Despite the vague sounding questions, Sumire understood what he was trying to get at. "You must have heard of me saying such terrible-sounding things."

It is no wonder he has avoided her recently.

Hino sighed deeply. "Are you an idiot?"

"Eh?"

"Look, Sumire, I told you repeatedly before that I knew your situation because Sano asked me to investigate you. We became closer because of Yuhi too, so I already know what type of person you are. You did not say those words to hurt him but to push him away and create a distance so he would not get hurt."

Her eyes widened when she heard him say those words. This person doesn't he understand her far too much? The only other person who understands her this well is Yuhi, but that is normal since he is in love with her.

Now that she thought about it, that time Hino told her to stop messing with Sano, he said something like the one he worries about is her after he said that things have been odd between them.

"Say, Hino, you like me, right?"

"As a friend?"

"No, the other thing."

Hino sighed deeply but nodded. "I do. But at the same time, you know I never intended anything to happen between us. I care about our friendship more than anything else."

Indeed, she thought the same, and that was why it surprised her when he behaved that way.

"But isn't it difficult?"

"To be honest with you, Sumire, this is not the first time. For a girl, I like to like Yuhi, not me."

Ah, now that he mentioned it. "You said you liked somebody before, but because of what happened with her, you slowly began to resent girls."

"Yeah." A solemn expression appeared on his face. "She didn't do anything wrong. I met her after Yuhi did, and she already had feelings for him, so it is not like she betrayed me or anything. But it hurt a lot."

There is somebody who likes Yuhi that much and somebody who Hino also liked. She wonders what type of person they are.

"If your curious, you can just ask, you know?"

Sumire shook her head. "I don't want you to think I am taking advantage of you anything, even more so after you admitted that you like me."

At that comment, Hino laughed. "Even though you are so cold-hearted towards others."

"Is it really fine with you?" Sumire muttered. "I know you understand my circumstances, but the pain of not having your loved one look your way, I understand that very well."

"Even if it wasn't Yuhi, I would never have told you."

At that comment, she fidgeted with her fingers. "Sano and I are over. It will never happen again."

"Yeah, I understand that much from watching you. That is why I told you to stop getting involved with him. If it will never happen anyway, it is better to stop appearing before him."

"I can't do that."

Even though she understood it would be better to stop this, for some reason, she can't do that. The complicated and dark thoughts she has towards that man that made her suffer so much has yet to vanish.

"I know that too." Hino trailed off. "But I just want you to know that nothing has changed. You can still come to me if you have a hard time. It is difficult talking about Sano or Tsueno in front of Yuhi; that is why you came to me before."

"Then Hino," Sumire mumbled. "If I told you to choose between Yuhi and me, who would you choose?"

Sumire understood it was a cruel question to ask. But she wanted to know his answer. Would he choose his friendship with her or his family relationship with Yuhi? For this person, who is more important?

Would he choose a future that has no clear path, or would he choose a certain life?

Her thoughts broke off when Hino suddenly stood up and sat down beside her. Before she knew it, he leaned forward and lightly kissed her lips.

It was a quick one, and yet all his feelings poured through.

Hino pulled away and sighed deeply. "Did you eat chocolate or something?"

Sumire raised her hand, but he immediately caught it. "You asked me something cruel, so I responded in the same way."

"You would choose Yuhi?" Sumire mumbled.

"Yeah, disappointed?"

Sumire shook her head. "No, that is for the best." If he said he would choose her, she would have gotten angry. "But kissing me to prove your point, you have no tact when it comes to girls."

At that, she noticed a tint of red appeared on Hino's face, and she laughed. "Don't do it if you will get this embarrassed."

"I have never met a woman like you."

"You probably won't meet many women like me." Sumire pointed out. "I am one of a kind after all."

"I don't think I want to meet another woman like you."

"Uh, time out." Sumire raised her hand. "Just because I know your feelings, it does not excuse you for saying cheesy lines, or rather where did that come from?"

Hino awkwardly scratched the back of his head. "I guess I am learning from Yuhi. You like straightforward people better."

Sumire blinked when she heard those words. "Wait, are you trying to make a move on me?"

"I value my li-" Hino's sentence fell short when they heard the sound of somebody knocking on the door. Hino stood up after he checked his phone, but Sumire grabbed his arm.

"Let me go." She felt like she already knew who it was. If she considers this timing, it can only be one person.

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Chapter 383: We are both rotten

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Sumire took a deep breath before she opened the door. Sure enough, on the other side of the door was Sano. But there was something different about him.

Oh, this--? Her eyes widened when she saw his badly bruised face. No, the bruises went all the way down to his neck.

"Did you get hurt again?"

Sano cupped her cheeks. "You're okay?"

"Mmm, nobody has gone after me for a while-" She paused mid-sentence when she saw how bad his wounds were "They hurt you?"

"..."

Hino sighed deeply. "If you don't tell her, I will."

"..."

It took Sano a few minutes before he finally spoke. The words that left his lips were hard to believe.

"Eh? You mean--"

Hino nodded. "Lately, they drag Sano along with them to their jobs and make him do unreasonable things."

"Is that because they heard about me bringing him with me?"

"Well, you did create rather ambiguous rumors."

Sumire sweat fell when she heard those words. "Well, you know..."

Sano slumped in her arms. "It must hurt. Hold on a second." She placed her hand on his forehead. "I think you have a fever too."

The moment she moved her hand away, however, Sano leaned in to kiss her. "San...mmmm...."

"I wanted to say this for a long time, but you learned to kiss with your mouth open. You couldn't do it before."

Why does he remember such things? Why does he have to behave this way? Before she could process that thought, somebody entered the room and pulled her away.

"Yuh-?"

He wiped her mouth with a cloth and sighed. "Geez, how many times do I have to do this?"

"Are you okay?"

Oh, her legs now that he is here. She suddenly felt all the tension disappear.

Yuhi crouched down. "Good job calling me."

"You're too slow."

He squeezed her hands. "Do you want to go back? But since we're here, we can eat out."

