

Melody 431

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 431**

Chapter 431: Girl In The Snow

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December - Two months later

Almost two months have passed since Ibuki Sumire last faded away right in front of Nagawa Sano.

Did it bother him that she didn't say anything to him but left words for Nagawa? No, something like that wouldn't bother him. Yuhi knew that even though Sumire said they would search for Mamoru together, she would eventually go off on her own.

Yuhi glanced up at the grey skies. Two whole months huh? There were times where he thought that Sumire would never return to him. Maybe she found Mamoru and is staying with him now. But at the same time he dismissed such thoughts, it felt like there was something wrong.

The first star shining brighter than anyone was it? Sumire, back then, you were already everyone's first star. The people who surrounded you all loved and respected you. Even among those who know her, there was love, respect, desire to beat, as well as those who strived to improve themselves, to stand by her side.

So many people loved and cared for the person called Ibuki Sumire. People love her so much. But because they've always been the same, the fact that one day she would leave has always crossed his mind. The fact that you'd disappear and break off all contact with everyone is something he knew was possible for her. Even if Mamoru didn't pass away, she would have eventually fear happiness.

At the start, when she had accepted his confession in high school. He did think it was a dream. Even if he suspected that there had been some fondness, he didn't think the two of them could be together.

When he told Kou this, his companion told him he had been stupid, 'Mimi kissed you and acted like that, and yet it's not enough evidence?' The kisses and the fact that she said it with her very own lips when she was sick. He didn't think he could know true love and happiness, yet that girl proved it possible.

He still doesn't understand very well Sumire what love and happiness are. But he does know that she would be the one who brought such a possibility in his life. His only guiding star on earth.

Sumire, won't she come back to him? Won't she tell him with a bright smile about being everyone's number one star? Even the starry night we looked upon has become so very dark to him. He can no longer see the stars in the sky, let alone that single bright star in the center. Sumire..

"Yu-yu, are you listening?" Kou called out.

"Uh yeah."

"Kou, don't be insensitive."

"Are you thinking about Mimi again? You know she didn't leave out of resentment-"

"I know."

Of course, he knew. It was the day he promised to pick her up from Nagawas. But when he arrived there, the house was in a bad state, and Nagawa Sano passed out on the ground with a high fever. When he looked around the house, he could no longer see any traces of Sumire.

He later confirmed it with Asuka; it seems Sumire learned from the researcher Eli where Mamoru was, and she immediately went to find him.

That girl is so careless, but she is not the type to act on her emotions. There must be a reason.

"I really hope she returns before Christmas, though. I don't want to sing any song but hers."

Jun sighed. "It is not like we are incapable of writing our own songs. Besides Yuhi-san, he is the legendary god of composers."

"But Yu-yus songs are too dark."

Yuhis eyes twitched, annoyed, and he gave Kou a nuggie. "Ouch, ouch, Yu-yu!"

"Dark and depressing, huh?"

"I didn't say the second line!"

"You two quit yapping; my ears still hurt," Ran exclaimed.

Tetsuo laughed. "You heard the child."

"What was that?"

Before they could continue bickering, they heard a beeping sound from Jun's phone.

"Snowstorm in three, two-" Before Jun could even say anything else, the snow from earlier seemed to increase rapidly.

Rans gaze darkened. "Hey, this isn't what you said!"

"If I told you before that there was a storm, you wouldn't do this job."

These guys like to argue. The storm most likely started from the other side of town, and now it is finally on this side. If it becomes a bother, he could just use his ability.

Yuhi was about to say something when they see somebody approaching them. At first, he couldn't see who it was due to the blizzard, but when he got closer, his eyes widened. He has never personally met the man, but Yuhi knew he would recognize him immediately.

"Your--Eli?"

It was the researcher who was close with Sumire. It was because of this man. That she--

"Wait a second Yuhi-san." Jun took out something from his bag; it was a small torch. He shone the light on Eli, and Yuhi's eyes widened, his face color turned pale, realizing something. There was blood all over the man's clothes, and his face looked half burned.

"Sumire?" Yuhi asked; he felt his entire body tremble as he asked.

Eli weakly extended his hand out and pointed in another direction. Isn't there a cliff there? Yuhi bit his lip.

"Ran-chan?"

"This blizzard is very bad, she-- she won't be able to--"

Ran doesn't finish his sentence and started to walk off. Kou, however, rushed off to stop him. But it did no good, Ran was faster, and he immediately bolted towards the cliff direction.

"Then I will go. Yu-yu, come on, Jun and Tetsu-chan stay with this guy."

It was difficult to manoeuvre through the snow since the blizzard gradually got worse. A skinny person wouldn't survive this harsh weather; the wind would blow them away in seconds. Sumire is not necessarily skinny, but she is underweight.

Ran approaches the edge of the cliff and points to the broken fence, "Do you think?"

"Most likely, but we need to think of a sensible way to get down."

"We don't have time. Hey Sumire?!!" Ran said loudly. He tried to lean forward to get a better look, but Yuhi grabbed his sleeve.

"Yuhi, she must be down there."

"I know, just wait."

Yuhi took a deep breath.

He needs to calm down. Think, focus- Yuhi closed his eyes and allowed a surge of power to surround him. In this blizzard, a scorching hot flame. His thoughts broke off when he spotted something flashing. It was stuck to a fallen piece of the fence, a beautiful hairpin.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 432**

Chapter 432: Rescue

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

It was the gift he gave her that Christmas. It looked like they both got hurt from Eli's injuries before they came here, then she must have fallen off the cliff because the wind blew this way. She must have been wearing it so she could feel his presence.

This girl is an idiot; if she missed him this badly, she shouldn't have left without him.

"Yuhi?"

"I've found her; you two go back get some help."

That broken fence, there is a large tree not too far away. Sumire should be somewhere nearby.

"No, I-"

"Trust me," Yuhi interjected. Despite them being teammates for so long, they still had a strained relationship. Yuhi understood why. Iwa Ran's feelings towards Sumire are far stronger than the others.

"Don't lose her again."

Yuhi nodded, and he watched as the two rushed back in the direction they came from. Yuhi looked at the slope. It is too dangerous to go down using normal means. If he tries to go down, there is a high chance that he will slip.

They would have no choice but to use this route for a normal human, but he isn't normal. He turned off the blazing flames, and a strong gust of wind wraps around him. Who said all he could use is fire? To have the strength to protect her, he sacrificed a lot.

After using his wind ability, it did not take long before he reached the bottom of the slope. The sound of rushing water drew his attention, and for a moment, he panicked.

She didn't fall into the stream, did she? If she did in this cold weather, then she would freeze to death.

No, it can't be. Yuhi searched for the broken fence and eventually found it. He searched around for a few minutes before he found a huge heap of snow at the edge of the stream. There was a rock and a small tree at the edge. Yuhi spotted the red droplets of blood and bit his lip.

