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# C Claw Translations

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## Gimai Seikatsu Volume 1 Chapter 1

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### 7th of June (Sunday)

“Welcome to our home! ...No, that’s not it. —Starting today, we’ll be living under the same roof, right! ...Hmm, that sounds a bit too creepy...”

With the countless cardboard boxes and new furniture in the corner of my eye, I looked at myself in the mirror, and repeated the same phrases to myself.

It was your average evening, roughly 5pm. I stood in a single room of this flat we rented on the third floor, located in the living district with the greatest deviation value in all over Japan (slight exaggeration). It was a 3 LDK<sup>1</sup> flat. For just me and my old man, it was definitely too big, but now it’ll surely end up too small.

For the past five minutes, I’ve been practicing my expression and words that I would show to greet the new family. You know, the entire premise of this is just ridiculous. I understand how my old man would take care of cleaning and preparing the room that will be used by him and Akiko-san. However, why would you send me, an adolescent boy, to prepare the room for the stranger that will become my younger sister starting today. That is one decision I cannot exactly follow.

“Weird...where did it go?”

“What’s wrong?”

My old man was walking up and down the hallway in a panic, so I called out to him.

“Ah, perfect timing. Did you see the febreze anywhere?”

“Should be in the living room. I used it for the curtains yesterday.”

“Ah, there! Thanks!”

I heard the sloppy sound of slippers walking down the hallway, heading towards the living room.

“Why are you panicking like that **now**?”

“I was looking through the room again, but when I started cleaning, the scent just bothered me so much...I don’t want them to think I stink, you know...”

“What are you, a high school girl?”

“When you get to my age, that’s a critical hit, alright! You’ll see what I mean twenty years down the line, Yuuta!”

“I’d appreciate it if you had a bit more confidence in your own son, you shitty old man.”

Watching him walk back to his bedroom, febreze in hand, his back curled up like a depressed cat, I let out a sigh. If you’re that bothered by it, why don’t you just keep at it each day? Then again, that’d probably be too cruel of a request towards an always-busy salaryman like him.

“My room is fine...right?” Thanks to my old man’s words, I started to feel slightly concerned myself.

I made the promise with Ayase-san that we wouldn’t expect anything from each other, but I still don’t want her to immediately suffer from the strong stench of a high school boy’s room. That being said, I regularly take care of the sheets, cleaning, and smell, so as long as my nose isn’t playing tricks on me, things should be fine.

As I was feeling satisfied at the results of my daily work, I was pulled out of my thoughts when the doorbell rang.

—So they’re here, huh.

“Yuuta~ Can you go for me?”

“Yeah yeah.”

Since my old man was still busy removing any possible stench from the bedroom, I made my way to the entrance instead.

“Sorry for the wai...t?”

“We’re here~”

I tried to be as friendly as possible. With a gentle smile, I opened the front door, only to beautifully freeze up. Greeting me was Akiko-san, both her hands carrying several department store bags. I could see food ingredients

and other daily necessities almost falling out of the bags, leaving me quite shocked.

“Um, Akiko-san, what is this...”

“We’ll be in your care today, so I bought all sorts of things~”

“But, so much...? You really didn’t have to...”

“No need to be thankful, that’s not what happened.”

I heard a slightly annoyed voice. Standing behind Akikosan was Saki—Ayase-san (her hands full with plastic bags as well).

“Mom is bad at saying no, so she got roped into buying all the recommended stuff from the employee.”

“Ah, so that’s why...”

“Hey, that makes it sound like I’m a good-for-nothing adult~”

“Am I wrong?”

“Ehh! That’s not true at all, right Yuuta-kun~”

She threw the ball at me. Honestly speaking, I don’t really appreciate how she’s so easy against proactiveness, but when she shows that childish pouting expression towards me, then all complaints just get drowned out inside my

head. That being said, just lying about it would strain my consciousness. Especially so since Ayase-san was giving me a cold stare, almost as if she was telling me to not spoil her mother. It's tough being on two fronts, really.

“Don’t just stand around there, come on in. I’ll help you carry some things.”

Hence, I just decided to ignore it. A wise man once said that in order to achieve happiness as a single person, you need the ability to sometimes ignore things. Akiko-san didn’t even seem bothered at that, and just smiled at me, as she handed over the plastic bags.

“Thank you. You really are a reliable man.”