"We can grab a bite somewhere."

Yuhi kissed her forehead softly. "Cool, then let's go on a date."

He turned to Hino, who helped Sano up. "Listen, I get that you like her and that you're doing a lot for her. But surely you must understand that doing this will only scare her?"

"Yuhi it's fine."

Sano looks so sick, and he needs to go to a hospital.

"San, you can go back to the bar. You remember where it is, right? Stay for a while and get your wounds treated."

"..with you. I want to stay with you now."

Sumire awkwardly looked over at Yuhi, who sighed but nodded.

Yuhi was about to say something, but Hino tapped his shoulder. "Come with me for a bit. I have something to discuss with you."

"Alright."

The moment the two left, she brought Sano over to the couch.

Sano caressed her cheeks. "Are you not hurt?"

"You're the one who is hurt," Sumire stated flatly. Why is he even expressing such concern for her?

"But they said--"

Sumire shook her head. "You need to stop letting them get to you. Listen, Sano, and I told you before that you don't have to sacrifice everything for my sake."

They are no longer in a relationship. Her sentence fell short when she suddenly felt herself on the ground. Sano hovered over, and in seconds he was kissing her deeply.

"Oh once again..." Didn't this happen a lot in the past too? Whenever she expressed her concern for him, he would end up doing this to her.

He would kiss her passionately, a passionate kiss that has no deep feelings behind it. It is like a predator kissing it's prey.

"You kiss," Sano mumbled. "--differently now."

Does she?

Why does he even remember things like that? Ah, she doesn't understand anymore. "I wanted to use him like a doll and trample all over him."

That was her plan to crush him and make his life miserable. It was one of the things she could hold onto when Ru left her. Her revenge towards the person who hurt her.

She forgot all about it when she dated Ru, but those dark thoughts emerged after the accident. Before she knew it, the situation became like this.

He was so cruel to her when they broke up, and he set up those terrible situations when they dated. He is the worst kind of man.

But since when could he kiss her so gently like this? It seems he has genuine feelings for her. How is she supposed to continue treating him in the future?

This is so painful, and it hurts to breathe. It hurts whenever she is around this person.

"Are you crying?"

"San-" She muttered. "No, stop."

"Don't cry, Sumire. I like you so much."

But it is too late for them already, even if he does this with her.

"Sumire." Sano's breathing became unsteady. "Please, don't cry."

"Ugh, I'm an awful person."

She needs to get away from him now.

"I can tell what is on your mind right now." Sano deepened the kiss, and she felt her vision blur.

"Why?"

"You and I are the same."

"We are both rotten?"

Sano weakly smiled. "If that is what you want to think."

He is kissing her again without stopping, and this time she felt his hands on her clothing. She wouldn't stop crying. This is so painful. It hurts too much; how much longer does she have to live like this? Why does she have to continue this way?

Her thoughts broke off when somebody pulled her off the ground.

It was Yuhi, and there was a mixture of pain and anger in his eyes.

"Nagaw"

Sumire tugged on his arm and shook her head. "Let's just go, Yuhi."

Just take her away already; please make this pain go away.

Yuhi nodded and pulled her into his arms. "Alright, let's do things your way."

...

An hour later

It was clear that he was angry. But unfortunately, she couldn't tell who he was angry at. Yuhi didn't take her back to the bar but to one of his apartments. The moment he closed the door behind them. Yuhi pinned her against the wall.

"Tell me something, Sumire."

".."

"Is that normal for you? Not to fight back when somebody oppresses you like that?"

"I--"

"Or is it because it's him?"

This was her first time seeing Yuhi so angry. Then again, this is how he should have acted all along. His behavior this entire time was unusual. But perhaps she got used to it since now his anger scares her.

"I said to you before that I'm a terrible person. It's not like--"

Yuhi slammed his other hand against the wall, startling her. "Sumire, after we talked last time, I thought you would start taking responsibility for your actions. I know you are only using him. But let us be realistic. You never got over your breakup. Mamoru managed to distract you, but even then, it wasn't enough."

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Chapter 384: The same

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Since Yuhi dragged her away earlier, she remained quiet because she knew she had no excuses. This time it is her fault. But why did he suddenly mention Ru?

"You can't bad mouth Ru like that! He tried; he did everything he could."

"It was me who was wrong." Why does Ru have to get blamed for her behaviour?

"Do you know how it feels? You should know after experiencing it yourself. Seeing the person you love with another person like that."

"I--"

"Sumire, I know full well that you don't want to hurt me."

"Yuhi.." She could only say his name.

"But with the way things are. You will not only hurt me but yourself. The only one who will benefit from this is him. Just talk to me about it instead of doing things this way."

That's right, all she needs to do is discuss it with him. The solution was right there in front of her, but she didn't acknowledge that. She overcomplicated the situation instead.

"Yuhi. I.."

Yuhi leaned forward and kissed her forehead slowly. "It's fine; take your time. I will listen to you, Sumire."

"Okay."

It took her some time to get any words out. It was difficult for her since it was something she refused to acknowledge for so long. Yuhi brought her over to the sofa and even made her some hot cocoa.

"Be careful; it's hot."

"Yes.."

Yuhi took a seat beside her, and she immediately flinched. She recalled how angry he was at her a few minutes ago. Even though he was the right to do that, for some reason, she felt a bit strange.

"Are you scared of me now?"

"N-no, how can I?"

This isn't fear; how could she be afraid of him?

"Sorry, maybe I overreacted there."

"No, that was the right reaction." She mumbled. "Tell me, Yuhi-san, did you know from the start?"

"When you first saw him that day, I noticed."

"I see."

"Was it that painful for you?"

Sumire nodded. "It was painful. I used him as a means to escape my pain, but in the end, I ended up in love with him."

"So you--"

"When you left Yuhi, I was very lonely. I regretted turning you down too. I wanted to tell you I changed my mind, but then you said those words to me on the day of your departure. So in the end, I could never say anything."

