

時々ボソッと

ロシア語でデレる

隣のアーリヤさん

океанические
Summer stories

4.5

燐々SUN イラストももこ



角川スニーカー文庫



Ты ведь
снова
придёшь, да?

時々ボソツと
ロシア語でデレる
隣のアーリヤさん

Summer
Stories

Иногда Алия внезапно кокетничает по-русски

4.5







「夜寝る前に、カロリーを気にせず
お菓子とジュースを貪る。
お菓子とパジャマパーティーの
これぞパジャマパーティーの
醍醐味です！」

ИНОГДА

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ЧНО



может, как раз
сегодня
я встречу его...

кокетка

тниает по-рус

The Neighboring Aarya-san who Sometimes Acts Affectionate and Murmuring in Russian

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Chapter 1 - Roses and Yuri

"Anyway, I don't mind using any buildup during the scene of the reunion between siblings! It would be nice if there was a heartwarming reunion where they were always thinking about each other's feelings, but it's also quite suspenseful when they reunite and discover that the two of them have become enemies!"

"That's right. The fact that the two of them are siblings will add a lot of drama to their relationship."

After Masachika and Yuki's relationship as siblings was revealed, Sayaka talked excitedly with Yuki at the amusement park food stall about [The talk of siblings living apart].

Ayano was secretly eating churros beside them, but neither of them paid any attention to her and were engrossed in their otaku talk. However, after ten minutes, Sayaka gradually calmed down.

"Ah, I'm sorry from earlier, it was just me who kept talking. I don't have people around me that I can talk to about this kind of thing..."

Sayaka felt ashamed for having let out all her pent-up feelings all at once, due to secretly being an otaku after such a long time. She looked fidgety as she pushed up her glasses, moving her lips and shoulders. Yuki had never seen Sayaka's behavior like this before, as she usually acted always serious and stern.

(Kuhh~ Isn't this really fun?)

Yuki smiled softly while trying not to show her inner feelings,

"It's okay, don't worry. I understand your feelings too."

"...Really? Thank you very much."

Sayaka thanked her with a slightly awkward smile, but inside heart she still felt that she had made a mess.

Many hidden otaku in the world were very wary of showing off their otaku hobbies themselves. That principle does not change easily even if the other party turns out to be a fellow hidden otaku. Yes, because closet otaku have a strong feeling that "their otaku hobbies" = "something they are interested in", which is why they harbor a mysterious obsession that "they cannot be more otaku than the person they are talking to", even if they are talking to someone who has a fellow otaku's hobbies.

(TN: Reminds me of that absolute banger manga series "Wotakoi". I seriously recommend you read it. I think it has an adaptation too.)

And even more troublesome, there is also the realization that "the other party must not realize what they are hiding". Don't let the other party sense that you are uncomfortable with your own hobby. Because that's the same as denying the other party's hobby.

For Sayaka and Yuki who have been hiding their hobbies until now, it has become a common thought. So, what would happen if two such people meet? meet?

"...."

"...."

As a result, the two of them were both trying to determine the other party's level of otakuness. Sayaka and Yuki quietly looked at each other while both smiling faintly. As for Ayano, she was still enjoying the churros in silence. As the tension between them increased..... Sayaka was the first to speak up.

".....By the way, Suou-san. What anime are you watching this season?"

It was a trial attack that was smoothly released. A malicious move that urged the other party to unilaterally reveal her level of otakuness by disguising it as a normal topic of conversation. The number of anime the other party watched would be used as a measure of their level of otakuness, and the content of the anime is used to analyze his/her taste. Does the other party like the genres fantasy, romantic comedies, slice of life. ... or the type of person who would like erotic genres?

With this one casual question alone Sayaka could obtain a lot of information without any risk. Taniyama Sayaka, a talented young girl who had already defeated many rivals with her skillful speeches in debates.

Sayaka quirked the corner of her mouth. Yuki with an unreadable smile. And Ayano folded the paper wrapping of the Churros snack.

"Ummmm, that's right. For this season...."

Yuki opened her mouth to respond to Sayaka's first attack. Of course, even Sayaka didn't feel that question alone was more than enough to determine the game. If Yuki mentioned some safe titles and asked back

"What about Sayaka-san herself?" Sayaka had anticipated that. But, there was no problem. Because Sayaka had prepared a powerful answer by "I guess we're the same. Because I watch that anime too."

(The safest strategy in this conversation is to place myself right behind the opponent and track the answer. Once I took the initiative to ask first, there was no way I could lose)

Feeling confident of her overwhelming superiority, Sayaka casually waited for Yuki's answer. But.....

"First of all, the anime "Blade hazard" and "Ano Yume" are a must-watch. In the review before, the anime "Blade hazard" was said to be the best anime of this season, but the first episode of "Ano Yume" was so perfect that it quickly became a candidate for the best anime ranking. Then, the anime "Rens" and "Isekai Tunnel" have a stable plot and are already finished. Personally, I think that the best performing underdog this season is the anime "Hamezon". I was originally curious how extreme expressions in the original story would be adapted in the anime, but the adaptation turned out to be much better than expected. Also, it seems that the momentum of "Gambaruon" hasn't waned even in the second season....."

(TN: dahn what an optimistic view. Whenever new anime are released, I'd often complain about how the source material is better. On a related note, if Project 9 content skips and ruins Otonari no Tenshi like they did with Higehiro, I will throw hands)

"!?"

In that situation, Yuki unexpectedly applied tactics without guards. Yuki's answer really revealed everything, without any secrets. From fantasy gene to romantic comedy, from heartwarming anime to robot anime, and finally to erotic dark fantasy. Sayaka's eyes widened behind her glasses as the information was revealed so quickly.

Sayaka looked confused. Yuki secretly chuckled. As for Ayano, she went to buy churros for the third time.

"So, what about Sayaka-san herself?"

"Uh, umm, that..."

The question was asked, as she had anticipated. However, the development was so unexpected that Sayaka could not answer it right away. In this situation, the powerful answer "I guess we're the same, because I also watch that anime" couldn't be used either. Because there are some anime that Yuki mentioned where Sayaka has never seen. But, can she honestly admit that? Because indirectly it is tantamount to denying the other party's hobby.

In front of Sayaka who looked upset and depressed... Yuki, who was still smiling, began to mutter something.

"It has begun..."

At first, she wondered what Yuki wanted to say. Sayaka's shoulders shook when hearing a sentence that had no context and made no sense, but tickled her inner being. Yuki then continued her attack.

"White darkness..."

"!"

"Ransom for great power..."

"!!!!"

Sayaka's body naturally reacted to the beautiful words that were spoken in rapid succession. Seeing her playful reaction, Yuki chuckled and said with a joking tone.

"Looks like the early stages of chuunibyou, huh. I recommend that you seek treatment as soon as possible."

"What?"!

Sayaka reflexively tried to refute the disease name "Chuunibyou", which was often avoided by most otaku. However, it was true that she was a little excited by Yuki's words... and when Sayaka stammered, Yuki's smile widened even more as she spoke to her.

"How about we stop second-guessing each other, okay? I'm sure that you already realize that my knowledge as an otaku is better than Sayakasan's. So, Sayaka-san doesn't need to hide it either, okay?"

"!"

After revealing how brainy she was without hiding it at all, Yuki then asked Sayaka to throw away her shyness and reluctance. It was a proposal that Sayaka never expected. Or it should have been... but Sayaka felt that the proposal was not a relief, but rather triggered competition.

"Fufufu...I see? Of course, I might lose out if you look at the number of works that I've touched But my feelings of love in each work will never be outdone, okay?"

Sayaka smiled boldly while slowly pushing up her glasses. On the other hand, Yuki responded with a calm smile. And then the debate began.

"On last week's episode of "Blaze hazard", the voice actor's performance in the final scene was amazing. That voice actor also gave an awesome performance in Gandero...."

"If you say so, I myself would prefer a voice actor who played the antagonist..."

"Oh yeah, did you notice the special ending of last week's 'Ano Yume' episode? There was a meaningful cutscene that I've never seen before...."

"Isn't that obvious? I would never do something like skipping the opening song and the ending song. I was thinking that..."

The composition is completely the opposite of the previous one, and this time the two of them were competing to see who was more otaku than the other party. Where did their calm and serious figures at school go? There were only two otaku who were arguing and showing off their knowledge. After about 20 minutes of arguing, Yuki suddenly closed her mouth.

"Oops, excuse me."

She then took out her smartphone from her pocket as she asked her to wait for a moment. When looking at the vibrating smartphone screen, Yuki's eyebrows twitched.

"Sorry, I need to make a call first for a moment."

After saying that, Yuki got up from her seat and walked away with the smartphone to her ear. Apparently, she received an urgent phone call.

"....."

"....."

Then, Sayaka and Ayano were left alone. Sayaka then stared at Ayano in silence. Ayano who received that gaze immediately stuffed the fourth churro into her mouth at once.

"Umm, you don't have to rush to eat them, you know?"

Sayaka said that in a worried tone, but Ayano took all the churros into her mouth as if she was in a hurry. After adding more milk tea into her mouth, she swallowed all the churros in her mouth in one gulp.

"Hmgh!..."

She then straightened her posture as if nothing had happened, and stared straight at Sayaka. Flinching slightly under her gaze, Sayaka lightly cleared her throat and straightened herself up.

"Once again, Kimishima-san. Although it feels a bit late, allow me to introduce myself again, my name is Taniyama Sayaka. Although we are classmates, we haven't talked much before, right?"

"Yes, that's right. I think this is the first time we've met face to face and exchanged words like this."

"That's right... then, ummm I've heard that Kimishima-san is Suou-san's personal maid, is that true?"

"Personal attendant... That's right. Ahh..."

Then, as if suddenly remembering something, Ayano looked up and slowly stood up. She then suddenly covered half of her face with her right hand,

crossed her arms and assumed a sort of pose, and then told Sayaka who was blinked repeatedly, with a cool (expressionless) expression.

"Written in the letters 'childhood friend' and read as 'maid'. Kimishima Ayano."

Ayano's way of introducing herself was so eccentric that it made Sayaka stunned with her mouth gaping. In front of Sayaka who was also showing a very rare expression, Ayano then changed her pose even further without showing any expression and continued in a monotone tone.

"The status of childhood friend and defeated heroine is only a temporary form to trick the eyes of the world. Masachika-sama will be protected by me, the real sub-heroine!"

After striking a stunning pose against the backdrop of the summer sun, Ayano sat back on the chair with a sense of accomplishment in her eyes. Then, she bowed her head towards Sayaka.

".....I'm really sorry. Yuki-sama should have been the first to say [Written with the letters 'childhood friend' and read as 'younger sister' Suou Yuki!]."

"...Eh? Uh, she wants to do that? Suou-san herself? With the pose you just did just now!?"

"...? Yes, because they say this is the formal way to reveal true identity."

"....."

Sayaka secretly shuddered in horror at Ayano, who felt neither suspicious nor embarrassed. She couldn't see any opportunities or gaps where she could compete, as she was only in the early stages of Chuunibyou.

(W-What a terrifying attack... to shake the opponent's mentality and take the initiative in the conversation at once)

While pressing down on her chest that ached from the invisible attack, Sayaka bit her lips and clenched her hands tightly. She then asked Ayano, who was (apparently) casually looking at her, a question as if she was challenging her.

"So, from the perspective of Suou-san's personal servant... or maid? According to Kimishima-san herself, what kind of relationship is usual between Suou-san and Kuze-san?"

"....."

In response to her question, Ayano looked back at Sayaka as if to find out her true intentions. She was probably thinking about how to answer, since she considered Sayaka as a potential opponent in the election of the new student council president. But in reality, the question did not mean anything.

Because the question has nothing to do with the election campaign instead it was just Sayaka's personal curiosity. In the past, Masachika and Yuki were Sayaka's best rivals. There were no feelings of hatred or resentment, instead there was a sense of trust and mutual recognition of each other. And her defeat in the election campaign turned it into pure respect.

Or to put it bluntly, she was a fan of both of them. She thought that the two of them were an ideal couple, and had even thought, "Hurry up and get married. No, it's okay to take it slow, and I wish you guys a happy marriage." If someone were to interfere with their relationship, she would do everything in her power to eliminate them as a representative of the fans.

Then, how did Sayaka respond when she learned that "The two of them are siblings and can't get married"? ...

(No problem. On the contrary, it's more savory that way!!)

(TN: 😅📸)

.....That was her response. If so, then...

(I want to hear... about the episode of their closeness as siblings!)

As a fan of theirs, how could she pass up this golden opportunity. However, Ayano would not be so easy to divulge information.

"...I'm just a servant. I cannot reveal information about my master without her permission."

No matter what Sayaka's intentions were, of course that was the reply she received. But it was still within Sayaka's expectations

"Ara, I see. In that case, I'll ask someone else, okay?"

".....Other people?"

Seeing Ayano tilt her head in confusion, Sayaka continued in an indifferent attitude while taking a sip of her drink.

"If Kimishima-san won't talk to me about it, I can just ask someone else, right? If I can find someone close to Suou-san or Kuze-san, there should be at least one person who knows that the two of them are siblings. That's right, for example Kujou Alisa-san?"

It was a contrived and long-winded threat as if to imply "If you won't speak up, I'll reveal to others that the two of them are sisters." However, the innocent Ayano did not realize this.

"That... would be a bit problematic."

That was why she said it honestly. Without thinking that her too honest answer would give information to the other party.

(So apparently, they even kept it a secret from the people around them that the two of them were siblings. Kujou-san didn't even know this either.)

Had she been confronted by Yuki or Masachika, they would not have pointed out the gap so easily. The statement "it will be a little problematic" is tantamount to telling the other party that it was her weak point. If Sayaka tried to pry information out of Yuki or Masachika, both of them would at least try to evade skillfully, or else, they would both threaten back and take control of the situation.

(I was a little surprised at first, but... as long as I don't get carried away with the tempo, she's an easy opponent to deal with)

While evaluating the situation inwardly, Sayaka relentlessly pushed the matter of the problem. Let me be clear once again, she only wanted to gain valuable inner satisfaction as their fan. Sayaka had the makings of an otaku idol.

"In that case, do you mind telling me? Don't worry, I have no intention of revealing Suou-san and Kuze-san's private lives. I'm just curious how the two of them usually spend their time."

"....."

From outward appearances, Sayaka asked the question with an indifferent attitude, while inwardly she was filled with a sense of excitement and waving both hands while holding an idol fan. Then, when Ayano remained silent, she slightly softened her tone of voice.

"Then let's talk about today's events. What were those two doing before we bumped into each other?"

"....."

At the compromising attitude shown by Sayaka, Ayano looked around and she opened and closed her mouth a few times, then lowered her gaze as if in contemplation. Feeling confident of her victory, Sayaka smiled, and inwardly prepared to get into position to swing the idol fan as hard as she could....

"Masachika-sama was pulling Yuki-sama who couldn't get out from under the bed."

"Huh, what did you just say?"

Her expression immediately gaped. The Mini Sayaka inside her also had the same expression while holding the fan in her hand. She asked back half-reflexively, and with the same expression, she swallowed Ayano's words with her confused head.

(Under the bed? What kind of situation would that be? Anyway, that's not what I wanted to ask... Oh, disinformation? To confuse me?)

When she realized this, Sayaka regained her composure. At the same time, she put aside her previous judgment regarding Ayano being "easy to control" and turned to face Ayano once more.....

"We almost had trouble pulling her because Yuki-sama was like a bagworm."

"As I told you, what are you talking about?"

Yuki in the form of a bagworm appeared in Sayaka's brain and was instantly filled with (???) signs in her mind.

"Ayano? Let's not go too far with the jokes, okay? Sayaka-san too, please don't tease Ayano too much, okay?"

It was at that moment that Yuki returned. She shouldn't have heard the flow of the conversation up to that point, but she was nonchalantly commemorating Sayaka as if she had heard everything. Sayaka immediately responded with an obvious smile.

"Ara, I just had a little chat with her, really? Maybe my questions were a little blunt"

"Is that so? How strange for Sayaka-san who has always been calm to be blunt like that. What were you talking about?"

"I just wanted to confirm that Suou-san and Kuze-san are really siblings. Because I'm still not sure if it's the truth."

"Ohh, so that's what you're talking about. Well, if you don't believe it, that's fine too anyway? Because technically, we really are childhood friends."

Is it because they were originally rivals in the election, or is it just a matter of compatibility?

When they opened their mouths, they naturally began to investigate the other party's intentions. They try to dig up information on each other while obscuring their true intentions indirectly. However, such an exchange ended once again with a single question from Yuki.

"By the way, is Sayaka-san the type of person who likes BL?"

(TN: *BL* = *boys love* = *yaoi*)

In response to such an abrupt change of topic, Sayaka raised one eyebrow and slowly raised her glasses as she sat deeper in her seat.

"Suou-san..... there are only two types of women in this world."

"...? And that is....?"

Then, with the lenses of her glasses mysteriously shining, Sayaka calmly affirmed.

"Women who like BL and women who don't know BL."

"So that's it. What a wise remark."

The two of them exchanged glances with each other and grinned with a foul smile. Ayano, a woman whom Sayaka referred to as a woman who did not know BL, blinked her eyes at the foul atmosphere that suddenly began to spread in the air, but she breezed off to buy churros for the fifth time without paying much attention. Sayaka didn't care either and put her hand on her chin thoughtfully.

"Oh yeah, by the way, didn't Kaito reject Nakusha's confession in last week's episode of Blaze hazard last week?"

"Ahh, indeed there was."

"That must be because he's dating Geruga, right?"

"I see."

Most Blaze Hazard viewers would have said, "Of course not!", but somehow the two of them communicated with each other. Perhaps feeling flattered by the approval, Sayaka continued to talk about the reasons why she thought so.

"I felt certain about this when I saw Geruga's gentle gaze at the beginning of the second episode while watching Kaito talk about his dream."

That was just an unfounded assumption.

"And it became even more obvious when the weapons they used were made from the same dragon."

There's no doubt that it's a baseless guess.

"When he said in the battle in the desert, 'I will give you my back!'" wasn't that clearly an indirect way of proposing, was it?!"

Her delusional power was also quite strong.

"...So that's it!"

Even Yuki could do nothing but nod in agreement.

Although Yuki had always enjoyed BL titles, she had never once fantasized about BL, so she could hardly follow what Sayaka was saying. After all, from the very beginning, Yuki was just joking when pretending to be a fujoshi, and in fact that she liked yuri more than BL, but that didn't stop Sayaka.

(TN: A fujoshi is a female who likes yaoi/BL genre)

"But I think the most exciting and suspenseful situation is the one where childhood friends become jealous and go on a rampage. The part where the childhood friend who has held the position of best friend for a long time forcefully attacks the main character out of jealousy is the most moving part."

Yuki's eyes became a little distant as she heard the words that didn't seem to be from a member of the disciplinary committee. As her gaze looked into the distance... she was immediately brought back to reality when she saw the figures of Masachika and Nonoa who were walking towards their place.

(Whoops, this is bad~~~~!!)

In front of her eyes was the figure of Sayaka spreading her brain virus. That was not a figure that could be shown to people she knew. At first, she seemed to be wary that she was an otaku, but now she was even revealing it openly.

"And then, once he found its momentum, he would open up and let his obsession run wild , what a feeling that is, even if it's not forgivable between a man and a woman, but it's forgivable if between men."

"Th-That's right. In shoujo manga, no matter how good the childhood friend is, if they attack the protagonist, it's a bit"

When Sayaka spoke with a somewhat excited expression on her face, Yuki quickly tried to correct the flow of the conversation. Then, Sayaka's expression turned gloomy.

"Well, indeed... Moreover, there are many patterns where when he pushes the protagonist down, they come back to their senses at the sight of the protagonist's frightened face. They're all too kind! Although he always likes the protagonist, and always puts the protagonist's happiness first Then what about him? What about the happiness of the childhood friend!"

"...Well, since most of them come to the conclusion that 'XX-chan's happiness is my happiness too.....'"

"That's just a form of resignation! He's just lying to himself! Moreover, the protagonist is the same way. Instead of dealing with the annoying handsome guy, she'll definitely be happier with a childhood friend who always cares about her!"

Sayaka clenched both hands on the table and shouted as if to venting her pent-up annoyance.

"Seriously, my favorite couple failed to set sail again and again with the official party... Do you understand my feelings!?"

"Y-Yes...well, if you support ship romance with a childhood friend, that's what will happen..."

"Why is it that everyone is more interested in transfer students or classmates they just met! Rather than those kinds of people who are unclear in nature, it's better to choose a childhood friend!! A childhood friend who constantly watches over the protagonist! I want her to be given happinesssssssss!!!"
(TN: foreshadowing in this novel???)

"A, Ahaha..."

With a wry smile, Yuki glanced at Masachika, who was staring at Sayaka with an indescribable expression on her face, and sweat pouring down her back.

(Fyuh that was a close call!!!!)

Yuki was secretly relieved that she managed to change the subject just in time. Then, to let Sayaka know that the two of them were back, she turned to her brother who was staring at her from afar.

"Which mouth has the right to say that? Onii-sama."

"Don't read my mind!!!!"

It was just a normal conversation. However, the part of the word [Onii-sama] was still ringing in Sayaka's mind.

『Onii-sama! 』

In a field filled with white clover flowers, little Yuki called out to Masachika while carrying a flower crown in her hand.

『Onii-samaaaa! 』

Frightened by the sound of thunder, little Yuki called Masachika with teary eyes while hugging her stuffed animal.

『Mouu~, Onii-sama! 』

With a slightly blaming expression, the grown-up Yuki fixed Masachika's tie.

All the beautiful scenes that might have happened between the siblings were instantly replayed in her brain thanks to Sayaka's trained imagination!

"Fumu!"

Sayaka then hurriedly held her nose with her hand to prevent the escape of the precious cerebellum.

(TN: Cerebellum is a vital part of the brain responsible for motor functions. Basically, the author is trying to convey that her brain has melted and is leaking out of her nose)

"Using O-Onii-sama's nickname... so precious..."

Then she blurted out that sentence. The siblings' unexpected casual conversation seemed to have completely crossed her tolerance limit.

"...You really are a genuine otaku, aren't you?"

Sayaka suddenly regained her senses when she heard Masachika's voice filled with anxiety. Realizing that she had messed up again, she managed to put on a calm expression and left her seat.

"I apologize, I seem to have taken up a lot of your time."

"No, I quite enjoyed it, too."

"Really? Then if you don't mind Kuze-san too, I really am sorry for suddenly accusing you."

"Oh not really, you made me realize that my guard was a bit loose....."

As Masachika spouted his words with an indescribable expression on his face, Sayaka responded by nodding her head as if understanding what she meant.

"Yes, I'll keep it a secret in my heart that you two are siblings. Nonoa's okay with that too, right?"

"Hmm? Well, if it's okay with me?"

"So that's how it is. Well, thank you very much for your time. Then, would you like to say goodbye first."

"Hmm, okay. I'll see you again."

"It feels really good. Enjoy your summer vacation."

"See you again in the new semester."

"Okeee~~ see you again, yeah~~~"

After exchanging greetings, Sayaka and Nonoa quickly left the place. Then, when she completely disappeared from Masachika and Yuki's sight, she immediately squatted down and covered her face with both hands.

"Haaa, I really messed up..."

"Oh, what's wrong Sayacchi? Are you okay?"

"I might not be too fine... Ahhhh, I was too happy that Suou-san turned out to be a friend who had similar interests, so I overdid it..."

While letting out a voice filled with regret, she smiled again as she recalled the conversation between Yuki and Masachika.

"But that was precious...."

"Ahh~~ I see."

"Thank you very much... this way I can work hard for another month..."

"What kind of logic is that?"

When Nonoa asked a question that left her puzzled, Sayaka who was squatting down and putting her hands together, immediately responded by opening her eyes wide

"Moe brings color to everyday life, and appreciation gives vibrancy to life!"

"...I totally understand~"

Sayaka gazed somewhere with distant eyes, without caring about Nonoa's blatantly monotone reaction. "There is something precious that can only be digested by looking at the closeness of siblings related by blood.

"Hard to understand~"

After saying that while playing around with her smartphone, Nonoa suddenly raised her face.

"...By any chance, is that the reason why you often stop by my house?"

"Ugh..."

Sayaka quickly averted her eyes. Nonoa shifted her gaze to the back of her head. After a few moments of silence, Sayaka muttered something in a somewhat awkward tone of voice.

"...Rea-chan and Leo-kun also look very close, the sight of the two of them always makes me smile."

"Hmm? Are they really that close?"

"Because they're twins, that alone is precious!"

At the moment Nonoa tilted her head, Sayaka turned around with a loud exclamation. Hearing her best friend's response, Nonoa could only say "I see" while shrugging her shoulders slightly.

"Even though they fight a lot, the feelings of affection they have for each other can be felt behind the quarrels. The sense of trust is so strong. That's what makes it so precious....."

"I see... well putting that aside for now, I think it's time for you to stand up, isn't it? Because for some reason, we've become the object of interest. Other people are staring"

"Ah... yes."

Finally, Sayaka realized that she was attracting the attention of the people around her while squatting in the garden, and she stood up while clearing her throat. She then said with an expression awkwardly.

"Umm, I don't want you to misunderstand me just yet, but The reason I went to visit Nono-chan's house wasn't just to meet Rea-chan and Leo-kun, okay?"

"I understand~ ... You want to see my closeness with Rea-chan, right?

"G-guh, I don't know... You understand what I'm talking about, right?"

Nonoa grinned at Sayaka, who was looking at her as if she was blaming her ignorance.

"Hmm~? I don't know~? I want to hear it straight from Sayacchi's mouth~"

"Uuuu, never mind!"

After saying that, Sayaka turned around with a frown and started walking away leaving Nonoa behind. However, after walking a few steps, she then turned around to see Nonoa who had not moved from her spot with a smirk on her face, and Sayaka grinned, and raised her voice as if she had been pranked.

"Moo~ Nono-chan! Don't be naughty!"

"Ahaha, sorry, sorry~"

Instantly, Nonoa ran towards her with a smile and easily hugged Sayaka's arm. She then asked Sayaka who was turning her face away as if she were sulking, with a slightly serious voice.

"But~ are you okay with leaving Kuzecchi and the others?

Even though you also have the choice to play with them, right?"

In response to Nonoa's question, Sayaka glanced at her before looking forward and spoke calmly.

"That would really hinder them. After all, our relationship isn't that close to the three of them."

"Ahh I see~... but can't you use this as an opportunity to get to know each other? After all, we're not candidates in the election for student council president, right?"

"...I think it's better not to do that either. Even though we're not candidates anymore."

"Hmmm, I see."

Sayaka spoke calmly and clearly, in contrast to the excited state of mode of her brain. Sayaka seemed to be returning to her usual self. As long as it wasn't because of otaku hobby and her tantrums, Sayaka was actually a very intelligent girl.

"Besides, from the beginning, I had no intention of wanting to be close friends with those two."

"Uh, did you?"

"Yes, I just wanted to appreciate the precious interactions of the two of them as a spectator."

..... She really is a smart girl. No, seriously. Nonoa squinted beside her as if to imply "What are you talking about with such a serious face? like that?", but that's exactly how she felt.

"Besides, I came here because I wanted to play with Nono-chan. There's nothing more important than that."

Sayaka said that casually while shrugging her shoulders. Upon hearing her words, Nonoa opened her eyes wide... and laughed merrily.

"Sayacchi really likes me too, huh~~"

"... it's obvious, right? Because you're my best friend."

"Ehehe so yeah~ I also really like Sayacchi, huh~?"

Nonoa brought her body closer to Sayaka while smiling. Sayaka did not refuse, although she lowered her eyebrows slightly. After walking for a while, Sayaka breathed out as if to regain her composure and looked around her.

"Now, where to next--"

It was at that moment...

"Fufufu, that was really scary, huh~ Onii-sama?"

"How creepy was it really?! You obviously enjoyed it a lot."

"No, no, there's nothing like that. In fact, it's all thanks to Onii-sama's reliable arm, you know~?"

Masachika looked at her with a scornful gaze, while Yuki spoke in an Ojou-sama-like suspicious style while hugging his arm. And then there was Ayano too.

Sayaka and Nonoa crossed paths again with the three of them who had just exited the haunted house. This was the second unexpected encounter.

This time they realized each other's existence at the same time and stopped at the same time. An indescribable atmosphere enveloped them. In the midst of it all, Sayaka slowly pushed up the frames of her glasses and said a word while maintaining a smart expression....

"Please continue."

.... while trying to hold back the nosebleed coming out of her nose.



Chapter 2 - Princess and Goddess

"Onee~! Please fix my hair!"

"Hmm~?"

One day during summer vacation, Nonoa was relaxing in her room when the door to her room opened with a bang. A strong-looking beautiful girl with dark brown hair and slightly slanted eyes, jumped into the room. She was one of one of Nonoa's two younger twin siblings, Miyamae Rea.

Nonoa, who was playing with her smartphone on her bed, turned her gaze towards her younger sister who entered without knocking.

"Rea... Knock on the door first before--"

"That's not important now! Nee~ please!"

"...Yes, yes."

Seeing her sister pleading while putting her hands together sweetly, Nonoa gently lifted her body from the bed. She then let her sister sit in front of the dressing table and plugged the power plug of the curling iron into the outlet.

"...So? What style do you want to do today?"

"Hmmm~ I want the hairstyle that Onee wore in the photo shoot last week!"

"Okay~"

As she combed her sister's hair while trying to remember, a little boy peeked through the open door.

"Oi, hurry up a bit. We'll be late, you know?"

"So fussy! Don't force a girl to hurry. You won't be popular, you know?"

"Huh? Who said that? I'm popular."

The boy who replied in an exasperated tone was Rea's twin brother, Miyamae Leo. He was a bishounen-type boy who was very similar to Rea, and his comment about being popular wouldn't have seemed strange if he had said it himself. In fact, he is active as a junior twin model with Rea, and was quite popular among the girls. However, this was something natural for the three siblings.

(TN: Bishounen roughly means "beautiful boy" who may possess feminine traits. They're often seen in shoujo manga and anime (I don't read or watch shoujo please don't take it the wrong way, that was purely based on a google search).)

"Today you want to play with your fellow models~?"

"Yes, with the people I met at the last photo shoot~~ Ahh, does Onee want to join in too?"

"Hmm~? No, because I already have my own plans today."

"I see~ then, I guess I'll be the only winner today~?"

Rea smiled like a little devil as Nonoa styled her hair. Looking at her expression reflected in the mirror of the dressing table, Leo, who was leaning against the door frame, blatantly frowned.

"What a slut."

"Haa~? I don't want to be told by you who always changes partners all the time~"

"I just let them approach me, and I don't seduce anyone like you!?"

The twin siblings glared at each other through the reflection of the mirror and spoke ill of each other. Seeing the behavior of the two of them through the mirror, Nonoa opened her mouth as if she didn't really care.

"Well, you two, just don't overdo it okay. Mama told you, right?
Remember--"

"Yes, yes, I understand. Don't worry too much, okay? I'm still keeping my last line of defense, really. After all, from the beginning, I don't really like ikemen guys, you know~? Guys who are overconfident and act arrogant, I don't know why~"

(An ikemen guy is a "cool", "frivolous" guy often seen in shoujo anime or manga (Again, I'm not into shoujo manga, I just searched this up).)

"Then, don't flirt carelessly with people."

"That's just it. It feels pretty good when you're flirting with a handsome guy~"

"Yuck!"

Leo clicked his tongue in annoyance, but when Nonoa looked at him through the mirror, She averted her eyes as if feeling a little guilty.

"I'll go to the front door first."

Then, he pulled his body away from the door frame and turned around. When she saw him who was about to leave, Nonoa then called out to him.

"Did you bring handkerchiefs and tissues?"

"What a nagger, I prepared them already. Don't treat me like a child, Neechan."

"?? I'm not treating you like a child. I'm just treating you like my brother, really?"

"I don't understand what you mean at all."

When he replied angrily to his sister's rebuttal, Leo then walked away quickly.

"...Is that called the rebellious period?"

"Maybe~? Gosh, he's such a kid."

Rea said with a snort, even though she herself was the same age as Leo. Nonoa did not respond to that comment, and then put down the curling iron, then stepped back to examine the ends of Rea's hair.

"How about this, pretty?"

"Hmm, thank you very much! Then, I'll leave first~"

"Hmm, be careful on the way~"

After seeing her sister leave the room with a coquettish smile, Nonoa glanced at the clock in her room.

"...I think I'd better get ready soon too."

Nonoa then sat on the chair where Rea had been sitting, straightening her hair with a curling iron, and braided it to cover her shoulders.

Next, she opened the three-meter-wide wardrobe, and inside were many branded clothes hung in rows. She herself couldn't imagine how much the whole thing cost. Without caring about that at all, Nonoa took out blouses and a plain skirt from the boxes piled up on the floor. Then from another cabinet, she took out a plain bag, a hat, and black-rimmed glasses and started wearing those items.

"...Well, I guess this kind of look is enough?"

The result was a coordinated look resembling a celebrity in disguise. The overly flashy glittery look was suppressed, and more of a clean and neat appearance.

After checking it in front of the mirror and practicing her facial expressions lightly, Nonoa finally left the house. Her destination was a karaoke place located in a secluded area behind the station.

To be honest, the place was not clean and smelled like cigarettes, but the karaoke place was often used by kids and couples with little money since there were no surveillance cameras with very few employees who were willing to patrol the area.

(TN: Sex. They are using it for sex.)

"Ueeh, hiks, hiks"

"??"

As she walked down the complicated back alley towards the store, she heard a small sob, and Nonoa averted her eyes. Then a boy who looked to be about five or six years old walked out from around the corner. He seemed to have gotten lost, his face was wrinkled with tear marks, and wandering aimlessly.

"Fuee, hiks..."

"....."

A little boy was crying and wandering around a place that wasn't very safe. Nonoa took a quick glance at the boy... and left it at that without being too worried at all. It wasn't that she was in a hurry, but she felt that she shouldn't bother to help the boy.

She understood that the idea of "one should be kind to children" was said in the views of the general public, and if there was an acquaintance in the vicinity, Nonoa would probably do so according to that ethic. But right now, Nonoa's acquaintances weren't around here. And most importantly, her parents also told her to [be nice to your younger brother and sister], but not to [be nice to small children]. Therefore, Nonoa had no reason to help the lost child. What about the emotions moved by the cries of a child? That kind of thing had never existed since she was born.

"Welcome~, how many people are there?"

"Ah sorry, I have an appointment with my friend. Umm, the room number..."

After arriving at the karaoke place she was looking for and telling the aloof employees that she would be joining a friend who had come first, Nonoa followed the room number sent through her smartphone and went up to the third floor.

"Ah, Nonoa-chan! I've been waiting for you for a long time~!"

Then, when she entered the meeting room, a girl who was running approached her as if she was going to jump on her. While on the other hand, Nonoa showed a very friendly and bright smile.

"Sorry, huh? Umm, am I the last to arrive?"

While saying that with a different, more polite pronoun, and with a different gentler tone of voice than usual, Nonoa looked around the room.

(TN: As I mentioned before in previous chapters, there are many ways you can refer to yourself in Japanese, and they are ranked in a hierarchy of formal to informal)

As if to respond to her gaze, the three boys who were sitting on the sofa smiled kindly.

"Yes, but yeah, don't think about it too much? Because we're the ones who invited you."

"That's right, that's right. We're sorry, okay? Even though today is your day off."

"Because there's something I really want to tell you as soon as possible... well anyway, just sit down first."

As soon as one of the boys pointed to the place next to him, the eyes of the other two boys immediately emitted a dangerous air.

"Oi, what kind of ulterior motive are you hiding to tell her to sit next to you?"

"Gosh, I need to be more vigilant..."

"Yes, yes, boys, let's not make a fuss here. Nonoa-chan, how about you sit here with me?"

The girl who had given the three boys a cold stare turned around and smiled at Nonoa, then invited her to sit next to her.

This time, it was the boys' turn to look at her with a cold gaze, as they were taking advantage of her position as a fellow girl. However, she ignored them. The girl then took another list tablet in her hand and handed it to Nonoa.

"Alright, let's do some karaoke first, shall we? I want to hear Nonoa-chan sing."

"Oh, that's a good idea."

"Yeah, I want to hear it too."

"Try singing just one song first, Nonoa"

"Umm~? Okay. But I want to order some drinks first--"

"Oh, let me order it then? What would you like to drink?"

Nonoa's words instantly made the four of them move in unison, and when she started to sing, everyone became excited as if they were attending an idol concert. The scene didn't seem to be much different from what always happens at school, but in fact there is a slight difference.

The difference is Nonoa's behavior and the reactions of the people around her. If Nonoa's behavior at school was that of a queen followed by her cronies, then the Nonoa of today is like a princess who is babysat by her servants.

"Fyuhh..."

Finally, Nonoa sang a ballad, and the four of them applauded for her. It was an old-school song that wouldn't attract praise at karaoke, but no one cared about that. However, even if Nonoa sang a heavy metal song or an anime song, their reaction would still be the same. Even if Nonoa is tone-deaf, they would still applaud wholeheartedly.

"You-You guys, that's enough....."

