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Outside the window, the summer sky was spreading wide, and I could hear the cicadas chirping. But, it was an average summer, with an average plan of action.

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I could see a faint glimmer of anxiety in her eyes. But...that’s also why she was an idiot. Also, don’t push your face so close, or I’ll give you a smooch, dangit.

“You moron. What kind of rhetorical question is that?”

That’s right, it was truly moronic. The answer to that question couldn’t be more obvious. When I grinned with my teeth on full display, Kazuhi smiled, too. And then I told her exactly how I felt.

“I’m the happiest guy in the whole world!”

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“Ah, Sou! I heard you suddenly collapsed! You okay?! ...Well, looking at you now, you seem to be doing better than ever!”

A few days after the festival, still in the middle of summer, Suzuya and Yousuke heard from Kazuhi that I had collapsed before, so they came to visit me.

“So, what?! Was it the demon lord’s curse?! Then live the dispelling ritual to me! I actually bought some fairy wings just for today...”

Yousuke was as expected as always, barging into my room. I wasted no second smacking him.

“Ouch?! What was that for?! Have you gone mad?!”

"I just vented my anger on you, no worries."

"For real?! Isn't this the one moment I'm actually allowed to be angry?!"

"You...Acting like an absolute bastard...You really got my hopes up!"

"Huh?! What are you even talking about?! I'm scared! I'm sorry!"

He was the reason I really got my hopes up during one of the loops. All because of that stone that supposedly had a devil grant any of your wishes. But in the end, it was just another piece of useless trash he wasted money on.

"You deceived me...What a trap that was...Shit...!"

"Seriously, what?! I deceived you?! With a trap?! Did I mess up real bad without even knowing?! Is it my power as a trickster and the genius black magic user?!"

"Shut up! Who's a genius black magic user?!"

"Aaaaah, Sou doesn't believe meee! I mean, I can't use magic yet, but...magicians and witches definitely exist! I believe in it!"

"..."

Since he came with that argument, I had no room to bash him anymore. After all, we had an individual like that sitting with us right now. I glanced over at Suzuya. Our eyes met, but she kept on smiling, showing no change in expression.

"C'mon Sou, don't you remember? In third grade, I heard a rumor that a witch came into our world, and we went to look for her. But the day before, my sis made so much shaved ice that my stomach was killing me the next day. Well, you said that you and Kazuhi-chan couldn't find her either, so maybe it was all for nothing, though! Haha!"

...He's not even aware that the person in question is sitting right next to him. Talk about being airheaded.

"Well, it was probably just the heat getting to you, so you'll be back in no time with some rest. Plus, if it's not a curse, there's nothing I can really do about it."

"I highly doubt you could just take care of a curse, either. But, well, I'll be fine." I sighed and paused for a moment, then looked at Kazuhi, Suzuya, and Yousuke individually. "That's why...Let's go somewhere this break. As the four of us."

Outside the window, the summer sky was spreading wide, and I could hear the cicadas chirping. But, it was an average summer, with an average plan of action.

"Yeah. I'd love to hang out somewhere!"

"Sounds nice! I wanna go looking for spirits!"

Listening to my words, Kazuhi smiled and Yousuke gave me a thumbs up. Suzuya seemed a bit bewildered at my invitation, so I continued to press further.

"You too, Suzuya. No need to hold back on that. We're all gonna hang out together."

Back at the summer festival, she still hesitated, after all. But this time, I need to reel her in. Because we can't let this summer break go to waste.

"Spending your summer break with friends is the best thing ever, don't you think?"

A summer breeze entered the open window, shaking her black hair. Her eyes slowly narrowed into a gentle gaze, and she smiled. Like she was happy...from the bottom of her heart. Needless to say, Kazuhi's smile is the best for me. But seeing Suzuya smile at me like that...I thought it was the world's second-best smile, as it was burned into my retinas.

"...Yes, it truly is."

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That blue sky and magnificent smile have stayed with me since the first time I saw it. And—I don't think I'll ever be able to forget them.

"Yeah...Now I get how amazing this place really is."

Right now, we came to that place we visited as kids—the sunflower field.

"Summer! The blue sky! A sunflower field! My childhood friend in a white dress! It's far too well done! I see...this is what they call sentimentality?!"

"R-Really...? Is that what this is...?"