"I'm sorry, this is my fault. I shouldn't have gotten mad there, and I was the one who left you alone."

"No, you tried to take me with you, Yuhi. I was the one who let you go." She trailed off. "The thing is, Yuhi, when I was with Sano, I never thought of you."

"Ha, that is harsh."

"I wanted to focus on him and only him. You know how I struggle with human interactions and relationships?"

"Yeah, I know."

Sumire took a deep breath. "When I met him, I already knew he wasn't a good person. If I didn't focus all my attention on him, then I would have gotten swept away. Despite what I have said to you, I did have some control in our relationship."

"Control?"

"Yes. He was always the one who sought me out. I never called him. I only ever went to him whenever it rained."

"You do get restless on rainy days."

Sumire laughed softly. "Yuhi-san, are you trying to show off your knowledge?"

"This does bother me a lot, even if I did figure it out before."

"He was the perfect gentleman type. But I knew his true colors very well. He had a bad temper, but the main cause of that is his family. Did you know Yuhi, Sano isn't the first son?"

"Ah."

"He isn't the first son, but because the first one has had a grave illness since he was young. They raised Sano as the first son."

"But even then, Sumire, he hurt you physically, right?"

"Mmm, I won't make any excuse for that. When his mood swings got worse, he often hurt me. When he first did that, I thought he was lower than trash. But did you know why I forgave him?"

"Why?"

"Because I am no better than him. How many innocent people did I hurt to vent my anger? How many lives did I take under somebody else's orders? It is no different than that."

She is no better than him. At least Sano was not the type of person to hide his real personality in front of her. He showed her everything, and it was because of that she remained with him.

"He was honest, as cruel as he was. I liked that he didn't hold himself back; when he was angry or upset, he would show that."

"So you liked him because he didn't pretend in front of you?"

"I suppose it was something like that." Sumire laughed. "Well, you know I don't get it very well, but at some point, I became attached."

"Sumire, it's hard for me to understand. He hit you, didn't he?"

"Only once."

Yuhi looked surprised. "Only once, but I thought?"

"Uh, Yuhi-san, are you forgetting how strong I am? No matter how docile I was back then, I would not let him hit me."

Yuhi sighed deeply. "Right, I guess I don't know him well enough. He at least treated you well before all the misunderstandings, right?"

"Mm, I think I figured it out. The source of his anger was Arashi-senpai."

Yuhi blinked, surprised at those words. "What does Ichinose have anything to do with this?"

"I think he misunderstood what our relationship was back then." Sumire carefully chose her words. She did not want Yuhi to misunderstand the situation too. "In Sano's eyes, a younger guy who had a higher status in the elite circle than him and got along with him suddenly appeared."

This is the best way to explain the situation. Sano also admitted this.

"So, in other words, he got jealous because he saw how close you two were."

Gah, but he has her already figured out. This is no good; Yuhi-san can see right through her.

"You know, I thought I told you not to bother with excuses and be truthful."

Sumire looked down. "You could tell me directly not to lie."

"But if I did that, you would feel bad."

She hates this side of him that makes this many considerations for her sake. This person goes so far for her. But, all she does is hurt him. Sumire wrapped her arms around his neck, and Yuhi patted her back.

"It's fine Sumire, you know I won't hate you over this."

"You're an idiot, Yuhi."

"Yes, I know. So finish your story."

"I liked him a lot. When I realized I fell in love with him, I intended to tell him that, but then I caught him cheating on me. It had to be that very same day. Our relationship was already strange then, but it got weirder after that, he openly cheated on me, and like an idiot, all I did was argue with him. But even I got tired of that."

She can't tell Yuhi that she got lost in those kisses and gentle words like a fool.

"So basically, this isn't Stockholm syndrome. Or maybe it is."

Sumire hits him, and then he laughs. "I am joking with you. I know you are not the type of person who would let somebody take advantage of you. You just went along with the flow since you felt like you had nothing to lose, right?"

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Chapter 385: The most important feeling

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"I am not so sure anymore."

She did not realize that it hurt her this much until he told her. Yes, she was in pain but to this extent? It does not make any sense to her. But there is no doubt that she was in love to the point that it haunted her for so many years.

"That person is most likely not worth it."

Yuhi sweat fell, and Sumire shook her head. "Scum is scum no matter where they ago. A person's core nature can change, but there will always be traits that remain the same."

"Sumire."

"The same goes for me. There are traits I can never get rid of, traits that you may end up hating in the long run Yuhi-san."

She watched as a pained expression appeared on his face, and Sumire pulled away from him.

"Just now, you told me to tell you everything. But there are some things I still do not understand myself, so Yuhi--" Her sentence fell short when Yuhi kissed her forehead softly.

Sumire blinked, surprised. She thought he would get mad at her, but instead, he does something like this. It seems like Yuhi-san will never change, at least in this department.

"I liked that you got mad just now."

She likes that he cared enough to get mad because she did not respect herself.

Yuhi laughed. "Miss detective, is that some kind of fetish?"

"If it is, it isn't an odd one." Sumire pointed out.

"Who knows? People can interpret things as they please."

"Hey Yuhi-san, if your not tired yet. Can we go somewhere?"

...

When she suggested going somewhere, Yuhi probably thought she meant they would go on a walk, but it was not like that. The place she brought Yuhi too was an area near their school.

"I'm sorry about this; it must be boring for you."

"Rather than boring, I am getting middle school de-jvu feelings. Rather I haven't run like this seriously since then. It has been a long time."

Sumire laughed. "I guess so, so you're not bored."

"No, it's not that. But is there any reason? You know, doing something like this suddenly."

Sumire shook her head. "I wonder if you could call it a reason." She trails off, a gentle smile appears on her face. "Whenever I have a problem, or something's on my mind, I just run and run until all the troubling thoughts have left my mind. After that, it's easier to talk about how to solve those problems. I don't just want to sit around and do nothing. I want to at least get moving, even if it's just physically moving. As soon as I run, it feels right." Sumire laughs softly. "I just like the feeling of moving forward with my own two legs."