He extended his hand out and melted the snow away.

Sumire was there, curled in a ball shape. She hit her head against the rock, but even more than that, like Eli, she was hurt just as bad. He wished his theory was wrong. How did she even get here with such injuries? Of course, she would slip and get hurt when she isn't at full strength.

Yuhi scooped her up carefully and examined her wounds as best as he could. The head injury looks bad, but her other wounds, his gaze fell towards her leg. Is her leg broken too? He could still hear faint signs of breathing, but her pulse is far too weak.

She went to search for Mamoru. Why did she end up like this?

He needs to carry her back up using his wind. Yuhi carefully placed her on his back instead.

"Yuhi?"

At that comment, his eyes widened when he heard her faint, fairly like voice. Even though she is hurt, why does she sound so- Yuhi shook his head.

"Yes, my foolish wife?"

Sumire laughed weakly. "I'm sorry I can't see very clearly, but I knew it would be you, Yuhi."

"How come?"

"Mm, because Yuhi always rescues me. Whenever I need him the most, he is right there, no matter how far apart we are."

Yuhi wanted to ask her why she is like this. Did she meet Mamoru? That researcher most likely didn't make a mistake and found him. If they found him, why aren't they together? There were far too many questions.

"But Yuhi wasn't there when Ru attacked me."

At those words, his body turned cold, and his mind went blank. What did she just say there? Did she just say-

"Ru hurt me. But even when he did, it didn't upset me. I just thought I have to get back to Yuhi. I have to see Yuhi again. I have to tell him that I told Ru, and now we can be together properly."

Yuhi clenched his fist when he heard those words. He doesn't have a clue what is happening right now. But one thing is clear to him.

Mamoru betrayed her; that is the one thing he can never forgive.

.....

Yuhi doesn't know how they managed to get her to the hospital, but they managed it. It was already late when they arrived. When the staff at the hospital saw it was Sumire, many of them hesitated. It was stupid. They are medical staff trained to save lives; why would they hesitate?

But when a woman with red hair stepped forward and said she would take responsibility, they all changed their minds. That woman is most likely Nagawa's fiancée, but he didn't care for the details right now.

The next few minutes he spends alone in the waiting room is torture. He told the others to head home.

"Terashima."

He looked up and saw Nagawa and Yuhi laughed. "Weren't you busy?"

He came to the Nagawa family hospital knowing that Sano would rush over no matter where he was.

"I left, she--"

"Save her, and then you can have a proper fight with me."

Sano, however, did not respond to those words, and he placed something on his lap. "It's not like she wanted to leave without telling you." With those words, the blonde-haired man disappeared behind the operation room door.

Yuhi tears the envelope quickly.

My dearest Yuhi.

Please forgive me; you're going through so many hardships and pain because of me. But not a day has gone by since I stopped thinking about you. The way you say my name and hold me in your arms. Even now, I remember it carefully. I remember it. But you are not here. Your scent and warmth have faded from me.

Please believe me. I will always love you.

But we cannot meet. I don't want you to see me this way. I am far weaker than I am before. Take this medicine, and I am sure it will help you recover.

One day when I am stronger, I want to return to your side.

But I don't know when that will be.

Yuhi too. Don't follow me here. Even if I return, I'll only surround you with darkness. I don't want to destroy your beautiful light. I've always liked it a lot. Your strong hands made me feel safe, and the beautiful light surrounding you on stage and off.

To me, the days I spent with you and the moments you held me will always be something I treasure deeply, even if I fall into the depths of this darkness. I'm sure I will always remember you.

Ever since I left, I've always felt so cold. There have been many times where I've wanted to return just for a while, to bask in your warmth once again. This world is so cold Yuhi. . .Once again, I've been made to realize, the one I love the most will always be you.

### **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 433**

Chapter 433: Letter

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

Yuhi thought it was a simple case of searching for Mamoru, but reading this now, he understands. Sumire didn't know about her hanyou powers, but she knew there was something wrong with her. How long has she been battling with the darkness without knowing what was wrong with her? It must have been so frightening.

She intended to find Mamoru, tell him, and then disappear.

I love you, and I love you.

I repeat these words to myself every night and the words you told me.

I love you..Yuhi so much, so please try to forget me already.

Forget me because even if I do, become strong and return. I have become a monster. Will you really still accept me, Yuhi?

I wanted to disclose the ring you gave me with this letter. But I'm afraid I can't do so. I can't. Even if I can't return it to you, please let me keep this ring. Just this, only this - I won't be selfish and ask to see you anymore. I love you...so much, Yuhi.

Yuhi sighed when he read the remaining contents of the letter. All the worry he had for her vanished immediately. That girl is the biggest fool he has ever met. Did she truly think he would let her go?

In the past, he did not think they could get together; even if she felt something for him, their relationship would not change.

She may have turned him down, but Yuhi knew that Sumire liked him then. He was satisfied with the relationship they had then. They were not together as a couple, but they remained by each other and watched each other's backs, the perfect partners.

His thoughts broke off when he heard a familiar pair of footsteps and looked up. There stood none other than Sumire's fiancé Makoto Soujiro.

Yuhi laughed when he saw the man. "Is it a coincidence?"

"I managed to track her down, but she disappeared right in front of me."

"You found her hurt?"

"I saw him hurt her-" Soujiro struggled to say those words. "Terashima, Tsueno is--"

Yuhi's gaze dimmed at the mention of Mamoru. "I don't care, don't make any excuses for him," Yuhi said coldly. He does not care what is going on with Mamoru. No matter what is happening, why did he hurt Sumire?

Sumire went all that way to find him. Why on earth did that guy do this to her?

"You have to calm down. Nagawa is a good doctor; he will save her."

"I'm going to kill that bastard. He already survived and should be grateful for that. But instead of improving his second life, he went ahead and did something stupid. Next time I will be the one to kill him."

This is the first time in so long that he has felt such anger. But when he saw Sumire like that, he couldn't help it.

"Terashima"

"When you found her, did she say something?"

"She said she wants to hurry up and see you, even though she was in that state."

"That's enough-"

He didn't need to hear anymore. Why is this girl so stupid? Why did she do something like this? His thoughts broke off when somebody passed him another envelope.

Yuhi looked up and spotted Shin. From his clothing, Yuhi could tell that his friend rushed all the way out here.

"Iwa gave me a call."

"Nagawa is operating," Yuhi pointed to the envelope. "This?"

"There was a recent assignment, writing a letter to our future selves. But Sumire, she didn't do that. She said writing a letter to her most important person is better."