“Ahaha.” I gave a vague smile to her grateful words, and turned around.

I offered her and Ayase-san the new house slippers I bought recently, and invited them in. When we made it to the living room, Akiko-san raised an astonished voice.

“Mmmm, citrus fruit, what a pleasant scent.”

“Huh, you actually keep it pretty clean.” Ayase-san looked at the flooring and the furniture, and let out an appreciative sigh.

“Well, we just cleaned it in a panic. Normally we don’t—”

“It’s really just as Taichi-san told me. You really love to clean.”

“—They say that a clean living area produces a healthy mind after all.” I swallowed my previous words I was about to blurt out.

That was dangerous. From the sounds of it, that idiotic old man of mine acted like a saint in order to woo Akiko-san more easily. Knowing what he previously went through with women, and being aware that this could lead to a downfall really quickly, I instead decided to act for my Dad’s happiness, and kept quiet that he was practically just lying to her.

Yet, Ayase-san was giving me a real dubious gaze at the same time.

“Do you always keep it this clean?”

“Of course. Every particle of dust deserves to be eradicated, that is our family motto.”

“That is some disturbing family motto.”

I wasn’t lying by any means. I was just changing up a few words of the motto my grandmother in the countryside always talked about. I still remember her grinning as she told me.

“That’s Taichi-san for you, I guess.” Akiko-san let out a giggle. “He always looks stylish and attractive, but to think he even kept his home this clean.”

“Stylish...My old man?”

“That’s right. The first time he came to the store with his superior, he looked rather plain and unsophisticated, but the second time around he put on some cologne, and the brand of his necktie made him seem like a first-class business man.” “Ahhhh.”

That reminds me, there was a time when he was putting a lot of money on clothes and perfume, right. I thought it was just to fit better into the world of adults, but to think it was simply to impress the woman he had interest in.

“H-Hey there, Akiko-san, Saki-chan!”

Speaking of the devil, my old man just came out of his bedroom. To my shock, he still held the febreze container in his hand.

“Wah, you...”

Put away what you got in your hand right now! I’m doing my best over here to provide some proper follow up, but you’re ruining it yourself!—I tried conveying this with mere eyecontact. However, that did not work at all, as my



old man just showed a smile like he practiced it in front of the mirror, and said the following.

“Welcome to our home! W-W-W-We’ll be living under the same roof from here on out, so let’s get awong!”

Awful. Nothing in my life felt more staged and fake than this. His choice of words was super bad, he even bit his tongue, and his arrogant face just hurt to watch.

“I’m so happy for the warm welcome~ Here, have some presents!”

“Isn’t that raw ham? Wonderful, let’s have a ham party later!”

...Well, I guess they’re a good match after all. Akiko-san doesn’t even bother picking up on the feebreeze in his hand, and he just naturally accepted the mountain of goodies like it was nothing.

“Hey, Asamura-kun.”

“Hm?”

“I’d like to see my room. Could you take me there?”

“A-Ah, sure.”

Ayase-san and I left the luggage and shopping bags in the living room, heading to her new room.

“This is it.”

“Huh, so here...”

“I did prepare curtains and bed, but I didn’t know what color you preferred for the sheets, so if you would like to change them, feel free. I kept the table at the window-side but if you want to move it, just let me know.”

“Thanks. You really prepared everything...Ohh.” She swiftly walked past me, walking into the middle of the room.

Her tone was rather indifferent, but her eyes were brimming with curiosity, like a cat on a stroll at night. In front of me stood a perfectly normal girl now. Add to that her stylish hair and clothes, I couldn’t help but admire her beauty again. Whether it was shampoo, perfume, pheromones, or even the imagination of a virgin like me, a sweet scent filled the room that hadn’t been there before.

“It sure is big.” The girl turned around.

“Maybe. I think it’s fairly normal.”

“We previously lived in a run-down apartment. One room massing six tatami mats<sup>2</sup>, and I didn’t even have my own room.”

“So you had futons out, and slept in the same room...is it?”

Makes sense why their furniture is pretty much new.

“Not really. When I was sleeping, I could monopolize the room for myself. Back then, Mom was busy with work at night, so our lifestyle rhythm was practically the exact opposite.”

“I guess that must have been much easier than suddenly living with two men...I’m sorry.”

“...That is fine, but one thing...”

“What is it?”