"Well, what's on your mind right now then?"

Sumire turned back and winked. "That's a secret."

She has to keep moving forward in order to deal with her problems no matter how painful it is.

After they ran the whole track, they eventually came to a stop at the fountain area. Yuhi collapsed on the bench, yet she stood on the fountain, stepping and stretched her arms out.

"The wind here is so nice. It feels great."

After a few minutes, she noticed Yuhi watching her before he stood up and made his way, overtaking a seat on the fountain wall.

"Say..." Yuhi started nervously. "Can I ask you something?"

"If it's advice on how to pick up girls properly, then I'd advise against it. It's the season for shaved ice after all."

"You're never going to let that go. But we are both grown-ups now, so I can play that sort of game too." He reached over and pulled her into his arms. Her eyes widened. "Since you're so jealous all the time, then all you need to do is remain by me, no?"

At that, her cheeks turned slightly red; despite it being dark, she knew he could see this.

"Okay."

Since they are so close to each other like this, wouldn't it be okay for him to kiss her? No, no, she shouldn't think of such things now. After all, even Yuhi must be reluctant to touch her after what happened earlier.

"Atushi said you went into town with Asami and Aika. Did you have fun?"

"Ah yes. . . We took care of the patrol first before going anywhere. And then we took a look at all the new markets downtown, it's amazing. Everyone's always so lively in this place, and every day seems to have a festival vibe. Asami looked cute in that panda hairpin, oh but Aika and I chose the animal hats. I already have plenty of pins after all, so something unique like that is better.

Oh, on the way, we ran into Shin and Komei-kun. Komei-kun is an info giver; although he used to be a delinquent, he now prefers background work. However, he says that I know that he has had a harsh time due to the incidents.

Since then, Shin has casually met him often as though not to make him feel lonely. Shin is kind despite what it seemed like; he is a gentle person."

He cupped her chin with his hands. "I think you've already said another man's name too many times."

She looked at him, puzzled.

"Talking about your exes is fine since you dated them. But talking about another guy so fondly with that expression on your face. It annoys me."

"But Shin isn't just anyone. He is a good friend of mine."

"You said "friend," and yet that is not the sort of impression you would make for a friend, you know?"

Before she could reply to that, he leaned over to kiss her.

"Mmph."

She backs away slightly. "Yuhi, wait, stop. If you kiss me anymore....my lips will become swollen."

"So?"

""So" tomorrow we are having lunch with the Rokjous. If they see then--"

Yuhi doesn't let her finish and kisses her once again. This time a lot deeper, as he ran his hands through her hair. Oh, this idiot! Why is he reasonable one second and then unreasonable the next?

"Even if he cannot have her; even if that's the case just for a little while longer. He wishes to hold her in his arms like this."

Sumire's eyes widened. Ah-what is this? How come she can suddenly understand his thoughts?

She doesn't know how long he kissed her, but when his gaze met hers, he pulled away, "Mmph, too much, eh?"

Sumire hits his chest. "Idiot! Why did you do that so suddenly!"

"Why you ask, there isn't a particular reason."

"He can still kiss me so easily." What happened earlier bothered him, and yet, he still treats her the same way. But this is one of the things she liked him; she likes how he can still accept her despite knowing her faults. For the current her, this feeling is the most important.

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 386

Chapter 386: The Passing

If audio player doesn't work, press Stop then Play button again

They capture the truth and reality of the moment.

And expose the hidden secrets people try to hide.

The good and the bad, and maybe they can even capture your thoughts.

Makoto Soujiro, the third Prince of the Makoto family, has always been said to be a man of pride, honor. Someone who always remains calm and never lets his emotions show on his face—the ideal elite member, who in the future will be able to support his brothers.

At the age of twenty-two, he realizes that suppressing his emotions becomes rather difficult. He sighs as he leaned back on his chair. His gaze flicked onto the paperwork for a few seconds before shaking his head. Even if it is him, this much alone is impossible. It just so happens to be the rare day when he gave all his assistants and guards.

Soujiro knew better than to keep working them endlessly like that. Today happened to be his rare day off, that was until he received word that his brothers would not be around. His brothers were attending a business meeting proposal overseas.

They are trying to escape from the upcoming gunfire fight that is sure to happen in the near future. Soujiro understood that as members of the elite, they have to think of their own safety before all others. Because if something happens to them, how can the royal family continue? It's only natural they would run away. But at this stage, how can they escape?

One of the main reasons why he has stayed away from his fiancée is because he is busy investigating the cause of all the incidents. It did not take him to learn that the one igniting this fight is a member of the elite circles.

Recently the family that attacked Ichinose Arashi has not made any moves and none of their branches either. What could those guys be thinking? Ichinose too, Soujiro was skeptical that he would stay quiet after what had happened.

But it doesn't seem as though he returned to Star Town, yet Soujiro had not been able to locate him in Tokyo either. Exactly what is that person doing?

Ichinose is a problem.

So is that family, especially their heir Kisaragi Aoi.

Soujiro had seen what kind of moves the guy had been pulling. The moves he had been taking have nothing to do with this game, this current battle. It was towards his fiancée; he is trying to pull Sumire away from him. Indeed that kind of move would benefit the Kisaragi family, and he ought to worry because there is indeed a strong chance for them to be able to pull this off.

However, that may be why Soujiro wasn't worried even if he does something about it. As long as Sumire continues to associate with that man, then he cannot do anything about it.

Even so, if it's not one guy, it's another. Exactly why did his fiancée gather such a troublesome crowd around her? It gave him a headache. Why do all the men who like her come from powerful backgrounds? Is it just a coincidence?

Sometimes Soujiro wondered if he had not left for the trip. Would he have been able to prevent the tragedy that fell on the Ibuki household? But when he discovered who caused it, he realized that he could not interfere even if he was there.