Dear Terashima Yuhi-san

It might be strange for me to write this letter to you considering how we are already in a relationship. But I have always found it difficult to convey my feelings to you. No matter how much love I show you, I feel that I cannot express it properly. So I hope by writing this letter I can lighten the burden more.

I hope I am not bothering you by writing something so heavy.

There is a saying that people in this world exist for another person. I think for me that person is you. We are born to live. I was born in this world for you- to bring you happiness and joy that you deserve.

Does that sound too cheesy? But even before I became your fan, I felt that something strong connected me towards you. You see I knew of you since a long time ago, even before you became the popular singer.

This may be connected to the memories I lost, but it is a precious memory to me either way.

I wonder if you recall it? I was a bit of a crybaby and cried a lot in the park. Back then, you would comfort me even though you didn't know who I was, or maybe you did? Either way, that was one of my fondest memories as a child.

You don't know this, but every single time we meet, you would appear in my dreams. No matter what form or shape our meeting takes, I would dream of a future where I could stand by your side.

As a singer, as a painter- or just as a normal girl. I want to be the only one you spend your life with. Whether it is in ten, twenty, or even fifty years- I want to be the one who walks down that aisle and makes those vows with you.

This seems so wrong, indirectly proposing, but I don't dare to tell you in person. From the very start, you were my only world and the only one who has my heart.

Ibuki Sumire.

At the end of the letter, Yuhi clenched his fist. Why is she so foolish? These things, she should have just told him in person. What good does it do bottling up such emotions?

"You know, people were making fun of her for writing this letter for you. It is just an assignment, but she is the only one who took it seriously. Sorry, I had to mark it, so I got a look," Shin trailed off. "Yuhi, you understand, right? Even though she went to look for Tsueno Mamoru, it was only so she could convey those last words."

"She told you?"

"Yeah, even before they confirmed that he was alive, she suspected it and confined in me. She told me even if he is alive; the situation will not change. But she wants to tell him first."



He was worrying for nothing. Yuhi understood that, and yet he pushed that thought at the furthest end of his mind. He was preparing his heart; any day, they would show up together and say they were getting back together. He replayed the scenario of her breaking up with him so many times in his head, but no matter how prepared he was, he knew if it came to it, he wouldn't let her go.

Sumire has improved a lot since they first met again; she smiles a lot more. But sometimes, Yuhi wondered if she was truly happy. He cannot give her the same things as Mamoru.

His gaze fell towards the red operation sign. "Will she be okay?"

"Nagawa behaves like that, but he will never let anything happen to her."

Even though he is partly to blame for this situation, Yuhi supposes he has no choice but to trust the man.

#### **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 434**

Chapter 434: Another Lie

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After the surgery ended, it didn't take long before Sumire woke up much to everyone's surprise.

But, she woke up screaming, and in pain.

Yuhi watched horrified for a few minutes as she pulled out the wires from her arms. There was a dangerous look in her eyes.

It was a good thing Nagawa cleared up the room so no other staff was around. Yuhi immediately pulled the girl into his arms.

—

When she finally calmed down and realized where she was, Sumire wanted to crawl into a hole and hide somewhere. Instead, her gaze fell on the wires she tore off and the glass cup she broke and bit her lip. What was she about to do there?

How long has she been awake and more importantly, her gaze fell on Yuhi, who was bandaging her arm. Whe--when did Yuhi get here?

It looks like she is in the Nagawa family hospital, but Sumire didn't know how she got here. She saw Soujiro. Did Soujiro bring her back? No, she remembers fading into a pool of light. Did she somehow end up in Tokyo? If so, Sumire looked around, and Yuhi sighed.

"Your companion is still in surgery."

"Ah."

Eli got poorly hurt because of her, and it wasn't just Eli. Sumire recalled Rus' pained cries, and she bit her lip. To think that was the reason why he didn't return to her. Sumire knew it wouldn't be simple, but she didn't think it would be like that. She shuddered as she recalled his state the last time she saw him. He ended up hurting her, but it wasn't his fault.

"Sumire. You're here, right?"

"Yes."

"We can talk in detail later, I'm sure. But for now..." He pulled her into his arms.

"Yu--" His warmth, the warmth she hasn't felt in so long. Only two months have passed, and yet it feels like it has been forever. As much as she enjoyed the feeling of being in his arms again, there was a problem.

"I can't bre- "

"Sumire. Sumire. "

He kept repeating her name over and over like some sort of spell. He's hugging her so tightly; she can tell how much he's missed her from this tight embrace. It is a bit too tight, though.

"Yuhi, geez, just listen to me for a second. " However, he wouldn't let go, instead his hold on her increased. This isn't romantic at all.

Sumire mustered whatever strength she had left and hit him.

"Ouch, why did you hit me?"

"I had to. I couldn't breathe."

"Like that's my problem."

"Are you trying to kill me?" Sumire retorted, but those words fell on death ears since he was kissing her lips passionately before long.

"Nnnnnnnmgh... Yuhi?"

"Don't go anywhere anymore, Sumire. Please, please don't go.."

Her eyes widened when she heard those words. It was the first time for her to hear Yuhi this weak and vulnerable.

Tears streamed down from her eyes, the ones she had been holding back since earlier, even though she doesn't deserve him.

Even though that's the case, right now, she wants to tell him.

"Sumire?"

"I missed you. "

"Yeah, I figured. Not having a human water bottle must have bothered you, so it was just about time.. "

"Dummy."

She wants him to hold her. But now really isn't the time for that.

"What is it? Don't be silent on me. Otherwise, I'll think I'm dreaming again...."

"I want you to hold me."

Yuhi awkwardly rubbed the back of his neck. "You know you're the one who suggested it, but you're turning red."

Sumire quickly averted her gaze. Stupid, this isn't the time to say such things. But she wants to feel his warmth again; she wants them to be one-- she paused mid-thought. It is a good thing that Yuhi does not have any mind-reading abilities.

"Even without mind-reading abilities, I can tell what you are thinking."

"Gah."

Yuhi laughed. "Well, even I understand that now isn't the time, but," He cupped her cheeks. "We can when you get better."

Uh, what did she just suggest?

"Yuhi, did anyone confess to you?" Sumire suddenly asked him.

Is it just her, or did her boyfriend become more handsome?

"She asks that so easily. "

"Sorry, but the way you are now, I wouldn't be surprised if loads of girls fell for you. "

"I won't deny that there have been a lot more stares. However, you're the only one for me, so it doesn't matter. "

Her cheeks flushed red, and she looked away. What on earth is she doing blushing like this around him? It reminds her of her of those times. Yet Yuhi has always had this effect on her. His feelings for her. When he held her in his arms, Sumire could tell right away how deeply his feelings still are.

Sumire felt very embarrassed by his love. They aren't children anymore, so such naive and pure feelings should have disappeared already. Over time such pureness ought to have vanished, and yet, even now, Yuhi is showering her with so much affection.