“That.”

“Eh?”

“Why are you speaking so politely? Of course, if it’s some personal or religious belief, then that’s fine.”

I’m not part of some suspicious cult, alright. I just accepted society’s rules of using polite speech towards a person I barely met, as this has been engraved into my mind subconsciously at birth.

“Even if you ask me for a reason...”

“We’re the same age, so why not keep it a bit more relaxed? I don’t need you to be considerate or anything.”

“I was doing it exactly because we’re at the same age...”

“Huh? Isn’t it weird to be super polite towards classmates or friends?”

“That is just the logic of the strong, that doesn’t work for me.”

You have to remember that, in my 16 years of living, I barely had any contact with a girl. Especially with a flashy type like Ayase-san. She made it sound so simple, but for someone with prerequisites like mine, it’s not an easy hurdle to overcome.

“Really? Well, I’m not going to tell you what to do, Asamura-kun. I just didn’t want you to be overly considerate towards me.”

“I wasn’t planning on doing so, actually...Ahh.” Mid-way through my sentence, I thought of something.

We promised each other to not have any expectations of the other person. That happened on the first day Ayase-san and I met. I thought about that meaning, and asked the girl.

“I feel like it would be better to confirm that right away, but...Would you rather have me stop speaking so politely?”

“Honestly, it’d let me relax a bit more. I’m not someone important that deserves to be respected either.”

“Alright, then I’ll stop it.” I shrugged, as I said.

Ayase-san’s eyes opened wide in surprise.

“That was fast.”

“Well, treating you like a years-long friend will be impossible, but since you’re asking for it. Not to mention that it’s more comfortable for me as well.”

“I see. It’s just as I thought.” Ayase-san smiled.

Normally, her tone and expression was always dry and fairly cold, but for the first time I felt like I could see a soft spot of hers.



“It really helps that we can ‘adjust’ so easily.”

“Adjust’, huh. That’s one way to phrase it.”

That’s what Ayase-san and I just did. First, Ayase-san considered the idea that I might be part of some religious group that just uses polite language, and offered me to

drop it because she didn't need it. Then, I realized that it was her wish for me not to speak so politely, and when I gave the YES, she seemed relieved and happy.

Is this a normal conversation and communication you could find anywhere? I don't know. But to me, from my own personal view, this was the first time such 'adjustments' happened. In most cases, the people you talk with request comprehension and sympathy.

If you don't explain it, then I can't understand your feelings! Why won't you get it that when you say this, you're making me angry!—And so on. Even though you can't take a peek inside other people's brains, they all ask for the impossible. That being the case, why not reveal your cards from the very beginning?

If you say this and that, you will make me angry. I treasure this and that. I see, then let's do it like this—Don't expect the other person to understand you, and search for information that can resolve the problem.

"If only all of humanity could be this dry and straightforward with other people. Just like you and me, Asamura-kun."

"You can say that again."

I don't understand why you would dislike polite language. But, as long as I know that she feels that way, I can adjust, and make her feel more comfortable. It's very impersonal,

and mechanical. If all of humanity would honestly adjust to each other's feelings, the world would be a better place, but society sadly doesn't work that way.

"When I approach my friends at school with that stance, they just laugh at me with a 'What is that, some contract?', and ignore it."

"That sounds rough."

"Yup. That's why I cut ties with all but one."

"Ohh...that's quite the act."

Can't judge if she's brave or just indifferent, really. But, seeing her tell me with a smile gave it an odd sense of credibility.

"I only cut off people that really deserve it, or aren't important. It's such a waste of time to deal with people of which I don't know when I could step on a landmine, and make them mad at me."

"Indeed...Talking about a waste of time, just standing around here isn't getting us anything done. Should I help you with your belongings?"

"How kind of you."

"Creating a debt early will help me in the long run. It's a win-win for me."



“How well-versed.”

“Don’t tease me like that, will you...”

“I was trying to praise you. Now then, what should I have you help me with...” Ayase-san looked around the room, looking for something. “First, I’d like to put away some stuff. Do you have a cutter?”

“Sure do.” I went back to my own room really quick, getting the cutter, and walked towards the cardboard box she was pointing at.

“Ah, just give them to me, I’ll do it myself.”

“Don’t worry, I told you I’d help.”