He recalled clearly the gaze and the words the girl's best friend told him "If she finds out, Sumire won't forgive you." Indeed he was well aware of that. Even if he wasn't directly involved, it doesn't change the fact that he knew who did it. To this very day he knew she still searches endlessly for the main culprit.

"I will not hate you," huh?

In the end, she means what she says. She hasn't shown any form of dislike for him. She even drops by quite a bit like before. But she does not stay with him. Soujiro knew that he didn't have any more rights to make such a selfish request like that anymore.

That's right; it's because he no longer has that right, even if she does decide to leave him for another man.

If she decides to break off this engagement, then Soujiro knew he would have no choice but to comply with her request. He will have no choice if she decides to go with someone else. In the end, it seems nobody will remain by his side.

"You have to listen to me, Soujiro; as a prince, you have to conduct yourself properly. You cannot disobey the orders from above and must live your life according to the decisions of others. You do not have a say anything. The existence you lead is only for the sake of your older brother. There is nothing other than that for you. That is why you cannot disobey. Whatever actions you take will affect your brother; that's why it is best to just follow orders. Do not tarnish our name".

He knew, he knew he couldn't do anything, that the reality was that he was actually powerless.

He sighed deeply again; it won't do him any good like this.

Soujiro looked at the window to see the grey color and picked up a parasol from the corner. He exited his office and walked down the hall.

It is strangely peaceful for once. Though there are still people hanging around the office at this time, there aren't as many as usual. This place is usually bustling with people; it's so quiet now.

His thoughts broke off when he heard singing; Soujiro located the source to find it coming from the decking area.

The person that stood there was his fiance Ibuki Sumire.

Sumire, so she came today. For Soujiro, just seeing her - made him lose complete control of his senses. He wants to embrace her, wrap his arms around her and not let her go. But he restrained himself when he saw the red color around the girl.

It was something he knew and confirmed with his own two eyes then. But perhaps there was a part of him that had yet to accept the situation" Soujiro, and I want you to be the first to know. I intend to pursue it, my career as an idol seriously again".

Ever since then, he only saw her around during the souriee gatherings. Due to the number of formal greetings they had to do, they barely had enough time to exchange a few sentences with each other.

"The sorrow

born today

soars high towards the sky

The sky awakens

calls for wind

My heart trembles

I want to protect you

I want to touch destiny
Both hollow in your chest
and your overflow tears

I want to fill them with happiness." Sumire sang.

It started raining after the first stanza of the song, and he opened up the parasol, sheltering him from the droplets of rain falling from the sky. She is very foolish, isn't she? Though it was brief, he saw tears in her eyes.

Soujiro was about to step forward and reveal his presence till she spoke up. Sumire extends her hand out to reach for the sky.

"There are more things in heaven and earth than has been dreamt of in your philosophy Horatio," Sumire mutters. "I miss you."

When he heard that, his gaze darkens, so that's how it'll be after all, huh. Even though he already knew since he last saw her performance, hearing it directly from her is painful.

Soujiro shook his head; she's already drenched. At this rate, she's going to get sick. He makes his way over and extends the parasol over her head, "Soujiro...."

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 387

Chapter 387: Secrets

If audio player doesn't work, press Stop then Play button again

"You will catch a cold. Let's go inside." He said, averting his gaze.

For some reason, he could not meet her eyes. No, it's normal, after he just heard her whisper another man's name. That longing look and painful gaze. In the end, he is the cause of it.

He knew that nothing would stop the two from getting together and nothing stopping her from admitting her feelings for him. It would not stop her from leaving him. If it weren't for him, she would have left a long time ago.

Had it not been for that promise, surely she would have left him already. Soujiro knew that, and that's why he wasn't going to do anything more than this. He wasn't going to try and step over the boundary anymore.

Sumire laughed softly. "Aren't you forcing yourself too much? I won't bite."

Soujiro sighed. "This is not funny."

"Mmm, but I thought it would surprise you more seeing me today."

"I am surprised. But since this is you, I am sure you came by today because you heard nobody else is around."

Sumire blinked. "That is the exact reason. I thought today would be a good day to test if you would make a move on me or not."

At that comment, he placed his hand on his forehead. "What are you trying to do?"

He suddenly felt the girl place her hands on his cheeks.

"Sumire ?"

"Look at me. Look at me properly. Don't avert your gaze from me!"

At this comment, his eyes widened, and their gaze met. He looked directly at her violet-colored eyes. When he first glanced at it in the past, it reminded him of jewels, but now there is something else behind them.

It was similar to a flame, a burning, and passionate flame.

"I am looking," He managed to say.

Sumire smiled warmly at him. "Good."

Soujiro knew better than to look away now, but something occupied his thoughts.

I know your secret. Well, to be honest, that isn't quite right. It's not just that I know your secret. It's my secret, too. The one that I'm talking about, anyway. In fact, you may be very surprised to know how many have the same secret as you.

It was the words Tsueno Mamoru told him. Soujiro recalled it very well since the man caused such a huge disturbance that day.

How many people can keep a secret before it isn't a secret anymore?

The answer, if one looked at the situation realistically, is fewer than one would think.

Don't worry. We don't plan to tell anyone for now; your secret's safe with us. Whether it's safe with you is another question. Some secrets tend to remain hidden, but others have a mind of their own. Even if you do not say it, eventually, people find out.

....

Soujiro woke up sweating and breathing heavily. He placed his hand on his damped forehead and felt the tears drop from his eyes to his cheek.

He shivered; suddenly, the room was much too cold for him, despite the high-class conditioning. He scans his surroundings, indeed, to find him in his living quarters.

Soujiro tried to recall what had happened. That's right, he got tired from paperwork, went outside, and found his fiance there. Then he led her inside to his quarters only to find out that the room she once stayed in was going through repairs.

He scans the room not to find a single spec of her brown hair. Did she go home already? It wouldn't surprise him if she did. She probably didn't know he was here today. No, but even so, why did she come

all the way here? Surely he has already informed her about the once-in-while breaks he gives his people?

It was was one of the first things they discussed upon meeting again. It can't be that she has forgotten either.