She felt his head rest on her shoulder; she blinks. "Are you tired, Yuhi?"

"Yeah. I was running around half the world searching for a certain somebody. " Yuhi said it normally, and yet Sumire understood.

It must have taken a lot of willpower for Yuhi not to resent her. She suddenly left like that even though they had that talk with each other. It is only normal for him to resent her, yet he still shows so much love.

"I'm sorry."

"Are you really? I wonder what's going to happen when you recover? Will you rush off with a different guy to find Mamoru again? But, what am I getting all jealous of? I know you haven't done anything wrong."

Sumire shook her head. "You're not to blame Yuhi. You're not. I drove you to a corner. I'm so sorry. "

"Don't cry, Sumire. I said we wouldn't talk about this now, and yet here I am, breaking my words. Sumire, I just want to know one thing. Do you still love me? "

Sumire was about to answer him immediately, but then she recalled something.

' If you leave him and remain with me.

I can negotiate with zero.

Him attacking us is merely a warning.

But he has no power over me once I'm serious.

If I do, under the condition you remain with me.

I will spare Terashima Yuhi's life.'

She has to lie again; she's sorry, Yuhi.

"I hate you, Yuhi. After I thought it through, I couldn't understand why you left me alone for so long. Ru was always there beside me, and yet I couldn't say anything. " Ah, what is she saying? He's going to see right through her. She can't even lie and say she loves Ru anymore.

"I hate you. That's why I ran away. I'm sorry you had to come all this way, but please leave me alone. "

Yuhi sighs deeply, "You are stubborn and a terrible liar. You're also reckless and a huge idiot."

### **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 435**

Chapter 435: I Cant Lie

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

"Wh--"

"I'm really angry. I must be an even bigger idiot to love you this much. Let's assume that you're telling the truth. Why do you look like you're about to cry? "

Her eyes widened at those words, and she tried to look away, but it was futile.

He noticed, of course, he did. Yuhi is the only person who she can't lie to. It is easy for her to lie to others, but the truth ends up slipping out when it comes to Terashima Yuhi.

"I love your smile. I can tell right away if it's fake or not. You can't play dumb with me. The enemy probably made some demands using my life as a bargaining chip. That's the only explanation that makes sense."

"No, I--- " She needs to deny it. She has to.

"Enough, be quiet." Yuhi silenced her and pulled her into his arms.

She noticed that he was quivering, and thus the tears desperately spilled from her eyes. It's not good. She can't pull away from him even though she has to.

"I felt like I was going to die. You left without saying a word to anyone, and you decided to sacrifice yourself. Do you have any idea how much th me? You really don't understand anything. You have no idea what it would mean if I lost you for real if you died somewhere in a place where I didn't know. A place where you'd be by yourself. "

Even though Eli was there, and even though Ru was in reach- Yuhi is right. She was close to dying in a place where nobody would find her—what a frightening thought. At the time, she did not think about it too deeply, but now that she is safe again, she realized how careless her behavior was.

"No, let me go, please."

Please let her go. Please don't say anything anymore. She doesn't need to hear it. She doesn't need to know how much he loves her.

"Didn't I tell you to be quiet? Just listen to what I have to say. I'm not dying, no matter what happens. You're not running from me again, no matter what. Didn't we vow when we first started dating, 'till death do us apart?' Didn't we swear that we would share each other's burdens? You broke the promise far too early if you ask me."

She never expected to hear words like that come from Yuhi's mouth. She tried to search for a retort back but found none. What can she say? He is right. They aren't even married yet, and she already ran away because of her insecurities.

"T--there's no other way. I will still remember, I'll live on with his memory everyday, I'll return his feelings. However, when the enemy slowly began to make their moves. I couldn't ignore it. I wouldn't bear it if you died Yuhi, so---this was the only way."

"There are a lot of options. Besides, you said we'd try to find a way together. That during the most difficult times, we would think about it together. 'I'm not alone' you're the one who made me realize that I have you and others who care about me. The same goes for you. Even if they'd kill me if you didn't obey, I'd just die if you sacrificed yourself. Don't you understand already? Geez, give me a break already. If you're going to make me hurt this much, it would be better to die together. "

At those words, she frantically shook her head.

"No !!!" she exclaimed. "No, I can't die with you Yuhi, I promised Ru that I'd die with him, that I'd fall into hell with him. But to the very end, I couldn't do that. I couldn't do it. I considered killing myself after his death. I was going crazy after all. I couldn't sing anymore. Music became a painful subject to me, but whenever I heard your songs, whenever you held me, I felt at ease. I felt so calm. Even now, during this situation, I just want to get close to you."

This isn't the time to get close or get affectionate. But the last two months, the only thing on her mind was to return to Yuhi, no matter what it took. If she could see Yuhi again, then she would surely tell him.

"I am towards Yuhi...love you a lot... "

It felt like a light load left her chest when she said those words, and she felt his fingers brush the tears from her eyes.

"Correct answer. You love me and only me. That's how it's always been, and he knew that too. The night before he got into an accident, he contacted me. "

Eh? Ru did what? Wait-?

Yuhi sighed. "Before I go into this subject. Was Mamoru the one who hurt you?"

Ah--she thought there was something wrong with him. It must have been painful for Yuhi to watch her in this state.

Sumire nodded. "He did, but it was only after they experimented on him."

"Experiment?"

"Tell me, Yuhi, is there any way to force somebody to have abilities?"

Yuhi nodded. "In the life sciences, there are many researchers who play with the idea of turning a normal human into an ability user, or mess with a very powerful ability user." He trailed off. "Are you saying Mamoru--?"

"I believe so. I did hear from Hino's brother that Ru got badly hurt from the accident, but why would he--"

"Obviously, he will do what he can to regain his strength."

"Are you saying it is for my sake? Is that why he--" Sumire paused when she recalled his pained expression.

Runaway Sumire.

"I see. I think I get it, but was it frightening? That he hurt you."

Weak laughter escaped her lips when she heard Yuhi say those words. Frightening? What frightened her was not her own life but his painful cries. She didn't think she would ever see Ru like that. It was a first for her, feeling so powerless. Even though she has strength, strength that is abnormal, she couldn't protect anyone.

Her thoughts broke off when she felt Yuhis hands on her hair. "But well, I was ready to murder him if he deliberately hurt you."

"Uh, that would have been a problem."

"I'm not happy about this."

Her gaze softened when she heard his tone. But even though he isn't happy, he will respect her wishes and her decisions.

**ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 436**

Chapter 436: Why?

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

A lot of people have asked her why Terashima Yuhi? There are much more fish in the sea, fish with better status. She knew how badly people in the elite circle criticize her relationship with YUhi. Many think she will get rid of him when she is bored and eventually marry Soujiro. People strongly believe that because she has yet to cancel the engagement. It is not like that; she just--wanted to sort out her lingering regrets first.