“No, that’s not the problem. In there—”

I heard Ayase-san’s voice at my back, but my hands already moved to open up the tape. Shortly after, the cardboard opened up slowly, revealing white fabric. That very moment, I regretted not listening to Ayase-san’s words.

“—are my clothes.”

“I really wish you would have told me sooner!” I turned my back towards the objects I had already seen, and frantically took some distance.

Of course, Ayase-san immediately laughed in the face of such a virgin-esque reaction.

“Ahaha, you don’t have to treat them like some cursed object. That hurt, you know?”

“Poison for the eyes, is what they say, right? For an adolescent boy my age, this is literal poison, in a lot of ways.”

“Only if I was wearing them a second ago. After going through the laundry, this is basically the same as a handkerchief, isn’t it.”

“Stop raising them up like that, I beg you.”

Even if I know that the object she’s waving is just white fabric, they still make me feel weird. I thought the two of us were relatively on the same level when it came to our values in human relationships, but I guess there’s a decisive rift between us after all.

“I’ll take care of my underwear, so could you put my uniform over there on the hanger?”

“I feel like a uniform is plenty stimulating.”

“Don’t get so excited, will you. There’d be nothing else for you to help out. Ignore it, and work.”

“Y-Yeah. I’m calm. Calm and collected.” I continuously told myself, and grabbed her uniform.

A shirt, a skirt, a cardigan, and all of these felt soft to a level where I only grew more conscious.

“Huh?” My hand stopped.

The leaf-green school uniform necktie entered my field of view, and I was assaulted by a feeling of deja-vu.

“This is...Ayase-san, are you attending Suisei?”

“Yup, correct. Are you shocked to see such a flashy girl like me attend a high-level school like that?”

“That’s not what I’m shocked about...I’m a student at Suisei as well.”

Suisei High. One of the many department schools of the Shibuya district, as well as the school with the highest rate of advancement towards the higher university, filled with honor students. Strict towards studying, as long as you manage to keep your grades high enough, you receive permission to even work part-time, and because of this flexibility, I chose this school.

To think the little sister I coincidentally happened to get after my father’s remarriage turned out to be the same age as me, and even attended the exact same school as I did. How more convenient can fate get? The only saving grace

in all of that is the fact that she's not in the same class as me. How awkward would things have been if that was the case.

I was curious as to what reaction Ayase-san would make, and as it turns out, she seemed to be lost in thought about something.

"So Asamura-kun is from Suisei as well...Hmm..."

"...I kinda feel bad. My old man never really looked into anything."

"It's fine. Mom's the same. No need for you to apologize."

"Must be awkward though, right? I'll try to act like we don't know each other at school."

"Huh? No, I'm totally fine with that. I mean, if you're more comfortable with that, then so be it, though."

"What do you—"

My words were interrupted by my phone buzzing in my pocket. I was wondering who would call me at a time like this, but it showed 'Work' on the screen.

"Sure, go take it. I don't wanna restrain you here or anything. I don't mind if it's in front of me either."

“We really get along, huh.” I said so, appreciating her words from the bottom of my heart, and stepped out of the room, accepting the call.

Since it was at a time like this, I figured it was because a hole opened in our shift plan, and they needed me to jump in to help. As a matter of fact, that’s exactly what it was, so I acted the usual Yes-man, and agreed.

Upon cutting the call and returning to the room, Ayase-san was focussed on her own work of putting away her belongings, only slowly turning towards me.

“What’d they say?” She asked, quite indifferently.

“They need me at work. Sorry, I can’t stay and help.”

“It’s fine, this was my job to begin with.”

Since this was an urgent situation, Ayase-san showed no signs of being bothered. Even though she’s a girl my age, a beauty, and has the looks of a gal, someone I’d definitely have problems with talking, the reason I can keep such a calm conversation right now is probably because of her calm atmosphere, and very sophisticated attitude. She doesn’t feel like a girl my age, but more like an adult.

“Then, I’m going.”

“Yup, take care.”

With a dry farewell, she returned to her work. The sight of her couldn't be further away from what people imagined when they heard 'little sister'. However, for me, this was a reason to feel relief, allowing me to leave the room with no complicated feelings.

The bookstore was located nearby the Shibuya train station. Stepping out of the Hachikou exit, walking across the scramble intersection with the various tourists and youtubers filming themselves and taking pictures at your side, it was straight ahead of you. With all the mobile game ads blasting your ears around you, once you get inside the eight-floor building, that's where I work, as a bookstore employee.