Soujiro knew that one of his fiance's strong points was her strong memory, so it isn't that. He stayed in that position until he heard the sound of chopping. Eh?

The sound was rather close by, but he could not believe it. There is no way, but there should be nobody else in the mansion today.

Soujiro stood up and opened the adjacent door to find the brown-haired girl in the kitchen area. She wore a pleated apron.

"Soujiro, your up? I've made you breakfast."

He scans the wooden table to see all sorts of dishes ranging from small rolled-up omelets, rice and stew. Soujiro starred at the table with wide eyes. He looked confused for a few minutes before he made his way over.

"What brought on this sudden change of heart?"

Sumire looked at him proudly. "Look at this. I just cracked a double yolk. Isn't that lucky?" She said, holding out a bowl.

"What are you up to?" Soujiro asked her again. "This time, do not play any games with me."

"I already told you."

Soujiro doesn't respond but stares at her intently, causing her to fidget with her fingers.

"I'll do the cooking, cleaning, and laundry. I heard that your family's maids are going to take a rather extended vacation, and it doesn't seem right to make your subordinates do this."

At that, he noticed the girl's cheeks turn red. "T--that's why for a while I'll be dropping in and helping you out."

The third prince doesn't know who leaked that information out. However, he quickly looked at the girl's expression again. If he can get such an expression to appear on her face, even just for a little while, he will take that opportunity.

Soujiro sat down. "Tea."

Sumire laughed softly. "Your tastes have changed." She slid a cup of tea in front of him, and he blinked.

"But you have, at least in the past, you could not do something like this."

"Then, since I have changed now, can you do a favor for me?"

Soujiro sighed. "You should have mentioned that from the start. But before you say anything, has Terashima communicated with you regarding his investigations?"

"Mm, he said there are chances that a strong hanyou is involved."

"I presume you have a better understanding of your abilities now?"

Sumire nodded and extended her hand out until he saw small droplets of blood dancing in the air. Soujiro frowned. He thought she had a fire ability, but it seems there is something else there.

He is the type of person who does not believe in things until there is evidence. This is why he researched thoroughly before he believed in the existence of humans with evolved genetics.

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 388

Chapter 388: Understanding

If audio player doesn't work, press Stop then Play button again

Meanwhile back at the Akagaumi bar, Yuhi laid on the couch pondering on the dream he had. A dream of the past.

Yuhi understood it a long time ago, even though it was something he couldn't accept. Just because he understood something doesn't mean he would accept it. That's right, for him, it had always been that way. Even though he understood what the consequences were, it didn't mean he accepted it.

All of his master's teachings, he understood what he meant. The distinction between nobility and regular individuals is why he kept his distance; he tried to remain far, far away from someone who belonged in that world.

Yuhi thought he did well and that he could maintain that. But before long, he realized that he constantly thought of her. It became even worse when he started to send her those books; he already sealed their fates together again then.

It was because of that, because of that factor alone, that he knew better than to get his hopes up whenever it concerns her.

Even so, because she keeps saying strange things like Yuhi's color is pretty."

Or, "It is the warmest beside you. It's the only warm place".

How on earth was he supposed to react when she says things like that? She's pretty bold, too, always snuggling up to his arm. Does she not have any self-awareness at all?

No, no, he saw how the girl was around the guys who like her. Despite how calm and playful the girl's personality is, even she should become conscious around the opposite sex.

She's surrounded by them every day, so it's normal she's calm. But even so, her actions really do leave him troubled.

Sumire is far too calm; that's what bothers him the most.

She's indeed found her color now. But even so, she should understand how dire the situation is.

After all, did she not recently admit something to him?

"Don't. Don't say anything. I get it already; I already knew. Back then, I noticed it too. Yuhi, you were someone who was always by my side then. I respected you a lot, the way you conducted your work and investigations. But I can't be with you, Yuhi, and I can't be with you. Everyone's going to get hurt. Asahi isn't going to be the only one. .. that's why....."

"I can't be with you," huh?

He had yet to actually say anything then. He never even got it across before.

His thoughts broke off when he felt a pair of gaze on him. "Again, don't you guys have anything better to do than loiter around here?"

The ones he was talking to were none other than the two members of the newly formed trio.

"According to my data, this is a bar, so we have every right to be here as customers," Jun commented.

The first person who spoke up is Kira Jun, one of the members of his new group.

The man beside him is a man with long curly blonde hair wearing an auburn-colored suit Ookoyama Kirishima, a member of the group Emma. It seems like all the members of that group was gradually returning to Japan. Atsuro, soon he will have to confront that person.

Kirishima smiles. "Now, we were not always here. It's just that Shin and Iwa use the studio we often use in Jupiter records. Hamano-san offered us a place to use here, so we're making use of it."

Yuhi sighed again. The person who invited them is not said person isn't even here today.

"You made an error, Terashima. Were not all here today, so it would hardly count."

Yuhi sends the teal-colored-haired boy a "as if I care look". These guys are ruining his nap time. Well, Kira does make a point. It is quiet without the ginger hair one around.

Kira can remain his usual calm and collected self if the other one isn't around. There is a sense of peace, he supposed. Even so, it's strange that these two actually hang out with each other—such an odd combination. Well, as long as they're not at each other's throats, then it should be okay.

Even so, it really is too quiet today. He stares at the spot that Sumire normally salt in. She's usually just there and watching him for some reason he will never understand.

"Speaking of which. Terashima, should you really be skipping today? I heard you are painting the sign for the mid-November fest?"

"It's fine. I paint it every year and always get it done even if I skip."

Besides, they are still in September, and there is still a good two months left.

"Hmm? What's this festival in November?"

"Artistic schools appear to have different traditions. I was surprised too. The music's students appear to have to perform too - meaning I'll be double-booked for performances then." Jun explained.

Yuhi yawned. "I doubt they'll make you perform if you're busy. Don't you have the tri competition and solo performances that week?"