Until then, you can hold onto this title and use it when it is convenient for you.

Soujiros' words echoed in her head, and she sighed deeply. Even though it must be hard for him too. She heard from the others how he desperately searched for

"Here."

Sumire blinks in confusion at the sand which she was handing her. "You can't just rely on blood. "

That's true, and she refused to eat earlier.

"Thanks." Sumire took a bite into the sandwich. She usually is a very picky eater and would examine what she is eating first but not today. It occurred to her that she has not eaten anything at all the last few days.

Not a proper meal, but she recalled the time they locked her up. Ru was trying to sneak food to her when they were not experimenting on him. He didn't speak much, but she already understood just from looking at him.

How much torture did that person go through for her sake?

"Is it good?"

"Yes, very."

He has become so reliable. Even though he said before that cooking is a pain.

"I'd like it better if you smiled while eating. Your eating face was one of my fetishes, after all. It's a shame that I can't see it after coming this far. .well, maybe now isn't the time to be flirting with you. "

Sumire extends her hand out hesitantly. "Yuhi, am I...dreaming still? Seeing you, being held by you, and eating with you like this."

"You're not dreaming, Sumire. Come here, let me hug you again. . "

"Ah! Stop there!"

He sends her a puzzled look before sighing, "I don't understand."

"No, it's- it's just... I probably smell." She averted her gaze and fiddled with her fingers. "You see, I was in a tricky situation and was being held captive, so I didn't get a chance to bathe myself properly."

It just occurred to her how she entered the operating room in this state too. But that is not what bothered her; she doesn't want Yuhi to think she stinks. Sure she took that dive into the ocean while escaping, but that is hardly what she would call a bath.

Sumire somehow managed to stand up despite her weak state, so she could get away from Yuhi.

"I just told you I don't mind."

Yuhi had stood up and grabbed hold of the brunette's arms, yet she attempted to escape. She avoided looking at his eyes as much as possible.

Sumire vigorously shook her head. "I don't want to bother you."

"You're not the only one, though."

"No, you're fine as it is. I don't mind it."

"And I'm telling you I don't mind it either!!"

"Your opinion doesn't matter here!" Sumire tried to say something harsh, but it failed since Yuhi pulled her into his arms.

"You've gotten louder and more annoying."

She felt the heat creep to her face, not due to embarrassment over her smell but more to do with his beating heart. Why is it beating this loudly?

"Damn, this is embarrassing."

"I'm the one who should say that-"

"You're not the one with the frantic beating heart."

Sumire felt her cheeks color even more at those words.

"This is bad; when I am around you, it is hard to contain my feelings."

What idiotic thing is he saying now? But this is the first time she has heard it.

"Whenever we get close, or whenever I see you, my heart ends up like this." Yuhi laughed. "Are you impressed?"

"Who would be impressed, idiot," Sumire mumbled. "Are you holding back?"

"If you mean holding back my desires even, I won't pounce on somebody who just had an operation."

"Uh, right." But normally, that doesn't stop him from doing other perverted things.

"I am holding back a whole lot of other things." Yuhi buried his face in her hair. "I'm not going to ask you in detail what happened. It is unlike you to get captured easily too, I know you went through something harsh, so I will not push you. You can take your time."



Sumire blinked when she heard those words. Should she tell him? It seems like he has misunderstood? Even though they held her captive, other than starving her, they couldn't touch her. She didn't understand it very well, but Eli explained that it had something to do with her ability.

Or maybe it is okay to let him misunderstand? She wants him to spoil her a bit more.

Her thoughts broke off when he cupped her cheeks, and she noticed the dark gaze in his eyes. Ah, forget it- she ought to tell him.

"Yuhi," Sumire said softly. "The thing is-"

It was hard for her to explain what happened without giving away everything. There were some things she had to omit, knowing Yuhi would most likely misunderstand.

"Mamoru protected you?"

"Well, mm, he tried to act cold and stuff at first. But that guy has never been good at hiding his feelings in front of me. I could tell right away." She trailed off. "Besides, if he hated me, I don't think he would be carrying my picture around everywhere."

Yuhi sighed and flicked her forehead.

"Eh, what was that for?"

"You're so inconsiderate. I didn't need to hear that. No man would be happy hearing that another guy carries around pictures of their wife."

"But you know we are both part of the entertainment industry. People carry around our pictures and even made albums of our photos/merchandise. It is the same thing as that."

Yuhi looked very troubled. "I'm saying that I'm bothered by anybody carrying your photo who isn't me."

So that means he even gets jealous of her fans? This man is so silly sometimes. Her gaze softened, but there is no doubt that his feelings for her haven't changed. No that is wrong; they have gotten stronger.

"I'd like to take a bath together, can we? This is a private room, right?"

Yuhi sighed. "Hey, are you doing that deliberately?"

Sumire laughed. "Are you saying you can't restrain yourself around me?"

"You know I am already having a hard time; wait here a sec I will ask somebody if it is okay. You just had an operation after all."

The moment Yuhi left the room, Sumire slumped back onto the bed and extended her hand out. To think she came back in one piece. Under those circumstances, she didn't think it was possible to return. Even though she wanted to return to his side and did everything she could, even she understood the situation.

That underground lab, that facility-- it felt like she had seen something similar before. It seemed the researchers there were very familiar with Mamoru too; they had accurate records of him when he was a child. On a whim, she tried to type her name into the computer system.

Access denied, needs special authority to open files.

So those people have information about her too? It was weird and confusing. She didn't get a chance to crack it since Ru dragged her back to her room. He scolded her a lot and said that was very dangerous.

But even then, she could see how worried he was.

Ru, was it the best choice to let her escape? Will he get in trouble? Sumire shook her head and closed her eyes. Maybe she ought to sleep a bit.

### **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 437**

Chapter 437: Tsueno Mamoru Part 1

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

At an underground research facility -

A man with maroon-colored hair stared aimlessly at the grey ceiling. There was nothing in this room, but a metallic and uncomfortable bed, a desk, and a thumb-sized window.

It seems she managed to return; that's good.

He clenched his fist as he recalled what happened. To think that he ended up hurting her with his own hands, even though it was to get her out of this place, he still hurt her. He went through all the trouble of returning to this place to regain his abilities, only for him to hurt her in the end.

How ironic; in the end, what was the use of coming here?

After seeing her like that, it occurred to him that maybe he should stop messing around and leave already. But this place has changed far too much. The level of technological advancement to improve this much. Unless they had a backer, it isn't possible. The only people who would support this place are that organization.

Some more regular people have nothing to do with this world in this place. Whenever he encounters them, they greet him like normal and say this is a great place to work. A week or so later, he would see those same people looking lifeless, and they avoid him.