Nonoa fanned her blushing face with her hands at the excessive applause directed at her. Then, the four of them stopped clapping as instructed, and made expressions as if they were witnessing a scene that was soothing to the heart.

"Ah~ I'm really nervous. Singing in front of people does make you nervous, huh~"

Nonoa smiled shyly when she received the gazes of the four of them, as if she was looking at something that made her smile softly.

Nonoa's shy smile, combined with her plain and different clothes from usual, seemed to arouse people's desire to protect her. In fact, the hearts of the four of them were already brilliantly entangled, and they all stared at Nonoa with passionate gazes. Nonoa seemed to feel awkward under their gaze, and wriggled her body.

"....U-uuuh, you guys are also singing, right? If it's just me, I feel embarrassed, you know..."

"O-Ohh, I see, that's true too."

"Ummm then, I guess I should take a risk and sing a rock song?"

"Oh~, that's good. The three of us can take turns to sing it."

"I'll go get the tambourine first, okay~?"

(TN: *A tambourine at a karaoke?*)

Nonoa encouraged the other four people to sing with hand gestures while turning away to avoid their gaze. Then the four of them chose a song in a hurry and started pretending to liven up the atmosphere. As if they were treating a precious princess, the four of them were overly sensitive to Nonoa's every move and showed excessive attention to her. However, it was only natural that they would act like that.

That was because, around the four of them, Nonoa acted like, "a timid and shy girl who feels suffocated by her parents' insistence that she should work as a model and belong to the normies group, but in reality felt suffocated by such circumstances."

That, of course, is contrary to reality. The persona of "shy and timid girl" is just a fabrication made by Nonoa to gain sympathy from these four people. In fact, it is the four of them who feel suffocated by their outward appearance and way of life at the school, as well as being disturbed by their inability to show their true selves. Nonoa skillfully approached them while revealing.

"Actually, I'm the same."

In this way, she brings together people who are excluded from the lower caste of high school to create a five-member group. Those who were usually depressed at school, were quickly attracted to their first true friends, and above all, the person who understands them best turns out to be Nonoa.

"Only we know the true nature of Miyamae Nonoa." "To Nonoa, the normies at school are just fake friends, and we are her true friends." This secret illusion gave them a sweet sense of superiority, the affection and trust Nonoa showed them gave them a feeling of versatility and excitement like a narcotic drug..... and that's how Nonoa became a goddess among the four of them.

"That was amazing~. You guys are really good at singing! Yeay~"

Nonoa high-fived the boys who had just finished singing while laughing with a cheerful voice. The four people lost their liking for behavior that was difficult to show at school.

However, the four of them did not just invite Nonoa to play with them. When the atmosphere had relaxed to a certain extent, they looked at each other and one of the boys spoke on behalf of the others.

"Ummm, Nonoa... The real reason why we invited you to karaoke today is because we have something to talk about..."

"What do you guys want to talk about?"

"That you introduced us to your new friend before, right? That's Kinjou-kun from class 1-F..."

"Ah, yes. Kinjou-kun, huh? So how was it? Do you think you can get along with him? Since Kinjou-kun seems like a lonely person... so I was hoping that you guys would want to be friends with him too."

"Umm, that's just..."

Nonoa's friendly smile made the four of them simultaneously pursed their lips in an awkward manner. But not long after, the girl sitting next to Nonoa began to open her mouth.

"Actually, it's about Kinjou-kun..."

◇◇◇◇

"Damn it, neither Suou nor Kujou are on social media do they want to show off that they intend to become student council president, but don't want to get attention? They want to act cool, huh! That really pisses me off."

In a room of a luxury apartment building, there was a guy in front of his computer, muttering something full of negative emotions. It was Kinjou of the 1- F Academy that Nonoa and her friends were talking about at the moment.

His appearance To put it bluntly, was one that could be considered ugly in the eyes of the public. He had a short body for his age group, his body had grown horizontally, with sagging cheeks full of pimples and a pig nose with prominent nostrils. Up to this point, he looked like a plain fat guy who would

be bullied at school, but his eyes and mouth, which unleashed bottomless cruelty, turned his impression into something completely different.

Instead of being a harmless little pig, he looked like a rude and cunning snake. In fact, he is the type of person who vents his insecurities by humiliating others, and always tries to beat up people who are "better" than him, both on the Internet and in real life, and slandering them by spreading bad gossip or rumors.

"Hahh!? What the hell is this girl doing traveling to Guam? Lately, this person seems really cocky... Try diving into his account first and find out if there are any comments that could set his beard on fire... Hmm? Pffft, what the hell is this guy, I guessed right on the right on target and got annoyed myself. Yup, she's just an ugly bitch whose picture was edited~"

(TN: Holy shit this chapter is full of people who need to get their shit together, touch grass and reconnect with him, the divine and holy spirit, god.)

Today was the same as usual, he was busy wandering around the social network accounts of students and celebrities in the same school, making fun of and annoying them. but at that moment, the smartphone placed on his desk rang because of an incoming call.

"Ah...? Oh..."

Upon seeing the name displayed on the screen, Kinjou's cheeks relaxed as he answered the call.

"What is it, huh.. karaoke...? Gosh, what can I do."

Contrary to his words, Kinjou got up from his seat with a joyful expression and quickly began to get ready to go out. Then, within five minutes, he left the house and headed for the karaoke place.

It was no surprise that Kinjou was hated at school like a snake or a scorpion, due to his bad personality, and had no one he could call a friend. No, he used to have no friends. Until about a month ago, when he was approached by Nonoa at school.

[Kinjou-kun... Is it true that you've always been compared to your younger sibling who's great? Actually, I'm the same...]

Nonoa spoke to him in a completely different atmosphere from the one she usually showed at school. And then Nonoa told him something. She was forced to act cheerful and glamorous in order to fulfill her parents' demands.

Even so, she was no match for her younger brother and sister who were true normies, and she didn't feel at home. Even at school, she felt suffocated by not being able to get rid of the characters she had already played.

[I think that Kinjou-kun is just like me...]

When Nonoa said that in an anxious tone and looked up to her, Kinjou's heart was instantly made helpless. And Kinjou herself began to tell about his situation. His father and stepmother doted on his half-brother too. People often said that his brother was brilliant, but that was because his parents gave him more opportunities in education, and he himself would have been much more brilliant if he had had the same opportunities. However, neither his parents, teachers, nor everyone around him realize his excellence.

(TN: the victim mentality is real)

Nonoa gently nodded her head and confirmed everything to Kinjou, who expressed all his pent-up dissatisfaction in his heart. After that, Nonoa introduced him to the 3 guys and 1 girl with similar circumstances, and he immediately felt that he fit in with them.

[I heard, Kinjou. It's said that you really don't support Kujou at the public debate the other day]

[I understand how you feel, really? The representative of a traditional school should must be pure Japanese, right~]

[I feel happy that there are people who share the same experience as us... Because the other students are all just a bunch of fools who only look at her face and think that she's a "princess" or something]

There's no other reason than because they're all equally antagonistic towards Alisa. Sharing something you hate can sometimes create a stronger connection than sharing something you love. than sharing something you love. In Kinjou's case, that's exactly what happened.

(The idiots at school have no brains at all. They're all just trash who can only judge people based on their outward appearance.)

(TN: isn't that what he's doing? 😐)

But they were different. They praised Kinjou's courage in facing the upper caste alone. They were eager to hear about the many heroic stories Kinjou had accomplished so far, and their eyes lit up with admiration when they heard his stories.

For Kinjou, who usually maintained a sense of self-assertion by looking down on others, the praise directed at him was accompanied by a deadly

euphoria. He who fundamentally distrusted others altogether at all, began to open his heart and mind to them.

"But I've never been to karaoke or anything like that... well, since they went to the trouble of inviting me, I guess I'll just have to enjoy it,"

Although he could not hide her joyful smile at all, Kinjou entered the designated karaoke place, and spoke to himself in a haughty manner.

He then took the elevator to the third floor and stood in front of the room that had been transmitted via his smartphone.

(Hmm? Somehow it feels quiet?)

For a moment, he wondered why he couldn't hear the voice of the person who was singing, but without worrying too much about it, Kinjou opened the door and stepped inside in a self-absorbed fashion.

"Heyy~, what's with you guys suddenly asking me to karaoke? Yeah, I just happened to be free, so I came here~"

While saying this, Kinjou looked around the room and finally realized there was something strange. There was a heavy atmosphere enveloping the room. Nonoa looked very sad while the girl next to her hugged her shoulder. The unexpectedly dark atmosphere made Kinjou frown for a moment, and then she forced the corners of her mouth to up.

"Oi, oi, what's with this strange atmosphere. What, is Nonoa crying again? Ehh~~ what have you guys done~?"

"Kinjou, shut your mouth for a moment"

When his words were suddenly cut off by an angry voice, Kinjou turned around stiffly. Then, the three boys greeted him with hostile gazes, making him involuntarily flinch. Nonoa slowly looked up and called out to him.

"Kinjou-kun..."

"O-Ohh, what's wrong, Nonoa?"

Nonoa looked at him with a hurt expression, as if she had been betrayed by someone she trusted. Seeing Nonoa's expression like that made Kinjou take half a step back.

"Kinjou-kun... Six months ago, was it really you who slandered the model Mimiko-chan on the internet and forced her to retire?"

"Eh? A-Ahh... umm, about that~..."

Somehow, he could see that things were going to be bad for his assertion here. However, how could he lie when those four people were glaring at him as if implying, "You said that the other day, didn't you?"

"Well, maybe that kind of thing happened once?"

As a result, Nonoa bit her lip and grimaced as Kinjou gave a short speech.

"O-Oi, what's wrong? After all, what exactly are you talking about?"

"Kinjou-kun... you know what? Mimiko-chan is my precious friend, you know...?"

"Eh..."

In a tone saddened by tears, Nonoa told the stunned Kinjou.

"Mimiko-chan is a very kind girl who accepts me as I am... but she was so hurt by your slanderous comments on the internet that she doesn't want to see me at all..."

Then, as if she could no longer stand being there, her voice trembled and brushed by Kinjou and walked out the room.

"Ah..."

Kinjou stretched out his hands in the air as he stared absentmindedly at Nonoa's back who was getting farther and farther away. Then there was a large hand gripping his shoulder from behind. When he turned around, he saw a group of four people with cruel smiles on their faces.

"So that's how it is, Kinjou. The person you destroyed for fun before was someone precious to Nonoa."

"Ah, no, I didn't know that at the time--"

He made excuses in a pathetic manner and walked backwards, but in the small private karaoke room, he soon discovered that there was no way to escape from this situation. The four of them immediately surrounded Kinjou.

"Don't think you can get away with saying you don't know, okay? After all, it's not just that model you're victimizing, is it? Didn't you proudly talk about it the other day?"

"Oh yeah, just so you know, I've recorded the entire conversation at that time, okay? Also, I checked afterwards and found... You often slander celebrities

and students from our school here and there, right? I wonder what would happen if I revealed your identity to them?"

"Wh-Why... wasn't it yesterday, you guys were praising me so much..."

A gaze full of contempt pierced through the stammering Kinjou who could not comprehend the situation she was in.

"Isn't that obvious? We were all just acting. I really doubt your sanity to proudly talk about such nonsense."

"Oh yeah, let me tell you first, if you really are a kind-hearted person like what Nonoa said, we would also accept you, you know? Well but as it turns out, you are actually a rotten guy and a jerk."

"That's why I told Nonoa-san about your true nature."

"Nonoa-chan is a very pure and kind girl~. So, we have to protect her from trash like you."

Then, after thinking about Nonoa with a gentle gaze, the four of them turned around and put on cruel smiles again.

The difference in their expressions just now was too great. The dangerous gleam in their gazes seemed like madness, and caused Kinjou to slump to the ground. He instinctively understood that these four people in front of him did not even consider him a human being.

They did not even care about the feelings, dignity, or even the life of the human being named Kinjou. They did not hesitate at all to tread on him if necessary.

"A-Ahh..."

This was the purest cruelty that had never been directed at him in his entire life. The pure will to obliterate him by putting aside disgust and hostility, shook Kinjou's body to its core, a feeling of warmth and pain spread throughout his lower body.

"So-Someone, help me..."

As if commanded by his instincts, his throat let out a faint gasp. On the other hand, the gazes of the four of them continued to blaze and only their mouths were twitching as if seeing something funny.

"Ahaha, what the hell was that? It feels like we're the ones trying to make you disappear."

"Don't worry. We won't do that, as long as you voluntarily disappear from Nonoa's presence, okay?"

"You may refuse, but in that case, I will expose your identity as I mentioned before. Then, not just you, but your family will also die socially, okay? Or rather, I'm the one who will make it happen."

"You've been threatening other people's social status all this time. So at least you are ready for the same thing to happen to you, right?"

"Uwaaaa--"

A guy's horrified voice, tinged with fear, echoed through the karaoke room. However, it never reached anyone outside.



"Ahh~ pretending to cry is really hard, huh."

Nonoa said to herself while playing with her smartphone in the toilet. Her face didn't show the slightest bit of sadness or anything like that. Naturally, it was all just an act. From the start, Nonoa had no grudge against Kinjou. She was not that close with a fellow model named Mimiko, and the whole reason why she was blaming Kinjou this time was to pay back her debts to Masachika and Alisa.

(Because papa once told me that if I owe someone a favor, I should return the favor properly~)

Nonoa had no sense of guilt or accomplishment, even though she had instilled fear into someone's heart for that reason alone.

Since it wasn't the first time, she didn't really feel anything right now.

Nonoa had already manipulated those four people to eliminate whoever was bothering her until now.

An upperclassman who violently harassed Nonoa out of jealousy. A life guidance teacher who made Nonoa an enemy. An opposing candidate in the campaign who slandered Sayaka's name. In each of these cases, Nonoa did not give any instructions. She simply gave information and acted in a way that triggered the desire to protect her. By doing just that, the four of them took the initiative to remove the obstacles that were bothering her. You could say that Nonoa selects and gathers members who have the strength and quality to do so.

(TN: Ezekiel 34:4. Nonoa shall repent for her sins of manipulation and I hope she shall find our father in heaven, the one perfect being and his divine and holy spirit)

"Upss, I guess it's time to go out?"

After taking the time to exit the toilet room, Nonoa arranged the expression of her face in front of the mirror before exiting the restroom.

"Ah, Nonoa-chan!"

And then sure enough, the four of them walked towards her. Nonoa turned to them with a weak and helpless smile.

"Everyone... sorry, huh? I've calmed down a bit now..."

"Nonoa-chan are you really alright?"

"Yes, I'm sorry for getting too carried away. I jumped out first before I could listen to Kinjou-kun's whole story... I'm sure there must be a reason, right? I have to listen to what he has to say properly..."

When Nonoa tried to return to the karaoke room after saying that, the three boys stood in front to block her entry. Then, each of them said,

"If you go looking for Kinjou, he's already gone home, you know?"

"It seems like he really regrets what he did and... he said that he doesn't deserve to be friends with Noana."

"He wants to reflect on his actions for a while. So, Nonoa-san doesn't have to worry about it, okay?"

"...Really? If everyone says so, then..."

Nonoa nodded as if reassuring herself, and the four of them looked at her kindly. According to the viewpoint of the four of them, they were knights who were trying to protect the innocent and pure princess. But from Nonoa's perspective, they all looked like radical followers who worshiped a Goddess.

(It's interesting to see how people make their own assumptions~)

Nonoa observed the four of them with a cool head while thinking about it without any particular emotion.

"In that case, until Kinjou-kun changes his mind and returns... I'll wait for him, okay?"

And then, she showed the most innocent smile on her face.



Chapter 3 - Mood and Appetite

On that day, Alisa was seen in front of a ramen shop. The name "The Cauldron of Hell" was written in horrible red letters on a wooden board.

It was a shop that specializes in super-duper spicy ramen so Alisa, who had previously entered with Masachika and Yuki, had almost seen hell as the name of the stall implied.

So, why was Alisa now trying to set foot in a place she had once experienced hell in?... It all started during her date with Masachika the other day... or not. When she gave an exercise similar to a pre-date to teach the naive Masachika what a woman's heart was, Masachika then told Alisa that he liked spicy food.

(No, it's not like I want to understand Masachika-kun's food tastes or anything!)

Alisa made that kind of excuse in her head. Yes, it's just because she thought that if there were some people who liked it, then spicy food would have its own flavor of deliciousness. This was just an attempt to bring more variety in her daily diet. The challenge is based on the idea that if she can learn to understand the deliciousness of spicy foods in addition to sweets, she might be able to multiply the enjoyment of her meals.

Well, as a side effect of that? I wonder if I can enjoy the food with other friends~ that's what Alisa thought. Of course, the friend in question was not Masachika, but Yuki.

"Yosh, alright!"

After finishing making up excuses and preparing herself, Alisa then opened the door slide.

"Ugh!"

Immediately, the air with pungent ingredients began to stimulate her eyes and her nose, and although she had prepared to a certain extent, Alisa reflexively squinted her eyes. reflexively narrowed her eyes.

"Welcome~!"

Alisa blinked her eyes as she heard the store employee's energetic voice, and turned her attention to the female shop employee who approached her... but suddenly, Alisa double-checked the familiar face that appeared in the corner of her vision.

"Uh, Kimishima-san?"

".....? Ah."

In response to Alisa's voice, Ayano who was sitting at the table for two near the entrance, looked up from the book in her hand and her eyes widened slightly.

The female store employee who had approached Alisa earlier, looked at the two of them in turn, and said,

"Umm, are you with this customer?"

"Ehh, umm, yes."

How should she answer in such a situation? Alisa was embarrassed by her unclear answers due to her lack of experience. However, since she had said that she was with her, Alisa then stepped towards Ayano's table.

"Umm, can I join you?"

"Yes, please."

Alisa asked permission somewhat reluctantly and sat down opposite her. Ayano also put the book in her hand into her bag.

"..."

"..."

And then silence. The two beautiful girls were both silent while looking at each other.

(Ummm...)

In this indescribably awkward atmosphere, Alisa tried to say something... but she didn't know what to say and closed back her mouth that was about to be open. In the past, Alisa didn't often start her own conversations. Besides... she and Ayano still had a very ambiguous relationship.

(Can I assume that we're... friends? No, right? Because we almost never talk to each other anyway, at best we're just fellow members of the Student Council... But as an opposing candidate, you could say that she's a friend and enemy. But, Yuki and I are already friends, so...)

What is the right term to describe the relationship between her and Ayano? Of course, for Alisa herself, she was not unwilling to be friends with Ayano.

But she wasn't asked to be friends, and she also lacked the confidence in her personality to refer to herself as a close friend. Alisa kept worrying about that kind of thing like a person suffering from a communication disorder.

Rather, would the other party want to start the topic of conversation first... when thinking so, Alisa immediately gave up after seeing the look in Ayano's eyes. Because she had a completely straight gaze. Her face did not exude the slightest of awkwardness. She put her hands on her legs and straightened her back, she was already in the perfect position to listen, Alisa could even almost hear her inner voice saying, "Go ahead, I'm ready to listen to whatever you have to say, alright?".

"Here's your water~. Please call me again when you've decided on your order~"

The mysterious gaze contest was interrupted when the female employee from before came in with a glass of water. After averting her gaze from Ayano, Alisa then picked up the menu book. She smiled wryly at the names of the dishes that were still brutal-looking. Alisa then glanced at Ayano and asked.

"Which dish did you choose, Kimishima-san?"

"Yes, I chose--"

Just as Ayano was about to answer Alisa's question, having mustered up all her courage, the answer just appeared on the tray.

"Sorry for keeping you waiting~. Here. The 'Pincushion of Hell' you ordered~"

A bowl of bright red soup with a pile of garlic as thin as needles and piled up like a mountain was brought to the table. The second dish from the top of the

menu. RamenIt was a ramen that had a spiciness one level above the 'Blood Pond of Hell' that Alisa had eaten before.

"...this is my order."

"So"

Looking at the ramen served, Alisa immediately thought for a few seconds. Originally, today Alisa had intended to order the Blood Pond of Hell that she had eaten before. But when she saw Ayano ordering another level of spicy ramen, the thought of "It's not like I won't make any progress if I keep eating the same thing?" crossed Alisa's mind. And well, if she ordered the least spicy ramen here, she felt that she would lose. This wasn't a match, though.

"Umm, excuse me. I'd like to order the same menu as her."

Alisa ordered so when she stopped the female employee who was trying to leave the ramen and return to the kitchen. Then she turned to Ayano and urged her to eat first.

"In that case, I accept your kind offer."

When she put her hands together and said that, Ayano used her chopsticks to dip a heap of garlic into the soup while pulling the noodles out from inside and slurped it up without making a sound.

"Gh!!!"

"??"

"..."

Then, after pausing her movements for a moment, Ayano began to stuff the noodles into her mouth slowly. She then quickly wiped her lips with a paper napkin and chewed. Her facial expression did not change at all.

(T-That's incredible! I didn't expect her to be able to eat ramen that looks so spicy-looking without moving an eyebrow... Kimishima-san must love spicy food too...)

(TN: no, I think she just lacks the ability to express emotions)

With a sense of horror, Alisa felt impressed and a little impatient. She still vividly remembered the destructive spicy flavor of the ramen the other day. Alisa wondered if she could finish ramen that was spicier than that....

(I-It's okay! After all, I'm used to spicy flavors, and last time, it was my own fault for adding spiciness halfway through eating the ramen!)

When she glanced at the edge of the table while cheering herself up, there was a small jar that gave a suspicious impression among other condiments such as soy sauce and peppercorns. It was a super spicy condiment called Demon Tears.

(As long as I don't touch that thing, I should be fine...!)

In front of Alisa who said that to herself and boosted her morale fighting spirit, ... Ayano was chewing her second mouthful of ramen.

(Spicy...so spicy, hiks, hiks...)

But inwardly, she was literally bursting into tears

Yes, actually, Ayano doesn't like spicy food at all. So, why did she bother going to such a restaurant? There was only one reason. All these efforts were

made so that she could eat the super spicy food that her two beloved masters favored.

(TN: called it)

In order to achieve that goal, Ayano secretly visits restaurants that serve super-spicy spicy food on holidays and keeps trying to practice to get used to it. Thanks to her efforts, she has become much more tolerant of spicy food than two years ago when she started her training in spicy cuisine, but still... for Ayano, this extremely spicy ramen was quite challenging.

(So hot, so spicy... hiks, my mouth is burning...)

The spiciness was obvious from the first bite. It's as if the residual spiciness in the mouth has been ignited by the heat of the noodles. The combination of the spiciness and the heat of the noodles caused an explosion that scorched the inside of the mouth. She herself didn't know anymore whether she was feeling hot or spicy.

(Fuu, huu, hau, fuuuu...)

If she could, she would like to open her mouth and take a deep breath. However, such a breach of manners should not be committed as it would tarnish her principles as a super maid. If she was alone no problem, but she was with Alisa who was sitting in front of her. How would she do such a disgraceful act in front of her beautiful classmate and rival of her master, Yuki.

"Fuu..."

Ayano managed to swallow what was in her mouth without changing her expression and let out a small sigh. She instinctively wanted to take a sip of

water, but based on her experience so far, it was not very effective in relieving the spicy taste in the mouth, so she tried to restrain herself. Instead, she decided to taste the relatively safe onions.

(Compared to the noodles that have been soaked in the soup... Let's taste a little onions that have not been exposed to the soup)

With that in mind, she brought the onion to her mouth and... immediately regretted it. Because, when she chewed the crispy green onions, the spicy flavor of the green onions pierced his tongue like a needle.

"!!?"

Ayano's eyes became wet as she felt the spiciness of the onion that was clearly not from ordinary onions. The piercing spiciness was very different from the

the searing heat of chili peppers. Chemically speaking, the spiciness does not come from the substance

capsaicin, but from aniline. If described in elements, the elements would consist of fire and wind. The two completely different types of spiciness exploded in her mouth and almost brought tears to her eyes.

(TN: capsaicin is a chemical compound which makes chillies spicy. Aniline is found in onion and is one of the compounds which contributes to its distinct "tangy" or "chillingly burning" sensation when eating it, hence why the author here described the sensation to that of fire and wind. Interestingly, capsaicin is meant to be a defense mechanism to prevent animals from eating the chili pepper itself, but for some reason we humans (mostly asians) find that shit addicting.).

(S-So apparently... so this is what the Pincushion of Hell is called...)

Two kinds of spiciness that attacked from completely different directions without clashing with each other. Ayano immediately closed her eyes as she realized that this double spiciness was what this ramen was all about. She nodded her head and suppressed her lacrimal glands to stop the tears, as if she was enjoying the meal with her eyes closed. Then she swallowed what was in her mouth and slowly reached for the glass to take a sip of water. Ayano opened her mouth as she exhaled in relief at the sensation of her mouth being washed clean.

"The flavor is really delicious. Despite the spiciness, the flavor of the vegetables and meat taste really good."

By the way, Ayano did not mean to lie. After a long period of practice Ayano can taste umami well underneath the spiciness. So, she wasn't lying at all. It's just that she's not telling the truth that umami was so difficult to feel that she was unable to enjoy such a delicacy like that.

However, Alisa was completely unaware of Ayano's inner thoughts.

"S-So yeah... then, I'm really looking forward to it."

With a slightly awkward smile, Alisa was secretly frightened.

(I-I can't believe she can keep eating it so casually... Kimishima-san, you do like spicy food, huh...)

As Ayano started sipping her ramen again in silence, Alisa became increasingly anxious. It was possible that they could shorten the distance between them in front of the enemy together while saying something like, "Uhh, this ramen is really spicy~" and being "Really, it's so spicy~" ... but that kind of faint hope quickly disappeared. Ayano is a veteran warrior who

doesn't need a partner. From the very beginning, she was the only one who was a new soldier.

(Uhh...)

Although it was too late, Alisa felt regretful for sitting with Ayano. If one tried to complain "spicy~ spicy~" in the presence of a warrior, it was only natural that she would get a look that implied, "why did you come here?". If that's the case, it's better if the ramen is only brought in after Ayano had finished eating and left the shop... Well, how practical could that be?

"Sorry for keeping you waiting~. Here's the 'Pincushion of Hell' you ordered~"

When Ayano had finished about half the portion, the ramen was served in front of Alisa. Having no other way to escape, Alisa decided to resolve, and picked up her disposable chopsticks as if she was a soldier heading into battle with a gun in her hand.

"Itadakimasu"

First of all, first contact is important. This first bite will determine the next step...

"!? Ufuguphtsh!"



As Alisa slurped her noodles, the capsaicin compound immediately hit the back of her throat and made her choke. She almost spit the noodles back out, but she couldn't stop gagging.

"Ukgh! Ukguh! Ukugh!"

She repeatedly coughed while holding the noodles in her mouth. After she managed to calm down, she carefully brought the noodles to her mouth with her chopsticks. She carried it and secretly felt pain from the spicy flavor that seemed to burn inside her mouth.

(Unnn ~~~!?)

It was spicy, hot, and painful. Are they all that stupid? Both the person who made this food and the person who ordered it.

(In other words, me too, stupid...!)

Alisa hurriedly wiped her lips with a paper napkin, her mind raging because the ramen was too spicy. She could understand it well upon making first contact. This food was truly her nemesis.

(I-I feel like I can't finish it...)

Alisa swallowed her first mouthful with a feeling of despair. Then Ayano called out to her with a slightly worried look in her eyes.

"Are you okay? It looks like you coughed pretty hard earlier..."

"I-I'm fine, really."

When asked in a worried tone, Alisa replied in a strong manner.

"The soup just fell down my throat. I think I slurped it a bit too hard."

"Ah, I've experienced that too. That's what happens when you're not careful."

(TN: if anyone has eaten soup which is spicy, you might have experienced this at least once. For some reason, involuntarily swallowing the soup for some reason makes it 10x more spicier than normal)

After replying with a faint smile to Ayano who nodded in agreement, Alisa then looked back down at her ramen bowl... She almost despaired when she saw her path to finishing the spicy ramen was still very long. Alisa stopped her chopsticks involuntarily. Ayano continued eating

(I-if I try to put the onion in just once, it might be a little less spicy)

And then she fell into the same trap of following the exact same as Ayano.

(Sp-Spicy as hell, ugh, uhuk!)

Alisa's poker face almost collapsed from the spiciness of the scallions that hit the tear glands from inside her mouth. However, when Alisa maintained her expression vigorously, she soon sensed that the more she bit into the onion, the more spicy it became. After minimizing the amount of chewing, she half-heartedly swallowed it with water.

Then, the coldness of the ice water and the piercing spiciness of the onion combined to create a strange, tingly sensation on the tingle in his mouth.

(I can use this!)

She knew that it was just a fake refreshing sensation. But, even if it was just her imagination, she couldn't continue eating without relying on this. After deciding on that, Alisa began to eat as fast as she could, slurping up as much noodles as much as possible while adding as little broth as possible. All for the sake of defeating as many enemies as possible while the fake invincibility time continued. Ayano looked surprised when she saw Alisa moving her chopsticks.

(S-She ate so many of them one after another... it was amazing. It seems that Alisa-sama also likes spicy food, huh.)

It was just a misunderstanding. They completely misunderstood the situation because of their fake endurance they have with each other.

(I can't lose either...!)

After all, she was inspired by the sight of her opponent. Ayano continued eating without stopping her chopsticks because she didn't want to lose to Alisa. Seeing that scene, Alisa too...

(She ate it so casually... I have to struggle too!)

It was really a picture of hell. As a result of misunderstanding each other because the opposing side was able to keep up, the option to surrender had already disappeared from both of their minds. If that was the case again, all that remained was to push forward with determination and pride. Until they passed through this hell. Not long after...

"Fyuuhh... gochisousama."

In the end, Ayano successfully conquered the Pincushion of Hell's ramen. While feeling a sense of accomplishment that made her want to raise the flag, Ayano was as intoxicated by ice water, and not victory wine.

(For some reason, Kimishima-san looks very satisfied...? Wh-Was it that delicious? I can't understand it... but I have a little bit left too!)

After seeing Ayano make it to the top one step further, Alisa also put in her last effort. She plunged her chopsticks into the portion of noodles that had the amount of which had been drastically reduced--

Alisa stopped her chopsticks when she felt an unpleasant sensation at the tip of her chopsticks. It was a mistake Alisa made because she was still a beginner in the field of super spicy ramen. What touched the tip of her chopsticks was a collection of chili peppers and ground meat that had settled at the bottom of the bowl because she had didn't stir the ramen soup during the meal.

(TN: Isn't eating chashu pork/sliced meat with ramen better than ground meat though?)

(?What?)

And because she was still a beginner... Alisa made an even more fatal mistake. The strange sensation touching her chopsticks caused her to unconsciously scrape them and peek into the depths of hell. As a result...

(W-what, uh, this...!?)

A lump of spicy material that settled at the bottom and half hardened... The demon swarms that had been sealed at the bottom of hell began to be

released. Now the amount of soup itself has already decreased, the density is not comparable to before. She hurriedly pulled out the noodles, but it was too late. The noodles she lifted up were covered with so many pieces of red chili and grains of black pepper that they were no longer in a condition where they could be removed by blowing.

(...Uh, should I eat it? This?)

Alisa felt as if her peak had erupted when she was already on the brink of the peak.

However, she couldn't keep looking at it like this forever. Her goal was in sight. Ayano, who had already reached the top first, was waiting right in front of her.

(I will not lose. I will definitely finish with her...)

Alisa boosted her fighting spirit while staring at the noodles with a slightly horrified expression. That's right, if she backed down now, she would never know why she struggled desperately through this tongue torture. For what reason was she willing to do all this... for the sake of her competition with Ayano? For her own satisfaction? No, since the beginning...

(I also want to be able to enjoy spicy food with Masachika-kun!!!)

In the depths of hell, Alisa finally revealed her true intentions. And then, she stuffed the noodles into her mouth.....

◇◇◇◇

"Ugh! ...?"

Alisa suddenly found herself sitting on the park bench that she had visited before. She looked around while blinking constantly and saw Ayano sitting right next to her, looking at her with a worried gaze.

"...Are you alright, Alisa-sama?"

"Eh? Umm, I..."

She tried to remember why she came to be here, but unfortunately she could not remember as if there was a fog covering her consciousness. Ayano slowly opened her mouth to Alisa, who tilted her head while frowning.

"Actually... after you ate the ramen, Alisa-sama was acting as if your soul was drained..."

"Uh, ah, so, that's what it looks like..."

Alisa glanced at Ayano while cowering in indescribable embarrassment and awkwardness.....

"Umm, thank you very much, Kimishima-san. You brought me this far, didn't you...? Oh yeah, payment! I haven't paid for the ramen yet..."

"For the time being, I paid for your share too..."

"Ahh, I'm sorry! I'll repay you right away! Umm, about how much was it?..."

After the money exchange was completed, Ayano suddenly asked her in a tone that was slightly reluctant.

"Alisa-sama, you umm... don't really like spicy food, right?"

"Uhh~....."

She wanted to deny it right away, but she couldn't bring herself to deny it when she had just woken up from a stupor. Alisa averted her eyes for a moment and then nodded resignedly.

"...Yes. I don't really like that..."

"I see...."

Alisa, who was already prepared for the question, "Then, why did you go to that restaurant?" was taken aback by hearing something completely unexpected.

"Actually, I'm the same way."

"Ehh...?"

"I tried my best to eat the same food as Yukisama and Masachika....., but it was hard to get used to it."

Ayano then shared the same motives and feelings as herself. In Alisa's mind, her sympathy and interest in Ayano began to surge sharply. She felt like she had finally met a living person, as there were only the demons playing merrily around her in the depths of hell.

"Ac-Actually, I'm the same way... I want to be able to enjoy the same food as my friend Yuki-san..."

"Is that so?"

Alisa's agreement brought a pleased look to Ayano's eyes. The look was exactly like finding a comrade on a deserted battlefield. After all, perhaps the thing to do in human relationships is to be honest.

"In that case, if you don't mind... from now on, would you like to continue practicing spicy food with me?"

"Ehh...?"

Alisa was immediately stunned when she heard Ayano's suggestion. To be honest, Alisa was not in a state where she could think of anything further.

"Umm, because I was thinking that the two of us could encourage and help each other...."

However, looking at Ayano who was struggling to express her words while looking down and stealing glances at her, Alisa couldn't bear to reject her.

(Maybe... I can make more friends)

The rest, well, she had a bit of an ulterior motive of sorts.

"Yes alright, I understand. From now on, please get along with me, okay? Kimishima-san."

"Ah--yes!"

Alisa accepted the offer without much thought. As a result, from now on Alisa and Ayano will undergo a long and painful training journey together, but that's a story for another time

Chapter 4 - Brocon and Siscon

"Hah, finally home..."

A man in a polo shirt stood in front of a Japanese-style house. He had a tall straight back and a fairly fit physique. The look in his gentle eyes was that of an intelligent and kind middle-aged man with an atmosphere that made people who confronted him feel comfortable. Although his hairline looks a little suspicious. But don't ever bring it up because it's something he's worried about.

The man's name is Kuze Kyotarou. He is the father of Masachika and Yuki who had just returned to Japan from his diplomatic duties after many years.

"It's been a long time since I visited here...."

Kyotarou raised his head slightly, which was a little heavy due to jet-lag, and mumbled emotionally in front of his parents' house, which he had not visited for a year. Then, as he opened the gate and stepped inside the yard, a large white dog sleeping in the doorway of the house suddenly woke up.

"Long time no see, Rir. Do you still remember me?"

The dog named Rir approached Kyotarou lazily, sniffed him and then whimpered.

"Hmm, yoshi, yoshi."

While stroking his head, Kyotaro smiled a little and wondered "Will he be able to fulfill the role of guard dog at this rate?"

This dog was a male stray that Masachika and Yuki had picked up three years ago. To be more precise, Yuki found a puppy with an injured hind leg and suggested rescuing him, which Masachika agreed to, and they together brought him back to their grandparents' house. This sounds like a beautiful story that makes one smile, but...what Yuki was actually saying at that moment was...

『There's an injured white puppy, it's definitely a teenage Fenrir! Let's take him home and make him our servant!』

... that's how it really happened. As a result of Yuki's wish, the former stray dog changed his name to Rir. The expectations placed on the injured puppy were too heavy.

After all, three years had passed since then, and although he had grown up, Rir still didn't show any signs of resembling a holy wolf. Instead, there was a feeling that he was becoming more and more lazy as time passed.

Perhaps, too heavy expectations were stunting her growth. But if he returned to the wild, he would soon die.

"Geez, who do you look like anyway?"

Kyotarou watched Rir's back as he slipped back near the door of the house, and said to himself with a wry smile. Then, after regaining his composure, he went to the front door, opened it, and called out to the back of the corridor that stretched straight at the end.

"I'm home~!"

Immediately after that, the sliding door on the left side of the corridor opened and Yuki appeared.

"Ah, father is home. Welcome back~!"

Then, with a big smile, she ran up to Kyotarou and hugged him. Kyotarou closed his eyes and looked at the ceiling as he felt deeply touched by his daughter's unchanging expression of affection.

(Oh, my daughter is the sweetest girl in the world!!)

He had heard that fathers in the world often felt saddened by the fact that their daughters dislike them when they reach their teenage years, but there was no sign of that with his beloved daughter. The lack of rebelliousness worried him a little, but it was just a trivial matter of facing this adorable face of hers. Kyotarou returned the hug lightly, his cheeks relaxing in the arms of his beloved daughter.