I've always loved books ever since I was little, be it children's literature or such from overseas, I tried practically every genre there is. I didn't just read them, I practically consumed books. I bit into them, until I digested them. That's why, working at such a place, with all sorts of new releases around me, was like paradise.

Books are great. Books show you all sorts of lives of other people. It offers an experience Asamura Yuuta would normally never be able to taste. Of course, it's not just stories. There's autobiographies, and business books as well. By reading many books, knowledge and experience fills your head, impacting it.

Narrow-mindedness, excessive pride and arrogance, narcissism. Through reading books, and the meta

knowledge you get, you can avoid suffering from these embarrassing personality traits, and that's probably how I did it as well; Thanks to books.

An average grown person's brain weighs roughly 1400g. You would think that this is enough to make some room for common sense, and yet that isn't the case for many, which honestly leaves me terrified to think about.

*If I hadn't read any books, I could have ended up like them as well.*

8pm at night. I started working at roughly 6pm, and these two hours went by awfully fast after dealing with the usual weekend storm of customers. By the time the number of customers lessened, and I thought I could finally take a breath, just focussing on fixing book covers at the register, I was interrupted by 'that' kind of scenery.

"Woah, Lady you're, like, totally my type. I fell for you at first glance."

"Are you searching for a book?"

"Eh, how can you be this cute? How about we go for a bite after your work is over? When are you done?"

“I don’t remember a name like that, could you give me some more details?”

“What are you talking about, lol. You’re so funny, haha.”

A flashy delinquent-type of a man was trying really hard to pick up a female employee. He didn’t even pick up on the irony of the girl, not shrinking down at all. This is something of a familiar scenery here in Shibuya, but seeing it happen in an actual store, not to mention this fiercely, was a rare sight.

The one being picked up was the perfect example of a Yamato Nadeshiko<sup>3</sup> with long black hair. A literature girl, pure and proper—adding the idea of that to her beautiful appearance and sweet scent drifting around her, she was definitely on a different league from your average girl. Even during this (honestly pretty bad) pick-up attempt, she kept smiling gently, not breaking down in the slightest. It was perfect customer service. However, her eyes weren’t smiling at all.

*I really don’t want any trouble, but...*

With these thoughts, I headed over to the source of this noise, binder and list in hand.

“Yomiuri-san, there’s something I’d need your help with.”

“Ah, yeah! What is it?”



“About the list of new arrivals. I don’t know how to check it with the information from the PC.”

“...! Got it, I’ll be right there.”

“Wha, hey!”

The girl seemingly understood what I was playing at, and walked away from that place, leaving behind a flustered man. He tried reaching for her slender wrist, but only hit the binder in my hand.

“Do you have any more business with **my Yomiuri-san?**”

“Eh?”

Of course, we aren’t in that kind of relationship. This was just an act to make that man give up. After freezing up with an open mouth, said man clapped his hands together, and suddenly lowered his head apologetically.

“I’m not that good when it comes to reading the mood, soz about that! Makes sense that a beauty like her has a boyfriend, alright.”

“Eh. Ah, well, yeah.”

Honestly, I was baffled. Judging from all the types of delinquents I’ve read about, I figured that he’d get aggressive, insult us, or anything of that sort, but he actually pulled away fairly easily. Then again, it might just be him.

“Bud, you better be treasuring her. Be happy!” He left behind a few words of encouragement, and stepped out of the store.

Now that the noise was gone, silence returned to the store. Realizing that we had drawn the attention from the other customers, I tried to hide my reddened ears, looked down, and returned to the register.

“Thanks, Junior-kun. You really helped me there. Also, if that guy was going to give up this easily, why was he even this obstinate to begin with...Right, my dear Boyfriendkun?”

“Please stop that.”

“Let alone a night, our love barely lasted a minute? How sad.”

When it was just the two of us again, her customer service smile had vanished elsewhere, and she merely stuck out her tongue with a teasing grin. She had her nameplate stuck between her teeth, only now putting it on the right side of her uniform. There, I could read the name ‘Yomiuri Shiori’.

“Weren’t we supposed to keep the nameplate on us during our work hours?”