"Several magazine interviews and meetings with the idol corporations too. But it would be quite disgraceful for me to decline a performance. We're only in Tokyo for a limited time, after all. So we make use of every opportunity we receive."

He guessed that was a logical enough explanation. Besides, it would probably be okay for Kira. In the short time since they started to hang out, Yuhi has not seen the guy break a sweat.

"Though." Jun glances in Kirishima's direction. "I suppose working with the rival works also."

Kirishima smiled. Now now. That last interview worked well, didn't it?"

"I suppose I'll commend you on that."

Rival huh?

A flash of blonde appears on his head. That guy's expression was still something fixed in his mind. He had watched the exchange between the two then carefully and heard the words she said to him, "I won't hate you for that. But I can't thank you either."

It was difficult to interpret that guy's expression, even though he normally acts high and mighty. Yes, the person he thought about was none other than the third prince of the Makoto family.

He heard that Sumire had gone to see him today, which explains her absence. He wonders if they'll sort it out. That guy was already quite difficult to deal with before, and now he got involved in this.

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 389

Chapter 389: Why her?

If audio player doesn't work, press Stop then Play button again

His thoughts broke once the door of the bar opened, great. A customer when Hamano isn't around. Guess there's no choice. Yoru isn't here either. He sits up, "Welc---" Yuhi pauses in mid-sentence when he saw who just entered.

Yuhi sighed deeply. "I see you are just going to show up without calling now."

The person who just entered is Kiragi Asuka, one of Sumire's close friends.

Asuka does not say anything to that but took a seat at the counter.

Yoru came just in time, thank goodness. He wasn't bad at making drinks, but it wasn't like he was any good either. The ginger hair boy seemed rather nervous to be around Asuka. Come to think of it, Hamano must have said something about it before, about Yoru not being good around girls.

"So? What is it?"

Asuka closed her other eye for a split second before opening it once again. "I want you to tell me directly since Jae-San won't say a word about it. Sumire doesn't have it anymore, does she? The emerald color."

Yuhi didn't respond straight away and recalled what happened during that time. So she noticed it already; this one is rather sharp. "If she doesn't?"

"I noticed something had changed." Asuka trailed off. "Up until now, Sumire served as the holy knight's number two under Aki-san. However, during that time frame, Aki-san started acting rather strange, and that's when I noticed that the cross on his arm. One of the pieces seemed to be fragmented. No, it has nothing to do with his reduced strength; he's still the same as ever. I didn't mention this to Futaba when I met with her, however during the time Sumire contacted me."

Why would Sumire contact Asuka?

"When she called me. I didn't think it was her at first since she has never sounded like that before. She sounded so terrified." Asuka pauses before she shook her head. "No saying would be wrong. That person has never been as strong as everyone says she is. She's never been that strong."

That's why when she didn't break down, I wonder why nobody questioned. Isn't it strange? Shouldn't someone have found it strange? Why? Why didn't they let her cry? Why does everyone else get to cry but her."

He doesn't know how to deal with girls on the verge of a breakdown. Or rather, Kiragi Asuka is not the type of person who would show her emotions openly like this. But luckily enough, he wasn't alone.

Ookoyama stood up and placed his hand on the girl's shoulder, giving it a firm squeeze. "It's alright. I'm sure that she already cried in front of someone over the matter."

At that comment, Yuhi flinched, but he looked over at Kira Jun, who stared at him with an odd gaze. "Did Maon tell you?"

Jun did not say anything, but he understood his new team member very well now.

"You?"

Kirishima smiles. "It's not too difficult to guess. With the way she's always stuck to you like glue."

She was stuck to him like glue, huh? Indeed, she often clung to him, even before they dated. But Yuhi didn't think that anybody would mistake them as a couple, let alone somebody Sumire could rely on.

Yuhi nodded. "Yeah, she cried. For Kuruga Asah and for all those nameless individuals out there who got involved."

It surprised her when she cried, but it surprised him more when she cried the way she did. It was a first for him to see her that way. No, that's wrong. That time too, he saw it, the tears she cried for Tsueno Mamoru and the tears she cried when he left her.

"I have always watched over them. That's why I know she isn't okay still. Asahi is dead. Futaba went off to investigate and has yet to contact anyone. I wonder if you're aware of it yet; when we contacted her

father's place the original manager answered and told us that she didn't know of the "Momoi" family at all. They intend to cover it up; that means something happened."

Jun spoke up. "I see. Was there not that huge shootout incident a while ago? At the park parking lot near a factory."

Hey, hey Kira, idols shouldn't investigate cases like that. Still, he also heard of that incident since Hino warned him not to go there.

"It's exactly as you say. Futaba's father was involved in that incident. I don't think she was involved, but we can't be too sure."

"Does Iwa not know this?" Yuhi wondered.

One of the few things he learned about Iwa Ran was the guy has a childhood friend. That childhood friend is Sumire's best friend.

"If he knew, then there would have been hell already, no?"

That's true. Iwa doesn't look like it. But he is the type that would go ahead and turn the world upside down if something happens to the people he cares about.

That incident, too, in summer in the stadium. Funny enough, those Iwa is now in a team with that very guy he said he would kill if Sumire gets hurt.

"I don't intend to tell him because I do believe that Futaba will contact him first."

Yuhi did not care for Momoi Futaba; he has never met her before. But he did care for his new teammate. Moreover, he knew how much Sumire cared for the two. "You want me to help you?"

"You catch on quickly." Asuka slides an invitation on the bar counter. "I need someone to go with me to this event; if you can't, Hamano will do."

When Yuhi saw the blue-colored seal, his face color turned pale, and he looked away. "I guess Atushi is going with you."

"Alright."

After a few more words, the purple-haired woman left. Kirishima chuckled. "That was interesting to see. I did not think the rumored cold-hearted beauty would cry like that."

Yuhi sighed. "Just because she has a label like that on her does not mean you can restrict her like that. She is free to behave any way she wants to."

He watched as Jun quickly typed something on his laptop, and sure enough, when he got closer, he saw the words he just said on the screen.