"I'm home, Yuki. You... have grown up, huh?"

"Hmm? What does the pause mean?"

When she calmly looked at Yuki's height and slightly muttered, Yuki immediately smiled at him.

"No... I feel that your height hasn't changed much, huh?"

"Isn't this size just right! Doesn't this size that fits my arm look even cuter!"

Yuki, who seemed to have no complex with her own physique, made strong arguments like a thug. Kyotarou, who was a little worried about his daughter's growth, had no choice but to nod at his daughter's adorable statement.

"Umm, well... it's true, Yuki is really cute."

"That's right, isn't it~?"

Yuki immediately looked proud and snorted "Ehem~" while crossing her arms across her chest. Masachika and Tomohisa then appeared from the other side.

"Welcome back, father."

"Oh, you're back, huh? Kyotarou!"

"Yes, I returned a moment ago."

After exchanging a brief greeting, Masachika soon returned to the room.

Compared to Yuki's enthusiastic greeting, this one was very simple indeed.

(Yes... my son is still acting as ignorant as ever)

Although Kyotarou felt a little saddened by his son's indifferent attitude after not seeing each other for the first time in a while, he thought that such a reaction was normal for a teenager of his age.

(While on the other hand...)

"What about England? Are there many beautiful women there? Hmm?"

"...Dad still can't calm down like he used to."

Kyotarou's gaze turned soft as his father approached him while putting on a flirtatious smile. He thought that a father in his old age would not usually look like this.

"Geez, Ojii-san, is that the first thing you ask your own son when he comes home after so long? Welcome home, Kyotarou-san."

"I'm home, mom."

Kuze Asae, Kyotarou's mother, came out from behind with the same dumbfounded expression on her face like Kyotarou. Although both his wife and son were staring at him dumbfounded, Tomohisa did not seem to respond and raised her voice.

"What are you talking about! When a man sets foot in a foreign land, what else is he supposed to do but taste local wine and beautiful women!"

"Dad's not an alcoholic..."

Kyotarou's expression grew even more dumbfounded, but he kept his mouth shut when he saw his mother's surprised smile turn into a frightening smile.

"Ojii-san.....?"

"!"

"You say that as if you do it often...?"

"N-No, that's not true at all, really? I'm only loyal to Asae-san..."

"But Ojii-chan, Ojii-chan used to say that foreigners are different, and their hips have a nice shape, right?"

"No!? No, I meant Westerners... that..."

"Ouch, ouch, geez Ojii-san, you had to teach that to Yuki-chan? Wah, wah, wah...."

"Ah, no, Asae-san?"

Tomohisa hurriedly chased after Asae, who was retreating backwards with an unpleasant smile on her face. Kyotarou was half relieved and half dumbfounded as he saw his parents' behavior was the same as usual. Yuki then turned around and said with a smile.

"So, what about it? Are there beautiful blonde women with an extraordinary style?"

"Yuki got curious too... Well, let me put my luggage first for now."

With a wry smile on his face, he left from the front door and entered the Japanese-style room on the left, and placed his luggage in the corner of the room. Meanwhile, Yuki clung to Kyotarou's back, and continued to pester him to talk about beautiful English woman.

"Oh yeah, did you see a maid? England is the home of maids, right? Don't you have a photo of a real maid?"

"I did see one... but I didn't see that kind of young maid, really? Instead of a maid, there's an ordinary nanny..."

"Ehhh~~? Aren't there any beautiful blonde maids who are boing-boing, like that~~?"

"I don't think something like that exists..."

"What the~, so boring~. Oryaaaa~"

While complaining, Yuki threw herself at the feet of Masachika who was playing a smartphone game on the seat.

"Ouchh, it hurts, what the heck?"

"Ora, ora, even though dad has already come home, you still keep on playing with your smartphone."

Yuki pointed her fist at Masachika's stomach who was staring at her while raising his smartphone up.

(As usual, they still look close)

Kyotarou watched the scene with a smile. He had heard that siblings of the same age often did not talk to each other or look at each other, even when they were at home. But there were no such signs between the two of them.

Instead, perhaps because they usually lived apart from each other, when they were together, they got along as if they were true friends.

"Oh my god."

Masachika raised his eyebrows, then put down his smartphone while grabbing Yuki's fist to stop her, as if he had something in mind. Then Yuki

quickly picked up his smartphone and directly operated the screen while lying on Masachika's thigh.

"Oh, you've already reached chapter 5. You've done well without paying~."

"Don't just play with other people's smartphones willy-nilly!? Did you forget your own words earlier?"

(TN: I think this is a reference to an earlier chapter in volume 4)

"Eh? Which one? What about foreigners having a different pelvis, so their hips have a nice shape?"

"I don't know! Anyway, what's up with that!"

"Haaa! Does that mean Alya-san and Masha-san too...? I'll have to check this out at the upcoming training camp!"

"What do you mean 'I have to check it', you cretin!? Hurry up and give me back my smartphone."

"No way~"

When Masachik a tried to snatch back his smartphone, Yuki turned 90 degrees with difficulty and took a kneeling position facing Masachika's stomach.

"Don't say that~, even Aniki is looking forward to it, right? Alya-san's appearance and Masha-san in their swimsuits~♡"

"Don't write the word "○" on the thigh!?"

"Too bad! It's "φ" not "⊖"!"

"I don't really care!"

"Hmm~? You don't really care~? Come on, don't be so stubborn... You really look forward to it when you think of the two of them in their swimsuits, don't you?"

"No, I really don't care that much...I mean, seriously, I'm not really looking forward to it, you know?"

"Fumu, it looks like your crotch doesn't stand out, guhaaaa-!?"

Yuki was hit on the temple with an elbow blow and groaned in pain on the tatami mat. While sitting in front of the table, Kyotaro was impressed by the scene

and then suddenly thought.

(No, aren't they... too close?)

Rather than looking like close friends, their conversation sounded like one of a "baka-couple". Overhearing the conversation that seemed to show their intimacy made Kyotarou want to comment "Eh, you two are dating, huh?" with a flat face.

(TN: 😐📸)

(No, no, it can't be true. It's not like in the manga anyway...)

How could that kind of thing happen to my children?While shaking his head, Kyotarou casually opened his mouth to remove the thought.

"By the way, do you guys have a significant other?"

In response to Kyotaro's question, Masachika looked at him with a suspicious look, and Yuki looked up slightly while holding her head.

"I still don't have one... Didn't I say that last time?"

"I still don't have one~. Besides, I have no intention of getting a boyfriend."

(Hmmm~~?)

No, well, he had expected it. Because he often exchanged messages with both of them, and they had said that too. However, the only thing that bothered him was Yuki's comment that "she has no intention to find a boyfriend."

(I heard that even middle schoolers are used to having boyfriends nowadays...)

With Yuki's cuteness, I'm sure there are a lot of guys asking her out? No, of course I don't want her to date just any guy!)

While Kyotarou was thinking about this, Yuki, who had recovered, began to approach him in a crawling position. Then, she looked at Kyotarou with a smile

grin that looked similar to Tomohisa's.

"So, what about you?"

"What?"

"The conversation earlier! Did you meet a beautiful blonde woman? Diplomats often attend parties, right? Did you not get introduced to a nice young lady from the British government~?"

"That story, yes ... no, well, there are some beautiful people I met, anyway."

In fact, Kyotaro sometimes attended parties accompanied by his partner because of his position as a diplomat. In some cases, he would ask his female junior to act as his partner, but mostly he attends alone. On such occasions, it was not unusual for someone to tell him something like, "Oh, are you single? Then how about my daughter?" However, Kyotaro took it as mere pleasantries and didn't take it seriously.

When he summarized all that, Yuki only replied "Hee~?" with a tone that was filled with doubt.

"Is that really just a pep talk~?"

"Of course. That guy's daughter is in her mid-twenties, you know? It's obvious that he was just joking."

Well, it's not like he had never been in a strange situation with that woman while drunk. Kyotarou suspected that it might be one of the "honey trap" tactics, given the fact that a major international conference was just around the corner. By the way, fortunately at that time, he was saved thanks to his junior, whom Kyotarou always asked to act as his partner, who rushed to the scene.

Afterwards, that junior of his warned him,

"Since Kuze-san is weak to alcohol, please be more careful with those kinds of people!"

Since then, that junior of his accompanied him more often than before as a countermeasure to the honey trap, but..... Kyotarou thought it was his younger and prettier junior who should be more wary of honey traps.

(Well, since she's a strict person and I'm sure that she wouldn't discuss sensitive information with others during her assignment...)

While thinking about that, he simply said, "No one wants a middle-aged man who has children," because it wasn't something he would talk to her daughter about. That was his true intention, and even if there was a woman who was interested in him, Kyotarou had no intention of remarrying. However, Yuki did not seem to be discouraged and continued to approach.

"In that case, how about a beautiful widow? Are there no beautiful widows who have children?"

"Eh~? Hmm~ well, I think there was one like that, a French diplomat I met at that conference..."

"There is, huh?!"

"A beautiful woman from France!"

Yuki's excited voice overlapped with Masachika's tsukkomi.

"No, well, it seems she also left her daughter in her country to work, too, you know, so we just chatted for a while, that's all and nothing more, okay?"

Kyotarou said this to calm down Yuki who was excited about something, but then Yuki suddenly narrowed her eyes.

"But, you said "there is", not "there was", right? Does that mean you're still having some kind of interaction with that woman?"

"Huh!? No..."

Kyotaro unconsciously held his breath at the suddenly sharp point of view. Then came another follow-up from his son who was sitting nearby.

"Isn't it possible that it's the person I sent the otaku stuff to about half a year ago?"

"!? Uh, y-yes, is that so?"

"Hmm? Ahh~~! That letter from back then!"

Kyotarou looked away for no reason because of his two children's correct guesses. In fact, the daughter of the French diplomat seemed to be fond of Japanese otaku culture, and she asked if she could get otaku goods of a certain kind of work through her mother.

The letter was written in awkward Japanese, exuding a trace of effort that was extraordinary. The diplomat's daughter's enthusiasm was so great that he could not refuse her request, and Kyotarou sent the request to Masachika.

In addition, the items were not too difficult to obtain in Japan, so Masachika accepted his father's acquaintance's request. Then, an enthusiastic message of thanks was conveyed through his father, so Masachika and Yuki still remember it too.

"Nufufu~ Dad, you can't lie to me, you know~? It turns out that Father is still interacting with that French diplomat~"

"No, I told you that's not the case. As a thank you, we're just been having dinner, okay? First of all, as representatives of our respective countries, we always try to find each other's true intentions--"

Kyotarou made that excuse, but Yuki's grin did not stop at all.

"Eh~ it doesn't matter, right~? Diplomats from different countries can fall in love with each other, right?"

"No, it's not forbidden, but..."

"No problem, right~? You can remarry a beautiful blonde and send your stepdaughter, a beautiful French girl, to this place for no particular reason, that's fine, isn't it? Onii-chan and the beautiful blonde girl who suddenly became his half-sister started living together within three seconds after their first meeting, right~?"

"Isn't that a light novel plot?!"

(TN: *I was going to say the same thing*)

Masachika took out a tsukkomi from behind to Yuki who was in otaku mode.

However, Yuki ignored him and urged Kyotarou to ask for more information.

"By the way, how old is the daughter of the French Diplomat?"

"Umm, if I'm not mistaken she once said she was 14 or 15 years old?"

"Hou~? In other words, a little sister, huh? I wonder if there will be a war between me and her?! Onii-chan, between me and her, who would you choose?!"

"Even if you say so, you will definitely get along with that girl, alright."

"And then, a fierce romantic comedy battle over Onii-chan between the blonde half-sister and the silver-haired classmate will begin!?"

"Don't start it."

"Hmm? Silver-haired classmate? Is she not the girl that you were talking about the other day, umm her name if I'm not mistaken..."

As Kyotarou groped his memory and muttered a little, the sliding door of the room suddenly opened with a bang. Looking in that direction, Tomohisa, who looked exhausted, stood with a sweet smile.

"You mean Kujou Alisa-san, right! What, have you made any progress? Hmm?"

Then, while saying the correct answer, he rushed into the room.

"No... because nothing happened as you expected."

Masachika looked away while grimacing in disgust at the curious gazes of his father and grandfather. But then, Yuki immediately revealed the gossip story.

"Onii-chan said he did his summer homework with that girl. At home, just together, for days!"

"Hoho~!"

"Hee~ you're not bad, huh."

"No, I told you that I only did my summer homework..."

While becoming increasingly fed up with the three people who were blatantly increasing their tension, Masachika reasoned that he wasn't doing anything out of the ordinary. However, his little sister wouldn't stop at that.

"That's the defendant's defense, but what's the reality? The last time I went to Onii-chan's room-

"Who are you calling the defendant?!"

Without caring about Masachika's tsukkomi, Yuki put her hand on the side of her mouth as if telling a secret, and leaned her body towards Kyotaro and Tomohisa. Then, after successfully attracting the interest of both of them, she then grinned and dropped a bombshell.

"I found Alya-san's silver hair on Onii-chan's bed! Kyaa~ I wonder what they were up to, huh~?! Are they studying the reproduction chapter~!?"

"Hoho~ that can't be ignored~? Hmm? Did you study hard? Did you fulfill your credits and graduate?"

"I didn't do that! Don't just jump to conclusions! It's disrespectful to Alya too!"

Masachika refuted Tomohisa's vulgar remarks. Yuki then placed her hand on his shoulder with a gentle face.

"I understand, really. Because Onii-chan is a cowardly virgin who doesn't have any guts, so you don't dare to touch Alya-san, right? Yup, I understand."

"Hmm? Are you asking for a fight, huh?"

"That's impossible. I'm on your side, aren't I? Therefore, I will help you to get closer to Alya-san at the upcoming training camp camp, okay?"

"You interfere too much, you know"

"For the time being, which would you prefer, Alya-san's swimsuit getting washed away by the waves or the two of you stranded on an uninhabited island?"

"What kind of idiot are you? Of course I'll choose both."

"Okay, then, I'll get Alya-san's swimsuit washed away, and then leave Onii-chan and the Chairman stranded on an uninhabited island, huh~~"

"Wait a minute. What's with that horrible situation?"

"Huh? Because I didn't say that Aniki and Alya-san would be stranded on the island..."

"Damn it, I didn't expect to fall into this rudimentary trap... No, where did the request for that come from?"

"There are requests among fujoshi. Then, there was a request from people who didn't want some bastard to get into the sight of girls frolicking in swimsuits."

(TN: *fujoshi = female yaoi fan*)

"Huh, so they mean me, huh?"

"So that's how it is. If Onii-chan wants to blend in too, you have to turn into a woman first, okay?"

(TN: *That's not possible. Yes I just said what I said, cope.*)

"That 'first' hurdle alone is very difficult."

"Don't worry. Even if you're just an ordinary guy at first, you'll become a beautiful girl when you take on a female form."

"Even if that's the case, how are you going to explain it to the other student council members?"

"Well, I guess I have no choice but to introduce you as my cousin, Kuze Masachika-chan*, right?"

(TN: *In the raws, the Kanji here is written different but it's still read as "Masachika"*)

"You have no intention of changing my name!"

"Don't worry! Because I'll call you Chika-neechan!"

Seeing Yuki trying to help his brother's love life while joking, Kyotarou felt his worries begin to dissipate.

(What the heck... I guess I did think about it too much.)

Thinking that these siblings were in an illicit love affair was a ridiculous and absurd fantasy. Kyotarou felt ashamed of himself for making such a malicious guess, even if only for a moment.

(The two of them are just very close siblings. Yeah, isn't that something adorable?)

While thinking back to that, Kyotarou warmly watched them together with Tomohisa... At the end of their sight, Yuki was hugging Masachika's back. Both their arms and legs were tightly entwined.

"Is something wrong?"

"No, for some reason... since I've already hugged father, so I thought I should hug Onii-chan too."

"Instead of hugging, it's like riding a piggyback... plus, you're heavy, you know?"

"Huh? Did you just tell a girl that she's heavy?"

"Did I say that?"

"You bastard!!!"

While shouting angrily, Yuki opened her mouth and bared her teeth, she then aimed for Masachika's neck...

"Bite bite"

"Don't bite, don't bite!"

"Hmm~ I think it's around rank A2~"

"Hmm! It feels so hard to comment on it... you can at least tear it up if it's F1 rank."

"There's no such thing as F1. It's not a car anyway."

"No, that's something I already knew. But most of the ones like this are usually F-ranked, right? Something like 'My sister teases me for having an unrivaled F rank in the school cafeteria'?"

(TN: I have no idea what these alphabets mean. I'm sorry. If someone knows please feel free to tell me)

"Well, it's more or less like that... wait a minute, did you say school cafeteria?"

"Ahh, that was just a subheading, and the main title is 'Reincarnation of Beef'."

"It's not like it's going to be eaten! What kind of work is that!"

"The main character reincarnates as a Minotaur in another world, cooks himself in the school cafeteria that was hit by a food shortage, and made the heroine take off her clothes while saying 'Yummi~!'"

"Don't think that you can get people to read it just by taking off pretty girls' clothes, okay?"

"Oh yeah, by the way, all the heroines are monster trolls."

"What a disgusting image!"

"What are you talking about? It's a touching work in which two different species understand each other through the joy of eating, a joy common to all living things."

"It would be touching if it didn't have the element of cannibalism."

"At the end of the story, when the main character gives his remaining right hand to the headmaster's granddaughter and says with a sad smile, 'Ah, I guess I can't cook anymore' you won't be able to hold back your tears, right?"

"Only psychopaths would read such a work."

"And in the end, the main character repays the sister who mocked her with the best dish ever."

"Isn't that the worst kind of revenge?!!! That's disgusting!"

"Well, since her sister is also both a Minotaur and a herbivore, she can't eat that dish."

"It's like throwing mud into the garbage with a bad aftertaste."

"How about that? Interesting, isn't it?"

"Yes, I'm so interested in the contents of your head that could think of such an idea."

Yuki shook Masachika's body with a series of incoherent babble and giggles. When he saw that, Kyotarou quickly turned his attention to the terrace with a smile on his face.

(Yup, aren't they too close?)

Inevitably, he thought of something like that.

Chapter 5 - Ideal and Reality

"I'm sorry for having you all gather here during the summer vacation."

The members of the student council currently gathered in the student council room during the summer vacation. When Touya apologized for holding a sudden meeting, the other assembled student council members shook their heads left and right as if they didn't mind too much. Masachika then opened his mouth to represent the others.

"No, well, I don't mind myself, but... is this about the issue of changing the uniform?"

"Hmm? Ahhh, no, because Chisaki and I will handle that...."

"Is the Chairman sure? If there's anything we can do, we'll help you, okay?"

"Thank you very much. But that business is really unnecessary. Instead, I would like to ask you guys for help with something...."

"Ask for help with what?"

Touya then looked around at all the members except Chisaki and asked while lowering his eyebrows slightly.

"Approximately... do you guys know about the Seven Mysteries that are currently popular at school?"

"The Seven Mysteries are mysteries that look like Hanako-san's ghost in the toilet or the model of a human body that moves on its own?"

"That's right. Well, although the contents are a little different, anyway..."

Having still not understood what Touya was talking about, Masachika looked at Alisa who was next to him. However, how could Alisa, whose circle of friends was smaller than Masachika, know something that Masachika did not. As the two of them exchanged confused glances, Yuki who was sitting across from them, raised her voice.

"I've heard of some of them. If I'm not mistaken 'The Shadowy Figure that was standing on the roof', 'The Upside Down Statue', and 'The red schoolgirl figure'...?"

"Suou already knows about those, huh? Indeed, the three things Suou mentioned earlier are included in the Seven Mysteries of this school."

"Hmm... somehow those are names I don't recognize."

"That's right. Whether it's the ghost of Hanako-san's restroom, the piano that plays by itself at night, or the stairs that multiply? That's not the kind of thing that's being talked about."

"Well, if someone is already a high school kid and hears ghost stories, they'll have a hard time responding... Anyway, what's the story behind these three mysteries?"

When Masachika asked this question with a wry smile, Yuki replied with a slightly mysterious smile.

"Are you sure you want to hear them? There are some pretty scary stories, you know."

"Uh, really? By the way, how scary is it?"

"It's as scary as a small screw falling near the microwave."

"That's really scary! Well, doesn't the meaning of scary become a bit different?"

"Fufu, I'm just kidding, really~"

While chuckling, Yuki started talking about the contents of the Seven Mysteries of Seirei Academy.

'The shadowy figure standing on the roof'. Occasionally, there was a black figure seen standing on the roof of the school building that was forbidden to enter. For some reason, the silhouette is unclear and its gender is unknown, but the students who witness it all feel a strong powerful gaze of the figure.

The 'Upside Down Statue'. At midnight, the left and right sides of the stone sculpture in the art room were turned upside down. Although that was the only phenomenon that occurred, there were eyewitness testimonies from several art members, and there is also photographic evidence of how the statue was turned over.

The 'red schoolgirl figure'. Inside the school building after school, some students met a female student who was suffering from a mysterious wound somewhere on her body. However, none of the students could remember the girl's face, but within a few days, they would be injured in the same area where the girl was injured.

"Hmm..."

After hearing Yuki's explanation, Masachika let out a response which showed he was not amused at all. Yuki smiled bitterly at this reaction, which she seemed to be very distrustful of.

"Looks like you're not too interested, huh?"

"No, after all... it's just hearsay, isn't it? Even if you say there is photographic evidence, these days students can edit photos easily."

"Well, I guess that you have a point."

Yuki seemed to share the same view as Masachika, she nodded her head and lightly shrugged her shoulders at the same time. From the very beginning, Yuki probably didn't believe in the Seven Mysteries either. It wasn't just the two of them, the other members were either smiling, looking expressionless, or disinterested. Except for one person.

"Uuuuu~... what's with that story...guh~, I don't dare to walk by myself around the school building after school anymore..."

"Uh, Masha-san?"

Maria embraced herself with both hands and trembled. There was no smile on her face, and the way she looked around anxiously showed that Maria was extremely frightened. Seeing the overreaction of her best friend, Chisaki who was sitting in front of her, called out to her with a wry smile.

"No, no, Masha, it's just a rumor, you know. So, don't be so scared..."

"Uuhh~, but the saying goes that you can't blame someone for something you don't suspect, right?"

"Eh? I didn't hear it wrong, did I? Isn't it 'there's no smoke if there's no fire'?"

"Haha, it seems like a waste of time to say something that isn't true. but the meaning itself almost says the same thing."

"Hmm?"

"Oh my, Masha! What kind of mistake are you saying..."

Maria blinked in confusion, and Alisa corrected her mistake with a look of embarrassment on her face. Turning her head towards her side, Masachika looked a little surprised at Chisaki and asked.

"Even so, Sarashina-senpai, aren't you afraid of ghosts?"

"Eh?... Not at all, really. Why is that?"

"I thought Sarashina-senpai was the type of person who would say 'Ghosts are scary because I can't hit them!'"

(TN: *Reasonable*)

Chisaki tilted her head with a look of astonishment as she uttered the sentence often uttered by muscle-brain type characters in the 2D world.

(TN: *2D as in Anime*)

"What are you talking about? Ghosts can still be hit, right?"

"Eh?"

"Ehh?"

"~~~~~Ehhhhh? ~~~~"

The gazes of the six people in the room were all focused on Chisaki at once. However, Chisaki gasped in shock as if she could not understand why she was being looked at like that.

"So Chief, what about the other four mysteries?"

"Oh, I want to hear them too."

"Oh yeah, another story..."

The six of them decided to pretend they hadn't heard anything. Because if they went any further, they would be looking into an abyss that was incomparable to the seven mysteries of the school. Yes, the fact that she could hit them meant that it wasn't a ghost, but something else similar, yup let's just say that it was that.

"Ummm, based on the stories I heard..."

Then Touya began to tell the other four mysteries.

'The sound of sobbing from the club building'. Well apparently in the club building, the sound of a woman sobbing can be heard from nowhere.

'Stairs that bring good luck'. If you pull a gacha on the stairs leading to the roof, you have a high chance of getting SSR.

(TN: Yo that's just based not scary. I want that irl.)

"Excuse me, I need to use the restroom for a moment."

"That's fine, but Masachika-kun, you need to leave your smartphone here, okay?"

"Ah, I won't need the restroom then."

"You're really honest, Kuze."

'A disembodied cat. Sometimes one can hear a cat meowing in the gymnasium next to the schoolyard. However, no one can actually see it.

'Crazy cherry blossoms behind the school building'. The cherry blossom tree growing behind the school building sometimes blooms crazily at night. If the flowers are white, good luck will come to the person who sees it; if it is red, bad luck will befall the one who sees it.

"And well, if you add up the ones Suou told me about, there are seven in total."

Touya closed his mouth after saying this, and Masachika massaged his eyebrows as if his head felt dizzy.

"Ummmm, well, it's useless to blame the Chairman, but... there are many things I want to comment on. I mean, the gacha is clearly a mystery that was made up in order to fulfill the "seven" mysteries, right?"

"Well, is that so?"

"A woman's voice... I think it could be just the sound of the wind blowing against the wall... Well, I'm a little worried about the sobbing part, anyway. And the cat's voice is just probably a cat that wandered in from somewhere else."

"Well, if you think about it normally, that's a reasonable explanation."

"Besides, are the cherry blossoms really going crazy? All of our school's cherry blossom trees were originally white..... The color difference depends on the variety, so how could the flowers bloom in different colors."

"It's true, though. ...that's why it's called the 'Seven Mysteries', isn't it?"

"Hmmm... even so, I think it's about the difference between white and pink depending on who's looking at it"

After giving such a negative opinion, Masachika realized that he sounded like he was complaining and cowering.

"I'm sorry, I've been saying such negative things."

"Oh that's okay, that kind of critical opinion is also important. So, don't worry about it."

"Thank you very much. So what does that have to do with the 'Seven Mysteries'?"

When asked, the look on Touya's face turned somewhat troubled and he crossed his arms.

"It has to do with that... Recently, it seems that there are many students who secretly sneak into the school building to find out about these Seven Mysteries, even though they have no business being there..."

"Haaa..."

"If it were students who came to the school for club activities only, there would be no problem... but unfortunately, there are some students who try to enter the locked roof, and there are even some students who sneak into the school in the middle of the night."

"Ehhhh~... even though we're already high schoolers, there are still people who do that kind of thing?"

Yuki nodded in agreement with Masachika who teased about it, and then she asked a question.

"Sneaking around in the middle of the night... Isn't that a violation of the rules? I don't think the school would just let it go... Where did the Chairman get that information?"

"Well... Actually, there seems to be live video footage of the event that has been posted on a SNS site... The student who saw it sent it to me directly the other day."

"Uwahhhh... how stupid~. There are people like that everywhere."

Depending on the case, the contents might be leaked to the general public and might cause an uproar, or even lead to exposing the people involved once the contributors were identified, which made not only Masachika, but also Alisa and Chisaki frown. Apparently, even in a prestigious school like the Academy of Seirei, there were some reckless people with low crisis management skills.

"Hmm, well, I immediately issued a stern warning personally to the person involved in that video. The video seems to have been deleted, so I guess there's no pressing the issue for now, but... I'm not sure if there are any other students who would do the same. It's a good thing that this time no teacher

has found out about it, but if any teacher does, I'm sure that they'll be punished."

"That's right. It's a good thing it's not a big deal."

Nodding at Yuki's words, Touya raised his tone of voice slightly.

"That's why. How about we, the student council, conduct an investigation on the Seven Mysteries to calm down this whole commotion?"

"Investigating... in other words, looking for the origin... and then quietly spreading the information that "It's all a hoax" and make the students lose interest?"

"That's exactly right, Suou. To be clear, it doesn't matter whether the evidence is fake or not. For example, for the sound of a cat meowing in the gymnasium, you can take a picture with a random cat you brought from somewhere else and say that the cat has been found. The purpose of this is not to reveal the true identity of the Seven of Mysteries, but to pretend that we have already solved it. Anyway, I want to end this Seven Mysteries boom as soon as possible."

(TN: Hyouka vibes except instead of being detectives they are being frauds. Speaking about Hyouka, it's a pretty good Light Novel. It's a shame that the author releases like 1 volume every 7 years though. It has an adaptation too.)

"Actually, some Kendo club members are already talking about it... Well, I don't think that they would trespass, but I'm still a little worried..."

Hearing Chisaki say so, Masachika nodded his head while thinking to himself, "No, it might be partly because Sarashina-senpai made a statement something like 'ghosts exist'...".

"Well understood. It's true that this is an issue in which responsibility should be given to the student council, given that we are in charge of the wellbeing of the student body."

The other members also verbally agreed with Masachika's words. Touya felt relieved because it seemed that no one was reluctant to cooperate.

"Thank you very much. I want you guys to investigate immediately... I'm sorry for putting the responsibility on you guys, but Chisaki and I are going to a meeting about the uniform changes..."

"I'm really sorry. Since it's already noon, I can't join you guys today....."

Touya and Chisaki lowered their eyebrows in apology, but the other members raised their voices expressing they didn't mind too much and persuaded the two of them not to worry about it.

"No, no, I don't mind at all, really. On the contrary, the uniform business that you two are handling is much more difficult. We've even been allowed to visit the Chairman's villa during the training camp, so this little matter is for us to handle." (Masachika)

"Well, there's no point in having so many people, so just leave this matter to us." (Alisa)

"We'll handle this matter, so please don't worry too much about it." (Yuki)

"As everyone has already said. I wish you both good luck." (Ayano)

"You guys are also doing your best there, huh? I-I too... even though I feel scared, I'll do my best!" (Masha)

Touya and Chisaki smiled at the words of encouragement they received. After that, they began to discuss the next step.

"Then, let's investigate separately... But half of the Seven Mysteries have to be investigated after dark, huh?"

"That's right... sorry, since Ayano and I have a curfew, so..."

"Ah, if that's the case, it'll just be me, Alya, and Masha who will do the investigation after dark...?"

"I don't mind."

"Y-Yes, fine. I understand."

"I'll ask the teacher for permission about it. Let's hide the fact that a student infiltrated the school, and pretend that we're investigating the Seven Mysteries because there are students who are worried about the rumors, and that we are trying to conclude them."

"That sounds good. Please help with the permission."

After some further discussion, the meeting ended. After a short break, they decided to conduct the actual investigation.

"Ah yes, Kuze-kun."

"Yes?"

During the break, each person either went to the restroom or to buy drinks, Masachika himself was about to go to the restroom when Chisaki stopped

him from behind. Then, Chisaki took out something from inside her bag and held it out to Masachika.

"I'll lend you this."

"What is this..."

The thing Chisaki lent him turned out to be... a juzu. This was a real juzu that was strangely made of a series of polished obsidian stones.

(TN: A juzu is Buddhist prayer beads)

(What does it mean to give this to me!?)

Masachika was stunned at the mysterious development of being lent a juzu by his senpai. Perhaps sensing Masachika's confusion, Chisaki added an explanation.

"Look, just in case the rumors are real. You just use this, okay?"

"Huh? What do you mean by 'real'?..... uh, don't tell me there's a real ghost? But, how do I use it..."

Does he need to hold it between his hands while reciting an exorcist prayer? Masachika imagined something like that as he thought of the exorcism scene performed by an exorcist monk in manga.

"The method, yes..."

Meanwhile, on the other hand, Chisaki looked a little confused and wrapped juzu around her right hand from the index finger to the little finger, similar to holding a brass knuckle.

"It's wrapped around like this, and then like this."

"...Hou."

Then, when she squeezed the juzu wrapped around her fingers and clenched her fist, she suddenly pointed her fist towards the sky.

"After that, this way!"

"Ho~"

In other words, violence. If you don't have time to chant, you can just punch. After all, muscles are the answer to everything.

"Oh, if it looks too difficult to approach, I suggest taking it apart and using it as finger bullets."

"Don't say it as if finger bullets are a mandatory technique. But yeah, I can shoot it, anyway. I'm an otaku after all."

"Oh, this as well. Please surround the girls with this 'Lianyang Lotus Sutra'."

(TN: Well known Buddhist scripture/text)

"This is obviously an item that can only be obtained in the final dungeon? I wonder if it's not a problem? Do I have sufficient equipment xp?"

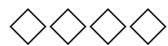
"Don't worry, there's no need to be so anxious. Even if you don't have enough, that thing will only suck up a little bit of your lifespan."

"If that's how it is~, then I can feel relieved!"

After uttering cheerfully, Masachika carefully accepted the juzu.

(By the way, why is it that this person can make such a sweet smile...)

As usual, Masachika was made to shudder by his Senpai and had no idea how serious her joke was, Masachika then decided that he would never wear it.



"Yoshi, alright. Then, let's start the investigation!"

"What are you talking about? It's not like you've finished investigating one of the Seven Mysteries."

Alisa's tsukkomi echoed up the stairs to the roof with a dumbfounded expression on her face. On the other hand, Masachika responded while turning around with a dangerous smile and dilated pupils.

"Hahahaha, what are you talking about? It's not like our investigation has just begun."

"No... I told you, instead of just now on this staircase, you..."

"Nothing happened, really? Yes. It's just an illusion that the 5,000 gems I collected by watching commercials every day melted in an instant, right?"

(TN: Bro really burned all his gacha tickets 💀. Reminds me of when I fucked up my confirmed pity in Genshin on a character I did not want.)

"Huh..."

Yuki smiled fearlessly beside Masachika, who was trying hard to escape from reality.

"Fufufu... the experiment is still not enough to say that the rumor is just a hoax. Don't you think so...?"

"No Yuki-sama, you shouldn't go that far."

Ayano calmly stopped Yuki, who was trying to top-up her gacha tickets with a smile and wide-open eyes. The two of them were both unlucky. Let alone SSR, they couldn't even get SR-level characters. Instead, their gacha pulls were much duller than usual. As soon as the investigation started, two people had their moods decreased by a completely different factor than fear. Seeing that situation, Maria, who normally did not play games, smiled problematically.

"Umm, are you okay? Want me to pet you to cheer you up?"

"You don't need to do that."

"Uh, is that okay?"

"You don't need to get provoked either!"

So, after spending a few minutes recovering his mental state, Masachika skillfully ignored Alisa's cold gaze, and pointed to the end of the stairs with vigor.

"Let's go to the roof then!"

"Why are you suddenly so excited..."

"No, of course I'll be excited. The school roof is a romantic place, isn't it?"

"What's romantic?"

Alisa furrowed her brows suspiciously, but Maria nodded deeply beside him.

"I totally understand~... the school rooftop is really nice, isn't it~. It sounds like something wonderful is going to happen, doesn't it?"

"Fufufu, if I'm not mistaken in shoujo manga, the protagonist and her friends often gather on the roof, right."

Maria looked excited and raised her voice beamingly, while Yuki laughed elegantly and showed a sense of anticipation as well. Ayano was already blending into the air.

"Well, there you have it. Also, the fact that the rooftop area is usually locked gives it the impression of being like a secret hangout."

"I see."

When Masachika turned his gaze to the roof, Alisa let out a light sigh as if to say, 'I can't keep up with you'.

"Well, whatever you say, but don't forget what we came here for, okay?"

"Yes, yes..."

While nodding at Alisa's suggestion, Masachika climbed the stairs and narrowed his eyes at the roof entrance.

"Hmmm~ There's no particular problem with the door. It looks like the knob and lock aren't broken. It's impossible to break in... right?"

"That's right~ I don't think it's possible for a student to get in there by himself."

After a cursory examination of the surrounding area, Masachika concluded that it would be impossible to enter without a key.

"Alright, now it's time for us to go to the roof!"

"Okee~ I'll open it then~."

Then, Maria opened the door with the key borrowed from the teachers' office, and the door leading to the roof was opened.

"Ohh~"

Masachika's voice was filled with anticipation as the roof area that he had never visited opened. While squinting at the dazzling sunlight, he then.....

"It's so dirty!"

His facial expression immediately contorted at the sight, which was not romantic at all and was actually unsightly.

Well, it wasn't surprising since the roof had never been cleaned, the area was covered in something black, bird droppings were everywhere, and there was a lot of green moss growing under the railings, so the area is not clean at all.

"Uwaaahh..."

"...It's pretty horrible."

"Uhhh... it's not as beautiful as in shoujo manga..."

The three people who had romantic fantasies about the rooftop were completely disappointed when their illusions were cruelly shattered. Alisa returned the conversation to its original purpose, after giving a disappointed look to Maria, who became very sad.

"So, what are we going to do? As a precautionary measure for the seven mysteries... I think the more rational and best explanation would be to explain that the figure who appeared here is just a human?"

"That's right, too... I think it would be best to make footprints near the fence on the side of the schoolyard and take a picture of it. Along with the photo, we can spread the information that a contractor entered the roof. As long as there are no students trying to enter this place, there is no other explanation, and conversely, no one can deny the existence of the contractor."

"Well, I guess that makes sense... or rather, it's all we can do right now."

Nodding at Yuki's suggestion, Masachika suddenly raised his face and realized that all four of them were looking at him.

"...Uh, me?"

"In terms of shoe size, aren't you the only one who fits?"