From the information, he gathered those people enter this place thinking it is a normal work area.

Mamoru shook his head. What use is there thinking about that now?

Ki looked well, she seemed to have gained more weight, and she looked lovelier than when he last saw her. Also, he placed his hand over his eyes.

"Is it possible for somebody to become that pretty?" He mumbled.

Almost a year has passed, so it is natural for her appearance to change, but he didn't expect that. He has changed too, but he probably looks worse than before because of the experiments.

She looked so pretty, and Mamoru recalled the warmth of her hands. This is bad, he doesn't see her in a while, and he gets all worked up seeing her again.

He didn't think they would meet each other so soon, nor would she recognize him.

Mamoru spent the first six years of his life in silence.

His parents seldom spoke to each other; his father was always away on business trips. Whenever he came home, he looked exhausted, so it was difficult for him to talk to him.

On the other hand, his mother was always around, she was a housewife, and yet at the same time, it felt that she was never there. His mother avoided him. But it is not like she starved him. She would prepare meals for more people than necessary and then leave the kitchen right away. After he learned this routine, he would grab food and bring it to his room.

He felt that if he stayed there long, then there is a stronger chance of crossing paths with her.

There were rare times where their paths crossed, and unfortunately, those were the times where she was drunk. She would scream, grab his arm and chuck him in the wardrobe or mainly the cupboard under the sink.

They lived in a semi-modest-looking house, but it was still small; the kitchen was the smallest place in the entire house. It was dark and damp, and he could have sworn that the rats lived there.

He would stay there until his father came home. It was one of the first things his father did, search for him. Even though the man seldom spoke to him, at the very least, the man remembered his presence.

If his father didn't come home, he would stay there for days until his mother felt like cleaning that area. She would find him there and simply reach over for the cleaning tools beside him. She would never say a word, and he would simply use that chance to leave.

His thoughts broke off when he hears the sound of his phone.

This was the phone the facility provided them to communicate their schedule for the day. Although one could use it to make calls, it restricts calls from the outside; only those inside could contact each other.

Only one person would call him right now. Mamoru, however, would use his sonic powers to interfere with their jamming whenever he got calls.

"John, what is it?"

John was not a subject but the researcher in charge of him. The man had an unusual habit of smiling all the time, and he strangely resembled his old companion Jae.

"I helped your wife escape, but shouldn't you have gone with her?"

"I already know."

John chuckled. "Your powers are so convenient; answer my second question."

"You know I can't just go."

"Even though you can?"

It seems this person was very unusual; not only did he treat the subjects like humans, but he held a strange interest in him. Then again, John was one of the only people who realized that he could leave at any time.

"There is something I have to figure out first."

"By the way, that girl wrote you a letter. I can't deliver it at hand since they would notice, but I will send it via a safe line. You still have to delete it afterwards, though."

"Alright."

After a few minutes, he hears the sound of a beep from his phone.

(To Tsueno Mamoru-san,

This may seem strange, but even though we have repeatedly seen each other, I cannot seem to talk to you properly.

I hope you heard me though when I told you that I loved you because I would be troubled if not.)

Mamoru chuckled when he read those lines. Why would something like that trouble her?

Of course, he heard her; she was so loud when she said it. That fool, he already knew. But he never pressured her into saying it. That was fine for him; she didn't have to convey her feelings through words, her actions spoke loudly enough. Although he would be kidding to say he didn't want to hear it, he wasn't fussed.

(I don't understand the current situation very clearly. But one thing is clear to me, once again, you are doing something stupid for my sake.

If it is like that, I won't tell you to stop.

I know how stubborn you are when it comes to me.

I have a lot of questions for you, but I suppose it can wait.

You will be glad to hear that Yuhi has been treating me very well.

For the first time, I have felt the happiness that I haven't in so long.)

His gaze softened when he read those words; She is happy, huh? Yuhi is treating her well; he is glad. For a while, it worried him what would happen with those two. Initially, he did not intend to ask her out, but after Kanagawa Ren left, she said something ridiculous about giving up on romance.

When she said that so seriously, he had to ask her out; if none of the other guys can muster the courage to help her, then he will do it.

Chapter end

**ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 438**

Chapter 438: Tsueno Mamoru Part 2

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

Was it painful being a substitute? There were times where he thought so, but those moments were fleeting whenever he saw her smile.

For him, all that mattered was her smile; as long as he saw that, then nothing else mattered.

(Thank you so much, Ru.

If it weren't for you, then I would never have found the courage to tell Yuhi how I feel.

I have spent many blissful days with him.

But I could never truly be happy with him. I want to learn the truth of what happened that day.

What were you investigating before?

Why did your illness flare-up?

The memories I lost, why did I lose them?

The strange incidents happening across the globe.)

Mamoru chuckled again when he saw the long list. She is the same as ever. The moment she gets suspicious of something, she becomes so curious to the point it ends up with her snooping around.

So she even suspected why his condition got worse. Even though she stayed by his side and helped him, she had other things on her mind.

(Ru, I won't stop running.

So I know one day our paths will cross again properly.

The next time we meet, I want it to be with Yuhi.

Will you properly give us your blessing then?

It is cruel to ask this, but I want to show you the person who has helped me experience happiness. The happiness you always wanted for me.)

There was more to the letter, but Mamoru didn't read any further.

Ki, the truth is there was something he desperately wanted to tell her if they met again.

But if he were to say those words to her now, it would trouble her, wouldn't it?

...

As a child, the walls in his house were the only ones he was familiar with. For the longest time, it remained that way; there was an unspoken rule, the outside world is a dangerous place.

Mamoru confirmed that theory because when he tried to leave the house once, his mother dragged him back inside. Those were the times she would beat him.

He quickly learned that being treated like air was better than being beat. After the first few times, he didn't bother trying again; he wasn't suicidal. Most people now would say he was smart for his age. He managed to survive despite living in such circumstances.

He didn't know whether it was deliberate or not, but that place didn't have many windows. But from what he could see, there were no other nearby houses. It was just a house in the middle of nowhere. He didn't know how to feel about it, but he knew there was something wrong.

His parents did not live as a normal couple.

The one time they had a guest, it was a friend of his mother's. She hid anything to do with him and acted like he didn't exist.

Why did they have to lock away a child and even deny his existence to that extent?

He taught himself how to read and write; he taught himself how to cook whenever his mother wasn't in the kitchen. There were days where she would leave the house and not come back for a while. There were many days where both his parents were not around. So he could use his father's study and the kitchen as he pleased.

His father's study wasn't very large, but there were many books there. He would pick up random books and stare at the pages. After repeating that process daily with different books, one day, he could read.

It was a strange way of learning how to read, but that is what happened. He read all sorts of books and started to realize how vast the outside world was.