“It’s an ad hoc approach.” Yomiuri-senpai put one finger on her lip, showing me a wink, like she was telling me to

keep it a secret. “Rules are there to keep the organization running smoothly, right? If he were to spread my name to others, we’d soon have a full store of people like him.”

“That does make sense.”



She clearly wasn't just a person that would let others play with her. Honestly speaking, I think that this creativity and wise thinking are her greatest charm, but I guess that most men in this world apparently don't agree with me. "That makes it the third time this month, huh."

"It's only the 7th, so we're at a pace of every two days once."

"And the third time while being at work. How can I focus like this?" Yomiuri-senpai hid from the eyes of the customers behind the register, letting out a defeated sigh.

"If only they'd stop doing it inside the store. Whenever I try to help, you tease me right after...Then again, I'm used to it already."

"As always, thanks a lot. You really are reliable, Juniorkun."

"...I'm sorry, I didn't mean to make you feel like you owed me something."

"It's fine. You're helping me a lot, so I really am." She laughed, and tapped me on the shoulder.

Yomiuri-senpai might seem like a prim and proper Yamato Nadeshiko, but when it's just us during the shift, she often jokes around like that, or uses a fairly casual tone. At first, I was a bit lost because of her vague sense of distance, and

frequent skinship, but as soon as you understand that this is how her character works, it's easy to get along with her.

“You're as popular as always, I see. It's probably because you're that much of a beauty.”

“Junior-kun...If you keep praising me this nonchalantly, you might end up like that person just now.”

“Don't scare me like that, will you.”

“Well, I don't think it's because of my looks, Isn't it just that I look easy enough with a bit of pushing?”

“Look easy enough...” Because of her direct and straightforward way of phrasing it, I was at a loss for words.

She looks innocent, sure, but she's plenty of an adult, I guess. This town of Shibuya holds what you could call a heretical touch, giving men like that guy such a misunderstanding. I can imagine a lot of men here aiming at a lady who has no experience with men, able to be won over with a slight push. Not to mention that she never really holds back her words...

“Say, Junior-kun. I've been picking up some woman's scent from you this entire time. Did you get yourself a girlfriend or something?”

She even has slight sadistic tendencies.

“Don’t joke around like that, please...But, do I really smell that much?”

“Brimming with stench. How many hours did you flirt around to amass that intense of a scent?”

“Let me leave early. I’ll go home and take a shower.”

“Ahhh, I was only joking. Don’t leave me aloneeee~”

I took a whiff from my clothes, and pretended to make my way home, when Yomiuri-senpai clung to me. Right now, it’s only her and me at work. Although we made it past the peak storm, having her do the rest was too cruel. That being said, I only played around to begin with, and never really intended to go home.

“It’s just, you told me before, so I was wondering.”

“Ahhh...”

Now that she mentioned it, I did in fact ask her for some advice. After I found out that my supposed little sister was actually a girl my age, I was unsure on how to really treat her, and what type of attitude I should take. Since Yomiurisenpai is the only girl around me that I can actually talk to easily, I asked her for some tips. Of course, I was teased, made fun of, and didn’t get any helpful information.

*‘I can’t say much knowing only that it’s a girl. People have different personalities, hobbies, and values.’*

That was her opinion, and it made perfect sense to me, so I couldn't complain at all.

"And, how's she? Cute?"

"I mean, I don't feel too comfortable looking at her that way."

"I know that you're not the aggressive type who'd be happy about a situation like that. I'm talking from your objective point of view."

"...I think she's a beauty, yes." I answered honestly.

I found it hard to say that. After all, she'll be my family from today, so when I see her in such an objective way, a sense of guilt fills my chest, making me feel uncomfortable. In terms of human relationships, she's someone who shares a lot of thinking with me, but she's a member from a world I never thought I'd intersect with.

She's got a great style, has a cute yet charming face, beautiful blonde hair, and the clothes and accessories she wears perfectly compliment her looks. She was clearly different from a background character like me, someone who stood in the sun. Rather than feeling happy about any praise that I could give her, she'd probably just think of it as disgusting.

"Phew, living together with a beauty like that, you're a lucky one."

“Nothing will happen.”

“Nutting will happen?”

“Can you not pull some abrupt dirty joke like that? It’s a really bad habit of yours.”

“I’ve always been in girls-only schools that entire time, so it can’t be helped.”

“My evaluation of girls-only schools is dropping...”

“It’s the truth.”