"In terms of weight, I think it's easier to make footprints if you're heavier. You must feel happy, right, to be able to enter the roof you yearn for."

The next two student council president candidates surprisingly teamed up to corner Masachika. Although they said reasonable things, it was clear that they did not want to set foot in that area.

"Ehh~... here, with my shoes?"

However, the same goes for Masachika. After all, who would want to walk to a dirty place and stomp their shoes to leave footprints? When Masachika was about to ask Maria for help to ask if there was another way, but

"Uhh~ playing with fireworks on the roof... Lunchtime on vinyl sheets... Hiding and secretly smoking..."

..... Apparently, he's still trying to catch up with his shattered dreams. After all, cigarettes are not good.

"...Ummm then, how about I do it?"

Once Ayano continued to stare at him after saying that, Masachika had no choice but to say,

"No, let me do it..."

Then, as he went down to the first floor to get his shoes, Masachika sweated under the summer sky and made footprints on the roof.

(I wonder if there is any student council work more pathetic than this...)

Looking down, he could see the athletic club sweating in the schoolyard. When he looked up, he saw birds flying freely in the sky. Oh, how nice it was. But he swore he would never forgive them for dirtying the roof with poop.

"Masachika-kun~? Why have your legs stopped~?"

(You're the same, you little brat, whose fault is it that I've done this?)

(Ahh!! whatever...)

The cruel reality has shattered his fantasy and made him do a miserable job. Masachika, who was frustrated by various things, spontaneously immediately executed the eleventh thing on the list of "Things I want to do on the school roof" After taking a deep breath, he ran towards the fence facing the schoolyard and shouted...

"To hell with youth, bakayarooooo!!!!

"The stupid one is you."

Masachika managed to carry it out, but was immediately silenced by the cold words of Alisa.

Chapter 6 - Warehouses and Locked Rooms

"Geez, you're so shy."

"What can I do? I want to try it once in a while..."

After finishing their work on the roof, Masachika and Alisa headed to the schoolyard. Their destination was the sports equipment warehouse.

Of the five remaining mysteries, "The disembodied cat" and "The sound of sobbing from the clubhouse" could be investigated during the daytime. They then decided to investigate these two places separately. Basically, they were divided by couples for the election campaign, Maria was asked to go to the club building, given the wide scope of the investigation.

"Impulsively shouting or something, it's not just endangering people, you know."

"...But yeah, I've adjusted it so that those below can't hear it, okay?"

While debating such things, they finally arrived at the sports equipment warehouse. When the heavy metal door was opened, dusty air rushed out, and they both reflexively frowned. The light coming in through the entrance clearly illuminated the dust flying in the air, and it was very bad for one's health.

"Uwaahh... do we have to check inside this room?"

"...Complaining is also pointless. Let's quickly start the investigation."

Once inside, the first thing they needed to do was listen carefully for whether they could hear any meowing sounds or not.

"..."

"..."

—— Nyan

"Just now, I heard something!"

"Uh, from which direction?"

"Please be quiet first!"

Masachika approached Alisa and tried to listen along...

"Yosh~ just a little bit more!"

"Let's get your spirit out!"

"""Ohh!"""

(TN: Sounds from the sports club outside)

"Fuuu, it's so noisy outside! Masachika-kun, please close the door!"

"O-Okay."

Masachika closed the heavy sliding door at the behest of an exasperated Alisa.

Soon, the air inside the warehouse was cut from the air outside and became stuffy making the warehouse even hotter again. But they endured for a while and listened carefully.

"..."

"..."

However, despite having focused all their attention on their hearing for about 20 seconds, Masachika and Alisa could only hear the sound of the athletic club's activities. In the end, Alisa exclaimed in dissatisfaction.

"Now I can't hear it anymore... haaah, even though I'm sure that I heard it earlier"

"Never mind, let's just open the door first... look, it's hot and dark in here, right?"

While calming and persuading Alisa, Masachika tried to open the sliding door... *Bruuk*!

"Hmm?"

The door didn't move at all and stopped when there was a slight gap between the doors.

"Is something wrong?"

"Well, actually..."

While thinking that it was impossible, Masachika grabbed the handle with both hands and pulled with all his might, but the door still wouldn't open.

"Uh yeah, seriously..."

"...Unfortunately, that's the way it is."

Masachika ceded his place to Alisa, who approached him with an impatient and half-suspicious gaze.

However, the door still wouldn't open even if it was someone else opening.

At that moment, Masachika's smartphone vibrated lightly. When he took it out of his pocket and looked at it, he immediately saw a message from Yuki. [Hello~ back again with Yuki-chan, a very understanding little sister.]

Masachika spontaneously wanted to throw his smartphone. But he held back his will and waited for the next message to come in. Soon after, the next message came.

[For the sake of cowardly Onii-chan who dared not do anything about Alya-san despite bringing her home so many times, I've prepared a wonderful special event for you.]

..... No, they're already doing something similar to their date the other day.

Although his memory was lost halfway through.

However, Yuki shouldn't have known that, so Masachika didn't comment anything.

[That's right, it's a mix of a good old-fashioned romantic comedy cliché scene called "You can't get out of the gymnasium warehouse before cumming---"]

(TN: I beg your pardon? 😅)

"To hell with it!"

After reading that far, Masachika mercilessly threw his smartphone.

Masachika's smartphone was buried inside the large blue mat used for the high jump landings. At the same time, Alisa turned around and her shoulders jerked, startled as she suddenly heard a strange sound.

"Wh-What? What's wrong with you?"

"...No, it's nothing. I'm just a little upset about not being able to contact Yuki."

Actually, Masachika could contact her. However, contacting the culprit wouldn't help at all. Now that I think about it, the cat's voice that Alisa heard was also quite suspicious. It would be more reasonable to assume that the cat's voice was just Yuki's subterfuge being played through her smartphone.

It was all in order to get Masachika and Alisa to close the door of the gymnasium. Then, she could just lock them both in from the outside.

(Imouto yoooooooooooo!!!)

Masachika gritted his teeth to keep his voice down and shouted only in his. In front of him, a message came into his smartphone.

[Don't worry. I'll release you guys at the right time so you don't get heatstroke.]

(That doesn't help much anyway!)

[So, in the meantime, try to pet or groom one of her oppai. If you want to, you can go too far with the petting, right?"]

(How could I possibly do that!!)

(TN: I mean he does eventually (This story takes place before the training camp).)

Exhaling a rough, ragged breath between clenched teeth, Masachika took back his smartphone. Then Alisa raised her voice while shaking her head left and right.

"...It's useless, I can't contact Masha."

".....That's it."

It was just as Masachika had expected.

There was a possibility Yuki had handled that too. It was possible that she also notified the athletic club outside by saying, "There might be a little commotion in the warehouse, but please don't think too much about it~"
So, Masachika's chosen course of action was...

"...Well, I already sent a message to the student council group. After all, someone will definitely come here after the investigation in other places is over, and we just need to wait until then."

He could not help but say that.

"Waiting... Can't we just shout for help from outside?"

"Better not do that. There's a chance that they won't be able to hear it, and it will make you thirsty and hot."

"Hmmp....."

The fact that there was no way to refill her thirst made Alisa close her mouth. After that, she silently pondered for about ten seconds if she could escape, but she shrugged her shoulders in resignation at not being able to think of anything.

"...Then, let's go find the cat until help arrives."

"No, you're really diligent."

"What the hell? It's not like that's what we came here for in the first place, and I actually heard the cat's voice earlier."

"Ummmm, well... that's just because..."

In Masachika's opinion, there was a possibility that the cat's voice was the work of Yuki. Since he could not provide any evidence or basis for his guess, Masachika could only nod his head ambiguously. Perhaps taking this as affirmation, Alisa pressed the switch next to the door and tried to turn on the fluorescent light, but

"...Ara?"

"Oh yeah, if I'm not mistaken the lighting here is turned off, huh..."

One of the two fluorescent lights mounted on the ceiling were completely extinguished, and the other only emitted a dim, bright orange-colored light, which barely did not function as illumination.

Now that the door was closed, the only decent source of light was the small window placed high on the wall. The illumination was also largely obstructed by the piles of various equipment piled up in front of it.

Thanks to that, they could still at least see each other, but the area near the warehouse wall melted into darkness.

".... Look, this room is too dark to look for cats. So we'd better be quiet okay?"

"Who says we can't? We can still use the flashlight on our smartphones. Let's find the cat quickly."

"Ehhh~..."

Alisa started looking for the cat like a model student, despite Masachika's attempts to persuade her.

At this point, Masachika couldn't stay silent and was forced to start the search. Somehow they split up and searched left and right. After searching for the cat for about five minutes,

"It's hot!"

Masachika couldn't bear to take off his blazer because of the hot air in the warehouse, where he could neither find nor hear the cat meow. He also took off his tie, hooked it on a nearby basket for balls, and grabbed the chest area of his shirt to fan himself.

"Haaa... although the Chairman is working on it, we still have to wait for the summer uniforms to be replaced, huh?..."

"...That's right, the current uniforms are definitely too hot."

Masachika glanced at her as Alisa replied approvingly to his ramblings, which he did not really expect a response from her. Then, Alisa was about to take off her blazer like Masachika.

She also took off her ribbon tie, unbuttoned the shoulder straps of her jumper skirt, and just removed half of her upper body, then exhaled lightly and fanned her face with her hands.

(Uuuhh.....)

Seeing that voluptuous figure made Masachika inevitably remember...the hypnosis incident that happened in the student council room about a month ago, and he felt awkward.

Whether it was because she could feel Masachika's gaze or some other cause, at the moment when their gazes met, Alisa furrowed her brows and she quickly turned her upper body as if to protect her own

"Hey... don't look over here."

"O-Ohh, sorry..."

No, she wasn't wearing any strange clothes. If you looked at the clothes alone, the uniform was not much different from a typical school summer uniform. But somehow she strangely looked very erotic even though she only took off her blazer.

(Geez~ at this rate, I'd rather concentrate on finding the cat.)

Deciding that in his heart, Masachika started his search again... but ...

"...Still can't find anything, huh."

Masachika had searched here and there, opening and closing the various sports equipment in the warehouse, but he still couldn't find the cat.

However, since the name of the seven mysteries was "disembodied cat", it was only natural that he was could not find it easily.

"The only area left is the top, huh...?"

Masachika looked up at the shelf, which was about the height of his own head, and frowned.

There were small cone-shaped tools, wheels with bent spokes, and cardboard boxes with unknown contents... ... in other words, there were many things that were not usually used, and unpacking just one of them seemed to be a very troublesome task.

(... Besides, since we will also be conducting the investigation at night, it's not like we could do it with three people at that time?)

I shouldn't bother doing it in a hot and humid atmosphere like this... while thinking so, Masachika turned to look at Alisa to ask her opinion too.

"Hey, Al-...."

Then, he swallowed back his words when he saw Alisa who was crawling under the obstacle bars placed collectively on the wall, exploring the depths of something.

Alisa's butt trembled and swayed with the sound of the bars clashing against each other. It swayed to the right and left... to the point of fluttering the hem of her skirt. Probably because her upper body was bent over so that her back wouldn't hit the crossbar Masachika could see her panties, which he couldn't in normal circumstances.

(... Seriously, here?)

Masachika's mouth frowned at the unexpected opportunity to catch a glimpse of Alisa's panties.

Inside the room filled with stale air, he felt that Alisa's buttocks were slightly quivering as it swayed, as if inviting him to join in.

How exciting it was to see sweat dripping down her plump, smooth white thighs, which appeared faintly in the darkness. Ahh, he must see with his own eyes himself where the sweat came from--

"...Uhukksph!"

While letting out a sound that sounded like a loud cough, Masachika punched his forehead and pushed away his perverted, evil thoughts. Then, while exhaling, he tried to cool down his brain that was boiling from the heat.

(C-Calm down... catching a glimpse of a girl's butt is just a lewd lucky event that was unintentional. When you try to look at it directly, it's no longer called catching a glimpse! That's already peeping!)

Masachika reprimanded himself with an argument that might make one wonder if that was the case. Pressing his fist to his forehead, Masachika glared at Alisa's skirt.

(No matter how big the gap is, taking advantage of it to peek at it is an outrageous act! Doing so could destroy the trust I have with Alya... so I would never do that! Never... but still, her legs are really smooth)

The thighs that are tightened by her knee socks, and the way they rub against each other was strangely sexy. Inevitably Masachika's gaze tried to follow how the plump thighs collided with each other and changed shape.

(... yup, it's not called peeping. In other words, its still considered safe, right?)

Masachika looked at Alisa's legs as if in a daze and hurriedly hit his forehead again with his fist. At that moment, the smartphone in his hand shook, and made Masachika gasp in surprise. His reaction was as if he had been poked and woken up when caught sleeping in class.

Masachika took out his smartphone as his eyes wandered here and there for no reason, and realized that he had received another message from Yuki.

[When Alya-san is on all fours, the curve of her buttocks is clearly visible to the point of making the center of your crotch preyed upon--]

While reading it that far, Masachika quietly turned off the screen of his smartphone. Then, feeling very awkward and embarrassed, he looked around to see if his little sister was watching him from somewhere...

"...Hy-Hyaa!"

Masachika reflexively turned around at the sudden shout. When he turned around, he saw Alisa, who in an attempt to crawl out, had hit the bar by accident.

Alisa's skirt fluttered conspicuously as she retreated hastily

"!!!?"

Barely getting back the event of catching a glimpse of a girl's butt, Masachika quickly looked up. However, Alisa didn't seem to care about any of that, and hurriedly ran towards him with a shuddering expression, then embraced Masachika's arms with both hands.

"Wh-What? What's wrong!?"

"R-Rat, there's a rat...!"

"Huh? A rat..?"

Masachika raised his eyebrows and looked at Alisa, who looked up and stared into his eyes.

There, Alisa seemed to realize that she was now holding on to Masachika, and after looking at her own hands in shock for a moment, hurriedly let go.

Then, as she hugged herself with her hands to stifle the feeling of goosebumps, she pointed behind the obstacle bars with an expression of fear and disgust.

"Umm, back there... there seems to be a rat carcass..."

"...Ueehh, seriously?"

Masachika frowned at the word that gave a physiological disgust that was called a small animal carcass. However, Alisa glanced at him with a look of "You should check it out too" and reluctantly he picked up his smartphone and walked towards the obstacle course equipment.

"Ups..."

He then crawled over, tucked his body under the obstacle course, and slowly illuminated the wall. Then.....

"Ughh... !!"

On the right side, Masachika saw it behind the large rope used for tug-of-war and shouted. He hurriedly pulled himself out from underneath the obstacle bars and returned near Alisa's feet.

"...it's there, isn't it."

"Yes. I mean, it's there. Ughh~ so disgusting."

Masachika himself had never seen a rat. Because he had never seen one, he had a vague impression that rats were filthy creatures... but when he saw one that had turned into a carcass, he couldn't help but feel disgusted.

"Ughh~~ ... but isn't this proof the cat really existed? I feel that the mouse carcass had bite marks on it..."

"T-That's true too... but we can't just take a photo of it and treat it as evidence, right?"

"Of course. Even with a mosaic, that photo would cause an uproar..... and I'm sure that no one would want to go near the sports equipment warehouse."

(TN: Mosaic is pixelated censorship, with the other 2 censorships being a few horizontal lines and complete whiteout, if you understand what I mean. (ﾟ\ )

They both shuddered as they rubbed their arms. It was already a completely different terrifying experience from the seven mysteries.

Due to the goosebump sensation that ran up his spine and the unpleasant perspiration oozing out from all over his body, Masachika walked quickly towards where his blazer was hanging. He then unbuttoned his shirt and took it off.

"Ughhh ~~ so disgusting! I'm dripping with sweat!"

Then, when Masachika was wearing only his undershirt, he took out his handkerchief from his pants pocket and wiped the sweat from his neck to his chest.

"Hey...! Don't suddenly take off your clothes like that!"

"Huh?"

Alisa then let out a panicked voice, and Masachika turned around while wiping the sweat from on his face. Then, Alisa's anxious gaze went everywhere in the darkness.

"No, it's not like I'm going to take off more than this, okay? Besides, it won't be too visible, right."

"Although I can't see it, but that's not the case, you know!"

"No, no, at the training camp we'll be wearing swimsuits, right? In other words, my upper body will be naked..."

"Y-You know what, if you suddenly take off your clothes in a closed room like this, any girl would definitely feel wary!"

Masachika immediately fell silent when he heard Alisa's words.

It was true, if a guy suddenly started taking off his clothes when they were alone in a closed room, any girl would feel threatened. Even if it was with someone they knew.

"...I guess there's some truth to that. Sorry, I'm not being sensitive at all."

"Uh, y-yes... Well, it's fine anyway..."

Alisa awkwardly answered Masachika, who honestly bowed his head. Then she continued by mumbling in Russian.

{My heart is on edge, you know...?}

(In the sense of being alert, right?)

His brain immediately made a practical interpretation and Masachika brilliantly ignored the mumbling. For a few seconds, a strange and indescribable atmosphere filled the sports equipment warehouse. However, Masachika suddenly grinned and said something to change the atmosphere.

"Well, if it was said by a weak and innocent girl, it wouldn't matter, but if it was Alya says it, it feels a bit strange~"

"Huh? What does that mean?!"

"After all, you have a criminal record of knocking a guy unconscious in his room..."

"Ah, that's just because..."

Alisa stammered as she recalled what happened in Masachika's room a few days ago. After a few seconds of her gaze wandering restlessly, Alisa glared at Masachika.

"That's because you did something to ruin the atmosphere!"

"Hmm? Did I?"

"Yes!"

With a sharp jerk, she turned away as if to imply that this conversation was over. Masachika smiled wryly as he said "Well, I'll just take that this time" at the way Alisa ended the conversation forcefully, but....



{If only the atmosphere was nicer... I would too...}

The sudden murmur of Russian made his smile harden.

(Oops? What does that mean?)

I'll also... What does that mean? If Masachika hadn't done something to ruin the atmosphere, what would have happened next? In the darkness, Alisa's expression could not be seen clearly. Although he couldn't see it, judging by her habit of playing with the ends of her hair, Maschika believed that Alisa must be...

"Nyaan"

"!?"

At that moment, they turned around as if being played by the sound of a cat meow that suddenly came from the upper right area. Then, at the pile of cardboard boxes loaded on the shelf. They saw a black cat there.

"..."

"..."

Suddenly confronted with the cat, Masachika and Alisa stared at the cat without a sound. It seemed like this was an accidental encounter for the cat as well, and it was staring at the two of them as if to say, "There's something here!" . They then continued to stare at each other for a few seconds.

Masachika, who realized first, was about to raise his smartphone to take a picture of the cat, but the cat suddenly bent down in front of him. Then, half a

second when Masachika was stopped by a cat that seemed ready for a battle, the cat turned away and disappeared into the back of the cardboard box.

"Ah!"

After letting out a disappointed sound, Masachika rushed towards the place where the cat had disappeared. Then, as he moved the cardboard box where the cat had been hiding, a dazzling light entered his field of vision and reflexively squinted.

"...what is this?"

There, behind the square hole in the wall.... There was something that looked like a rain cover with a downward opening. When jumping lightly, one can see the ground outside through that hole.

"Hmm~? In other words, is this the hole where the ventilation fan used to be...?"

Somehow, that's what Masachika felt. On closer inspection, there were traces of something stuck to the edge of the hole.

"Does that mean she goes in and out of here?"

"Yes, it seems so..."

When he casually turned to Alisa, who came next to him... Masachika was stunned for a few seconds, and then quietly started forward back. The reason why he was acting like that was because

(Uwaaaahhhhhh her uniform is really transparent)

In other words, that was the problem. Alisa's upper body was illuminated by the light that came in through the hole. The yellow lace could be clearly seen through her clothes that were wet, soaked with hot sweat and cold with fear. In addition, the shirt was completely clung to her skin and displayed incredible curves. Those curves were too stimulating for a pubescent teenage boy.

(TN: *There's a colored illustration of this on the illustration page*)

(After trying to avoid the incident of catching a glimpse of her button-down, I unexpectedly experienced a 'seeing her bra through her transparent clothes' event)

While Masachika was doing some kind of nonsense monologue about the unexpected situation, Alisa, who seemed oblivious to Masachika's agitation, let out a sigh of relief when a light breeze blew through the hole.

"Ahh, it feels a little cool."

Masachika actually felt that his body was getting hotter. His head almost felt like boiling again at such an unexpected stroke of luck, but for the time being, he quietly put the cardboard back to avoid the poisonous sight in his eyes.

Then, while pretending not to notice Alisa's gaze, which seemed to be conveying "Even though the air is getting cooler, why did you suddenly close it", Masachika turned his face away and began to put the various objects that he had moved back into place.

"...well, since we've already found the culprit of the cat's meowing sound... if we close the hole there, the cat definitely won't be able to get in and out as it pleases anymore."

"That's right."

Alisa began to clean up as well while tilting her head at Masachika, who suddenly lowered his tone of voice. Then, when they were almost done cleaning up most of the mess over the next few minutes, they could hear Yuki's voice from outside.

"Masachika-kun, Alya-san? Ara? Why is the key..."

After hearing that voice, which could only be described as bland from Masachika's point of view, there was the sound of the door being opened with a clank. Masachika shrugged his shoulders as he muttered "Yare~, yare~, finally got out too" ... but immediately realized that it was a bad idea.

(Wait a minute... it's going to be a disaster if we let Alya out in this state!)

Although the possibility of this happening was very small, if there were male students who were near them while she was out, it would really be an accident, and even if it wasn't, Yuki would definitely tease Masachika if she saw her.

She would say something like, "Hmm? So, how does it feel to be with Alya-san whose clothes are almost transparent?" Masachika was sure that Yuki would tease him about that!

(Wh-What should I do!? I have to do something to hide Alya... but how? First of all, how do I tell her, but if I don't tell her, the conversation can't continue peacefully!... ahhh time is running out!!)

After two seconds of racking his brain, Masachika grabbed his own blazer up close and gently placed it on Alisa from behind.

"What?"

He then smiled softly and turned to Alisa, who was staring at him with a doubtful expression. Alisa's gaze widened while her shoulders jerked lightly to the loving eyes that were suddenly fixed on her.

The two of them exchanged glances from a close distance. It was so close that they could feel each other's breath. The scene looked like a very romantic scene where a guy puts his jacket on a wet girl as she takes shelter from the rain. The arm around her shoulders gave Alisa the illusion that she was being hugged from behind. Under normal circumstances, she might have felt that she was in danger. However, Alisa did not move at all.

She just opened her eyes and grabbed Masachika's blazer tightly. While squinting her eyes gently at Alisa, Masachika spoke to her in a calm tone.

"Ojou-san... your bra can be seen you know?-- guuhhaa!?"

Then he was knocked off his feet by a hard slap to the face

"W-W-W-W-Why didn't you say so earlier, you idiot!!!"

Yuki happened to open the door as Alisa was screaming mixed with shrieks. She then saw Masachika's whereabouts buried in the high jump mat and blinked her eyes.

"Ummm, this--"

"Hmmpf!"

Although Yuki raised her voice to dispel her doubts, Alisa just snorted while continuing to approach her with rough steps, and she hurriedly stepped aside to make way for her. Then, after a few seconds of watching her back, which was getting further away from the school building, Yuki suddenly raised her voice confidently.

"Ahh, her shirt is see-through, huh?"

"Seriously, what's with that sharp instinct of yours?"

"Fufu, I can detect the waves of romantic comedies from a mile away..."

"Seriously, you?..."

Masachika commented in a dumbfounded voice, and then lifted himself up from the mattress. Then, earlier his grinning sister said something, Masachika took the initiative and opened his mouth.

"We managed to discover the true identity of the "Intangible Cat". And we have identified its entry point, you know."

"...Seriously? Where?"

Accompanied by a seemingly interested Yuki, Masachika exited the warehouse and traveled around to the back side of the gymnasium.

"Look, over there. At first glance it looks like an ordinary ventilation hole, but it's actually a hole used by a ventilation fan that allows access to the inside."

"Hmm~~..."

When Masachika said that while pointing at the rain cover attached to the wall, Yuki looked around the wall, Yuki looked around and thought deeply... but she suddenly realized something and stopped moving.

"Hmm? What's wrong?"

"...Hey, did you really see directly that the cat went in and out from there?"

"Hmm? Well... I didn't actually see it directly, but based on the traces, I think the cat must have gone in and out that way... besides, there's no other place the cat could have entered."

After Masachika said that, Yuki slowly raised her face and... asked with a serious expression.

"How?"

"Ehh?"

"How did the cat get in through there?"

After being told that, Masachika took another look at the back of the gymnasium and realized that the wall was completely flat and that there was nothing to use as a foothold. The distance from the ground to the ventilation shaft was also about more than one and a half meters.

"Right...."

Masachika instantly felt a chill run down his spine as he realized this fact. Just as he was thinking, "Perhaps, this is a scary story if one understands what it means", Masachika and Yuki heard a faint sound coming from the slope to their left, and turned around at the same time.

"Ah!"

Then there was the black cat that Masachika had seen earlier. The cat was staring at them from the grass on the slope with eyes that seemed to say, "What's the matter with you guys?"

They looked at each other for a few seconds. Masachika quickly pointed his smartphone camera to capture it this time. Right after he started recording the video, the cat turned its attention towards the gymnasium and started running at high speed.

The cat ran like a cheetah chasing a wolf, and jumped near the sports equipment warehouse area. The cat then attached itself to the surface of the wall and galloped up the wall normally, like a ninja.

""...That cat is really good!""

By the way, the video that was recorded at the time immediately went viral on social media later on.

Chapter 7 - Constellations and Kneeling

"...Umm, then, shall we start the investigation?"

It was around 7pm, when the club activities at school had ended. Inside the student council room, Masachika reluctantly looked to his left and right after finishing an early dinner with food bought at the convenience store.

"O-Ohh~~...."

"Let's get this over with as quickly as possible."

With an obviously trembling waist, Maria raised her fist. While Alisa, with her arms crossed while wearing an indifferent expression, tapped her fingers restlessly. Before departure, Masachika was already overwhelmed with anxiety.

"Umm Masha-san, are you okay? Or rather, you don't look fine"

"E-Ehh~~? That's not true, really? I'll do my best!"

With a subtle twitch in her eyes, Maria pursed her lips and tightly clenched both hands. Her appearance was full of enthusiasm, looking a little adorable, but...

"The moment you tried to say you were fine made it clear that you were not okay..."

That statement alone was an admission that she was scared. In response to that attitude Masachika could only say, "Please don't push yourself too hard," and turned his attention to Alisa on the other side.

"So, is Alya herself feeling okay?"

"I'm fine, really? Unlike Masha, I'm not a scared person."

(TN: Wasn't there that one chapter in V3 or V4 where she got scared after watching a horror documentary that she had to call Masachika?)

Alisa raised one eyebrow hesitantly and looked at Maria slightly dumbfounded But was it just Masachika's imagination if she was just pretending to be calm. However, there was no point in bringing that up now, so Masachika sighed and opened the student council room door.

Then the motion sensor reacted and the lights in the hallway started to turn on. Shrugging his shoulders, Masachika turned his head to look back.

"Look, Masha-san. The lights are coming on. It's still not too dark outside, really. So you're not too scared, right?"

"Yes."

Nodding to Masachika's words, Maria timidly went out into the hallway. With a slightly dumbfounded expression on her face, Alisa also went into the hallway and closed the student council room door.

"Then, let's go to the art room first. After that, we can go around the school building to look for the whereabouts of the "red schoolgirl"."

"A-Alright..."

"Yes, let's do that."

After confirming that they nodded, Masachika continued and....

"Ah, wait a minute!"

..... But suddenly, his right hand was grabbed from behind. When he turned around, Masachika saw Maria who was glancing at the window with a face that already looked like she was about to cry.

"Don't go first, I'll be scared, you know~~"

"...no, that's why Masha-san was able to wait for us in the student council room earlier."

"If I'm alone, I'll definitely get attacked!"

"What!? School ghost stories are not jumpscare horror stories, you know!?"

Maria shouted in an uncharacteristically fast voice, and Masachika told her that she must have mistaken it for a horror story about being chased by a serial killer. But Maria didn't believe him at all and repeatedly glanced toward the window. The slender hand holding Masachika was also visibly trembling with fear.

"I know that this kind of thing usually comes out of the blue with a bang from outside, right?"

"No, this is just an ordinary ghost story, not the type of story with sudden attacks from outside haaa, is this enough?"

Sighing, Masachika moved to a position next to Maria, guarding her from the window area. Then Alisa also moved to the opposite side of Maria while sighing.

"...Here. Now you don't have to worry about anything coming out from inside the classroom, right? Even though nothing came out, anyway."

"Y-yes... thank you, Alya-chan."

While nodding awkwardly, Maria also took Alisa's left hand. Although she raised her eyebrows for a moment, when her gaze met with Masachika's eyes above Maria's head, Alisa gave up and simply shrugged her shoulders.

Maria's hands were held by Masachika and Alisa from both sides. The composition really resembles the sight of a parent and child, as the person in the middle was shorter than those on both her sides. But in reality, the person in the center was the oldest.

"This kind of thing too... can be included in the clichéd scene of a horror movie, when a person is holding hands with both sides, and without realizing that the person being held has been replaced by something else... Ah, sorry."

As soon as Masachika muttered that in a low voice, Maria looked at him with an unbelievable look in her eyes and he immediately apologized to her. However, Maria suddenly looked surprised and turned to Alisa quickly. Then, she spoke to her with a terrified expression.

"Alya-chan...? You're the real Alya-chan, right?"

"Yes. Don't take Masachika-kun's jokes seriously."

Maria suddenly spoke in Russian to Alisa, who looked completely dumbfounded.

{If so, where is the most prominent mole on your body? } (Masha)

{... What's the deal with that question?} (Alya)

{It doesn't matter, Kuze-kun won't understand it anyway} (Masha)

(TN: Maria knows he does but is continuing anyway. Dahm she really did Alya dirty)

No, he understands. He completely understood the conversation between the two of them, but Alisa took a quick glance at Masachika and looked away with a snort, she then said...

{..... on the right leg thigh} (Alya)

(.....Hou~)

No, what the heck are they talking about? At best, Masachika could only mutter in her heart "it turns out Alya has a mole too, huh...".

However... inevitably his gaze always fell on the thighs hidden under her skirt. At the same time, he recalled a scene in the sports equipment warehouse that happened during the day and tried to verify in his brain, "I wonder, is there really a mole there?".

"Yup! There's no mistaking it, you're the real Alya-chan!"

However, when Maria suddenly turned her head towards him, Masachika hurriedly raised his face. To be honest, he was not sure if he managed to turn his face away in time, but Maria didn't seem to care much and tilted her head with a groan.

"In that case, now it's Kuze-kun's turn....."

After a few seconds of thinking. Maria covered her mouth with both hands with a shocked expression on her face.

"Wh-What should I do! I can't think of a question that can distinguish whether this Kuze-kun is real or fake!"

"Ahh... yes."

"What about Alya-chan? Are you able to come up with good questions to distinguish between real or fake!?"

"Ehh...?"

Alisa frowned with an exasperated expression, but she looked slightly at Maria's overly desperate appearance. Then, she looked at Masachika with a mischievous smile on her mouth as if she had just thought of something.

"Well then... Are you able to tell me what you really meant when you offered to be my partner in the election campaign?"

"H-Hah, what's with that question?"

"What's wrong? If you're the real Masachika-kun, you should remember it, right?"

Masachika's cheeks twitched at Alisa's blatantly grinning face.

(Yeah, I do vaguely remember it... I remember that I said something crazy and super embarrassing! And you want me to rephrase that sentence right here!?)

When Alisa demanded a horrifyingly humiliating answer under the pretext of identifying his identity, Masachika tried to demand a change in the question but after seeing Maria's teary-eyed gaze, and gently keeping a distance from himself, he immediately shut up. When stared at with a look like "Eh, that's not true, isn't it? It's a lie, isn't it?", he instinctively wanted to do something about it.

(Haaa... gee, I guess I have no other choice)

In this case, if you feel embarrassed about it, you're the one who loses.

(Because you asked for it yourself... so, don't regret it, okay? Feel this!)

Having made up her mind, Masachika made a serious face after clearing his throat and looked straight at Alisa as he said.

"If I'm not mistaken, I said, [I won't leave you alone anymore. From now on, I will support you]?"

"...More precisely, you said [I won't leave you alone again] [From now, I will stand by you and support you]"

"Uh, ah, that's right."

When Alisa corrected her with a dissatisfied expression, Masachika's face turned serious. Immediately afterward, he quickly blushed because of the embarrassment that was creeping into his heart.

(Uehh? Seriously? Uh, what the hell is she doing? Does she remember everything I say? This isn't embarrassing for her anymore!?)

The fact that she could accurately recall the words of his own black history, and the fact that it was engraved in Alisa's brain as an important memory made Masachika fall over inwardly.

"Why are you blushing all of a sudden?"

Alisa glared at him, but it seemed that her embarrassment came too late from Masachika, and even her own cheeks flushed slightly. Perhaps realizing this, Alisa turned her gaze away from Masachika and turned to Maria in a way that was deceptive.

"See, I knew that he was the real Masachika-kun... so let's go quickly."

She said it with a clear expression and a relaxed tone, but Maria tilted her head with a smile that was very different from the one she had just given.

"Alya-chan, so cute~"

"H-Huh? What do you mean cute, anyway."

"Yes, yes, so young~ ... oh well, how about this?"

After saying that, Maria pulled Masachika and Alisa's hands, which were clasped in her both hands, and half forced them to join hands.

"Good. Fellow good friends, should hold each other's hands, okay?"

"Why!"

"No, isn't the conversation going to be different?"

They both commented simultaneously and quickly released their hands from each other. Then Maria lowered her eyebrows slightly while laughing softly.

"Fufu~ you two are both shy..."

"No, I don't understand what you mean."

"After all, from the beginning, wasn't it Masha-san herself who asked to hold hands because you were scared, right?"

"That's right, really~? Therefore, you two let's hold hands?"

"Sorry. I didn't understand the meaning of 'Therefore'. "

"Use the conjunction properly."

The two of them brought that up to Maria, who skillfully skipped over their reasoning. But instead, Maria looked dissatisfied and walked to the other side of Masachika, then took his left hand.

"If you keep saying that, let me hold hands with Kuzekun, okay?"

"I told you, why do you say that!?"

"This conversation is completely out of sync..."

It was Masachika who shouted in a loud voice, and Alisa put her hand on her forehead as if her head hurt. However, after seeing Maria holding Masachika's left hand and somehow looking pleased with herself, the two of them abandoned their understanding at the same time. After exchanging tired glances, they then held each other's hands again.

"Alright, then, let's go~~!"

Upon seeing that, Maria nodded her head contentedly, and pointed to the forward with a joyful mood, while still holding Masachika's hand in her right hand.

"..."

For a moment, Alisa looked at Maria with one wide eye like a thug and as if to imply, "I thought you'd let go of his hand when I was holding him!". However, she soon realized that it was futile, sighed, and looked ahead.

"Then, let's get started... and finish quickly."

"...Ohh~~"

With a resigned expression, Masachika began to walk with a faraway look in his eyes. On to his right was Alisa's slender and slightly cold hand, while to his left was Maria's warm and soft hand.

(Hmm? What's with this situation? Harem? Hooray~~ I'm holding two beautiful girls in both hands~ finally, spring has arrived in my life~)

Regardless of the stupid things he said in his brain, inside his mind, Masachika felt quite nervous. Although he had held hands with Alisa a few times, the number could still be counted, and this was the first time Masachika was holding hands with Maria.

Then at the same time, Masachika didn't know: "should I swing my arms if my hands get sweaty, is my walking speed right, or is this the right way to hold hands?" . He worried about such matters and couldn't feel at ease.

(I-It's about that anyway... Ahh, I'd better get it over with quickly)

Sandwiched between Maria, who was strangely in a happy mood, and on the other side, Alisa looking a little sullen, Masachika decided to end the investigation early. As a result...

"The art room! No abnormalities! Next place!"

"Cherry blossoms behind the school building! Still not blooming! Next!"

"Isn't that too perfunctory!?"

When Masachika drew conclusions in less than ten seconds after a glance, Alisa couldn't help but criticize him. However, Masachika seemed didn't really care and shrugged his shoulders with a relaxed face.

"From the beginning, this investigation was done to make sure there were no abnormalities, so there's no problem, right? Don't worry, I also didn't forget to take photos for proof."

"That's true anyway..."

Due to her serious nature, Alisa muttered in frustration and seemed less convinced. However, when she glanced at Maria, who was on the other side of Masachika, she sighed.

"Masha... that's enough, don't be afraid."

"Eh, e-even though you say so~~"

At Alisa's unreasonable request, Maria shrugged her shoulders pitifully. She then looked around with fear at the environment that was finally darkened

and quietly brought herself closer to Masachika's body. Seeing the scene, Alisa furrowed her brows.

"After all, the investigation is starting now, right... it's only natural that I feel so scared."

Perhaps afraid to talk about the details, Maria cut off her words and moved closer to Masachika. With her right hand gripping Masachika's left hand, she tightly embraced Masachika's forearm with her left hand. Naturally, their arms were completely attached to each other, and Maria's breasts tightly against Masachika's elbow. Masachika's face immediately turned bright red, while Alisa frowned.