In those books, there were people, children, adults, and the elderly. He learned about how families should be, adults teaching their children and spending time with them. The children growing up and going to schools, meeting people, falling in love- becoming adults themselves.

There were all sorts of stories, murder mysteries, contemporary, reincarnation, fantasy, drama. Some stories didn't suit his taste, but that was fine since he focused on other areas. What he liked the most about books were the humans who interacted with each other.

It was so different from the world he knew.

It was only when he first met Ibuki Sumire that he finally learned that the stuff in those books happens in reality.

He was around seven when he met Ibuki Sumire.

It was only a month since he arrived at the facility. His mother committed suicide, and his father tried to make a run for it since the police suspected him. It turned out his father was a piece of trash with several different families. He only came home once in a while because he would go home to different places after a certain amount of time.

Mamoru didn't know what to make of it.

-

Several years ago, at S facility.

One by one, his friends kept disappearing; as a curious young boy, Mamoru knew something was off with the situation. So when he finished all his training, and they escorted him to his room. He waited a while before he snuck out.

But it wasn't until his closest friend vanished too did he gain any leads.

It didn't take long before he found a place with a no entry sign and an odd-looking fence. It was a fence that suppressed those with strong powers. But for somebody like him, it was easy to pass. Usually, in places like this, one finds the organization's secret. But Mamoru wasn't after that.

Once I found Youji, then I will leave.

It is strange that he just disappeared one day. Whenever he asked the other researchers about it, they would say that person was never here.

So even the adults deny his existence. He snuck into the data room and found that they even erased his records. For them to go that far, there is something wrong.

He wandered around the hallways for a long time. It was an unusual corridor, everything looked the same as the dorms, but there was a barbed wire across all the rooms.

It occurred to him that they were keeping people here too. But he moved past each door when he saw the nameplates. There are numbers but with different letters. It will be difficult for him to identify whether Youji is here too.

He eventually reached a different type of door; there was an unusual red-colored light that screamed danger, so he leaned his head against the door. It was the only one without the wired fence.

"Hello? Are you there?"

Mamoru didn't say Youji just in case. He knew how precious names were to people in this facility.

"--get--"

Get? Mamoru paused when he heard that muffled voice. "Hey? Are you in there?"

There was no response other than an annoyed grunt.

"I know. Are you one of those people they call a shut-in?!"

Still no reply. Maybe he heard things.

"I know maybe you are a neet! Are you worried that you will lose your job if you open the door?"

At those words, he heard a very annoyed-sounding voice stand up. In the next second, the doors opened, revealing a young girl around his age with long brown colored hair. Despite her thin-looking state, Mamoru felt his heartbeat increase. There was something angelic about her appearance.

H--huh? What is this?

**ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 439**

Chapter 439: The Past - Mamoru And Sumire Part 1

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

Mamoru felt the sound of his heartbeat increase more, and his cheeks felt hot.

This--this is the first time he has seen somebody of the opposite gender before.

He was under the impression that anybody they kept locked up in a place like this would be a guy.

"Y--you're a girl?"

The girl looked him up and down; after a while, she sighed. "For a moment, I thought there would be a cool guy out here, but all I see is a hobo."

That fantasy-like image vanished the moment the girl opened her mouth.

"Excuse me; perhaps I heard you wrong?"

Kouji always told him to be polite, especially around girls.

"I said you're a hobo; not only do you dress like one but even the way you speak--"

At that comment, Mamoru grabbed hold of her shoulders. "Listen here, you, you can't just insult somebody you only just met."

For a moment, the girl looked stunned, but it didn't take long before her monotone-like expression returned. The girl kicked his shin, and Mamoru yelped in pain.

"Are you holding a grudge because I called you a neet?"

"You're a hypocrite; after you insulted me first, you're telling me off for getting back at you?"

This girl has an angelic-like appearance, but she has such a foul mouth. Then again, he can't judge her too much. He wonders how long she has spent in this area. It does look like she can leave her room. But unlike the area he stays in, there isn't a cafeteria or place to hang out; the only thing anybody can see here is long hallways.

"Ugh, sorry." Mamoru went on his knees and bowed. "I didn't mean that. I just said it to test you."

"Test?"

"I am looking for my friend."

At that, the girl's expression changed. "Your friend?"

"Yeah! I was wondering if he was in here. You see, he is wearing a uniform like this except he is a bit shorter than me, he has pale-colored medium pink and white-colored hair. He looks meek but talks a lot, and his name is--"

"Kouji."

"Yeah! That's him, you know him?"



He doubted Kouji went around telling strangers his name. So he probably became friends with this girl.

"That kid disappeared a few days ago."

"Argh damn, I just missed him. I was formulating the last few days when would be the best time to sneak out."

"What's your name?"

Mamoru blinked when he heard that question. This is the first, no the second time somebody has asked him what his name is since he came here. The people in this place refer to each other by numbers; the only privileged ones with names are the researchers.

"Me? Mamoru."

"That's a weird name."

What? Oh no, she didn't just insult his name.

"By saying that, you're acting rude again. My name isn't weird."

The girl looked uncomfortable when he called her out for saying something rude. Perhaps she is bad with this kind of thing?

"I've never heard that name before."

"Really? I hear it is common." Mamoru trailed off. Then again, he wonders how long she has been here? If she has been here for so long, it is only normal for her not to understand normal things. "You know it is strange for us to debate about my name without giving your own."

"Danger level extreme."

The moment Mamoru heard that, he cursed in his head. This is worse than numbers. They gave this poor girl a strange title. While the nature of the name makes him curious, Mamoru knew better than to ponder on it.

Even if she is dangerous, it doesn't matter. She doesn't look like the type of person who will hurt him.

Now how does he get her to say her real name?

Unless she has been here since birth, then she wouldn't have a name.

"Sumire."

Mamoru blinked when he heard something escape the girl's lips. "Huh?"

"You wanted my name, right?"

Well, he did, but he didn't think she would give it. Or maybe it is because of Youji? Youji disappeared quite some time ago, so he supposes that is enough time to- his thoughts broke off when he heard a rumbling sound. Huh? That doesn't sound like his stomach.

His gaze fell on the girl who had turned a bright shade of red. "What are you hungry?"

"No!" Sumire exclaimed. She tried to sound aggressive, but all he could hear was an adorable voice.

Pfft, she is so cute.

Mamoru pulled out his bag and eyed the hamburger he placed in a container. It is a shame he has to give this way. He planned to eat it later in case he got caught and needed the strength to escape.

But this is fine too; he wants to become friends with the girl. This is the best way to bridge the gap. There was something about her other than her fairy-like appearance that made him want to befriend her.

"Right, I know what you want."