“...Seriously?”

“Well, it’s up for you to believe it or not...you know?” She spoke like she was talking about some urban legend, giving me a wink.

Inside my head, I chose the latter. I wanted to keep my image of a yuri romance blooming at girls-only schools.

“Well, I’m a boy myself, so I get thoughts like that popping up in the back of my head. But, honestly speaking, I don’t even have time to consider all these wicked thoughts.”

“Hmmm?”

“Think about it. I’m living under the same roof with a member of the same age, and different sex. It’s way too



complicated for me, who never had any contact like this happen before.”

“So I’m not even a girl in your eyes?”

“You’re a man at heart after all.”

“Ahahah! Heeeeey, isn’t that a bit too cruel! I mean, I can see where you’re coming from, but!”

“You’re like a friend, or a reliable senior.”

She always pulls dirty jokes as well...

“Ahahaha...haaaah...Phew...Alright, I get it. From that conversation just now, I figured out that your skill at dealing with girls is abysmally bad.”

“...I’ll refrain from any comment.”

Not like I could make any to begin with.

“Honestly speaking, I’m at a loss. What kind of attitude would be fitting for us as siblings? How considerate should I be of her? These worries fill my head, I don’t even have time to enjoy this situation.

“Just act like you always would, Junior-kun.”

“Won’t I just be hated because of this?”

“Do you hate my natural manners?”

“...Not at all.”

“See!”

“But, you’re a beauty as well, Yomiuri-senpai...Your natural manners and mine can’t even hope to compare.”

“That is some horrible self-evaluation you got going there. I actually like you quite a lot, Junior-kun.” “But, you’re weirdo, Yomiuri-senpai...”

“Hey now, you’re using completely opposite words in the same breath there. But, I like that. Feels so artistic.”

“That’s exactly what I mean.”

Mid-conversation, her face turned into a critic’s, as she nodded to herself. According to her, as a literature girl, she is on constant search for beautiful rhetorics in her everyday conversations. I don’t get how this connects to her pulling some old man’s jokes during the day, but I swallowed that doubt.

As I was feeling slightly defeated at the idea that some middle-aged man was sleeping inside a literature beauty like her, Yomiruri-senpai walked away with a ‘Right’,

only to come back with a book in hand. “Here, I recommend this.”

“‘Science of Man and Woman’?”

“It’s psychological research put into data and advice on how to get along with other people—especially when they’re members from the opposite sex. This will turn into some great reference, right?”

“Sounds interesting at least.”

I swiftly flipped through the pages of the book, and said so. Just by looking at the contents, I realized that this would surely be a helpful book for me.

According to it, you need to understand the other person. Following that, you need to understand yourself. In order to achieve that, you need to gain an objective view of yourself. I’ve read something similar in other books before. That’s why I started working to see myself in an objective light, and this isn’t something entirely new to me. However, there was one part of the contents of this book that really caught my attention.

**‘If you want to get better at perceiving yourself objectively, then start writing a diary!’**

It’s a method that I could start using right away. Just from reading that, I felt interested. Yomiuri-senpai apparently picked up on that, and showed the grin of a succubus.

“I’ll tell you, I tested the effects of that book, and boy did it do God’s work.”

“You used it before?”

“Lots of credibility, right? I mean, you and I are getting along just fine.”

“Yeah, that’s pretty convincing.”

One realization means more than a hundred deductions. Rather than some fatty preaching about a diet, you’d much rather believe a former fatty who went through rigorous training and fitness plans. As a result, I decided to buy the book.

After the end of my shift, when I had finished changing back from uniform, I bought the book from Yomiurisenpai, whose shift lasted until midnight. Unlike me, a highschool boy who was only allowed to work until 10pm, she still was locked up in there. I accepted the book from her, stuffed it into my bag, and just when I was about to leave, I turned around again.

“If some guy like before tries to hit on you again, give me a call whenever. My bike is always aching to roar.”

For a second, Yomiuri-senpai seemed confused. That expression however changed quickly, as she showed a happy grin.

“How reliable~ Then, I’ll call you, and then the police.”

“Make it the other way around, please.”

If you’re going to call the police in the first place, then don’t even bother contacting your Junior-kun.