"...Let's quickly leave and continue the investigation."

Alisa said this with a mixture of annoyance and pulled Masachika's hand as she started walking with large strides. However, Maria still clung tightly to Masachika's right arm and did not move away, and Alisa furrowed her brows even more as she looked over her shoulder to confirm this... With that being the case, they walked back to the school building and started walking down the corridor.

"O-Oi, walk a little slower..."

"What? We're going around the main school building, right? Shouldn't we go around as quickly as possible so that it doesn't take too long."

"Well, that's true, anyway..."

Masachika felt a slight sense of discomfort as Alisa hurried on with her gaze fixed on the path ahead, she then asked timidly.

"...aren't you pushing yourself too hard?"

"..."

At this point, Alisa's hand twitched as she grabbed Masachika's hand. However, when Alisa still wouldn't turn around, Maria whispered to her.

"Alya-chan is being a hard ass..."

"Ehh, what, I knew it, you're really scared, huh?"

"...Not really, really?"

She said it with an indifferent tone of voice, but she still wouldn't turn around. And suddenly, her walking speed began to slow down. When they managed to catch up with her, Alisa snorted and turned her head to the side to hide her expression.

"...You're afraid of horror, aren't you? Though during the bravery test during school festival preparations last year, I thought you looked fine..."

"That said, I don't feel scared at all, really..."

Alisa stubbornly kept denying it while turning her face away, but then Maria came back with an explanation.

"You know, Alya-chan is ~ if she's just scared, it's fine, but if she hears scary stories, she'll get scared, you know~"

"Ahh... I see. So you're the type of person who gets scared by your own imagination, huh."

When Masachika sounded convinced, Alisa glared at Maria, but she quickly turned her face away again. After seeing that easy-to-understand reaction, Masachika could only smile wryly as she said, "If that's the case, I guess it's only natural."

Among the seven mysteries, only the mystery of [The figure of the red girl] was clearly more serious as a ghost story than the others. Just like the famous ghost stories Kuchisake Onna and Teke-Teke, there are many witnesses who have seen sightings of the red schoolgirl figure.

It is said that she often appears inside the main school building after school hours. The figure wears a Seirei Gakuen uniform, and her ribbon is green.

She has waist-length black hair and is called the "Red Schoolgirl" because she always bleeds from somewhere on her body.

If you meet her, never call out to her or occasionally help her because you feel worried. If you help her, she will say "Thank you, I'm fine.", then go somewhere. And the person who hears those words, in a few days, will get hurt in the same place as the girl.

That's right, it's as if the wound from "The figure of the red girl" was transferred exactly as it is...

(Anyway, just because you're injured doesn't mean you're going to die, it's just that part is strangely too realistic... the fact that it can only happen in a few days adds to the uncertainty...)

In addition, there are ways to deal with it if one encounters such a figure, whether it's true or not. First of all, never approach it. Then, leave the school building immediately.

In addition to the above-mentioned characteristics, the way to distinguish her from an ordinary female student is motion sensors that don't respond, so be careful if you see her standing in a dark hallway....that's how to deal with it.

(Well, to be honest, I have a strong feeling that it could just be a warning, but... there have already been actual victims of that figure.)

Touya told them that he had information about the two victims. The first case happened last November. A male student from the running club met with the "Red Schoolgirl" with an injury to her right leg, and three days later, the man suffered a laceration to his heel.

(TN: laceration means deep cut btw)

The second case occurred in June this year. The vice president of the drum band club was hospitalized with appendicitis surgery after encountering the "red schoolgirl" with blood stained on the center of her uniform... Because the vice president of this club is a very popular and well-liked person, rumors quickly spread, and it seems that his case was the one who triggered the viral gossip of the seven mysteries.

(In other words... The mystery of this "red side girl" is the origin and the culmination of the seven mysteries of the school. Ahh, come to think of it, it seems a little cool that so)

Masachika laughed lightly at the idea that was similar to a chuunibyo's fantasy. In contrast with the Kujou sisters, Masachika has a fairly relaxed attitude because he basically doesn't believe in ghost stories.

It's not uncommon for members of the running club to have heel injuries. And regarding the appendicitis surgery, Masachika thought that it was just a

normal complication. First of all, neither case was accompanied by bleeding. This made it impossible to say that the injury from the "red schoolgirl" was transferred.

(In fact, it's much more credible that they had stab wounds or cuts~)

After summarizing his views on the seven mysteries rumor, Masachika shrugged his shoulders and looked at Maria.

"From the beginning, most of the seven mysteries were just hoaxes. You didn't hear the sobs of a woman in the club building, right?"

"Y-Yes... well, I didn't."

As Masachika had said, Maria and the others investigated "The sound of sobs in the club building" during the day, but after searching around for an hour, they did not hear any such sound. So, they had no choice but to open the windows slightly and concluded that the sound of the wind blowing

"Huuuuuuuuuu" is the true identity of the mystery or more accurately, that's what they insisted on.

Regardless, of the six mysteries, the only one that was clearly identified was the cat in the warehouse, and the rest were hoaxes, that's how their investigations have turned out so far. Therefore, it is likely that this last ghost story is also a creation from students.

"After all, the Seven School Mysteries are more or less bound to be so. I'm sure that it was just a student experiencing something strange, and then told it in an exaggerated way."

Looking at Masachika who didn't seem to feel the slightest bit of fear, they both seemed to have lost some of their fear. Maria nodded slowly as she moved her body away from Masachika slightly.

"Yeah... when you put it like that, it's true, though..."

"Well, isn't it? First of all, it's not like female students are the most common. Why is it that this type of urban legend is mostly female? Let's call them the ghost legends of Hanako-san, Kuchisake-onna, Teke Teke, Yashaku-sama... ...On the contrary, it would be more novel and believable if a greasy bald old grandfather would appear."

(TN: Excuse me, but if I were to die from a ghost, I'd choose letting a highschool girl stomp me than being stabbed by some bald old man)

"That should be reported normally."

"That's right."

Arisa teased Masachika with a serious look on her face, causing the three of them to chuckle. Maria pretended to think a little while relaxing her expression.

"But right, there's also a youkai who's a grandpa, right?... umm, if I'm not mistaken his name is Konafuki-jiji?"

"No, the correct one is Konaki-jiji. What's with the youkai that seems to match with Akaname's youkai?"

"That one might be more of a hunter than that greasy bald-headed grandpa..."

(TN: I don't read Japanese yokai stories so I can't explain or give backstories to the ones they mentioned unfortunately)

The tension that had built up between the three of them was almost completely obliterated by Maria's naturally witty reply. Then Masachika realized that the search that started on the first floor had already reached the center of the third floor hallway. In a relaxed atmosphere, the three of them walked down the hallway while occasionally looking into the classrooms....

".....Hmm?"

As they approached the classroom at the far end, Masachika's pants pocket became slightly warmer. It was as if there was a body warming plaster inside.

"What's wrong?"

"No, it's nothing...."

Masachika put his hands in his pockets as he answered Alisa's question with a vague reply. He then took out a heat source that touched his fingers.

"Ara, what is that thing?"

"I borrowed it from Sarashina-senpai. But, for some reason..... this thing, over time became very hot....."

It was a black prayer bead (Juzu) with a very scary name, which he had brought along just in case. It was vaguely hot in his hand. As if trying to tell Masachika about something.

"Hey... stop it quickly. Don't keep trying to scare me, anyway... the jokes aren't funny, you know."

"Huh? No, no, I didn't mean it that way... well, in horror movies, this pattern usually indicates that a vengeful ghost is approaching, anyway..."

Right after Masachika said that jokingly while making excuses to Alisa, who raised her eyebrows angrily a hand appeared from the corner of the hallway a few meters away.

"Uh--"

A strange white hand reached out from behind the corner and gripped the wall. The attention of the three of them was immediately drawn to that hand.

" " " ... " " "

The three of them stared at each other in silence, the fingers of the white hand gripping the wall firmly. At that moment, Masachika had a premonition that something horrible was about to appear behind that corner. His instincts loudly warned to leave this place right now. But against his will, his legs simply wouldn't move.

The same was true for Alisa and Maria, whether consciously or unconsciously, they both clung tightly to Masachika's arm and did not move a step from that place.

And in the end, the figure appeared from behind the hand gripping the wall. While wearing a Seirei Gakuen uniform with a green ribbon. Her black hair flowed long to the waist. And peeking through her black hair... The face of a girl covered in blood.

"Kyaaaaaaa!"

"No-No."

To her right and left, Maria and Alisa let out shrill screams. To be honest, Masachika also wanted to scream. However, the warmth of their bodies and the feeling on both of his arms, temporarily pushed away Masachika's fear. With a cool head that even he himself felt surprised by, Masachika thought quickly about how to get out of this situation.

(Would it be better if the three of us just ran away? No, let alone Alya, I don't think Masha-san can even run. On the contrary, his legs are already weak to the point that even now it's difficult for him to stand up. Besides, this will probably be a traumatic experience for Masha-san-- in that case, I guess I'll just have tohup!!)

After making a quick decision, Masachika let go of their hands and walked away while putting a smile on the corner of her lips. He approached the female student who appeared covered in blood. Then, through his trembling throat, Masachika let out a shocked voice.

"O-O-Oi, oi, oi, oi! This is too scary, you know! Who told you to go that far!?"

His voice sounded relaxed and cheerful, in contrast to the tension of the place. He felt that his actions could relieve the two people behind him.

Masachika's decision is..... to make this "red schoolgirl" considered a surprise that he had prepared. While walking with an attitude like "I guess I've have gone a little overboard on the surprise☆,"

Masachika gripped the black juzu that he had borrowed from Chisaki. In this way, he could maintain his calmness on the surface and sharpen his thinking with a cool head.

All it takes is a readiness to get hurt and not hesitate to use violence. Consciously, Masachika pushed aside all other emotions.

(Ahh~ I might die)

That kind of thought occurred to him as if it was someone else's business. Although he wouldn't die, he felt that he wouldn't be safe just like that. Masachika instinctively knew that it was a real ghost. On the other hand, he only had a piece of juzu in his hand, which he didn't even know if it would work or not.

The odds were too low. However, how could he just retreat without putting up a fight. After all, the "red schoolgirl" that appeared was injured in the face.

If the ghost stories were true, then Alisa and Maria would probably have facial injuries. He wouldn't let those two people's faces get injured... As their friend, and his pride as a man, he would not forgive that.

(For the time being, I'm going to push her around the corner and hit her with this juzu... Even if that doesn't work, the only person hurt by the "red schoolgirl" is the person who approached her. And the effect will only be seen after a few days. If I was really hurt, I could have hid it during summer vacation.)

There was a possibility that he would not be able to participate in the training camp. However, if he could protect both their minds and bodies, Masachika felt that all his efforts were worth it.

(That's why... let me be her opponent!)

Then, as he prepared to face the "red schoolgirl", Masachika turned his attention to the female student's body to look around for where he should attack....but suddenly, he noticed something strange.

(Hmm? How come there's blood on her waist... Hmm? If you look closely again, her right leg and arm are also injured...)

Aren't there too many wounds?

A moment later, such questions crossed his mind. Then a hand that stretched out from the other side of the corner, gripped the neck of the "red schoolgirl" from behind tightly. And the owner of that hand appeared with a bitter expression on her face.

"I finally caught i.... Hmm? Kuze-kun?"

"Eh? Huh?"

The person who appeared was their student council vice president, who shouldn't be here. The unexpected appearance of this person made Masachika stop suddenly and stunned.

"Ah, there's Masha and Alya-chan too, huh. Good job to you guys~"

"Ahh, uh, yes?"

"Th-Thanks for the hard work too?"

The Kujou sisters also responded awkwardly, as if they didn't know how to react to the unexpected situation that happened in quick succession. However, Chisaki did not seem to care much about it, and continued with her usual normal tone.

"Because I was feeling worried~, I stopped by for a while because the meeting ended early.... Well, for now, can you leave it to me? I won't let her escape again this time."

When Chisaki turned her attention to the "red schoolgirl ", her body immediately thrashed about. Her bloodshot eyes turned toward Masachika, and her hands stretched out in a hoarse voice.

"H-Help me...."

However, Chisaki immediately dragged her away and the female student disappeared around the corner. "D-Don't overdo it, huh~" Masachika said with a somewhat doubtful tone and tilted his head.

(Ummm... so, what does this mean? Ehh? Maybe she's not a real ghost... but just a student who barged in without permission, and got beat up by Sarashina-senpai? No, whichever way you look at it, that one is much more realistic... ...Putting aside the question of whether Sarashina-senpai would use her fists on a female student).

Or maybe it was a bad surprise that didn't involve Masachika. There might be someone pretending to be the "red schoolgirl" and trying to frighten someone... When thinking like that, it can be concluded that the reason why there was blood smeared on her face was because she wanted to hide her true identity.

(Yup, I feel like that's the case. Owaahh~~ I was just in a hurry to make a decision, huh~. I feel ashamed that I came forward so bravely and took it so seriously.~ hahaha....)

Masachika concluded this while trying his best to

turn his attention away from the fact that there was an amulet wrapped around Chisaki's left hand like a glove. Then, as he scratched his head to cover up his embarrassment... there were two hands firmly gripping Masachika's shoulders from behind.

"Masachika-kun... What is the meaning of this?"

"Kuze-kun~? I wonder if you can explain it to me, hmm~?"

A cold voice sounded from behind him. When turning around to look back stiffly, Masachika saw Alisa's face, which was smiling faintly with eyes that did not smile at all, and Maria with an unnatural smile. The expressions of the two of them were far more frightening than the "red schoolgirl" that he had just seen earlier.

"Ah, uh, umm... I-In order to surprise you two, I've prepared a special surprise, really? Probably~ it was too much, and I actually got a lesson from Sarashina-senpai....?"

Masachika, who couldn't swallow his own saliva, was forced to explain the situation. Instantly, Alisa's gaze narrowed and Maria's smile deepened. In addition, both of their fingers gripped his shoulders tightly.

"Umm, then, I need to catch up with Sarashina-senpai first to make sure that she's not overdoing it..."

After telling that, the grip of the two of them did not loosen at all. After that, they both lectured him severely. Even though he wasn't really involved with the incident.

(Hah, well, that's okay... A man is something that does not ask for something in return...)

While sitting on his knees before the two of them, Masachika looked out the window with distant eyes. How nice it was to be able to see the beautiful constellation of stars with two beautiful sisters, while sitting on their knees, today

"Masachika-kun! Did you hear what I said!?"

"Kuze-kun, you must contemplate this properly!"

"...Yes."

.....seems to be a bad day. It's not good to keep running away from reality.

A few days later, the topic of the Seven Mysteries at school dropped in less than a week, as the results of the Seven Mysteries investigation were disseminated through the student council contacts.

As for the most talked-about ghost story of the "red schoolgirl", they announced it with half-joking sentences like "Vice Chairwoman Sarashina has exterminated it", and strangely... the students accepted it quite normally.

"It's not like this one is more suitable to be the Seven mysteries, right?"

"That's right."

After watching the whole story, the two siblings muttered whether it really existed or not.

Chapter 8 - Beautiful Girl and Gloomy Boy

"I-I-I-I-I-I-I like you! Pl-pl-pl-pl-please date me!"

Upon hearing this absurd and awkward (?) declaration of love, the first thing that crossed Chisaki's mind was "What the heck is this guy talking about?"

Taking place in the public discipline committee room of Seirei Gakuen High School, Chisaki, who was sitting on a chair, folded her hands while leaning her back on the backrest and looked at the boy in front of her.

At first glance, he looked like the introverted otaku type of guy. With a large body that looks slow and heavy, his body is equally large both vertically and horizontally. His hair was disheveled and unkempt, and he had an aged face like a middle-aged man with noticeable acne. The eyes behind the glasses restlessly glanced this way and that, and combined with his hunched back, he looked very frightened.

(I think I've seen him before... though I've never spoken to him, anyway)

Judging from the color of his tie, she could tell that they were in the same year, and she also remembered seeing him during middle school. However, they were never in the same class, and Chisaki was sure that they never exchanged words. So, why was this man suddenly visiting the public discipline committee room, and even confessing his feelings?

(...Maybe because he lost a punishment game? Was it not because of that? Or maybe, bullying?)

It's only been about a month since the new school year started. It was around this time when groupings were made and hierarchies within the class were established. As a result... sorry to speak harshly, this boy who seemed to be

from the lowest caste, came to confess his feelings to a fierce member of the disciplinary committee as a form of punishment from a game or something like that Or so it seems.

(Again~ bullying... even though I thought I'd destroyed most of them during middle school)

However, there are some students who apply externally when entering high school, and this is most likely the result of that. With this in mind, Chisaki asked directly to the boy in front of her.

"...Is this some kind of punishment from a game? If it's bullying, I'm willing to listen to your problems too, you know?"

"Ehh....."

Hearing Chisaki's words, the boy in front of her opened his mouth for a moment... Immediately afterward, he shook his head.

"N-n-no! Th-That's not the case, I'm serious..."

"...Huh?"

Chisaki stared into his eyes, not understanding the meaning of his "seriousness". Chisaki understood very well how the boys viewed her. She could find out such things by listening to the rumors around her. Based on the rumors, she was the demon sergeant of the public discipline committee. Or, there were also those who thought of her as the gang leader of the Seirei Gakuen girls.

Most of the guys' feelings directed towards her were admiration, and Chisaki herself was satisfied with her current situation. It was ten thousand times

better than being belittled by them. Precisely because she thought like that, she could not understand that there were boys who liked her.

If the person who confessed to her was an outside student who had just entered Seirei High School Gakuen, she could still understand it. Chisaki herself understood that she had a pretty face, so it was no wonder that someone would confess to her just by looking at her face. However, this boy in front of her was an internal student who had been here since junior high school.

"You... What's your name?"

"Uh, ah yes, my name is Kenzaki... Kenzaki Touya."

"I see... then Kenzaki. What do you like about me?"

"Umm, that..."

Chisaki asked with a cold-eyed look, Touya then answered timidly and bowed even more.

"You look strong, dignified, and cool... but at the same time, look feminine too. If I'm honest, I'm captivated by your proud way of life."

"Fuee, ah, hmm,...I see."

Chisaki was surprised by the answer filled with honesty and blunt praise like that. In fact, this was the first time Chisaki had been told a direct compliment from the opposite sex.

Of course, it was not that she had never received confessions of feelings. But most of them just said something like "You don't have a boyfriend? You

wouldn't mind being my girlfriend, would you?" Or "I quite like strong girls, be my girlfriend." Most of them were always trying to dominate Chisaki. Of course, those misunderstood boys were taught a lesson, then separated as burnable and non-burnable trash, but well, leave that aside for now.

Anyway, having unexpectedly received such a blunt compliment... Chisaki subconsciously felt happy.

"Ehemm!"

Then, when she cleared her throat to deceive herself, Chisaki pretended that she was not really caring, and started to say something.

"Y-Yes, I understand how you feel... but I don't know you at all, you know?"

"Ah, t-that's obvious anyway...therefore, first of all, how about...we start off as friends first?"

Over time, both Touya's body and voice grew smaller. His demeanor that was so cowardly and trembling with fear... overlapped with his former self and to her great annoyance, Chisaki then opened her mouth offensively.

"I don't like guys who don't say things clearly and firmly."

"Ehh, s-so yeah."

"I also hate guys who are always hesitant and cowardly. I also hate guys who are weak. Actually, I hate guys in general, so how could I possibly make you my boyfriend."

"Th-that's it, please give it some consideration..."

Chisaki was surprised when Touya, with his body trembling with fear, still did not back down, even though she had pushed him all the way. Then, the eyes that looked at her from behind his glasses made Chisaki a little shaken up again,... he then turned his face away to hide himself, and said while waving a hand.

"In that case, how about you try it again after becoming a cooler guy? Hmm, that's right... like being the student council president? If you become the President of the Student Council President, I'll reconsider."

"Student Council President!?"

"What, you can't do it?"

Although she said it herself, Chisaki was well aware that her request was unreasonable. The value of being the student council president in this school was very high. Hence, there were many students aiming for the position, and it was obvious that if an ordinary and unexceptional student suddenly ran for it for the position, he would be completely crushed without being able to make it to the election stage.

However, that did not matter. It was just an off-the-cuff requirement that came out of her mouth, but it was not a bad reason to make Touya give up. When Chisaki thought so...

"...well, I understand."

"Huh?"

"Then, I'll start over from the beginning."

After saying that in a clearer tone than before, Touya bowed his head and left the room. Chisaki looked at his back with a dumbfounded expression...

"Uh, does he seriously want to be student council president?"

After muttering absentmindedly, Chisaki shook her head as she said, "No, it's impossible, isn't it."

(He must have felt that I was not a quitter at all, so he just said that and just left.)

After saying that to herself, Chisaki tried to erase that intruder from her memory. She was oblivious to the fact that she was -in a sense- slightly attracted to the other party who was making such an effort.



Then, about a month later.

(That guy never really showed his nose again... even though he himself said that he liked me. No, I don't mind if he gave up anyway!)

After complaining in her brain, Chisaki patrolled around the school in a mood that was a little upset. Then from the nearby art room, she heard the sound of laughter between a male and female couple, Chisaki could only sigh lightly. Even in a prestigious school where many of the children of wealthy families attended, there were students like them. After school, there were some students who liked to meet secretly in club rooms or quiet classrooms.

However, engaging in indecent relationships within the school is an act of breaking school rules. Even if it's just a kiss, if a teacher finds out about it, one will suffer severe punishment.

(Geez, what's the point of being intimate at school, it's like there's nowhere else to go!)

With a feeling of exasperation, Chisaki swung the bamboo sword she had in her hand at the hallway. Prakkk! A loud noise echoed in the hallway, and the male and female voices that were heard from the art room suddenly stopped.

"The gates are about to close, you know!"

While shouting loudly, Chisaki quickly left the place. Although it was the disciplinary committee's job to crack down on indecent relationships, she did not bother to step in and warn them. If they complied and went home quietly, that was fine. If they still don't want to go home, the risk is their own. If a teacher caught them, it was no longer Chisaki's business.

"How ridiculous."

There were many prominent politicians and businessmen among the graduates and parents of this school. In this school that received a lot of attention, if they were suspended from school, their future would be darkened. It is no exaggeration that their path to success would be sealed.

Who would want to take such a risk and get carried away with temporary passion? Would they be that stupid when their brains are fueled by the feelings of love? While thinking like that, she casually turned her attention outside the window...

"Hmm...? Isn't that..."

Chisaki squinted at the two people in sports uniforms standing near the school gate. She then approached the window and stared at them for a few seconds, then realized that the two people were the student council president and vice president.

"What are they doing?"

They were standing side by side right outside the school gate and seemed to be waving or calling someone from the left side of Chisaki's perspective. As student council members, it was not unusual for them to remain at school after school. However, it was a different story when they were wearing sports uniforms near the school gate. Chisaki, who was looking at them with a puzzled look, saw the person they were talking to.

"Ehh....?"

The person who came running with a panting and exhausted look, who could even be seen from a distance, was the boy she had just imagined in her mind. Chisaki felt that his silhouette looked a little different, but she didn't mistake her guess when she looking at his large, hunched body. The boy put his hands on his knees and breathed in desperately, his back being patted by the two Senpai who were watching him.

"..."

Why would that guy be with two student council members? The answer was obvious. Because that guy is also a student council member. In other words, that means...

"Is he seriously... intending to become student council president?"

Chisaki immediately shook her head as the words came out of her mouth. If that was the case, then what? There must be something wrong with that guy's mind for already taking the subtle rejection made on the spot seriously.

(It was just a pep talk after all, wasn't it? Taking that seriously is just weird... So, it's not all my fault)

Indeed, it wasn't her fault. Even though it's not her fault, but... maybe it wouldn't hurt to care about him a little.

With a slight feeling of guilt, Chisaki went downstairs to the first floor and bought a sports drink from the vending machine, then decided to wait for Touya at the entrance. However "Your stamina is increasing, Kenzaki."

"That's right, you haven't had much muscle pain lately either, right?"

"Indeed... compared to a month ago."

At the sound of Touya's voice along with the other two, Chisaki immediately hid behind a shoe box. No, if she thought about it calmly again, she did not need to hide at all... as someone with a slight case of androphobia, it felt quite embarrassing for her to talk to a boy, or difficult to explain the situation...

(At this rate... I guess I have no choice but to do it)

After much deliberation, Chisaki came to a decision as she put down the bamboo sword and sports drink on the spot, and then attacked the student council president and vice president who were changing their shoes and were about to head into the hallway of the school.

(TN: Well that went from 0 - 100 quickly)

"Eh...."

"Wha...."

The sudden attack instantly dispelled their consciousness and made them lean gently on the shoe box.

"Ehh? Senpai? What was that sound..."

Then she heard Touya's voice from behind her, and when Chisaki turned around, their gazes met each other.

"Uh, Sarashina-san? Why what happened to the chairman and vice chairman!?"

Touya suddenly turned his gaze on the two people leaning on the shoe box behind Chisaki. However, Chisaki did not pay much attention to that, and stood up with an indifferent expression as she picked up a sports drink with a grin on her face.

"Long time no see, huh."

"Eh? Ah yes... it's been a long time. But umm, the president and vice president..."

"Did you join the student council? Since you're with the two of them, that means"

"Y-Yes, that's it... so about those two..."

"Hmm~? So you joined the student council, huh~"

"So-so rude and... so strong... I like it."

(TN: Yeah Touya is definitely a masochist)

"H-Huh!?"

"Ah sorry, I just let it slip."

When Chisaki cried out in confusion at the sudden confession, Touya's gaze wandered as if he was also feeling uneasy. When she saw his reaction like that, she could not even get angry with "Don't tease me!". Chisaki glared at Touya sharply and raised her chin as if to push him away.

(TN: I think between the two, Touya's the bottomer)

"By any chance, did you take what I said the other day seriously? Just so you know, that was just a passing thought I said to get rid of you. So, if you're thinking of recklessly aiming for the student council president position, how about you stop that?"

Chisaki, who dared to say so arrogantly, decided to make a clear statement at this point, but... the reply she got was unexpected.

"Uh, ah... no, well, I do have such feelings, but..."

"Eh..."

Chisaki was taken aback by Touya's saying that with a troubled smile while scratching his cheek. Without looking at Chisaki's face, Touya continued slowly.

"Well actually... of course, I had an ulterior motive to make Sarashina-san pay a little attention to me, but put that reason aside, I think this could be a good opportunity..... to change myself."

".....Change yourself?"

"Y-Yes, I realized that the person I am now isn't attractive enough as a man... so I thought, I can't go on like this."

"...Even so, you still tried to confess your feelings to me?"

"Ugh! No, that's just, umm... because I've heard that... one must tell his feelings to the girl he likes as soon as possible..."

"...Isn't that assuming that you're already in some relationship with the related people?"

"I-I guess that's the case, huh..."

Touya said that while dropping his shoulders in disappointment... but he then suddenly got up. Touya stared straight at Chisaki while his eyes were slightly trembling, he then told her in a voice that was slightly shaky but sounded clear.

"But I don't regret it. Thanks to that, I got the chance to change myself! So umm, Sarashina-san doesn't have to bother worrying about me..."

Touya suddenly lowered his tone of voice and looked away. Chisaki opened her eyes wide as she heard a remark that hit the nail on the head.

"Ha-Huh!? Who's worried about you anyway! I just thought that you took my joke seriously, so I was just making sure of that, really!"

"Ehh, isn't that the same as caring--"

"Huh~? Don't be absurd, how could I care about a guy! Here, I'm giving you this because I have a lot! Then, see you later!"

Chisaki spoke quickly while pushing the sports drink she was holding towards Touya, grabbed the lying bamboo sword, and rushed out of the place.

"Ah, but, the student council president and vice presidentOh, she ran away quickly--."

Chisaki ran as fast as she could as if she did not want to hear Touya's voice. She ran with an anxious heart.

(Huh? Care? That's completely different! If I say that, I won't care one bit anymore! No matter where or what that guy is doing, I'd never cared at all!!)

Like a stubborn child, Chisaki swore silently. After that, Chisaki made every effort to avoid any contact with Touya, in accordance with her vow.

"Chisaki~ this week's patrol, it says we get to patrol the school grounds."

"I will replace the person in charge inside the school building."

"Ehh?"

After school, Touya would run outside the school. Chisaki completely avoided anything that would cause her to meet him there.

"Sarashina, can I have a moment?"

"Yes, what is it?"

"Yes, please help me put up flyers during the Student Council President election period--"

"Please just ask someone else to do that."

"Uh...oh, okay?"

The chairman of the disciplinary committee made a confused face after being flatly rejected. But, what can be done? After all, the bulletin board recently had a small special feature about Touya in the school newspaper. Although she had tried to avoid Touya at all costs but, there were certain events that could not be avoided.

"Then, next is the introduction speech of the student council treasurer, Kenzaki Touya."

There was a greeting from the student council officers at the closing ceremony of the first year. Hearing a familiar name being called, Chisaki reflexively tried to avert her eyes from the stage But she felt surprised when she saw a figure coming out from backstage.

"Nice to meet you all, my name is Kenzaki Touya, the Treasurer of the Student Council this year."

Is this what it means to be different? His body shape was clearly different from one half a month ago. Although his body was still a little chubby, his sluggish and disheveled aura had disappeared, and the way he walked with his back straight and erect gave the impression of an authoritative and dignified appearance.

Chisaki stared at the figure standing on the stage, forgetting to look away. At that moment Touya looked straight into Chisaki's eyes. It was not just her imagination. Because that was proven by Touya's next words.

"I intend to run for student council president in next year's election, but I do not yet have a vice chair candidate to run with me. However, there is one person that I would like to make my partner. No, I can't imagine being paired with anyone but that person!!!"

Touya's statement made Chisaki's heart beat wildly. And at the same time, the surrounding students, especially the male students, showed a strange excitement that was strange.

"I'll do everything I can to make that person willing to be my partner!"

What kind of declaration was that? While Chisaki thought so with a dazed expression, everyone around her clapped for Touya on stage. Being affected by the atmosphere around her, Chisaki had clapped a few times...and hastily lowered her hand. She could feel that her cheeks were burning. Whether it was due to reflexively clapping or something else...at that time, Chisaki could not tell.



Then, the day after the opening ceremony after the summer vacation. Chisaki was genuinely surprised when Touya visited the public discipline committee room just as he had done in the past.

"Sarashina-san! Please, are you willing to run as a candidate for vice president and participate in the student council president election together with me!"

Touya bowed his head and seemed to be a completely different person from four months earlier. The fat covering his entire body had been completely removed and replaced by toned muscles. His hair was neatly arranged, and his eyes that looked straight at Chisaki, were filled with confidence.

"Ah, ummm..."

Chisaki was left speechless after seeing his drastic change and coughed once. Then, she forcefully turned her gaze towards Touya.

"...Why? I thought I originally asked you to be the student council president, right? If I run together, wouldn't that be the same as me doing you a favor?"

"Of course I know that. But I can't think of anyone other than Sarashina-san as my partner!"

"O-Ohh..."

Chisaki instinctively looked away at those too straightforward and blunt words. Touya then gave a further explanation.

"Of course, if I win the election with Sarashina-san's help, I won't use it as a shield to force you into a relationship with me! But... I'm no longer a cowardly or weak guy. And I will continue to grow into a man who will be recognized by Sarashina-san! Are you willing to see my growth up close? Please!"

"U-Ummm, well...."

It sounded like a rather selfish request, but the straightforwardness of it made it impossible for Chisaki to simply refuse. Then, she realized that her mouth was again talking to itself and uttering strange conditions without permission.

"You're not weak at all... Isn't that already obvious by looking at your current body? I guess I have to prove it too... hmm, right. I'll think about it if you manage to win a point from me in kendo."

Because she had already said it, Chisaki herself even thought "What the hell am I talking about?". If she wanted to refuse, she should have refused normally without giving any conditions. If she did that again, then...

"...Alright, I understand. After school, I'll visit the Kendo Hall."

As expected, Toya agreed to that condition after two seconds of silence, he then bowed his head and left the room. While looking at his back, Chisaki kept wondering, "Why didn't I dare to refuse him?"



"So you're the one, huh! The brat who dared to approach Onee-sama!"

"Ummm..."

After school, Touya visited the kendo hall and looked very surprised. But naturally he reacted that way, because as soon as he entered, Touya was immediately ganged up on by an Ojou-sama with a ringlet hairstyle, or hanging rolls. Moreover, on either side of that Ojou-sama, three female students with strangely elegant standing postures (inexplicably standing in a karate stance) were lined up in a row. The atmosphere was really like his arrival had been eagerly awaited.

"W-who do you mean by Onee-sama?"

"Isn't that obvious... when talking about Onee-sama, who else would it be but Chisaki Onee-sama desuwa!"

(TN: *uhh she's basically Beatrice from Re:ZERO I guess. Same hairstyle and ends every sentence with “desuwa”. Except maybe not a loli?*)

"S-So yeah..."

Touya nodded his head as if overwhelmed by the Ojou-sama's strength. Then, the Ojou-sama shook out her hair roll as she said.

"I know why you came here... roughly speaking, you want to challenge Oneesama, don't you?"

"Geez, what a person who doesn't recognize his own position!"

"This is very troublesome, you know? Don't take Onee-sama lightly."

"If you think that you can win easily because you're a man, you're dead wrong, okay?"

"No, I don't think so... Umm, why are you standing at an angle?"

(TN: *They are all currently standing in a fighting stance. You where your body is at an angle while one leg is in front and the back leg is holding more of your body weight?*)

"That's not important at all! If you want to challenge Onee-sama"

Then, the Ojou-sama stopped her speech and snapped her fingers. Then, the girl with a cheerful-looking twintail style on her right shouted while puffing out her chest.

"Shinbashi Ayame!"

Next, the tomboyish girl farther to the right began to open her mouth, covering one eye with her hand.

"Oomori Kikyou!"

Followed by the bespectacled girl on the other side saying while pushing her glasses.

"Kurasawa Hiiragi!"

And finally, the Ojou-sama in the center came forward as she shook her hair roll.

"Kiryuuin Sumire! How about you defeat us first, The Sisters of the Four Seasons, before you can fight Onee-sama desuwa!?"

(TN: Is this a kendo club or a chuunibyou club?)

It was a truly impressive declaration of war, announced in a loud and booming voice. In fact, it felt like there was going to be an explosion behind them. When hearing a nickname similar to the Four Heavenly Generals of the demon king army, Touya's reaction was, taking a step back and turning his head toward Chisaki, who was slapping her forehead behind the four of them.

"Ummm, Sarashina-san... Who are these lively people?"

"...They are all members of my competition team in the kendo club back in middle school"

"...Then why were you called Onee-sama earlier?"

"No, don't get the wrong idea, okay? We are neither blood relations nor sworn sisters, nothing like that, okay? First of all, that Sumire is older than me in terms of birthdays, and although she calls herself 'Sumire' to conform to the people around her, her real name is Vio--"

"Don't just ignore us and talk to Onee-sama!"

As she leaned forward to block Touya's view, Vio-... Sumire raised her voice. Then, she snapped her fingers again, and a petite girl who referred to herself as Ayame stepped forward.

"If you want to fight Onee-sama, beat me first!"

"E-Ehhh...?"

Touya stared at the girl in front of him, his voice trembling with confusion. Even according to a rough estimate, the height difference between the two of them was more than 30 cm. Even if excluding the difference in gender, it was hard to believe that they could compete fairly.

"Well, well... if you say that..."

Still, assuming that the conversation would not be able to continue, Touya decided to engage her, but...

"Hmph! Just a big mouth!"

"Hah, I didn't expect it to end in one punch..."

"What a disappointment."

"Ara ara~, it's just a tree standing there gawking."

It was an instant defeat. As soon as the signal was shouted, his opponent disappeared from his sight and he was immediately followed by a stab in the neck, and the match was over just like that.

"Goho, gah, ughh!"

"Wha-are you alright-"

"Onee-sama! Don't show mercy to the opponent, desuwa!"

"No, but it's getting too-"

Touya coughed in a crouching position, and Chisaki, who was worried about him, tried to rush towards him. but before that, Sumire stood in his way. She then looked straight at Chisaki as she whispered.

"(A woman shouldn't show sympathy to a man who's already made up his mind. Showing compassion is tantamount to underestimating his determination desuwa.)"

"!!!!"

Chisaki was stunned when she heard Sumire's words. Then, while Chisaki stood stunned, Touya got up himself and wielded his bamboo sword again.

"Uhuk, uhuk, ... let's do one more round!"

"Hee~, you still dare to fight me? Well whatever, I'll hit you again and again until you feel satisfied!"

As per the declaration, Touya was forced to lick the ground for the next two hours. However, Touya neither despaired nor gave up. He continued to go to the kendo hall and challenge The Sisters of the Four Seasons. Later, he managed to defeat them one by one...

"I can finally face you, Sarashina-san."

By the time Touya challenged Chisaki to a duel, it was already October, but that was no reason for Chisaki to give in to him.

"...I'll come back later."