"Oi."

Jun shrugged. "Occasionally, you would say great lines like this. I still do not know much about you, Yuhi-san. So I figured jotting down anything you say will help me."

Yuhi sighed again when he heard that. "You don't have to write notes; you can just get to know me."

"Did you hear that, Ookoyama? This is why Sumire-san likes him."

Ookoyama Kirishima chuckled. "Indeed, it is rare to find a person like this."

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 390

Chapter 390: I want to keep trying

If audio player doesn't work, press Stop then Play button again

After Asuka left, the doors opened after a few minutes. The last person he expected to see was Nagawa Sano but even more surprising was that Sumire was with him. Didn't she meet Soujiro? Why are they together?

Yuhi observed them. Sano had his coat draped around her shoulders, and he was asking her if she felt okay. He felt a sudden pain in his chest, and he clenched his fist. It is not like anything has changed between these two despite what happened recently. From the moment Sumire decided to pay attention to Nagawa, they have behaved this way.

His thoughts were about to spiral out of control when Sumire rushed over to him and hugged him tightly. "Im back, Yuhi-san!"

"Yeah, why-" His sentence fell short when he smelled something familiar. The bandages restricted the smell of blood, but it was still fresh for him.

Yuhi grabbed her wrist and noticed there were bandages there too. Before she could say anything, he dragged the girl out to the back. The moment he shut the door, he pinned her against the wall.

Sumire laughed softly. "Uhh."

"Why are you hurt?"

"When I was leaving Soujiros place, I got into a bit of dispute with the guests who were on their way to visit him."

Yuhi frowned even more, when he heard those words. "They aren't delinquents. Why would they attack you?" He inspected her closely and noticed how her hair seemed out of place.

"I guess just seeing my face makes them angry."

"You didn't provoke them?" He knew how much she liked to tease people.

"This time, I am innocent. More importantly," Sumire wrapped her arms around his neck. "Does the smell of my blood not bother you?"

Yuhi stared at her dumbfounded when he heard those words escape her lips. It seems like she is getting braver; then again, he does not dislike it when she is this straightforward with him.

But instead of falling for her provocation, he reached over and grabbed her arm again. A pained screech escaped her lips, and Yuhi frowned.

"I thought since you came with Nagawa, he would tend to your wounds, but--"

"I didn't want to get close, so.."

Yuhi awkwardly ran his hands through his hair. "I know you are considerate of me, but you do not need to go this far. You got hurt, and he is a good doctor."

"A good doctor, huh?"

"What?"

Sumire didn't say anything, and he led her over to the benches. The moment he sat down beside her, though, she immediately clung to him. "Yuhi, you don't have to get jealous."

He sighed deeply when he heard her say those words. "You know I am trying hard not to. But--"

But just now, when they came through the door together, a thought crossed his mind. They looked so perfect and so natural together.

"Ssh Yuhi, it will all be okay. My feelings for you have remained unchanged since the day we first met."

"Didn't you say it wasn't love at first sight?"

"I said that since I fell for your voice first. But in this situation, I will use this."

Hah, in this situation? Yuhis gaze softened when he saw her rambling. Sumire is struggling to make things normal after what happened that day. If it were the old her, then she would have run away by now and hide for a few days.

Yuhi cupped her cheeks and noticed her look down. "Is it awkward?" He asks a question that he already has the answer to.

"Yes."

"But you want to keep trying?"

"Mm. I know most couples would take a break or something."

Yuhi felt his heartbeat increase when she said the words take a break. He knew that she was only using it as an example, but even that mere suggestion upset him.

His thoughts broke off when he felt Sumire take his hand in hers.

"But just the mere thought of that is heartbreaking. I wasn't kidding when I told you I always liked you, and when I accepted your confession either."

"I know," Yuhi mumbled. Despite her not using the words love, he understood her feelings for him very well.

"Then Yuhi-san, will you have more confidence from now?"

"Confidence?"

"Just now, you say that sight with Sano and end up upset. It will not be the last time you see such things."

"Are you going to flirt with him deliberately?"

Sumire sighed. "No. But I have a lot of male friends, Yuhi-san. I don't want you feeling bad every time you see me with them."

It took a second for her words to register in his mind. Right, he almost forgot. She has loads of male friends who happen to have feelings for her. This will not be the first or last time. Now he is starting to understand Nagawa a little. It is easy to feel inferior whenever there is a better candidate around.

This was the main reason why he was uneasy around Makoto Soujiro. The man is a member of the elite circle. No matter how rich he becomes and famous, that is only limited to the entertainment industry.

Yuhi wrapped his arms around her, and Sumire laughed softly. "What is it?"

"I think I can relate with him a little."

"But even if you do, you won't behave the way he does, will you?"

Yuhi shook his head. "I won't, but it does hurt." This is the first time for him to feel this way, and yet when he saw that moments ago, he experienced something very painful. It felt like somebody had ripped apart his heart from his chest.

"I see, it hurts. I wonder how he coped with it this entire time then."

Right, if he thinks this hurts, then what about Nagawa?

"Maybe you should get to know him," Yuhi suggested. From what she has told him, it does not seem like she got a chance to know him before they dated.

"You would be okay with that?"

"Well, as long as I get to know him too."

He does not want to live a life with such hateful feelings in his heart. He no longer wants to return to those days where he did not trust anybody.

Sumire blinked before she burst into laughter. Yuhi rolled his eyes. "It isn't that funny."

"No, it is. I wondered what you were about to say." Sumire trailed off. "You know, I wonder if Ru knew about this too."

"About this?" He repeated.

"I wonder if he knew that I would end up not disliking Sano one day."

"Who knows?"

Whenever Sumire spoke about Tsueno Mamoru, she would get this look in her eyes. Yuhi clenched his fist, more than these new ugly feelings of jealousy towards Nagawa Sano. There is one emotion he

cannot erase. Mamoru is dead, and even if he were alive, the one beside Sumire is him. But he cannot get rid of these ugly emotions inside of him.