We promised to meet up with Suzuya and Yousuke another day. Today, it was just Kazuhi and me. It was a bit embarrassing to admit, but we went on a date. And Kazuhi was even kind enough to listen to my

selfish request and wore a white one-piece dress with a straw hat on top. There are a lot of clothes and costumes you could ask for. A maid uniform, a miko uniform, a school swimsuit, goth lolita, an apron, a bunny girl... And all of them sound wonderful. I can't disagree there. But only I know the truth, so let me say it... A white one-piece with a straw hat is the best thing ever!

"S-Stop staring at me... it's embarrassing..."

"Oh, is it embarrassing?"

"Y-Yeah, it is..."

"That's even better! A flustered childhood friend wearing a white one-piece is the best!"

"G-Geez, you dummy!"

I struck a pose, to which Kazuhi grew even more flustered. Mhm... such sweetness. Normally, you wouldn't be able to taste this, but...

"It doesn't hurt once a in while, right? We're... lovers, after all."

".....Fueh?"

"What's wrong?"

"No, um... Lovers? Sou-chan... and I?"

"Who else is here?"

"Huh? No, but, um... Ahm..." Her face turned beet-red as she panicked.

What's that reaction about? Now you're even making me feel flustered.

"What...? We're a couple, right? What's there to be embarrassed over?"

"R-Really...? A c-couple?"

"Y-Yeah! What else would we be?!"

"Sou-chan, you... I-like me...?"

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For a second, I was genuinely lost in what she was on about. But then, the realization hit me. I confessed to her during the night of the summer festival... But that was the Kazuhi from the future. The one in front of me is the one who lost all her memories of everything that happened. The Kazuhi I have not confessed to, and... Wouldn't that make this... my first confession toward the current Kazuhi?

"Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah?!"

"S-Sou-chan?! What's wrong?!"

"Are you kidding me?! No, wait, let me get a redo!"

"R-Redo?"

That was... so messed up. This was Kazuhi's first confession, so I should say it more clearly!

"Kazuhi!" In a rush, I took her hand.

"Wah?! Y-Yes...?!"

"W-Well... Um..."

But when we stood face to face like this, I felt incredibly nervous. There's no more sweetness left in the air, so what am I supposed to do?!

"I-I... I'll say it properly this time."

"O-Okay?"

Why did I say that?! That only makes it harder for me!

"I..."

Ah, crap. My heart is beating so hard. I said it so many times before, but when I realized that this was the first time I said it in front of this Kazuhi, my body felt like it began to burn up. I took a few deep breaths to relax... which ended up being completely futile. I really wanted to look away right now, but that would be even more pathetic, so... while cheering for myself mentally, I looked Kazuhi straight in the eyes...

Aren't I even more nervous than when I confessed the first time? A-Anyway. I just have to say it, right?!

"I... love you, Kazuhi."

Once they left my mouth, I realized how plain it was. Then again, a confession doesn't have to be extravagant.

"... Yeah."

Hearing my words, Kazuhi smiled. It was a smile rivaling the blooming beauty of the sunflowers' beauty. A smile that incorporated all of summer—and the smile I loved more than anything else in this world.

“Me too. I love you more than anybody else, Sou-chan!”

“...!”

You know...I can't. I'm at a loss here.

“Wha...Wh-Why are you laughing?!”

In the end, I couldn't look her directly in the eyes. Even though it's my favorite smile...can't blame me for acting a bit cold! Or what, are tsunderes only cute if they're girls?!

“Wh-Why? Because...I'm so happy...I'm smiling because I can't believe how happy I am! Is that... bad?”

Of course not. She's cute. Absolutely adorable. My brain is melting. Help. I'm her victim. Now even the inside of my brain has turned into a sunflower field.

“No, not at all! It's so good! It's the best! Keep smiling like that for the rest of your life, you dummy!”

My brain cells were turning to mush because of all the happiness, making me blow a fuse as a safety mechanism. I just took Kazuhi and lifted her high into the air! There's no meaning to this! I'm just coping, haha!

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What a lovey-dovey couple we are...If someone I knew happened to see me like this, I would probably die from the embarrassment. But...even so...we managed to beat destiny like that, so I should be allowed to drown in excitement!

“...Hey, Sou-chan. Are you happy right now?” Kazuhi asked, still in my arms.

“Huh? Why'd you suddenly ask that.”

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