Although Touya had improved his skills in kendo against The Sisters of the Four Seasons, he was constantly defeated by Chisaki. During this time, Chisaki did not exchange a single word with Touya, but she did not refuse to fight him and continued to beat him with all her might. If she did not submerge her heart in this way, she might have been filled with uncomfortable feelings. But one day, suddenly.

(Ah, the exam is soon His forearm... he needs to study hard too...)

Touya put all his strength into his arm to attack the mask, and in that split second, he tried to aim his bamboo sword at Chisaki's empty arm. Suddenly, such a thought crossed her mind. And then, that momentary hesitation caused her grip to loosen, and Chisaki's small hand split the air. Immediately afterward, Touya's bamboo sword was swung downward and...

Plangg!

Chisaki's head received a light impact. The impact was too light... to be judged as a blow.

".... Haa?"

Her opponent held back. As soon as that possibility crossed his mind, the emotions that Chisaki was suppressing exploded.

"Hahhhh~~~~!?"

With a mixture of contempt and anger in her voice, Chisaki grabbed the bamboo sword that hit her head, grabbed it forcefully, and threw it at Touya.

"What do you mean by that, hahh!?"

She glared at Touya through her metal mask angrily, and Touya, who caught the bamboo sword in his arms, cried out in panic.

"Uh, ah, I'm sorry! I know that it's rude to hold back on you or something like that, but just as I was thinking of hitting the girl I like with all my strength, my body suddenly held back..."

"Wh-What!!!"

In response to those words, Chisaki was rendered speechless her teeth chattered, and then she cried out to express things.

"Ahhhhh~~, uuuu! Whatever! I lost because of a violation! Student Council President election!? Alright, who's afraid! I accept your offer to be the vice-chairman candidate!"

"Uh, ah... ho-hoorayyy!"

After a moment of confusion, Touya raised both his hands like a child. At the sight of the scene she exhaled angrily, Sumire, who was acting as referee, called out to her.

"Onee-sama, are you sure?"

"...Well, no problem, really?"

Chisaki said that by looking away, even though she was wearing a mask so that her face was not too visible.

"Well, we're just running for the student council president election, right? Dating is a different story."

As she continued to speak quickly, Chisaki realized that she was making excuses for herself.

"I did it!!!!!!!!!!"

With his protective suit on, Touya made a victory pose as if someone would think that he had won a gold medal in the Olympics. Looking at him from the side, Chisaki foresaw that in the not-too-distant future, she really wanted to be able to run in the election together with Touya.....

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"So, you know what? Touya got cooler and cooler after that"

"Uhh, yeah, that's something to be thankful for..."

Located in the large arena of a dojo owned by the Sarashina family. In the audience, Chisaki was talking to her cousin, whom she had not seen for a long time, in a happy tone. However, the expression on her cousin's face was twitching and stiff. That was because...

"Ummm? Chisaki-neechan. That cool boyfriend of yours is likely to get killed in the elimination round, you know?"

"Gosh~ What are you talking about? How could Touya, who managed to beat me, lose so easily~~"

"No, even if you say he beat you, it was only a victory because of Chisaki-neechan's offense alone, right...? Furthermore, this match is hand-to-hand combat."

Her cousin looked anxiously at Touya who was in the center of the arena, his face clearly puckered and pale. In front of him, a man who was even bigger and more muscular than Touya, was staring at him with a sharp, bloodthirsty gaze.

"That opponent, isn't that guy the student from our dojo who was beaten to a pulp by Chisaki-neechan back in the day, right? For some reason, he gave off an air that seems to be no joke."

"Is that so? I don't remember at all. Touyaaa~ Fight~~!"

Chisaki innocently encouraged Touya while saying something outrageous. In response, Touya raised his right hand with a stiff smile, and the murderous air of the opponent in front of him intensified.

"I-I think it's too impossible for an amateur to participate in a martial arts festival, even if it's just the amateur division... ...Hey-Hey, wouldn't it be better if we just stop the match now?"

"Ehh~~? But Touya seemed really excited about it, really~?"

"Of course, if his girlfriend encourages him like that, a man has no choice other than to do it!!?"

"That's true, isn't it~, he looks so manly and cool, doesn't he~~?"

"Ahhh you pussycat!!!"

The referee declared the start of the match, ignoring the concerns of Chisaki's cousin. The result... Well, let's just say that when Touya collapsed, his body fell forward. After that, his opponent was planted in the corner of the arena by Chisaki, who intervened and barged in after the match.

(TN: Now that I think of it, Chisaki and Touya really resemble the student council president and her childhood friend from the manga series “Aishiteru Game no Owarasetai”.)

Chapter 9 - Merciful and Ore-sama

"I wonder if hypnosis will work on Onii-chan?"

One day during summer vacation. While sitting on the bed in her room with a book on hypnosis in her hand, Yuki suddenly mumbled the words.

The title of the book was "Anyone Can Learn Hypnosis~ Starting Today, You Are Also A Hypnotist!~". It was the book that had once caused the incident in the student council room. After that said incident, Yuki promised Masachika that the hypnotism described in this book would be sealed forever, but why would Yuki let go of this kind of interesting thing just like that since she had failed once.

She bought the book with her own money, and from then on she had tried out various hypnosis techniques on Ayano as her guinea pig Ayano, who had reached the maximum level of loyalty and would obey any order without the need for hypnosis, could not be used as a good example. When Yuki thought, "I want to try it with other people too~but if it's with a friend and it fails, it's a bit awkward~" and at that moment the existence of Masachika appeared in her mind.

"Nee~ What do you think?"

"Nyaan?"

When asked by Yuki, Ayano, who was curled up with her head on her thigh, raised her face. She looked at Yuki's face with curious eyes and pushed her bangs away from her eyes when she woke up.

"Aaahh...."

She made a dazed sound, and Yuki raised both her hands and tried to clap her hands with a pyaak sound... then, Ayano suddenly stopped moving.

Then, she looked at Ayano, who was sitting in a typical "girl sitting style" on the bed, and suddenly rubbed her breasts.

(TN: Basically sitting kinda kneeling-ish? But in the way where her legs are to the side and where her thighs and butt are touching the surface of the ground.)

"Mu, momu? Have they... grown a little?"

Tilting her head and looking at Ayano curiously, Yuki rubbed Ayano's breasts with a serious expression on her face.

"O-O-Ohhhh~? Uwooohhh~ it's growing well.... It feels so soft and supple"

Yuki pushed Ayano's breasts from below and sounded rather impressed. After that, Yuki spent a few minutes admiring Ayano's breasts before clasping her hands together in satisfaction. Then instantly, Ayano's movements stopped for a moment. She then blinked slowly and tilted her head.

"...Did you succeed?"

"Yes, everything worked out without any problems on the target's behavioral changes... So do you think this will work on Onii-chan too?"

"To Masachika-sama? ...I guess that's pretty difficult?"

Ayano tilted her head, seemingly not too bothered by the fact that she had just been hypnotized into a cat. Yuki then responded with a shrug.

"That's right~~. It is a common belief that the hypnotist will acquire resistance to hypnosis... Oops, I guess it's time for violin lessons~."

After saying that, Yuki got up from the bed and started preparing for her lesson. While helping her, Ayano's lips were tightly sealed as if she had already decided to do something.



A few days later, as Yuki was getting ready to go visit the Kuze residence, Ayano suddenly approached her.

"Yuki-sama."

"Hmm?"

"Regarding the hypnosis matter the other day, I've prepared some items that might be able to help you."

"Eh? Hypnosis? ...Ahhh! You mean something that will work on Onii-chan! You went to all the trouble of preparing something?"

"Yes. If you intend to hypnotize Masachika-sama, I think you might need some tools to strengthen your hypnotic effect."

"Ah~ some kind of enhancement item? That would be helpful, indeed~"

"I've been researching various things regarding that... and first of all, this thing."

While saying that, Ayano took out a dark pink candle from her maid's shirt pocket.

"It's said to be an aromatic candle that can calm the mind and make one easier to hypnotize."

"Isn't that what often appears in erotic doujinshi!?"

"Then next,... this one."

Ayano operated her smartphone and passed it to Yuki. The screen displayed a suspicious image with a wavy effect around large eyes.

"...What is this?"

"It looks like it's a hypnosis app."

"Isn't that what also often appears in erotic doujinshi!?"

Yuki repeated the same tsukkomi, and then Ayano took out,... some kind of rough collar necklace.

"...What is that?"

"It seems to be a collar that forces the wearer to obey."

"Isn't that something that often appears in isekai fantasies! Well, you intend to put that kind of thing on Onii-chan!?"

"No, I hope I can wear this for you..."

"You don't need it anyway, do you."

"I see...yes..."

"Oi, why do you look so disappointed?"

With her head starting to feel dizzy and putting a hand on her forehead, Yuki looked at the collar that was strangely shaped and sticky. The collar had several objects similar to colorful power stones attached to it, giving it a strange presence that made the collar not look like an item for a joke.

"First of all... where did you get all these objects that look suspicious?"

"Umm, that... the other day when I went shopping, I was approached by a hooded street vendor... Although I didn't say anything, he gave me this and said that I didn't have to pay for it"

"Oops? Apparently it's not an isekai fantasy, but modern occultism? Don't use that once, okay? If according to the sect, the person who wears it will somehow inexplicably break and the street vendor will laugh at him while saying something like, 'Humans are indeed stupid creatures...'"

"Huh...?"

"Wait a moment. Isn't that a scented candle too?"

"For this one, I bought it from a 100 yen store."

"Seriously, you. The 100-yen store is a one-stop shop."

"I bought it for 200 yen, though..."

"Isn't that a little expensive? How come?"

After throwing out all her tsukkomi, Yuki realized that Ayano looked a bit discouraged.

(Ah... maybe I said it too much. Even though she went to the trouble of preparing it for me...)

Contemplating that in her heart. Yuki lightly cleared her throat, and opened her mouth as she turned her attention to the candles.

"Well, but... how about we give it a try? The candle and the app."

"! Yes, with pleasure!"

"Yes, thank you so much for looking for everything."

"No, this kind of thing is no big deal."

While laughing at her servant who looked instantly happy, Yuki inwardly smiled wryly "I think a five yen coin with a string is still much more effective...".



"There are times when I think like that too."

Yuki muttered to herself, then her gaze fell on Masachika who was sitting on the bed with blank eyes. Last night, she handed a scented candle to Masachika while saying "a scent that can improve sleep", after spending the whole night inhaling lots of smoke, Yuki then used the hypnosis app on Masachika who was in a daze..... Unexpectedly, she managed to hypnotize her brother.

"Seriously, here"

"Congratulations. Your hypnosis was successful."

"Ah, yes... ummm, let's just open the window for now, okay?"

"Alright, understood."

When Ayano in maid mode opened the windows and doors leading to the living room, the strangely sweet air in the room faded away as hot air passed through the room. However, even so, Masachika showed no signs of returning to his sanity. He simply stared blankly at a single spot on the floor with a blank expression.

".....Hmmm, what's up~?"

Yuki didn't know what to do from here because she didn't expect that her hypnosis would work. However, after cooperating with Ayano, how would she end it with "Since I already know that this can work, so let's end this."?

"Hmm~~..."

After thinking for a moment, Yuki made an "Aha~" expression as if she got a good idea and started operating her smartphone. Then, while showing the screen that hypnosis app towards Masachika, she began to make suggestions.

"You will become a loving ikemen guy. You won't be able to control your overwhelming feelings of love!"

After saying that, she then tapped the screen and a strange hissing sound came from her smartphone, causing Masachika's body to jerk. Then, as his

eyes gradually came into focus... Masachika suddenly smiled sweetly at Yuki.

"Hello Yuki... You look cute today, too."

"Uwaahh so dirty."



Yuki was shocked, and immediately made a scathing comment. Masachika, who seemed unperturbed by his sister's shocked state, began to turn his attention to Ayano.

"Ayano looks cute, too."

"T-Thank you very much?"

"Fufufu, what's wrong with you, you look so strange... oya?"

Then Masachika suddenly realized something and got up from the bed, then gently grabbed Ayano's black hair.

"Look, your hair here is tangled, you know?"

"Ah, f-forgive me! For showing such an embarrassing appearance..."

Masachika gently placed his right hand on Ayano's cheek. Then, when he gently made Ayano look up, he whispered sweetly with a warm and affectionate smile.

"You don't have to worry about that, okay? Because it shows how hard you work... on the contrary, I think Ayano can relax a little, you know?"

"N-No, that kind of thing..."

"Is that so? Ayano really is a hardworking girl, huh... Thank you for everything. I love you."

Ayano's eyes opened wide and almost fell at Masachika's confession of love who was gently caressing her cheek...

"Fuhuu~~~..."

"A-Ayano!"

"Oops!"

Masachika quickly supported Ayano, whose knees looked weak and eyes were foggy. Then, in an instant, Masachika picked her up princess-style, and gently laid her down on the bed while caressing her head.

"Fufu, Ayano is really cute."

After saying that, Masachika then turned to Yuki as if asking for her approval. But Yuki quickly steeled herself against it. Masachika began to approach her with a sweet smile as Yuki sat back down and held her hand in front of her chest.

"O-Ohh, what? Do you intend to do it to me too? If you think that I'm going to be intimidated by a casual confession of love, you're sadly mistaken, okay? Yes, it's a big deal if you're scaring me. Unlike Ayano, I won't... ah, wait..."

-- Five minutes later.

"I love you... I love you more than anyone in this world, Yuki."

"Ohyohyohyohyo! What the hell! There's a strange sound coming out of my mouthhhhh~~~!"

There was the figure of Yuki sitting on Masachika's cross-legged legs while being whispered to with words of love while being hugged from behind. Sweet words were chanted near her ear as she was gently hugged on her

stomach and her hair and cheeks were caressed. Yuki, who couldn't take it anymore, started moaning and squirming while making strange sounds.

At first, she felt uncomfortable with Masachika who was acting very affectionate, but when he did ikemen-style movements without feeling embarrassed, Yuki felt that everything was useless. After all, it seems to be true that if you feel embarrassed, you are the one who will lose.

"What's wrong? How come you can't calm down like that...are you feeling shy, huh?"

"Fuehh, anooo, ummm~ can you stop whispering in my ear? It's giving me goosebumps..."

"Really? Then... why don't you look over here? I want to talk while looking at Yuki's beautiful face."

"No, I don't want to~! Because my face is looking weird again right now~~~~!!!"

She stretched her arms and legs forward, wriggling and thrashing. But that still wasn't enough to escape Masachika's embrace.

Or rather, his grip was unusually strong despite his soft hands. Yuki could feel Masachika's strong desire to never let go.

"Ku-Kukuku, that's okay too. I never thought that you could make me this shy..."

"Fufufu, really? As long as I can see Yuki's cute figure, I will say my feelings of love for you over and over again, really? Because I love Yuki more than anything in this world."

"Fuhyaa, you, mugugu, don't get your hopes up, Onii-chan. If you think that I won't fight back, you're very wrong, you know?"

With a fearless smile on her face, Yuki crossed her hands on Masachika's arm.

"Feel this, Onii-chan! An eye for an eye! Teeth for teeth!
Hypnosis for hypnosis! I'll fight you in my latest new mode that I learned the other day!"

Although she used the words "new" and "latest" at the same time, Yuki did not care about that at all, she curled her body into a ball to increase her aura, and then she pushed her right arm into the sky with all her might.

"Come on! Activate! Angel Mode--"

"Even if you don't do that, Yuki is always my angel, really?"

"Fueeeaaaaaa"

Arguably, Masachika deliberately destroyed the forbidden transformation. Masachika, who was in doting mode, didn't wait for the long transformation scene. Yuki, who failed to make the change, became stiff to the point where the aura that was raised with great effort was wasted. Masachika hugged Yuki affectionately and rested his chin on Yuki's shoulder.

"My angel who always loved her family more than anyone else and always worked hard for her family... I really feel happy to have a little sister like Yuki."

"O-Ohhh..."

Yuki really felt embarrassed by the mercilessly snappy remark during her stiffness, she couldn't even make a joke. At that moment, a faint voice was heard behind Yuki who was blushing with a flat face.

"U-Ughh... umm..."

"A-Ayano! You're awake, aren't you!? Please help me for a moment!"

Looking over Masachika's shoulder at Ayano, who had lifted herself up on the bed, Yuki tried to ask for help. However, Ayano turned her gaze rudely to Masachika, who was looking at her in the same way....

"Ah, really... I'm going to prepare breakfast"

She said quickly and left the room, ignoring the pleas of help from her master.

"A-Ayanooooo, you traitor~!"

"Hey, hey, you can't say that, you know? We're all family, okay?"

"I told you not to whisper in my ear!"

Munyaa~~, Yuki raised her voice with a furious expression while wriggling wildly like a cat.

"Ah, to-toilet! I'm going to the toilet!"

"Hmm? Is that so? Well then, go ahead."

In response to Yuki's words that sounded desperate, Masachika easily let Yuki immediately get up and she hurried to the bathroom. After arriving, she then exhaled a long breath.

"This is really bad~really really bad."

The sweet behavior of her brother, who had lost his shyness, made Yuki unable to hide her excitement. It was very different from an idol video where a handsome man just whispers sweet words. After all, the words and Masachika's words and actions right now were... unmistakably... his true intentions. It was undoubtedly because Yuki herself hypnotized him with the suggestion, "You won't be able to control your overwhelming feelings of love!"

"Y-Yikes~~ Oh my, seriously, huhhh~? Onii-chan, you love me too much~~"

Yuki held her cheeks with both hands and wriggled her body while teasing Masachika. If she didn't do so, she was afraid of losing control of the itchy feeling that attacked her whole body.

"Damn, damn... Onii-chan is really cute."

After a while of writhing in the bathroom and calming down a bit, Yuki returned to the living room. Once back.....

"I like the way Ayano cooks... your hands look so skillful, I can't help but be mesmerized when I see it."

"Ah, ummm..."

"What are you doing, asshole, you guys look like newlyweds!"

Yuki immediately said a tsukkomi as soon as she saw Masachika hugging Ayano from behind while whispering sweet words. However, she did not dare step forward at the thought that her brother's attention might focus on her again. Yuki gritted her teeth and ventured to step into the kitchen entrance.

While on the other side, Ayano, who was now being coddled by Masachika, was completely frozen with a raw egg in her hand. Her eyes were rolling around expressionlessly, and her face gradually began to turn red.

"Newlyweds, huh Fufu, whoever can marry Ayano must feel lucky. She's so cute and kind, and can do her housework perfectly."

"A-Awa, awawawawawa..."

Upon hearing Masachika's sweet praise, there was a trembling sound that had never been heard from Ayano's mouth, and her hand holding the egg began to tremble violently. Perhaps sensing the danger that the raw egg would slip out of her hands, Ayano raised her voice tremulously.

"Ma-Ma-Masachika-sama! You can't do that! The egg, it's going to drop"

"Umm? Ahh... you can't do that, it's dangerous, you know. Look, can you hold it properly?"

While saying that, Masachika gently grasped Ayano's hand that was holding the egg with his right hand, while his left hand held Ayano's stomach. Immediately, Ayano's body trembled violently and made increasingly dangerous sounds.

"Ah, no! The egg will come out! The egg--"

"Don't start getting ready to conceive Onii-chan's child!!!!"

(TN: This sounds so fucking sus man)

Unable to bear it, Yuki stepped into the kitchen and pulled the Masachika from Ayano.

"Hora! Onii-chan should just watch TV! Don't disturb Ayano from cooking!"

She then forcefully removed Masachika from the kitchen area and looked back at Ayano, who had slumped down at the kitchen table and was still clutching the egg in her hand.

"...So? Can you continue making breakfast?"

"Y-Yes..."

"Don't stroke your stomach in a way that makes others misunderstand."

Ayano stroked her lower abdomen with her flushed cheeks, and Yuki looked at her with a dumbfounded look.

◇◇◇◇

"...Hmm~~"

After finishing breakfast, Yuki tilted her head when she saw Masachika was watching TV leisurely.

"Hmm? What's wrong? Yuki."

"I've had it."

"??"

When Masachika tilted his head with a sweet smile, Yuki said clearly with a sour face. It had been an hour and a half since she had hypnotized her brother to be an affectionate ikemen. She had gotten used to his sweet words and deeds. Or to put it bluntly, it started to become annoying over time.

Even during breakfast, he tried to tease her with 'ahhhhh~' and wiped her mouth with a tissue, so naturally Yuki felt stuffed. In a different sense from food.

(Besides, when will he wake up from his hypnosis? Maybe it's better if I open the window wide, huh...)

Since morning, it was quite hot and sultry today, so she closed all the windows and turned on the air conditioner after ventilating the room sufficiently, but it turned out that there was still a scent of candles still lingering in the air. Even Masachika's hypnotic state showed no signs of returning to his sanity.

"Hmm~... Maybe it's time to give another hypnosis~?"

As Yuki fiddled with her smartphone while muttering to herself, Masachika came around the table and hugged her from behind.

"What are you doing? Are you playing a new game?"

"Yes, yes, that's right~. Check this out."

"Hm? What the..."

While dismissing her brother's question, Yuki showed the screen of her smartphone. Then, Masachika's voice faded quickly and began to stare at the screen without blinking. When Masachika was once again in a state of hypnotic induction, Yuki gave her the next suggestion.

"You will become an Ore-sama-type ikemen guy. You'll be always confident and acting frivilous. But don't worry, because the people around you really like you~"

After saying that carelessly, Yuki then tapped on the screen, then a strange a strange hissing sound came out from her smartphone, and Masachika's arm jerked and shook. Then, his eyes gradually came into focus and he suddenly lifted her chin with a flash and looked at Yuki with a smug smile on his face.

"Oi, oi, even though you've been hugged by me, you're busy playing with your smartphone. You have guts too, huh..."

"Uwaah.... this is bad"

Yuki expressed her honest impression with a flat face to her brother who raised her chin while laughing frivously. Unlike the affectionate type before, this 'Ore-sama' type was not too serious in Yuki's view. After all, it will be over soon. Instead, she felt a little annoyed.

"What's wrong? Are you pouting because I'm paying too much attention to Ayano?"

"!!!!"

Yuki couldn't help but pick up her smartphone as she saw her brother's increasingly annoying behavior after being hypnotized into the type of

'Ore-sama'. Then, just as she started recording, Masachika lifted his body and flicked his bangs while turning around.

"Oi, oi, what's wrong with you all of a sudden? I understand your feelings of wanting to take a picture of me, but If you want to take a picture of me, can't you do it when I'm a little more fashionable?"

While saying that, Masachika unbuttoned the top button of his shirt, sat on the chair with a thud, and turned his troubled-looking gaze to the lens of Yuki's smartphone.

"Uwaahh so sly~ ... I mean, isn't the character 'Ore-sama' according to the description of Onii-chan a bit disgusting? I wonder what his reaction will be~ after seeing this when he wakes up?"

Yuki smiled cruelly when thinking of such a thing as retaliation for being embarrassed by her brother who was hypnotized into loving brother mode. Since it was Yuki who caused the problem in the first place, it was really a shameless slander. Yuki looked away from the unpleasant truth without the slightest of hesitation.

It took a while for Yuki to photograph her brother in a series of poses. Then suddenly, the sound of the intercom rang softly, and Yuki raised her face. At the same time, she felt a little uncomfortable because Ayano, who was usually ready to answer the call, did not move at all.

"Ayano?"

Yuki then took a quick glance to her side, and saw the figure of Ayano who was sitting on the chair with a somewhat dazed expression. Yuki thought that she was just blending into the air but it turned out that she still hadn't

recovered from Masachika's attacks of affection. Reluctantly, Yuki put down her smartphone and got up from her seat to answer the intercom.

"Yes, yes, who is it...?"

She peeked at the intercom screen thinking it might just be a courier.... but Yuki's body instantly froze when she saw the shadow of the silver-haired girl standing there.

"...Ehh?"

Her brother had never told her that Alisa was coming today. Maybe he forgot? Impossible. First of all, because there was a study session with Alisa yesterday, Yuki deliberately came to stay overnight thinking that she wouldn't come today. If she planned to come for two days in a row, how could Masachika have forgotten about it. If so, this might be a surprise visit by Alisa herself... but it was still 10:30 in the morning. It was still too early to visit a friend's house.

(Uh, Alya-san? Uh, why?)

Yuki was immediately in a state of panic, stuck in front of the intercom in an unexpected situation. From behind her, Masachika suddenly stood up quickly. He then stretched his hand over Yuki's shoulder, and pressed the answer button before she could stop him.

"What's wrong? Alya."

[Ah, Masachika-kun? I'm sorry for visiting so suddenly. It seems that I left my smartphone at your house yesterday...]

Yuki was convinced by the reason for Alisa's sudden arrival. However, at the same time, she then thought....

(For someone who just came to pick up her smartphone, her makeup is pretty fancy too.)

From a fellow girl's point of view, Alisa's outfit clearly seemed to be intentionally shown to the opposite sex. That would be fine if she usually dressed fashionable enough, but it felt like there was something more to it than that.

"No problem, come up then."

"Yes?"

"!!?"

While he was staring at Alisa with a gentle glance at the intercom screen, unexpectedly, Masachika had already opened the apartment gate and invited Alisa, who seemed to feel something strange about Masachika's way of speaking, entered the apartment without saying anything.

"No, isn't this serious?"

Muttering that sentence with a flat face, Yuki turned her head quickly. If asked what was serious? First of all, Masachika's hypnotized state alone was already serious. In addition, the presence of herself and Ayano in the Kuze residence this early would make matters worse. On top of that, Ayano was now wearing a maid uniform, and Yuki herself was wearing loose casual clothes.

(That's right! My current appearance is very dangerous!)

She immediately thought of that and had to change clothes first while she was contemplating that and was about to take a step, Masachika started heading towards the front door.

"Ughh~~~ the hypnosis must be released first!"

After feeling indecisive for a while, Yuki immediately grabbed her smartphone.

"Ayano! Quickly stop Onii-chan... No, hide my shoes and yours first!"

".....Yes"

As Ayano headed for the front door, Yuki activated her smartphone.

(For the time being, it's better to hide my shoes and Ayano's shoes first, and have Onii-chan, who is already awake, to meet Alya-san at the front door...)

While formulating the next plan at high speed, Yuki launched the hypnosis app and activated it...

"...Well, how do I release the hypnosis!?"

Not knowing how to release it, Yuki shouted in frustration. Now that it had already come this far, she had no other choice but to try the usual hypnosis release... and just as she was about to do so, the doorbell rang, and Yuki's body froze.

"Yoo~ she finally came."

Moreover, after that, she could hear the sound of the front door being opened and Masachika's voice welcoming Alisa. Faced with the worst situation, Yuki clenched her back teeth tightly.....

(~~~~ First of all, I need to disguise myself first!)

She ran to her own room, took off her ponytail, and changed her clothes as quickly as possible. Then, with a graceful smile on her face, she headed for the front door Then her body froze when she saw the scene in front of her eyes.

There, she saw Alisa's figure cornered against the wall and the tip of her chin lifted by Masachika behind the door. And then there was Ayano who watched the scene without showing any signs of trying to hide.

"No, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait..."

For some reason, Yuki tried to interrupt by passing by Ayano who was standing dumbfounded. Masachika then told Alisa with a sadistic smile.

"Come make babies with me."

"No, what kind of nonsense are you saying!"

"..... Yes."

"Ooooooooooooooiiii!? She said yes!?"

(TN: )

As soon as she replied to Masachika's 'Ore-sama'-style selfish sentence with a straight face, Yuki was almost surprised by Alisa's unexpected approval.

Then, after staring at Alisa's face with wide eyes, Yuki began to understand the situation when realized that Alisa had a blank and hollow expression.

"Damn! This person is so easy to hypnotize!"

Perhaps she was affected by the hypnotic scent that still lingered in the house. Even so, she didn't expect it to flow near the entrance, but... how susceptible was she to hypnosis? Or perhaps, it had become a habit to be hypnotized by Masachika? While Yuki was pondering that, Masachika walked towards her while putting his arm around Alisa's waist. Alisa also leaned back in Masachika's embrace with a dazed expression on her face.

"Uh, no... wait a minute, oi."

Yuki grabbed his shoulder and stopped him with a straight face as Masachika tried to sneak past her and head towards the living room. Then, Masachika glanced at her with a faint smile, and said in a reprimanding tone.

"Yuki... freshen up a bit. Okay?"

"What do you want to do, you bastard!!!"

Accompanied by a loud shout, Yuki immediately swung her fist. She mercilessly attempted to punch Masachika's jaw from his right side and tried to immobilize him. However, before she could hit her target, her wrist was grabbed by someone and was grabbed by someone and stopped.

"Oops, that's dangerous. I hate girls who don't listen to me, you know?"

"What the hell! Come back to your senses, you fucking cheat!!! Ayano! Oni-, Masachika-kun Ayano?"

Yuki tried to ask for her cooperation after seeing the existence of Ayano, who was standing upright and kept stepping forward in front of Masachika. However, when looking at the look in her eyes, Yuki had a bad feeling.

"Masachika-sama...Yes. I'm going to give birth to Masachika-sama's child...."

"You too!!!!!"

When she thought that Ayano always looked absent-minded, it seemed like the scent was slowly working on her as well. As for how that could happen...

(It's definitely my fault!)

It was none other than Yuki herself who made Ayano's resistance to hypnotism weaken by often using her as a guinea pig. While feeling worried inwardly, Yuki hurriedly gave orders when saw Ayano trying to lean her body against Masachika.

"Ayano! Sit down!"

"..."

"Shit, she won't stop! Is this the difference in talent!?"

Yuki spread out both her hands and stood in front of Masachika while dismissing her hands and shouted in despair. She then glared at Masachika, who was holding Alisa and Ayano in both hands, as if to challenge him.

"The moment I touch your shoulder, you will be released from hypnosis! Listen carefully? Ready? One, two-pyak!"

Yuki told her clearly, then tapped Masachika on the shoulder and shook it as if in prayer. But

"Yuki... what's wrong with you, jealous? Don't worry, I'll always be your big brother, okay?"

"It didn't work! Ahhhh damn it, what should I do here?"

As soon as she yelled out violently, Yuki felt a grip on her wrist and her body was suddenly lifted into the air. Then Yuki found herself lying on her back in the hallway.

"...Ehh?"

She didn't feel any pain at all, thanks to her semi-conscious passive attitude and Masachika's actions that gently knocked her down. But no matter how careless she was, she couldn't even react until just before she fell to the floor. Yuki felt frightened by that fact, but when she realized that her brother, who had done this, had already turned around and headed for his own room, she hurriedly chased after him.

"O-Oi, seriously, please calm down first, okay? Ecchi hypnosis is not really erotic doujinshi. No, isn't it weird that the guy is also in a hypnotic state too? No, no, going straight for a threesome on the first experience, isn't this not the harem route bonus after conquering all the routes multiple times!? If that's the case, you can only do it after you've conquered the individual routes!?"

She grabbed his shoulders from behind and tried desperately to stop him. But unfortunately, Yuki's small body was just dragged in vain.

"~~~~kuhh! Ahhh, I guess what can I do!"

Then, when entering the living room, Yuki let out a desperate voice.....



"— Hmm? Uh, guh! Ow, it really hurts! Ouch, huh, is it because my sleeping position is wrong so it hurts like this?"

Masachika groaned from the intense neck pain when he woke up.

"Owwww, it really hurts, why is it...hmm?"

He woke up clutching his neck and realized that somehow he had fallen asleep on his bed in his regular clothes.

"Why... Whoa!?"

Masachika looked around the room with questions on his mind and was surprised when she saw Ayano beside his bed.

"Eh? What? What happened?"

"I'm really sorry...."

"Apologize for what? Uh, wait, I have absolutely no idea what really happened."

"Actually...the scented candle I gave to Masachika-sama yesterday was meant to make it easier to hypnotize you...Masachika-sama has been hypnotized by Yuki-sama since this morning."

"Huh? Hypnotized?..."

In Masachika's mind, the half-naked figure of Alisa in the student council room reappeared inside his head....and he hurriedly pushed it away. At the same time, Masachika recalled that Alisa had lost her memory during the hypnosis at that time.

"A-Ahhh~... uh, what does that mean? Was I hypnotized by Yuki and ...experienced memory loss?"

"Yes most likely so."

"Huh..."

To be honest, Masachika still couldn't accept the situation he was in, and made an unenthusiastic sound. Actually, it's not surprising that his reaction was so, because he himself didn't realize that he had been hypnotized and didn't remember it

"...Then, for some reason my neck hurts a lot, why is this?"

"It's becauseI can't say for sure because my memory is also a little fuzzy...but when Yuki-sama was trying to stop Masachika-sama, she said that she did a wrestling submission move from behind..."

"Huh?"

As expected, Masachika still didn't quite understand the situation.

"...Well, that's okay. By the way, where is Yuki herself again? I mean, it's not your fault, so just raise your head."

"No, because I was the one who prepared the aromatic candles and the hypnosis app..."

"...Hypnotic application?"

"This one..."

After saying that, Ayano held out her smartphone which displayed an image of large closed eyes, accompanied by a faint and suspicious vibrating sound.

"...What the hell is this? What's this sound anyway?"

"Ah, this is a sound wave to release hypnosis? It seems so. By using this and letting the sleeping Masachika listen to this... Oh yeah, regarding Yuki-sama, yes. Yuki-sama, umm, she returned to the Suou residence first..."

"Huh? Why?"

"Umm... I was entrusted with this and had to hand it over to
Masachika-sama..."

Ayano very reluctantly held out a folded piece of paper. When opening it, Masachika only found the words "SORRY YA" written there in large letters typical of Yuki's handwriting. "...What does this mean? No, wait a minute. Trying to stop me?

Uh, did I do something that needs to be stopped?"

"That's... I think you should check it yourself..."

After saying that, Ayano glanced at Masachika's smartphone placed next to the pillow. With a bad feeling, Masachika began to turn on his smartphone, and a row of messages from his senpai from the student council group appeared on the screen.

[Kuze, what's wrong with you? If you have any problems, I'm willing to hear you out, huh?]

[Kuze-kun, are you okay? Maybe you were possessed by something during the investigation of the Seven Mysteries the other day...]

[No, I think it's cool, really?]

There were messages from Touya and Maria showing their concern. And a message of comfort from Chisaki.

One step back from there brought up a single video file uploaded by Yuki. When Masachika tapped on it....

『Oi, oi, what's wrong with you all of a sudden? I understand your feeling of wanting to take a picture of me, but If you want to take a picture of me, can't you do it when I'm a little more fashionable?』

"Wha-!?"

Masachika was instantly speechless when he saw his own appearance on the screen, which did not resemble him at all. On the screen, he was posing one after another in a narcissistic style. The video was so unbearable that he turned off the screen of his smartphone, but that didn't change the fact that the video had already been seen by his senpais. Masachika immediately felt his entire body become hot.

"Yu, Yuukii~~... What the What have you doneeee...!"

He gritted his teeth on the bed and desperately endured the embarrassment. And then Masachika suddenly realized. He had yet to receive a message from Alisa.

(In other words, there was still one chance that Alya would see it-- Ah yes, That's right! Alya forgot to bring her smartphone home yesterday, so she hasn't seen it yet! In that case, I should delete this video before she sees it...!)

The person he least wants to see hasn't seen this video yet. With a glimmer of hope that suddenly appeared, Masachika ran out of his room, thus forgetting the fact that Yuki had already left.

"Oi! Yuki-"

Then, while jumping out of her room and finding Alisa in the living room, flopping on the table and her back trembling slightly, Masachika's body instantly froze at the sight.

"Uhu, kufuh, fufufufu~~~~!!!"

Alisa buried her face in her left arm and made her back flinch while letting out a slight laugh. In the right hand that was thrown on the table... there was Alisa's smartphone, which should be on Masachika's desk.

『Oi, Oi, more photos again kukuku... Ahh, I see. You want to see me with your own eyes, and not through the lens of your smartphone, right? Kuhh, what can I do... 』

"~~~~!!"

His own voice, which was not like his, was playing on the smartphone. Masachika immediately fell to his knees on the spot.

"Yu-Yuki... Yukii~~~!!!"

Then, while crawling on all fours, he shouted a voice from the bottom of his stomach.

"What have I done~~~!!!"

"~~~~~!!"

The sound of Masachika's soulful scream was covered with Alisa's stifled laughter. At that moment, his smartphone vibrated in his hand. A message from Yuki was displayed on the screen, saying, "You're becoming very popular, huh".

Chapter 10 - Clumsiness and Store Employees

"Haaahh..."

In a cute room filled with stuffed animals of various sizes, there was a sad sigh that didn't match the atmosphere of the room. The owner of the voice was Maria, who was lying on her bed and holding a stuffed animal.

Maria was holding the stuffed animal in one hand and looking at the photo on a gold locket with the other, her facial expression was more somber than usual.

"Saa-kun..."



The name that came out of her mouth was the name of her loved one. The name she used to address with a melodious and beautiful voice was now filled with the sound of bitterness and sadness.

"I wonder if I'll ever see you again..."

A pessimistic hope emerged from Maria's mouth. But she quickly shook her head and curled up, burying her face in the pillow.

"...just a little more. Until this summer vacation is over..."

After saying that to herself, Maria clutched the pendant on her chest tightly. Either hoping for a reunion... or perhaps, terrified.

Knock, knock.