By the time I made it home to my flat’s parking lot, it was already 10pm. On my way home, I was balancing the bike with one hand, while looking for apps I could use to keep a diary, which is why the downloading took longer than usual. I stopped my beloved ride at the bike space, went up to the third floor with the elevator, when I was assaulted by a sense of guilt again.

Normally, I just came home at my own leisure, but I don’t remember telling Akiko-san or Ayase-san about how long I would be out for my part-time work. I hope that my old man gave them a proper explanation, but I can’t exactly expect some follow-up like that.

Keeping in mind the chances that my family might be asleep already, I carefully opened the door, and headed to the living room as quietly as possible. I could see light burning through the clouded glass door, so someone was still awake. Feeling my body tense up, I headed inside. As it turns out, Ayase-san was sitting alone on the sofa.

I figured it was hot chocolate or something along those lines, as faint steam came from the cup she was holding. She looked at her phone, expressionless, probably going through social networks. Maybe even messaging some people. Friends? A boyfriend? Being such a good-looking girl, and easy to talk to, both sounds very much possible.

“I’m home.”

“Eh? Ah, yeah.” She looked up from her phone, giving me a slightly flustered reaction.

Rather than it being just vague, it felt like she was taken by surprise, unsure what to say. Like a foreigner just asked her for directions in an area she wasn’t too familiar with.

“...Ayase-san?”

“Sorry, I’m just not used to actually hearing that, so I was unsure how to respond.”

“Ahh...right. Because you were living completely different lifestyles.”

She mentioned that since Akiko-san was always working at night, their times to sleep never matched up, huh. When I first heard that, I just thought ‘I guess such families exist as well’, but realizing what exactly that meant now, I felt my chest tighten up.

“What’s that serious expression for?” Ayase-san showed a wry laugh.

Seems like my inner thoughts actually showed on my face.

“It’s fine. I wasn’t treated awfully or anything. She came home when I went to school, got some sleep and finished whatever business she had, and when I came home, she went off to work. To us, that was our normal routine.”

“You seem pretty close despite that.”

“We’re mother and daughter after all. Today, we got to go shopping together after a long time, it was pretty fun.” Or so she said, but her voice offered no special intonation, no expression on her face.

I was just listening to her reasoning, as she spoke of the past in an awfully dry tone. The reason I don’t sense any loneliness from her is possibly because she’s already used to it. We’re talking about a single parent, and a highschool student. I know I’m not one to speak, but I personally wouldn’t feel that much about not being able to see my parents for a while.

More importantly, it seems like I bothered her when she was busy on the phone. Feeling pathetic, and apologetic, I wanted to walk off and hide myself in my own room.

“I was thinking of taking a bath and then going to bed...”

“Go ahead. I’m fine with being the last on both. I always stay up late.”

“Alright, gotcha.”

As I made my way to my own room, preparing for a bath, I thought about Ayase-san’s last words. She was fine with taking a bath last. She was also fine with sleeping last. I mean, that makes sense if you think about it. She wouldn’t want a boy she barely met, let alone has to live together with now, use the bath water she just used, and by sleeping first, she made herself defenseless in the presence of an adolescent boy. If so, then the longer I take, the longer her night becomes.

—Guess I should to hurry and get my stuff done.

Deciding on this, it took me only ten minutes for my usual thirty-minute bath, and I used the other twenty minutes to empty the bathtub, fill it with fresh warm water. I don’t really know how to act around her yet, but at the very least, I wanted to make it as easy as possible for her.

As a result of this, although you might expect it after reading one too many romcoms, no heart-throbbing and exciting event happened during this first night of us sleeping under the same roof. Just as I have stated in the prologue of this story, a daily life with a step-sister differs greatly from what is shown in such material.



That being said, it's not like I wasn't aware of the opposite sex sleeping practically within the same few perimeters of mine, which is why I had rough time sleeping.

When I woke up the next morning, Ayase-san had already prepared everything herself, sitting in the living room, so there was no heart-throbbing exciting event to find either. However—

“Morning. Slept well?” She asked me.

“Thanks to you.”

“Same here. The bath was great, thanks a lot.”

—I could pick up Ayase-san's charm as a normal human being through even such dry conversations, and although it might not be the same to all those fictional ones, I found myself thinking that this relationship wasn't as bad either.

1 Combined living room, dining room, and bed room

2 Roughly 10 square meters

3 The perfect example of a Japanese wife, with long beautiful hair, a devoted housewife.