"N--no, I don't want your food-" Sumire's sentence fell short as she eyed the container curiously. "That is?"

Mamoru blinked at her reaction. "Uh, it's just a hamburger."

When he saw no reaction from her, Mamoru paused. Could it be that she has never seen a hamburger before? Then she might have been here since birth. But no she has a name. The subjects who come here who have names were once a part of normal society.

"You don't know what it is?"

"D--don't make fun of me. I--I've been here for long, and my family was not the type who ate out."

"Ah, homemade meals?"

"No, the cook.."

Mamoru blinked when he heard those words. He thought there was something different about her, but this girl is a noble? Then what on earth is she doing in a place like this? She looks very skinny too like somebody hasn't fed her in a long time.

Normally people in this institute focus on keeping the subjects healthy. Aside from the inhumane training and keeping them from outside world factor- they don't mistreat them. At least he thought so but judging from this girl; there are dark secrets about this place.

Then again, it is not like he didn't notice. After he stayed here awhile, he began to notice things he didn't before. In the beginning, he used to like it here. From his very first day, people liked him. The adults interacted with him and treated him well.

However, as more time passed by, he observed how these people behaved in front of others. Mamoru recalled how he saw one of the researchers looking at Youji in disgust and how they rudely shoved him out of the way in the hallway. He observed this for a few days and noticed a pattern.

The researchers are only nice to the people with talent; they treat those without skill as failures. They are only nice to him because they think they can gain something from him. When he leaves this place with full control of his power, they can use him whenever they need help.

It was the first time he felt such disgust. Even more than the parents who treated him like air, these people were more despicable. If he didn't meet Kouji, then he most likely would have had a poor opinion on his world.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 440**

Chapter 440: The Past- Mamoru And Sumire Part 2

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

But it doesn't change the fact that there is something wrong with this place. This facility is similar to a gilded cage. He calls it a facility, but there is everything here, stores, great food, amusement rooms filled with games. Numerous areas would help cultivate skills after the subject leaves this place.

A lot of the subjects were young children. After having everything given to them this way, some didn't see the need to go outside.

Why would anybody bother with the outside world when it is more difficult to obtain these things outside? Why settle for the hard option when there is the free one?

A perfect paradise, of course, this place isn't all fun and games. The training program for those children with supernatural abilities was similar to torture. The subjects had to endure such gruesome and inhumane training every single day.

But due to the leisure activities, many fail to see what the facility was doing to them. There was a set routine, a schedule for each child every single day. Most people got used to living that way.

However, Mamoru understood that real life wasn't like that. Although he spent the last six years in silence, even he understood the current situation.

Life isn't this simple. It isn't easy to obtain everything just because you obeyed somebody. The fun thing about life is getting lost, getting hurt, and experiencing hardship. People can only grow if they do those things.

But the facility and their perfect ideology mess up children's brains. The kids don't think of hardship or anything bad happening. They believe that as long as they obey orders, they can obtain anything, even the world.

He wonders how many ability users struggle after they leave this place. Do those people learn that society, that life is not easy? Or do they cause a disturbance in society because things differ? It is most likely the latter.

He often hears the researchers speak of those who have left and comment on how they end up detained.

Mamoru didn't have to hear any further details; he knew what they meant by detained. Those people end up going to prison. To what extent does this place brainwash people?

His thoughts broke off when the girl split the hamburger in half; she passed the other half towards him. "Here."

Huh?

"I think you're hungry too."

Mamoru blinked, surprised. Is she trying to be considerate? His gaze softened. So she is a nice person after all. "Eating out here is a bit awkward. Can we go inside--" He paused, realizing something. "The surveillance?"

"Ah, I don't have any, don't worry."

Even more surprising, he just assumed that every room in the facility has surveillance cameras. So they kept her locked away in a secure area, and yet despite the tight security, there are no cameras? What an unusual situation.

Mamoru followed the girl inside, and the doors automatically closed behind them. His eyes widened when he came inside. "This place is so large!"

From the other doors, it seems like there are other rooms too. This is the first time he has seen an accommodation like this for a subject. He knew the researchers had rooms like this, but he didn't think a subject would have one too.

A nice room, and yet locked away in the deepest area of the facility. Are they confining her or not? Moreover, if she has such a nice room with her own kitchen, bathroom- why is she so frail and skinny? Surely they must give her food to eat.

Sumire laughed softly. "I suppose so; you can sit wherever you want. Can I heat these?" She pointed to the hamburger.

"Yeah."

The girl took his share too and went off to another room.

Mamoru awkwardly sat down on the couch. He wonders what the situation is with this girl. He has never heard of the facility doing so much. He recalled the name she gave him earlier. Are her abilities that dangerous?

His thoughts broke off when the girl reappeared with a white apron. She peeked through the door. "Would you like to watch?"

Mamoru blinked, puzzled, and realized what she was doing.

He quickly stood up and made his way over. "Are you going to cook?"

Is this girl only seven years old? How come she knows how to cook?

Sumire shyly covered her mouth with her sleeve and nodded. "Mm, sorry if it doesn't turn out so well. I haven't done it in a while."

Uh- the fact that she already knows how to cook is amazing enough. His gaze fell towards the table. There was a large piece of meat inside a blue-colored bowl. There were various other appliances and fresh groceries.

"Were you planning on cooking before I came here?"

"I planned to, but then I thought I didn't want to let them win."

"Win?"

"This fancy facility they gave, it was only recently because my parents visited. They didn't like the room I had before and negotiated. It felt stupid. I came here because of my uncontrollable ability. I don't expect to be treated like a human being."

So it was something like that. He figured something was off.

"The rooms you went past on the way here were all mine before. Plain empty walls, not even a bed. Locked up like some kind of monster."

Mamoru blinked, startled at her words. "That many?"

"My powers would go out of control. So I don't see the need having a nice room, I don't want to destroy everything. I normally lock myself up in one of the other rooms and not go out."

Are her powers that bad?

Sumire tapped the surface of the oven and set a timer. She pulled out a few pots and dumped different ingredients inside alongside the raw meat. "With how advanced things are, though, cooking is boring."

She tapped the knife against the raw meat, and he watched how it immediately sliced into thin pieces.

Mamoru blinked, surprised. "Wow."

"Interesting, isn't it? In this place, one doesn't have to put much effort into leisure activities. But when it comes to training, these people are so brutal."

Mamoru felt his heartbeat increase when he heard her say those words. Could it be that this girl is the same as him?

He watched her get everything else ready; indeed, since she didn't have to waste time cutting ingredients, it didn't take long.

She quickly got the table ready, and he helped her place the dishes on the table.

The girl decided to make a stew with the meat and alongside the hamburgers were potato chip fried rice.

"Wow.."

Sumire laughed, "Don't be too impressed; you do know that appearances can be deceiving, right?"