After a few minutes passed, there was a knock at Maria's room. She answered the knock with one eye peeking out from her pillow.

"Yes~"

"...Masha? Can I have a moment?"

"! Alya-chan!?"

Maria jumped as if she was bounced off the bed by the voice coming from the other side of the door. Where had the melancholy mood gone? Maria's mood could change very quickly.

"Wh-What's wrong!?"

Suddenly, her younger sister, who had always been sullen towards her, visited Maria's room alone. Maria immediately rushed to the door, as this occurrence only may or may not happen once every two weeks. Alisa, who came to visit her, looked a little confused by the festive welcome. On the other hand, Maria's face immediately broke into a smile when she saw Alisa's face. Alisa is here! Maria immediately got rid of all the troublesome things!

"...Were you sleeping?"

Alisa looked a little worried when she saw Maria's slightly disheveled hair. However, Maria's smile dispelled such worries from Alisa, and proudly puffed out her chest with a smile.

"No, I was just lying on my bed! So, what's the need?"

"I see, yes... well, that's..."

She was a little irritated by her sister's proud statement of being lazy, and mumbled a little. Then, while looking away and playing with the ends of hair, Alisa hesitantly opened her mouth.

"At the training camp next week... we have to wear a swimsuit, right? Did Masha prepare her's?"

It had been four years ago since the Kujou Sisters last went swimming. Since then, they had never gone to the beach or the swimming pool in person, so there were no swimsuits that fit their bodies, as they had grown up in many ways since four years ago. Although there are swimsuits designated by the school, even Alisa knew that wearing them outside of school was unethical. Therefore, she came to ask her sister who was in the same position. Which meant...

"No, I still haven't bought it. I was thinking of buying it today or tomorrow."

Anticipating her next words, Maria told her with a big smile. Then, true to her premonition, Alisa glanced at Maria and said as she averted her gaze again.

"Hmm... In that case, how about we buy it now? Since we still haven't bought it together."

Alisa asked her out on a date! Maria's IQ dropped five points!

"Yes! I don't mind, really~? Fufufu, I can go on a date with Alya-chan!"

"It's not a date, okay."

"When do you want to go? If it's Onee-chan, it can be anytime~."

"Uh, then... about 30 minutes later?"

"Alright! Then. I'll get ready first, okay~?"

Maria, who quickly looked very happy, closed the door and began to change into clothes while starting to hum a song. The atmosphere was completely different from a few minutes ago. Once again, Maria's mood rapidly changed.

So, after finishing her preparations with gusto, Maria left the house with Alisa.

"Then, let's go~!"

"There's no need to hold hands either."

"Yahh~"

As soon as she tried to grab Alisa's hand with both hands, she was brushed off roughly, and Maria puffed out her cheeks in dissatisfaction. However, she hurriedly chased after Alisa, who started walking fast first without paying much attention to her.

"Alya-chan, wait for me~ you're walking too fast, you know~!"

"You're the one walking too casually, right?"

"What's the point of rushing, the weather's just getting hotter, right? Let's walk slowly while chatting with Onee-chan, okay?"

"It's okay if we don't have to talk about anything."

"Boooo! Alya-chan is so annoying!"

While having their usual conversation, the two of them arrived at the nearest station and moved along the platform, drawing attention from the people around them.

"Come on, Masha, over here"

"Ehh, this one is closer to the stairs when we get off, right~..."

"No way. Let's not be too fussy and board the women-only carriage properly."

"Hmmpf... fine~"

Maria reluctantly walked through the entrance after being asked by Alisa. Of course, even Maria knows why the women-only carriages exist, and she also

knows that there are sexual harassment criminals in this world. Although she knew that, because she had never experienced it before, she didn't really feel dangerous and threatened at all.

..... No, although she wasn't really aware of it, she had experienced it several times. However, all of them only ended up being attempts because when before the perpetrator could touch her, the scary little sister would push them hard, or the scary student council vice-president would twist the perpetrator's wrist. It seemed ironic that while she managed to avoid that thanks to the efforts of the two of them, her own sense of crisis still remained as weak as ever.

"Even when you ride alone, make sure to board the women-only carriage. If not, don't get too engrossed in your smartphone, and stay aware of your surroundings."

"Yes~~"

However, perhaps it was Maria's nature to obey the advice of her sister and best friend, knowing that they were worried about her. Nodding at Alisa's warning, Maria suddenly frowned.

"Alya-chan... by any chance, have you been harassed?"

"Huh? Never... unlike Masha, I have a tight guard."

"Muu, I also have a tight guard, you know? Other than Saa-kun, I would never let another man touch my body!"

Maria puffed up her cheeks and put her hands on her hips in disappointment, but.... upon seeing her clothes, Alisa murmured in dismay.

"What mouth would dare say that..."

No wonder Alisa said that. After all, the style of dress Maria was wearing today featured her smooth shoulders and sexy belly button. With her fair skin smooth and healthy, her current appearance was already attracting a lot of attention from the people around her. However, Maria happily puts her hand on her hat and poses lightly for a moment, probably not knowing how to interpret the stares.

"Ah, this dress? Fufu, so cute, right~?"

"...I admit it. Although I would never wear it, anyway."

"Eh~? But this feels really cool, doesn't it~?"

"Girls shouldn't let their stomachs get cold."

Alisa pulled Maria's arm and boarded the train car after glaring at the surrounding male passengers around her who were staring at her sister with indecent looks. Then, after riding the train for fifteen minutes, they got off the train at a large station, where they usually shopped for clothes and other items. When they both boarded the elevator to the women's clothing area, Maria's eyes immediately sparkled when she saw the rows of beautiful clothes

"Wahhh~, that dress is so cute!"

Immediately, she tried to enter a shop that had nothing to do with swimsuits. Then Alisa, who had anticipated her movement, grabbed her left wrist and stopped her.

"Today we came to look at swimsuits, you know. Come on, let's go."

"Ehh~ wait a minute~ just a minute, let's look around for a minute~~"

Maria made a pitiful sound as her arm was pulled away, but Alisa continued on her way without paying any attention to her. Alisa did not hesitate as she understood very well that if she left her free sister unrestrained, her gaze would wander endlessly.

"Ah, that skirt, the one that was on TV the other day!"

"..."

"Wow, they're having a sale! Alya-chan, all the products are half price!"

To be honest, Alisa was a little shaken by those words. But since she had no intention to accompany her sister's shopping which would definitely be long and pointless, she kept her eyes stared at the road ahead and kept moving forward. Maria finally started to calm down a little when she was dragged halfway by her younger sister to reach the shop she wanted to go to.

"Uwahhh~ there are so many cute swimsuits!"

No, rather, she was just transfixed by what was in front of her. After looking at her excited sister with a dumbfounded expression, Alisa looked around for a while and raised her eyebrows... briefly and raised her eyebrows.

"What's wrong, Alya-chan?"

Without answering Maria's question, Alisa looked once more at the surrounding area of the sales floor..... and tilted her head slightly. "Aren't all the swimsuits too revealing?"

"Ehh, is it~? It doesn't have to be, does it?"

Tilting her head at Alisa's words, Maria pointed at the swimsuit-style one-piece swimsuit hanging on the wall.

"If you're curious, there are also swimsuits like that, you know? That one..."

"My legs can still be seen, you know?"

"...Legs?"

Maria turned to Alisa with a flat face when she heard the slightly unexpected statement. However, Alisa's look was very serious, and Maria blinked rapidly.

"Umm, Alya-chan? I thought it was normal for your legs to be visible..."

"No, it's not. Unlike the school swimming pool, there must be boys there too, right? You're supposed to hide places that aren't normally visible."

"Ummm, so what does that mean?"

When Maria tilted her head solemnly, Alisa said something as if it was a natural thing.

"Besides the belly, we should hide the legs and thighs too, right?"

"Alya-chan, do you want to be a diver?"

After making a joke with a flat face, Maria inwardly thought, "This is bad."

She knew that Alisa's guard against the opposite sex was very strict, but Maria could imagine a future where Alisa would finally wear a wetsuit if she

was allowed to choose a swimsuit. As a girl, she thought that was inappropriate, and as an older sister who loved her younger sister, Maria wanted Alisa to wear a cute and pretty swimsuit.

However, it is obvious that if she directly suggested a swimsuit and said, "Let's try this on!", she would have flatly refused with "I don't understand Masha's taste". After all, she had just seen Maria's dress with her belly button exposed and declared that she would never wear it. If that was the case, then...

"Alya-chan... Onee-chan thinks it's a good thing that Alya-chan is trying to protect your own body, but I don't think it fits with the TPO, you know."

TPO, meaning the behavior of a reasonable person..... No, those are words for someone who wants to be a reasonable person. Alisa was no exception to this, and looked at Maria with a twitch of her eyebrows. While looking straight into her eyes, Maria enthusiastically advised her.

(TN: TPO means time place and occasion)

"The training camp we're going to next is not an ordinary training camp, but rather a social trip to increase the closeness between fellow student council members. In other words, it's just a recreational trip, right? Therefore, I think we should dress appropriately and suitably."

"...That may be true, but it's not like we need to wear swimsuits that are too revealing...."

"Of course we do. If you're dressed in a way that clearly implies 'I don't want to show you my skin', no friendships will be formed.

I'm sure that everyone~ will feel uncomfortable and awkward, you know? Remember, there's no such thing as a truly honest relationship in Japan, right?"

"Muu...."

Alisa was at a loss for words, probably thinking that Maria had a point. Then, Maria seized the opportunity and folded her arms.

"Besides, the beach we're going to is a private beach, so we're not going to be seen by other unknown beachgoers."

"...Isn't there still Masachika-kun and the Chairman there?"

"Don't worry~ after all, the Chairman only pays attention to Chisaki-chan only. Besides, Kuze-kun will definitely see me."

"Ehh?"

When Alisa raised her eyebrows to ask what she meant, Maria dared to puff out her chest proudly.

"Remember, even Kuze-kun is a boy, you know. All boys must feel curious about girls' breasts. Therefore~... as long as I wear a cute swimsuit, I'm sure that the gaze of his eyes will be glued to me."

Maria gently wiggled her body while placing both hands on her chest. The corner of Alisa's mouth twitched at her sister's uncharacteristic words, and the competitive spirit flared up.

"Heee... how dare you say that. I am inferior to Masha. who is not only fat in the breasts but also in the stomach?"

While strengthening her tone of voice on the "I am" part, Alisa folded her arms and curved her body as if bragging about her own style. Then, she turned a meaningful gaze to Maria's bare belly and sneered at it.

However, Maria did not take offense to such a cruel provocation.

"You still don't understand anything, Alya-chan. Boys really~ prefer girls who are a little fuller, you know~? I think Alya-chan's toned body is also quite good, too?"

While saying that in a comforting manner, Maria confidently protruded her large chest. The corner of Alisa's eye twitched as she saw the arrogant attitude of Maria's uncharacteristic arrogance. Because Alisa was proud of herself, she was proud of the fact that she worked harder than Maria to maintain her figure. Was her hard work outweighed the fat deposits that her sister had accumulated through her negligence? Alisa flatly refused to accept such a thing.

"Your guts are big too... I don't want to know, you know? Don't whine that you'll feel embarrassed when walking next to me with my perfect style."

"Okay, who's afraid~? Then, Alya-chan will also wear a bikini, huh?"

".....Hmm?"

"What's the point of wearing a swimsuit if it doesn't show your belly~? Don't worry, I'll wear a bikini too~. Oh, this one looks good."

While Alisa tilted her head with, "Huh? How did it come to this?" Maria quickly began to choose a swimsuit. Then, a female employee who was

wearing glasses with her hair tied up tightly, walked up to her and interrupted her.

"Please forgive my impertinence, dear customer. With all due respect, this swimsuit seems a little small for you. I recommend one size larger."

"Ehh?"

Maria turned to Alisa when the female employee pointed it out to her while clicking the temples of her glasses. She then looked at Alisa's breasts seriously and said.

"Alya-chan... Did your breasts get bigger again?"

"S-so what?... Even Masha is the same, right?"

"Yeah, I guess so... I wonder if it's because of mom's cooking? My growth hasn't stopped at all~"

Tearing her gaze away from Alisa who gasped awkwardly, Maria looked down at her own breasts and made a troubled face.

"Alya-chan, you'd better be prepared for this, okay?"

"What the heck... anyway, this isn't the right place to talk about that, you know!"

While saying that, Alisa tried to grab the swimsuit that Maria was holding in her hand, but the store clerk took one size larger and quickly slipped it into Alisa's hand.

"Dead customer, if you want, you can try it on over there."

"Ehh, no, but..."

"There's no harm in trying it first. You can try it on first and then decide which swimsuit you want to wear. Now, please, this way."

Alisa was quickly guided to the front of the changing room and pushed into the changing room. Maria gave a thumbs up to the store employee, who had brought and forced Alisa to try on the swimsuit smoothly.

"Thank you so much for doing this."

"No, no, because this is my job."

"What a pro~... By the way, what's your name?"

"I'm sorry for introducing myself so late. My name is Watanabe and I am the manager of this store."

Watanabe-san then showed the nameplate on her chest while clicking the temples of her glasses. The store manager's glasses seemed to shine.

"By the way are you two sisters?"

"Ah, yes. That's right~. I'm the older sister, after all~"

In addition to her height being shorter than Alisa, coupled with her baby face, she always tended to be thought of as the younger sister, which was why she added those words. However, Watanabe-san was not surprised at all and repeatedly nodded her head as if she knew what she was talking about.

"Yes, yes, I can figure it out. You want your sister to wear a beautiful swimsuit. That's right, isn't it?"

"That's right~! That girl is likely to wear a diver's suit if she is left alone..."

Then Maria realized that there was no sound at all from inside the dressing room, and she poked her face through the edge of the curtain.

"Alya-chan, is something wrong~?"

"Wait-, at least call me, sis!"

Sure enough, Alisa frowned and made a reluctant expression with the swimsuit that was given to her, she then returned her gaze to Maria who suddenly peered at her.

"Then change your clothes immediately~ because the store manager ma'am is also waiting, you know."

"But, this swimsuit..."

No wonder Alisa felt hesitant. After all, the swimsuit that was in her hand was some sort of ultimate black bikini. The black bikini looked plain, had no ribbons or frills, and coincidentally, it only covered the sensitive area with a small cloth.

There is just a thin string and a small piece of fabric. This is the type of bikini that tends to be often worn by Western supermodels.

"I knew it, I can't wear this!"

Alisa shouted and tried to take her swimsuit off. Then Watanabe-san, the store manager, suddenly appeared there.

"Then, how about this one?"

She then gave her a pink bikini, this one had a much larger fabric to cover the sensitive area. The edges were decorated with frills and gave a cute and sweet impression.

"Well, if it's this one..."

Where did the assertion a few minutes ago that she would not wear a swimsuit that showed her stomach or legs? She was completely fooled by the door-in-the-face technique, but Alisa picked up the swimsuit Watanabe had brought without realizing it. Then, a few minutes passed to change clothes.

"Uwaah~ so cute~"

"The swimsuit is perfect for you. It's a type of swimsuit that's popular this year, but we've never seen anyone wear it as well as dear customer."

"R-Really?"



If it was just a compliment from Maria, Alisa would probably ignore it. However, Alisa blushed slightly at the shrewd compliment from the professional store manager.

"But the pink color is a bit too sweet for me..."

"I see. Then, how about this one?"

Watanabe-san quickly extended her hand to the side, and another store employee who suddenly appeared, gave her a new swimsuit. Do all employees in this shop undergo special training?

"This swimsuit has the same model, but as you can see, the floral pattern on the blue background gives it a refreshing and pretty look--"

Under such conditions, Alisa, who was carried away by Watanabe-san's promotion that was offered calmly, tried on six pieces of swimsuits.

"Hmm... this one might look good."

In a light blue striped bikini with big frills, Alisa's mouth slackened as if it was her first time being satisfied. Without missing the opportunity, Maria nodded in agreement.

"Yeah, yeah, according to Onee-chan, that swimsuit looks cute on you, really~."

"Uhh, hmm, but..."

Then, perhaps feeling a little calmer, Alisa checked her appearance again in the mirror and frowned as she asked,

"Isn't this still too revealing?"

But then Maria immediately put on a curious face.

"Ehhh~? It's still better than Onee-chan's, isn't it?"

Maria lifted up the white bikini with only a string in the middle, exposing her cleavage. Alisa's judgment was shaken when shown with a swimsuit that was more daring than hers.

"But my legs..."

Still, Alisa stared at her bare thighs, as if she was still very worried about that part. Then, Watanabe-san quickly handed a piece of cloth to her.

"If so, how about covering them with this pareo? If you buy it as a set now, we will provide special services up to this point..."

Watanabe-san took out a calculator from somewhere and pressed the numbers quickly and showed it to Alisa. The telling term "The price will be cheaper if you buy it as a package" made Alisa's heart sway.

After a few minutes later, Alisa slowly nodded as she tried on the pareo and checked her appearance.

"In that case, I'll buy this one..."

"Thank you very much. I'll bring you a new one from the back now."

Manager Watanabe clapped her hands loudly, and one of the clerks disappeared into the back area of the store. Alisa was a little surprised at how dexterous they were. Then, after finishing paying for the two of them,

"Thank you so much for shopping~"

They were guided out of the store by Watanabe-san and her highly well-trained employees.

After reaching her destination, Alisa's mind was already in the position of preparing to go straight home, but , on the other hand, Maria looked at Alisa with high spirits, as if the spirit engine in her body had just been turned on.

"In that case, what should we do next?"

"Next? I want to go home as soon as possible..."

"Ehh~ let's look around the other stores with me~"

"I don't want to come with you because I know it will take a long time."

"Muu~~ Alya-chan is so stingy~"

Maria complained with a boo-boo~, but Alisa didn't pay much attention to her and headed for the elevator. Maria was really curious if there was a reason why she wanted to go home quickly because of her stubbornness.

(Hmm~... aha! Is it possible that she wants to go home quickly because she wants to do a fashion show in the swimsuit she just bought? After all, buying new clothes must make one feel good!)

.....Maria is often told by her family and friends that she sometimes makes clumsy, incoherent statements. However, she doesn't realize this and does not admit it.

(Perhaps she felt embarrassed in front of me and the store employees earlier... I'm sure she was planning to enjoy the fashion show alone in her room. Oh, when thinking about it, I want to do it too.)

Because in Maria's mind, her statements always made sense. She always speaks after thinking of the proper logical progression in her own way. However....

"Alright I understand, Alya-chan. But since I want to do it with you, can you wait for me for the fashion show later?"

"...What the hell are you talking about?"

It sounds like a very nonsensical statement from the listener's point of view because she starts from the conclusion without mentioning the process at all. Of course, once again, Alisa had no idea what her sister was talking about. But she immediately thought, "The usual thing, huh?" and abandoned her understanding, then shook her head as she said "Yare~ yare~".

"Yes, yes. Well then, I'll take that swimsuit with me."

"Ah, really? Thanks~"

Alisa took the plastic bag from her sister's hand and quickly headed for the elevator alone. After watching her sister leave, Maria checked her watch, thought for a while, and then boarded the next elevator. She then went straight down to the ground floor, and left the building without looking around any stores in particular.

"Hmm... I wonder if I can walk from here?"

Then, after searching on the map app, she said to herself and started down the street. The place she was heading to was a place she had been frequenting in her free time since she returned to Japan. Today she was walking to a place she usually goes by bicycle. She was headed there, but...

"Ara? What kind of shop is that, huh?"

Maryia was still changing her mind here. She entered the accessories shop on the right side of the street as if she was sucked into it. After ten minutes, she then left the shop without buying anything... When she should have gone right and returned to the original road, she turned left without hesitation. She kept walking for several minutes...

"...Ara?"

Maria finally realized that she had strayed far from the path she had originally traveled. She then stopped for a while and opened the map application on her smartphone.

"Hmm~..... Hmm, maybe this way."

And still, without hesitation, she started walking in the wrong direction. Yes, in fact in fact, Maria was... a person who was always lost and directionless.

She used to tell her friends and family that she liked to wander around the city, but in reality, most of the time she was simply lost. Although she refused to admit it. That's because.....

"Ara? I arrived here without realizing it..."

Maria was also someone who always experienced miracles, who despite suffering from severe directional blindness, somehow managed to reach her

destination. Suddenly, something familiar caught her eye as she looked to the side, and Maria tilted her head slightly as she headed in that direction. There, there was a square with a lot of playground equipment at the edge of a large park.

Without hesitation, Maria crossed the center area and stood in front of a playground with holes of various sizes and climbed onto it. Then, she sat down on a piece of vinyl on the spot and looked around once, as if looking for something.

".... As expected, he didn't come, huh~"

While muttering a little sadly and keeping her lips tightly sealed, Maria looked up at the sky to cover her loneliness.

"Alright, no problem. I'll wait, okay? Because destiny is something that you have to reach for."

She puffed up her cheeks as if reminding herself of something, and began to stare at the clouds. Then, she waited patiently under the hot summer sun for 20 minutes.

(TN: Dahm it seems like she frequently waits at the park for Masachika)

"Ah, there she is! Hey~!"

Maria's shoulders jerked slightly when she heard a voice calling her..., but she soon realized that the voice was not "that guy" and lowered her gaze in slight disappointment. On the outskirts of the playground, she saw a group of seven elementary school children she recognized.

"Maria onee-chan~!"

"Our Onee-chan is coming~!"

"Let's play together again~!"

A group of boys and girls looked at Maria and smiled happily. With a smile on her face, Maria came down from the top of the dome.

"Yosh~ what are we playing today? Onee-chan won't lose, you know~?"

After cheerfully stating that, Maria started playing with all her might with the elementary school children. They played hide and seek using the entire large garden, and when they were tired, they could play online games under the trees, or chat with the girls. After spending time like that, the sun began to set, and the children began to return to their respective homes while waving to Maria.

"See you soon~"

She waved back at them, and when the children's existence disappeared..... Maria looked back at the dome-shaped playground equipment and smiled sadly. Maria's heart felt both happy and painful as she saw the illusion of her favorite boy who used to be there.

At that moment, a strong wind suddenly blew, and Maria quickly held her hair and turned her face away. Then, when she turned her gaze towards the playground equipment again, the illusion of the boy had already disappeared.

"...I'll come again, Saa-kun."

After lowering her eyebrows slightly and saying that, Maria again left the place filled with memories again.

Chapter 11 - Cooking and Reasoning

"How was your summer vacation, Kuze? Did you have enough fun and enjoy it?"

"Well, not bad. How about the chairman?"

"Well, I guess I was similar. I'm sure that I had a pretty meaningful vacation."

Inside the men's room on the second floor of the villa. There was a trivial conversation going on between two men facing each other on two beds side by side. There were only two men here, and although there should be plenty of things to talk about, right now they were not particularly interested in having a conversation. That's how it should be. Because 80% of both of their consciousness... especially Touya's, was being directed towards the kitchen downstairs.

Inside the spacious kitchen area of the Kenzaki family villa, there was now a special battle between the five girls. Although it sounded exaggerated, what was happening was basically a culinary battle. It all started when they were on the train heading to their destination. At Yuki's suggestion, the girls decide to

prepare one dish each for dinner today. And since just doing that would be boring, they decided to keep it a secret who made the dish and have the two men choose which dish is the best The suggestion was quickly agreed to, especially by Chisaki, who looked very enthusiastic, and that's exactly how it happened.

That's why, to be fair, the two boys were forced to wait inside their room while the five girls were busy cooking in the kitchen. However, since the

kitchen was not big enough for five people to cook at once, they had to be divided into two or three groups and cook in turn.

"Ahh~... yes."

"..."

Touya looked around at the door of the room while making meaningless sounds. His attention was completely distracted and agitated. But, it was only natural that he reacted that way. After all, unlike Masachika who could comfortably evaluate the dishes... In Touya's case, one of the dishes served was made by his beloved Chisaki. Yes, for Touya, the most important thing was not which dish was the most delicious. It was about finding out which dish was made by Chisaki!

"Umm, by the way, Chairman."

"Hmm?"

"Have you ever eaten the dishes that Sarashina-senpai made...?"

".....never."

"Ohh..."

For now, they were at least told to choose which dish was the most delicious, but there was still a possibility that they would be asked "Then which dish is the second second most delicious dish?" Or rather, if Touya guessed Chisaki's dish incorrectly at the initial turn, there was a high chance that he would be asked that question. If he got it wrong, guess again... Just imagining it was scary enough. Masachika himself didn't even want the two of them to get

involved in a heated relationship. *No one wants to see the beautiful blue sea turn bright red, right?

(TN: Probably an idiom/proverb in Japanese lost in translation, but I guess you can understand it)

"Umm, I'm sorry if what I said sounds a bit offensive, but isn't Sarashina-senpai good at cooking?"

"I don't know? But the fact that we've never talked about it before, there's a possibility that it is..."

"But when Yuki suggested a cooking competition, she seemed very enthusiastic...."

"...Chisaki always has an enthusiastic reflex when it comes to competitions."

"Ahh...."

Masachika nodded his head when remembering his partner Alisa, who also showed her competitive spirit when it came to matches. Then, to regain his composure, he said excitedly.

"But if that's the case, here's your chance, Chairman! Although this sounds polite, you can choose dishes from people who are clearly not used to cooking!"

"Hmm... it sounds complicated when you say that, but is it?"

When Touya looked up while looking at the ceiling, Masachika nodded his head vigorously.

"First of all, Ayano can cook normally. And according to Alya, Masha-san is apparently a good cook. Alya is not a bad cook, and Yuki is too Well, sometimes she fails, but she doesn't make bad food. Maybe I can recognize Yuki and Ayano's cooking when I try them. Alya's cooking too..... she has a habit of cutting vegetables carefully and such, so maybe I can recognize it when I see it."

"O-Ohhh, I see... I mean, have you ever tried the dishes from the three of them?"

"Y-Yes, because Yuki and Ayano are my childhood friends. As for Alya, I've only tasted it once..."

After slightly awkwardly messing up his words, Masachika cleared his throat once and continued.

"Therefore... As for the cooking of the three of them, I will give the signal to the Chairman once it is known. Once the dishes of the three of them are known, the choices will be Sarashina-senpai's and Masha-san's. In case Chairman guesses wrong the first time, you can still follow up on the other dishes. Right?"

"Oh, ohhh, you can be very reliable, Kuze."

"...Well, the problem is when Yuki or Ayano cook something strange."

Touya smiled as if seeing a glimmer of hope, but Masachika lowered his tone of voice and expressed his anxiety. Yes, after all, the person who proposed this cooking competition was Yuki. She might decide that if she made a dish that was so ordinary, Masachika might be able to recognize it right away, so there's a possibility that she'll serve a dish that she's never made before. And there was a possibility that Ayano would follow Yuki's orders.

"...Aren't you overthinking it? How could she make a dish like that in the competition that she proposed herself, right?"

"Let's hope so..."

Touya's opinion was quite reasonable. However, Masachika knew his sister's temperament very well. His younger sister was the type of person who cared more about making the competition more interesting than her own victory.

"By the way... I've heard on TV that Russians are very fond of mayonnaise, you know."

"Hm? What's with that?"

Masachika tilted his head against Touya's words, who said them while looking up as if searching his memory.

"They say that Russians will add mayonnaise to any dish. If so, I thought it might be a clue to distinguish the dishes of the Kujou Sisters."

"Adding mayonnaise to any dish... not sour cream or something like that? No, I've never heard of it, and my grandfather who went to Russia never mentioned it either..."

"Even if the food for tourists isn't like that, maybe it's home cooking?"

"Hmmm~ how much can we trust the information from the TV Besides, Russia is a big country, isn't it. Even in Japan, the food culture is very different between Kanto and Kansai. Especially with such a big country, surely the food culture is more diverse, right?"

"Hmm. That's right. Come to think of it, I can't deny that 'people in Japan love soy sauce', but if someone asked me if Japanese people would add soy sauce to any dish, I would definitely answer no...."

"That's right. Well, I don't think that information is very reliable, you know? ... But, if the dish is covered with mayonnaise, it's a different story."

"If it's just covered with mayonnaise, I won't like it."

Masachika also smiled a little at Touya who smiled bitterly. After that, Masachika looked at the door of the room and glanced at Touya's face.

"...How about we check on them for a bit?"

"Check up on them? But we're not allowed to enter the kitchen...."

"We'll just say we're going to the bathroom, really. Maybe we can get some clues after hearing the sounds and noises coming from there, right?"

(TN: *Two dudes going to the bathroom together? Idk man seems sus*)

"So that's what it looks like, huh."

They nodded to each other, and together left the room, with their bodies slightly bent over. Then, while descending the stairs very carefully, they concentrated their hearing behind the door that led to the kitchen and the living room. Then, they could faintly hear the sound of cooking.

Was it the sound of a knife cutting something with a steady rhythm? Shuwaaaaaa... There was also the sound of something cooking in a frying pan. Then suddenly came the voice of Maria's voice, and they stopped to listen carefully.

"It smells so good~... The more you sauté vegetables, the better they taste, right?~."

"That's right."

"The more better...? I see."

Maria's voice was answered by the voices of Ayano and Chisaki, and then accompanied by the sound of 'gosugosu' that continued. As Masachika and Touya tilted their heads at the inexplicable sound, all the sounds coming from the kitchen suddenly disappeared. And, an instant later...

Shukiiiiiiin

A guttural metallic sound echoed from the kitchen. The continued silence seemed to drown out the remaining sounds. After a few seconds, the sound of cooking gradually returned, as if the BGM sound had faded away.

"(...Chisaki, what did you end up cutting?)"

"(...Does cooking have to be like a performance of special moves?)"

Touya and Masachika looked at each other in the distance while in the middle of the stairs. Then they heard Ayano's voice again.

"Actually, it would be better to stir it a little harder."

"Stirring? Isn't it too soft because it's so easy to cut like this? It could be more persistent~"

"Chisaki-chan...? Why are you talking bad about vegetables?"

..... For some reason, her voice alone sounded terrible. When he turned around, Touya had completely turned away from him. Masachika also understood that feeling very well.

(.....Not to think about it)

Masachika remained silent and lightly placed his hand on Touya's shoulder to convey his sympathy. Then Touya turned to walk up the stairs with a distant look in his eyes and walked back to his room with a large body bent over. After looking at his back, Masachika really did go to the toilet even though he used it as an excuse..... When he stood up, Masachika saw Alisa looking at him with cold eyes from the side of the stairs.

"..."

"..."

They stared at each other in silence. After exchanging glances for a few seconds, Masachika slowly walked down the stairs, approached Alisa, and took both her hands.

"Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait..."

Then, while whispering to calm her down, he led Alisa away from the living room and said, with a stiff face.

"Don't take this the wrong way, okay?"

"What, it doesn't make any difference, does it? Besides, don't just touch me."

Alisa pulled her arm and slapped Masachika's wrist with a look of disgust on her face.

"Oops, sorry."

In the corner of his head, Masachika suddenly thought, "Didn't you say {you can touch them} in Russian the other day...?" while releasing his hand. Then Alisa rubbed the arm that had been gripped and muttered in a bad mood.

{Don't hold it too roughly}

"Sorry huh?"

Masachika had no other choice but to apologize honestly about this matter. At the same time, if he lowered his head while asking, "If I ask sincerely, am I allowed to touch it?" Alisa's majestic mountains naturally entered his field of vision.

(No, well, I just rudely touched an even more amazing place, right?)

Inevitably that kind of thought flashed through his head.

"Ohh, you're wearing underwear properly this time" came back to his mind.

"What a brat..."

As if she could read Masachika's mind, Alisa's cheeks twitched in disgust and glanced at Masachika with a contemptuous look. She backed away slightly while covering her chest with both hands, and let out a disgusting expletive.

"In addition to being a pervert, you also like to eavesdrop too, you can't be saved anymore..."

"No, no, no, being accused of being a pervert is too much, you know."

"Hmm, but you don't deny eavesdropping, huh."

"Well, that's just..."

After a little hesitation, Masachika sighed lightly and decided to speak honestly.

"Leaving me aside, the Chairman will get into trouble if he can't guess Sarashina-senpai's cooking correctly, right? So I was just thinking of doing a little reconnaissance to help him..."

"Hmm?"

Perhaps somewhat convinced by Masachika's argument, Alisa removed her hand from her chest and raised one eyebrow.

"Well, I see what you mean but I think, even Sarashina-senpai wouldn't feel happy if her cooking is known first by the judges in a serious competition, you know?"

"Uh, hmmmm. That's, well indeed..."

"After all, even if she loses, she can try harder next time so that she can be judged on her own merits, or else she'll lose the chance to be chosen based on her abilities and she will lose the opportunity to grow."

"Uuhmmmm~, what you're saying has a point..."

Alisa's argument made so much sense that Masachika could only groan. But this time the case was quite different. Masachika then smiled widely without saying his intention that it would be better to avoid a situation that would ruin the atmosphere of the long-awaited trip.

"Well, don't worry. I'll give you an honest assessment without prejudice. Even if I find out which one is your dish, I won't change my judgment."

Alisa also smiled provocatively at Masachika's smile.

"Ara, how could you guess which one is my dish when you've only eaten my cooking twice?"

"It's possible, isn't it? Because I've picked up some of your habits from eating your food."

"Hmm~?"

Alisa raised her eyebrows and smiled as if to imply "If you can do it, just try it." Masachika also responded with an arrogant smile. Without realizing it, Masachika felt that he was in the flow to find out which dish was her's. However, he was originally tasked with the mission to find out Chisaki's cooking. Although it was increased to two people, it didn't change much at all.

(But, it's getting more and more exciting... let's guess which dish it is then and who cooked it, as well as showing her my good points)

Masachika's motivation was even more burning, even though that was not the purpose of the cooking competition. Seeing his reaction, Alisa shrugged her shoulders lightly.

"Well fine, without being told even once, even if you can figure out which is my dish, you don't have to find out everything, right?"

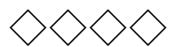
"Okay~. Then, I'll look forward to it."

After saying that, Masachika turned his back on Alisa and tried to return to the second floor.....

{Because I'll make you choose me}

(Hmm, hmm~! She means "my cooking", right?)

...then he heard an unexpected surprise from behind in a Russian phrase that was similar to a "declaration of love" from an aggressive girl, and his steps were slightly staggered.



"Then, Chairman, Masachika-kun, please enjoy the meal."

An hour later, Touya and Masachika sat around the dining table, and Yuki spoke on behalf of the others. And after that, the girls, including Yuki, immediately fell silent. Apparently, they intended not to comment or react when the boys ate it so as not to give them any clues about which dish belonged to whom.

"".....Itadakimasu""

Touya and Masachika clasped their hands together in a strange atmosphere while being stared at silently by the five girls from across the room. While doing so, Masachika looked at the plates lined up on the table.

(For now... none of the dishes contain mayonnaise, huh)

On the contrary, none of the dishes seemed to be unsuccessful. Though Masachika could hear the sounds of their chaos while cooking.

(Thankfully... I didn't see any burnt, intoxicated dishes that usually appear in manga)

On the other hand, there are no dishes that you can immediately tell who made them just by looking at it.... At first glance, the names of the dishes from left to right are fried rice, fried chicken, boiled gyoza, hamburg steak, and... a mysterious soup.

(What the heck is that?)

Not only Masachika, but also Touya became fixated on the food on the far right. The large bowl was filled to the brim with a reddish-black soup. French bread was served with the dish, and it turned out that the bread needed to be dipped in it. There are small tomato slices in it, so maybe the red color came from there... There was also a kind of lemon slice floating in the soup.

(Since there is a lemon wedge, does that mean the soup is cold? No, it was steaming... well, soup with lemon slices and tomatoes must be quite sour... yup, I don't have the courage to taste that just yet)

Masachika came to that conclusion, then exchanged glances with Touya, and lightly communicated with him. Touya pulled out a plate of fried chicken and placed it on a small plate for each of them.

(The dish looks ordinary... The garnish is lettuce and onions, yes. Well, fried chicken usually doesn't have any strange additions.)

It looked good, but to distinguish between Chisaki's cooking... or Alisa's, the lack of garnish was a negative point.

(Well, for now, it's better to try it first...)

First of all, Masachika tried the fried chicken first. As he bit into the crispy batter, the flavors of soy sauce and garlic, as well as the deliciousness of the chicken meat, spread in his mouth.

"Hmm... it tastes good"

"Yes, it's delicious."

The two of them naturally gave their impressions. At the same time, Masachika quickly glanced at the girls' reactions, but unfortunately they didn't react at all.

(Well, how could they divulge it so easily... No, but this really delicious)

Next time, if you wrap it with lettuce and onions, it will definitely taste good too. Because the fried chicken has a strong flavor, it goes well with vegetables.

(Well, this flavor itself is probably made with some kind of pre-made fried chicken stock but it's also quite difficult to fry crispy food. I guess the person who made this must be a good cook, right?)

He almost tasted it again, but he refrained and moved on to the next dish. Touya then picked up the fried rice plate located on the far left.

(The ingredients consist of...egg, spring onion, cabbage, no meat, huh?
Apparently this is pretty simple fried rice.)

However, daring to serve such a simple fried rice in a cooking competition, it means that the person who cooked this dish is probably quite confident in their skills.

(This might be a bit of fun)

With some anticipation, Masachika brought a small plate of fried rice to his mouth. And the result

(Hmm, well it tasted good anyway... but lacked flavor...)

To be honest, it was a little disappointing. Maybe because he ate fried chicken first which was quite strong, but even so, the flavor of this fried rice was still rather light. At best, it was elegant, but from the perspective of Masachika who usually prefers fried rice with the addition of garlic at home, the taste was less than satisfying.

(Well, it might be nice to be able to eat it without getting bored, but... I want to add some pickled radish or something)

While thinking that in his heart, the fried rice itself wasn't bad just because it wasn't his favorite, Masachika just said "It's delicious" for a formal compliment. The girls standing there still didn't react.

Next, Touya picked up a plate of gyoza. There were no special side dishes, just a plate of dumplings and enough broth to submerge about 70% of them. The distinctive feature was that there were no creases on the edges of the dumplings.

(While eavesdropping earlier, I felt that Sarashina-senpai used vegetables in her cooking. Based on that information, it seems that this one is not Sarashina-senpai's cooking.)

While thinking like that, Masachika brought the dumpling into his mouth...

"Hmm.....!?"

He was very surprised by the unexpected filling.

(In-It's not ground meat anyway... but mashed potatoes!)

(TN: *I beg your pardon?* 😐)

The soup tasted like consommé, which was surprising in its own way, but the flavor of the gyoza itself was completely unexpected. It didn't taste like meat that he had expected, and the faint sweetness of the sprouted potatoes that absorbed the broth caressed his tongue.

(Seriously... No, but something like this tastes delicious too)

While sharing his surprise with Touya, Masachika tartly said "It tastes delicious". However, this shook his theory that this dish was not from Chisaki. No, quite the contrary, if the potatoes were cut and mashed, it would explain the strange unexplained sound during the cooking process.

(Wow... I guess this is more difficult than I thought? If only Alya and Masha-san were cooking easy-to-understand Russian food...)

Instantly, a flash of inspiration like a divine revelation crossed Masachika's mind.

(I-isn't this... it's true!)

He didn't realize it right away because it looked like ordinary gyoza. But perhaps, there's no doubt about it. This was not gyoza, but rather...

(Russian food... Pelmeni!)

(TN: A type of Russian dumpling dish)

This is one of the famous Russian dishes in Japan. Masachika himself only knew it from words and had never actually eaten it. However, he realized that there was a possibility that this dish was Russian.

(If I'm not mistaken, Jii-chan once said that pelmeni can be filled with a variety of ingredients... I see, so this...)

So there was a high possibility that this was Alisa's or Maria's dish. The flavor itself is something that Masachika has never tasted, so there should be no way that it was made by Yuki or Ayano.

(It's possible that my guess is correct, isn't it?)

As stated, Masachika was excited with the hope that he might be able to recognize Alisa's food and be able to taste the pelmeni dish for the first time. However, when he saw the next dish that Touya offered, he felt that his excitement had diminished.

(Oh... it's finally this turn, huh)

Touya pulled out the mysterious soup located on the far right. The ingredients consisted of tomatoes, bacon, and shredded vegetables here and there...

(What's that green thing floating on the surface... basil? No, I can't imagine how it tastes...)

He stared intently at the soup in the bowl, putting aside the French bread that accompanied it for time being, and tasted it with a spoon.

"!?"

At that moment, Masachika was startled. Touya, who was next to him, also widened his eyes in surprise. It showed how unexpected the flavor of the soup was. In short, the flavor...

"Isn't this pizza..."

"That's right..."

Masachika proceeded to taste it once more. The flavor that spread in his mouth was still the taste of pizza...

(Pizza-flavored soup... No, it's really a mysterious soup)

But it was delicious. This dish was really good. This time, he took a slice of French bread, dipped it into the soup, and ate it.

"In addition, this is also still delicious..."

With each bite of bread, the broth that seeped into the coarse dough of the French bread seeps out. The slightly stronger acidity of the soup combined with the sweetness of the bread creates a synergy of deliciousness.

(This is amazing... Eh? Is this one too...?)

Suddenly, a piece of knowledge appeared in Masachika's mind. Russians usually eat soup and bread for lunch. After all, he'd heard that there were many kinds of soup in Russian food. When he thought that this soup was one of them, it made sense. But.....

(It's dinner time and... Russians usually use black bread...)

Even if this soup is Russian food, would the real Russians, Alisa and Maria, serve this combination for dinner? Instead, it's much more natural to think of it as something made by a halfway knowledgeable person who checked the recipe over the internet and made it for the sake of distraction...

(Well... anyway, it's better to think about that after eating the last course)

Having concluded that much, Masachika suspended judgment and moved on to the next dish.

The last thing left was a Japanese-style hamburg steak with grated radish and red bean paste on top. The garnish consisted of mushrooms, broccoli, and bell peppers. One of them was quite large, so he decided to cut it in half and share it with Touya.

(This dish is similar to the fried chicken from earlier, not very distinctive in appearance, but.....)

It was a regular hamburger steak dish with no cheese in it. When I tried eating it, the flavor was also mediocre, but still delicious.

"I usually eat it with demi-glace or tomato sauce, but the Japanese-style hamburg steak is also delicious."

The grated radish that had absorbed a lot of the bean paste was sweet and went well with the hamburg steak. The flavor of the hamburger itself seemed unremarkable, but the combination of ingredients was delicious to Masachika.

(But, if asked whose dish this was...)

Masachika couldn't be sure because he had never eaten it before. While feeling indecisive, Masachika finished his portion and put down his chopsticks.

"Alright, how about we start the assessment?"

And when Touya finished eating, Yuki shouted happily. Finally, it was time for the decisive moment, but..... Masachika couldn't identify Chisaki's cooking.

(I think the only thing that sets it apart is the pelmeni... I'm sure that either Alya or Masha-san made it. And that mysterious soup seems to be the same but I can't rule out the possibility that Yuki made it.....)

Clearly, both dishes were probably not made by Chisaki. That information was then conveyed to Touya by gesturing to himself under the table...

But all that was left was fried chicken, hamburg steak, and fried rice, the three most favored dishes of boys in the world. According to Masachika's taste, the fried rice dish is one notch below...

(Was it an accident to make it taste light, or was it intentionally made lighter? Depending on which, the story could be different...)

If it's the former, there's a good chance that it's Chisaki's cooking. But if it's the latter the latter...

"...Okay, I've decided."

While Masachika was still thinking about it, Touya who was next to him said so, and Masachika looked at him in surprise. Masachika had not narrowed down his list of candidates. However, Touya looked straight ahead firmly and spoke his answer clearly.

"In my opinion, the fried chicken was the most delicious."

The atmosphere was instantly quiet. A moment of tension occurred that didn't seem like a moment. Then....

"Hooray!"

In the next moment, Chisaki's voice was filled with excitement. She jumped up from her chair and raised her fist to the ceiling. Before Masachika could give his answer, Chisaki had already revealed her dish, and the other girls slightly lowered their eyebrows with troubled faces, but still congratulated her.

"Congratulations, Chisaki-chan."

"Congratulations, as expected, as a couple, you two are very suitable for each other."

"Congratulations on the success."

"Thank goodness. Congratulations."

While clapping with the girls, Masachika smiled in a different way.

(What the heck, it turns out that the Chairman doesn't need my advice... haha, I really can't stand this~)

For some reason... in a different sense than food, he already felt full.

"Fufufu~ Touya... was it really that good?"

"Yes, it tasted really good, you know?"

"I see... I guess it was worth it to train hard just to cook only fried chicken."

"Hmm? Only?"

"Fufufu, if it tastes that good... I'll keep making it for you, okay?"

"O-Ohh, I'm really looking forward to that?"

Chisaki slapped Touya on the back with a hue of excitement, and Touya talked while desperately swallowing something that came up with his surprise.

The look in Masachika's eyes became soft in the presence of the very happy couple..... By the way, in the not too distant future, Touya will be given a kind of ultimate fried chicken lunch box by Chisaki every day, which contents consist only of white rice, fried chicken, and fresh vegetables but that's a story for another time.

"Well then, back to the topic of judgment, what does Masachika-kun think?"

"Hm? Ahh..."

Prompted by Yuki, Masachika turned to face forward. He could see Yuki smiling happily and gracefully, then Ayano with an expressionless face, then Maria with her big smile, while Alisa had an ordinary expression, but with a serious look as if to imply "I'm not interested, you know?"

Masachika opened his mouth in front of the gazes of the four people looking at him....

"I think that soup tastes really good."

She told them honestly about her judgment. Then

"Ara, really? I did it."

After looking a little surprised, Maria put her hands together and exclaimed happily. At the same time, he could see Alisa furrowing her brow, but... what else. As Alisa had said, this was a serious cooking competition.

"It turned out to be Masha-san's cooking, huh? No, it's really good, really. I've never tasted anything like this before... Was this Russian food?"

"That's right~ this dish is called Solyanka, you know~."

"Solyanka, yes sorry, I've never heard of it."

"Hmm~..."

Hearing Masachika's words, Maria put her index finger on her chin as if she were thinking a little, she then tilted her head and said.

"If borsch is like Russian miso soup, then solyanka is like a Russian tonkatsu?"

"Uh, seriously? Tonkatsu? This dish?"

"That's what it looks like anyway~."

Maria said that desperately while waving her hands up and down. As Masachika smiled wryly at the adorable sight, Yuki returned to call out to him again.

"By the way, do you know who the other dishes belong to?"

It was a rather cruel question, but Masachika grinned back confidently. Because he had originally intended to identify everyone's dishes, Masachika felt confident when the other two dishes were identified.

"First of all, this fried rice is from Ayano, right?"

Masachika pointed at the fried rice and said so while looking at Ayano, then Ayano nodded in return and looked down slightly.

"Yes, that's right."

"I knew it. You deliberately made the taste lighter because the others made their dishes quite flavorful, right?"

"Yes... I thought it was better to cook a dish that can be eaten with other dishes."

"Hahaha, even though it's a cooking competition, you still put other people first, it's like Ayano's nature."

As he said this and smiled gently, Ayano shook her shoulders slightly shyly. With a widening smile, Masachika then pointed to the hamburg steak.

"Next, this is Yuki's."

"...Exactly. It's great that you were able to figure it out."

"Well, I thought you were trying to win this time. It seems like you're deliberately disguising it lightly, right?"

The dish itself was done properly, but the seasoning was changed so that it wasn't recognizable who cooked it, which is what made Masachika confused to recognize it. However, Yuki said with an indifferent face, "It's already summer. This time I tried to spice it up with flavors that are refreshing and light."

"Then next... this dish belongs to Alya."

With a smile full of satisfaction, Masachika laughed proudly and pointed at the remaining dish.

"..... correct answer."

Then Alisa nodded with an expression of dissatisfaction, but a little pleased. She might feel happy that Masachika could recognize her cooking, but she also had mixed feelings about being recognized so well.

(But, well, thanks to that mysterious soup... what was it called... Solyanka? I can identify it because I know that it's Masha-san's cooking, right?)

Masachika smiled wryly inwardly, but being unaware of such a situation Ayano innocently gave her a heartfelt compliment.

"That's amazing, Masachika-sama. You have an amazing talent for taste as well."

"Hmm? Well, because Alya's cooking is easily recognizable, anyway."

While feeling a little better thanks to Ayano's glittering eyes, Masachika looked at Alisa with a proud smile.

"At first, I thought that it was just ordinary gyoza, but... after eating it, I recognized it right away. It's a pelmeni, isn't it?"

Masachika smiled with a satisfied grin and showed off as a man who could distinguish that much. However, Alisa raised her eyebrows slightly and said curtly.

"It's called varenyky, you know?"

"Wait, what was that?"

(TN: )

Instantly, a surprisingly awkward atmosphere prevailed in the living room.

Chapter 12 - Lover and Master

"Then let's get the slumber party started!"

The student council training camp was held at the Kenzaki family villa. On the first night of sleepover, inside the room where the three first-year girls slept, Yuki who was wearing her pajamas while sitting on the edge of the bed, was screaming with excitement. On the other hand, Alisa who was wearing pajamas also hesitantly responded and opened her mouth.

"Is it okay... on the bed, doing things like this..."

Alisa tilted her head slightly as if her conscience did not forgive herself. Her gaze fell on the juice and light snacks neatly arranged on the bedside table. Since there wasn't much room to sit on the floor, they sat on two separate beds, with juice and snacks between them. But Alisa, who had a serious nature, felt uncomfortable sitting on the bed to eat or drink.

"Don't worry~ don't worry~ as long as it doesn't spill, I think we'll be fine."

However, Yuki who was sitting across the table next to Alisa, brought a choco chip cookie to her mouth as if to calm her down. Ayano, who was sitting next to her, also picked up the individually wrapped mini-donuts and put them in her mouth in one bite, trying not to spill it. Why there was no sound when unwrapping it was still a mystery. By the way, unlike Yuki and Alisa, Ayano was wearing a thin negligee. The reason why she was wearing a negligee was obvious. If she didn't wear a skirt, she couldn't grab her weapons quickly in case of an emergency. Although it was not yet known when the emergency would arrive.

(TN: No gonna explain what a negligee is here, you can search it up for yourself. Uhh just make sure no one else is looking at your screen ig)

"Hmm... well, I guess I can clean it up later, right?"

Seeing the two people in front of her eating the snacks deliciously, Alisa seemed to find peace with herself. While leaning her body slightly forward, she took a piece of choco chip cookie in her mouth and relaxed her cheeks. Seeing that scene, Yuki began to smile widely.

"Fufufu, that's how it should be, Alya-san. Before going to bed at night, we need to enjoy sweets and juices without worrying about calories. This is the joy of a slumber party!"

Alisa's hand stopped for a moment after hearing the word 'calories' mentioned by Yuki. However, when she saw Ayano who was quietly bringing a mini donut into her mouth without caring about it, she then turned her gaze to her stomach, and after a few seconds of silent contemplation, Alisa reached for the chocolate cookie again.

..... Thinking about it calmly, looking at Ayano's stomach right now absolutely can't be used as a reference point at all. The calorie intake she ate now would have an effect until tomorrow, but Alisa turned away from that fact.

"...Well, maybe I can think of this as dessert after a meal...after all, I've also been exercising a lot at the beach today."

Alisa mumbled while making excuses and brought a chocolate cake to her mouth. Seeing that, Yuki smiled like a demon rejoicing at the fall of mankind. However, as soon as Alisa raised her head, her smile immediately disappeared in an instant.

"That's right, I was too engrossed in the cooking competition and made the mistake of not preparing dessert."

"Fufu... If you want, we can have a dessert match as the second round."

"Ahh, that's a good idea... upss, almost forgot."

Yuki then picked up the cup with an expression that reminded her of something, and raised it lightly.

"In the end, we lost to senpai... so as a consolation prize, let's have a toast."

"What the heck?"

While laughing at Yuki's suggestion, Alisa also picked up her own cup. After making sure that Ayano had also secretly picked up her cup, Yuki began to take the lead.

"Then, as a consolation prize... Masachika-kun no baka!"

"!/? Fufufu, baka~!"

"!/? ...Cheers?"

Alisa who was surprised for a moment by Yuki's shout immediately smiled amusedly and joined in and responded happily, while Ayano looked confused and hesitated while raising her cup. To Masachika, it was a cruel slanderous remark. However, the atmosphere between Yuki and Alisa was already getting more relaxed.

"Geez, Masachika-kun really sucks, doesn't he~. It's true

that Masha-senpai's cooking is good, but I wanted him to praise our cooking more by saying, 'This one is no less delicious, really'."

"That's right. Moreover, he misnamed the name of my dish with a cocky expression on his face, you know?"

(TN: Gotta admit that was a true L moment from Masachika right there)

"Ahh, that was really embarrassing, wasn't it~"

The three of them present knew that they didn't really mean it, but Ayano who could not badmouth her employer even if it was just a joke, looked rather troubled and agitated. Seeing Ayano's reaction like that, Yuki smiled and turned to her.

"Ayano, if you have something to say about Masachika-kun, you are free to say it, really?"

"Ehh!? No, no, that kind of thing... Masachika-sama is a really kind-hearted and wonderful person..."

"...A kind-hearted person? Wonderful?"

When Ayano said that while shrinking her shoulders, Alisa raised her eyebrows and narrowed her eyes. She then began to recall all of Masachika's behaviors towards herself. The image that came to mind was of Masachika always teasing and pranking her whenever he got the chance.

"...In fact, he is quite naughty, you know?"

Alisa muttered to herself because she was a little annoyed at the image that appeared in her head. However, Ayano blinked repeatedly as if not understanding what was being talked about, and asked while tilting her head.

"...Masachika-sama, naughty?"

"Y-Yes, whenever something happens, he always taunts me..."

Alisa replied while being slightly taken aback by Ayano's gaze that was truly sincerely a question. However, Ayano only tilted her head curiously. Then at that moment, Yuki reached out for help while laughing.

"Fufu~, even if Ayano is teased, she will probably answer with a flat face like 'What does that mean?'. Whereas on the other hand, Alya-san is always serious and gives interesting reactions, maybe that's why Masachika-kun likes to tease you."

"Is that so?"

"It doesn't make me happy at all..."

"There, there. Isn't this similar to that? Hmm~ something like, you want to keep teasing the person you like?"

"Hmm?"

After hearing Yuki's words, Alisa raised her eyebrows and suddenly put a calm expression on her face.

"Well, it could be? Maybe that might be so...."

And as she said that while playing with the ends of her hair... Alisa then recalled the image of herself who also teased Masachika.

"No, that's impossible. That kind of thing is impossible."

Alisa instantly retracted her previous statement and removed her hand from her hair with a sullen expression.

"Ehh, what's wrong?"

"It's nothing, really? Well, it's similar to an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, so it's nothing like that."

"???"

Alisa lightly cleared her throat at Yuki who seemed unable to follow the conversation...

"First of all, I can't understand the feelings of someone who wants to tease the person they like."

"That's... because they want to seek attention from their crush? You see, boys often do that, right? They'll tease or make fun of the girl they like. Hasn't that kind of thing ever happened to you, Alya-san?"

"Ah... well. I usually just ignore them. Do they think they will be liked after doing something that annoys the girl they like?"

Yuki chuckled to Alisa, who snorted in annoyance after saying something so mercilessly.

"Well, no matter what age, boys always look childish sometimes."

"That's right. Even when they're in high school, they can't calm down at all, and are always doing stupid things."

"Fufufu, but when you see boys doing stupid things to each other, it sometimes makes you think that it looks fun, doesn't it~?"

"I myself think that they're free to do whatever they want as long as they don't bother other people, you know? But flipping through manga magazines at school is just too much."

"Ahh, it's true that breaking school rules is not good. But I think it's still funny if you only bring manga, anyway."

"If it's just normal manga, okay? But they grin sometimes when they look at gravure magazines, you know? I really wish they'd stop doing that kind of thing ..."

"Hmmm~ that kind of thing does make girls feel uncomfortable..... Speaking of feeling uncomfortable, you definitely don't want them gossiping about which girl is the cutest and which one has the biggest boobs, right~..... You can even still hear it normally even if they're already whispering."

"That's right... and if you listen carefully, they always talk about two-dimensional girls. It really makes me feel sick."

"...? That's right. Sometimes they'll argue about who their favorite character is in a popular anime show, right?"

"That's right, that's right. After all, that stuff is just fictitious, right? Seriously, I don't understand why they're so obsessed with that kind of thing. Every time

they play gacha games, they would feel happy or sad depending on whether or not their favorite character appeared. not....."

"Hmm.... Aren't they obsessed because it's a fictional and idealistic character?"

While answering like that, Yuki felt a suspicion growing within her. That suspicion was

(Ehh? We're talking about boys in general, right? Is this just my feelings? Alya-san seems to have been talking about Onii-chan all the time...)

That's what she felt. To prove her suspicion, Yuki tried discussing a topic that was a little closer to that.

"Speaking of boys, they're always uncooperative when there's a time based schedule, right?."

"That's right. Even though they have done their part of the schedule, they won't do more than that."

(Was that about Onii-chan?)

"They must be sleeping after gym class or other classes, right?"

"That's right. Well, they always look sleepy, anyway."

(That's about Onii-chan, isn't it?)

"Also, they usually play smartphone games at school, right~?"

"That's right. They always deny it by saying 'Since it's not yet class time, it's not a violation of school rules.'"

(Yup, it's definitely about Onii-chan)

Even though they were talking about boys in general, Alisa was clearly only talking about Masachika. Yuki's cheeks twitched at this a little scary.

(Hahh~? How strange, huh~? In Alya-san's world, is the only boy in existence Onii-chan? Is she a princess imprisoned in a tower and separated from the outside world?)

If she's doing it consciously with Masachika in mind, then hurry up and get married, but if she does it unconsciously, how uninterested is she in other boys? No matter what, Yuki felt that she should not should not touch that topic. So, Yuki quickly averted her eyes and looked at Ayano who was next to her.

"By the way, Ayano, didn't you keep eating donuts all the time?"

"Uh, ah... that's right."

Without realizing it, Ayano had already opened a new package containing mini donuts and was holding it against her stomach. Don't tell me, the reason she bought two packs of mini donuts on the shopping trip this morning was because she intended to eat them all by herself?

"Just like the Churros at the amusement park the other day, you really like them, huh? Deep-fried pastries."

"Y-Yes..."

"No, I'm not scolding you, really."

Ayano shrugged her shoulders as if apologizing, but still did not let go of the package of snacks. While smiling wryly at the sight, Yuki then turned to Alisa.

"What kind of cookies do you like, Alya-san?"

"Me? Hmm... maybe chocolate? I basically like sweets, anyway."

"Oh, Alya-san has a sweet tooth, huh."

"Yeah, maybe? But spicy food..."

Alisa muttered and gave Ayano a meaningful look. On the other hand, Ayano also responded with a meaningful blink. Yuki did not understand the meaning of that, but she felt there was some kind of bond between the two of them when they looked at each other and tilted their heads slightly.

(Is this... friendship? No, it's more like comrades in arms... no, what the hell is this?)

While throwing a tsukkomi inside her mind, Yuki asked the two of them about something that had been bothering her.

"...By the way, Alya-san still calls Ayano Kimishima-san, right?"

"Ehh? Well, that's right."

"Ayano also still calls her Alisa-sama."

"That's... yes."

As the two of them exchanged confused looks, Yuki now felt as if they were a pair of communication disorder sufferers whose relationship had not developed at all.

(What the hell is wrong with these two, how troublesome)

Despite thinking so, Yuki still put her hands together with a smile innocently.

"Isn't that kind of call very strange, even though we're sleeping in the same room like this? I think we should stop calling each other by our surnames and start calling each other by our respective names."

"Eh...? Hmm. I don't mind, really."

"I also if Alisa-sama feels okay with it."

(What, are they a cat-shy couple!?)

In front of Yuki, who inwardly made such a joke, Alisa and Ayano exchanged glances as if they were stealing glances. And then, Alisa opened her mouth reluctantly.

"Umm, then... Ayano-san?"

"Ah, yes. Alisa-sa...n."

(Their conversation was still too awkward for a flower couple)

Yuki's otaku brain immediately raced as the two of them made progress in their relationship, which was a bit similar to a yuri couple who had just started dating.

(Fumu, is this Alya x Ayano? Or maybe Ayano x Alya? Either way is good... rather, I want to be a part of them too. Any guy who gets caught in between a yuri will be killed, but if a girl gets caught in between a yuri pair, she'll definitely be forgiven, right? If necessary, how about involving Masha-san who really likes Alya-san?)

(TN: I'm pretty sure the difference between Alya x Ayano and Ayano x Alya is that the first name is the person who is the "lead" or "dominant" partner in Yuri relationships)

"Yuki-san?"

"Ah, ummm..."

When Alisa gave her a suspicious look as she had yuri fantasies, Yuki immediately asked the question that came to her mind.

"Oh yes, Alya-san. Why are you resisting so hard to be in a room with Masha-senpai?"

Even though it was an overly forced change of topic to get rid of the yuri fantasy inside her head, Alisa just frowned without being too bothered.

"...Because I'll be used as a pillow."

"Ehh?"

"...Masha always sleeps with a very large pillow...or rather a large stuffed animal? So when she's traveling and doesn't have one, she sometimes gets delirious and uses anything nearby as a pillow..... Whenever on a family trip, especially at an inn, she always sneaks into my futon..."

"Oh... Then, perhaps Sarashina-senpai is being used as a bolster pillow right now, right?"

(TN: No she isn't but someone else is 

When Yuki jokingly said that, Alisa began to imagine that scene, and chuckled.

"It's possible, but Sarashina-senpai will definitely kick her out with all her strength."

"Fufufu, that's right. It's possible that she'll be kicked out of bed."

"That's good. I hope that she'll learn from that incident and never use people as bolster pillows again."

While laughing with Alisa, Yuki thought to herself, "Made into a bolster pillow by Masha-senpai? If so, I'll gladly become her bolster pillow."

Once flowers bloomed in her brain, it seemed to be quite difficult to get rid of. After that, Alisa and Ayano, who seemed to feel a little closer because of the change in their way of addressing each other, started talking to each other little by little. Gradually, the three of them were able to chat casually like normal girls in general.

(I guess it's about time...)

Yuki put her palms together when one of the topics was finished and seized the opportunity.

"Then, I guess it's time to discuss the main topic."

"Main topic?"

"???"

"You two still don't understand it? The main topic of the slumber party is, of course, love talk!"

".....What?"

Hearing Yuki's encouraging statement, Alisa's reaction was a little sluggish. When Alisa clearly showed that she wasn't too interested in the topic... Yuki raised her voice cheerfully.

"I've been dreaming of this for a long time! Gathering with my friends and chatting about love to my heart's content!"

"!!"

Alisa's cheeks twitched when she heard the word "friends" from Yuki's mouth. Then, she turned her gaze away from her with a not-so-interested expression and slowly brushed her hair back.

"mmmm...hmm~? Is that so? Well then... let's do it? Chat about love."

At that moment, a dark smile appeared on Yuki's face, as if her inner voice saying 'so easy~' could be heard. However, because it was just for a moment, Alisa who was looking away did not notice it.

"Then... let's start with the ideal type of guy. By the way, mine is someone who is understanding and kind. What about Ayano?"

"For me... that's right. Maybe a guy who always invites me is my ideal type?"

"Ahh~, Ayano isn't a strict person, anyway... What about Alya-san herself?"

"A serious and honorable person who always strives to improve themselves."

"Hee~"

While a little surprised by Alisa's quick answer regarding such a topic, Yuki felt a little doubtful about the answer and tilted her head.

"...Doesn't that mean that someone who is like you is Alya-san's ideal type of guy?"

"Well, that's true. Isn't it important to have the same values?"

"That's true, but considering Alya-san's personality, that type of person might be a good rival, but I don't think you'll develop any romantic feelings for him...."

"Ehh?"

"No, in Alya-san's case, you might recognize and compete with that guy, but you'll never hold hands with him..."

Upon hearing Yuki's words, Alisa's eyes widened in surprise and slowly put her hand on her chin. She then examined Yuki's words with a serious expression for a few seconds before nodding deeply.

"...When I heard you say that, maybe there was some truth to it too. If that's the case, then ...a person who I can still respect, but has quite a friendly nature... Well, a person who is a bit extraordinary to the point of being unrivaled...."

At the moment of saying that much, Alisa opened her eyes wide for a moment and raised her face. Then she combed her hair and made an indifferent face as if trying to cover up something.

"...Well, that's not important at all. More than that, regarding Yuki-san's ideal type of guy..."

"Yes?"

"What... ummm,... Do you have special feelings for someone?"

When Alisa fiddled with the ends of her hair and glanced at her, Yuki could immediately guess her intentions and thought to herself, "Ahh~ I see...."

(I see. So she's wondering if I'm going to be her love rival or not, huh?)

There was no doubt in Yuki's mind that Alisa had feelings for Masachika. Considering that, what Alisa really wanted to ask was, "Do you like Masachika-kun too?". Plus, Yuki had once stated to Alisa that she loves Masachika. As for Alisa, she wanted to take this opportunity to confirm the truth... and that's exactly what she was doing right now.

(TN: iirc, Yuki said "I love him a lot" to Alya in V1 or V2, can't remember which. Now obviously she's saying that as a sibling but still said it anyway to troll her)

(Fumu I could've just said firmly, "I'm just showing family love affection to Masachika-kun, you know~?")

Alisa would definitely feel relieved if she said that. Revealing their blood relation did sound quite interesting to Yuki, but....

(But that's too boring, isn't it~?)

(TN: *hehe this is where the fun begins*)

With a devilish smile in her heart, Yuki only showed a meaningful smile.

"Hmm, I don't know~?"

"You're asking back... Isn't the point of a love chat to talk about that?"

"Ehhh~ after all... it feels very embarrassing, anyway."

While holding her cheeks with both hands, Yuki wiggled her body shyly. Yuki did not ignore the serious light that resided in the eyes of Alisa's eyes when she saw her.

(Kufufu, she misunderstood. Well that's how it is~ if there's a girl who behaves in this shy manner, you usually think, "Don't you have the courage to say...?" right~)

Yuki laughed evilly inwardly at the fact that she was capable of making Alya misunderstand. All this for the sake of playing Alisa no, all this for the sake of being able to help her beloved brother's love life. Because the presence of a rival can always accelerate the development of love. Yuki did not hesitate to play the role of a rival in order to advance the romantic progress between her brother and Alisa.

(Kuhehehe~ if Alya-san was officially dating Onii-chan... what kind of expression will she make when she finds out that I'm actually the younger sister of her boyfriend?)

Yup... probably all for her own pleasure. Accompanied by an evil smile that looked like the devil inside her, Yuki pretended to be an innocent girl and looked at Alisa.

"Then, if Alya-san wants to tell me first, I'll tell her too, okay?"

"Ehh?"

"I want to hear Alya-san's love story."

"Even if you say that... I've never been in love with a guy."

"Ehh, really?"

In response to Alisa's answer, Yuki opened her eyes in surprise and covered her mouth with her hand as she thought to herself, "Which mouth said that?".

Alisa's lips pouted slightly dissatisfied with that very surprising reaction.

"What the heck... it doesn't matter, right? Even if you've never experienced falling in love."

"Of course it doesn't matter, but since Alya-san is so popular, I thought you might have experienced it at least once."

"Not at all... After all, it's not like people who have a lot of romantic experiences look much better, right? For some reason, there's a social tendency that if someone doesn't have any love experiences, they'll be ridiculed or made fun of What the heck is that?"

"Uh, ummm~... well, having a lot of love experience means that you have a feminine charm... There are also people who just want to feel superior, so that they can outshine those around them."

"From my point of view, those types of people are like admitting that they don't maintain their own chastity."

Alisa snorted with an annoyed expression, as if she had experienced being ridiculed like that. Yuki smiled wryly inwardly at the remark that was not suitable for love talk itself.

"Ummm... by any chance, Alya-san is that kind of girl? The type who believes that you should keep your chastity until you get married?"

"Wh-Were we talking about that too?"

"That's of course. Love talk is like that, isn't it?"

Alisa turned her gaze with slightly flushed cheeks in response to that topic but Yuki nodded with a very natural smile. That clear smile of hers made Alisa a little indecisive and thoughtful.

"Uh, ummm~ ... I wouldn't go that far anyway, but I think only people who are already committed to each other would do something like that?"

Perhaps feeling embarrassed by what she said, Alisa sharpened her gaze while the blush on her cheeks intensified, and she continued to speak in a stronger tone.

"I mean, any girl would dream of that, right? First falling in love with someone, then dating someone you love for the first time, and then getting married to that person, and then spending the rest of your life with him!"

"Hmm....."

Yuki had trouble answering Alisa's straightforward statement. Well, she did understand what she wanted to say.

Dating the person you like for the first time, making love smoothly without cheating on each other, then getting married a few years later, and living happily ever after~... I'd say, it's a progression that can be described as a super smooth road in shoujo manga. So, it's not that she doesn't understand that statement reflects the ideal of all girls in the world. However...

(In some parts of the world, there are also girls who ideally want to be popular and be pampered by a good man, and there are many girls who think that marriage is about money, not love In contrast, girls who cling to pure love are quite rare these days, aren't they?)

In fact, as someone who is surrounded by several girls who made such statements, she couldn't help but look at Alisa with a gentle gaze.

"...What? What's with that look?"

"Ah, no, it's nothing... I just thought that Alya-san turned out to be like the types of innocent girls who would like shoujo manga."

"...."

Yuki's somewhat implied words made Alisa think to herself, "For some reason, I feel like I'm being teased?" and frowned. But to discuss it, Alisa was still a little reluctant towards Yuki. Had she gone up against Masachika, Alisa would have blasted him mercilessly. However, Yuki seemed to sense

something in Alisa's silence. She then took her eyes off Alisa and turned to Ayano, who was beside her.

"Fufufu, that's a very good way of thinking. Don't you think so too, Ayano?"

"!!!!"



Ayano's eyes widened when she was suddenly asked to speak. She immediately tried to answer her master's question, but her mouth was already filled with donuts. It was rude of her to speak in such a state. However, despite trying to swallow it quickly, the donut still didn't pass easily down her throat. She still lacked the water to push it through.

"!!!"

Ayano reached for the cup on the side table in search of water. However, when she realized that it contained orange juice, she picked up the cup and immediately stopped moving. Because the act of combining a sweet donut with orange juice was beyond Ayano's taste buds, she hesitated. However, when asked which should be prioritized between her taste and the situation where her employer was waiting...

"Uh! ~~~~... Puha, yes, I think so."

"Yup, for some reason, I'm sorry? "

Yuki tilted her head in distress as Ayano poured the juice into her mouth in a horrible way.

"No, Yuki-sama doesn't need to apologize at all. That's right. I completely agree with Alisa-san's opinion. After making a firm decision, I will devote myself completely. That's ideal."

"...hmm?"

Yuki tilted her head when she heard Ayano's words. Somehow, Ayano seemed to be talking about something other than love talk... But before the question could be answered, Alisa immediately replied to Ayano's opinion.

"I guess that's what it is, isn't it! Devoting yourself to the one person you love for the rest of your life. That's what a woman should do!"

"I see...."

Ayano opened her mouth to Alisa's words... and was stunned. Her pupils pointed upwards at an angle and traced a semicircle around the ceiling. Then she tilted her head.

"Ayano-san?"

"No... I feel that I don't need to fixate on one person..."

"Ehhh...."

This time Ayano's words left Alisa stunned. Alisa's facial expression really looked like "I was betrayed!", but Ayano's next words made her widen her eyes wide.

"I think even two people are fine..."

"T-Two people?"

"I do have one body, but if I put in the effort, I can somehow handle it."

"Plus, at the same time!?"

In Alisa's mind, she imagined Ayano flanked by two guys on either side of her and laughing coquettishly. Furthermore, Ayano's own statement of "at the same time" conjures up an image of Ayano dealing with two boys at the same time. At the thought of that, Alisa's face immediately turned bright red. Then, Alisa sharpened her gaze and reflexively raised the tone of her voice.

"D-Don't, that's not allowed! Ah, no, if the person themselves agrees with it, that's fine, but the point is, a student shouldn't behave immorally like that!"

"? Immoral?"

"B-Because, two people at once...!"

Alisa was unable to say anything further due to the perverted delusions that appeared in her brain. Incidentally, the vagueness of the entire imagination was not due to the self-imposed restrictions, but simply due to Alisa's lack of knowledge. After all, the limit of Alisa's knowledge in that area was at the level of shoujo manga, which only depicted the upper part of their bodies embracing each other...

(Maybe she was fantasizing like this~)

On the other hand, seeing Alisa's reaction like that, Yuki could imagine the scene of Ayano "Ahhhnnn~" or "Iyaaaaannnn~~~" from the front and back. This imagination has a perfect scene in every detail. On the contrary, she had to limit herself more. Of course, Yuki realized that Ayano did not intend that way. She did realize it, but...

(Because it looks interesting, I'll just keep my mouth shut)

In front of Yuki who cruelly chose to remain silent, the conversation between the two people who were out of sync still continued.

"I thought we didn't have to stick to men?"

"Eh!? A girl is fine!? That means"

"Of course, Alisa-san is also included, really?"

"Eh, ehhhhhhhh~~~~!?"

Alisa immediately fled to the bed while holding her body with both hands and screamed at the top of her lungs. Seeing that unexpected reaction, Ayano tilted her head curiously.

(... Yes... Maybe she's trying to say that if Alya-san marries Onii-chan, she would also give her dedication to her... Fatally, her words are still incomplete, anyway.)

Yuki instinctively looked at Ayano with a gentle gaze, but Ayano didn't seem to notice her master's gaze and blinked rapidly as if she had just thought about something.

"That's right... then, there might be four people at the same time someday."

"Um-. Four people...!? Ehh, how will you do it then?"

Apparently, it was already too difficult to understand and this time she was really interested in that. While blushing, Alisa leaned back on the bed with furrowed eyebrows. On the other hand, Ayano's gaze wandered around with an expressionless face as usual.

"...Hmm, that's true. Maybe I guess two people take turns every day?"

"Y-You want to do it in turn...!?"

"No, of course, if everyone lives together, that would be four people at the same time."

"Living together... ma-meaning a love nest...?"

"Even if that's the case, I won't do it half-assedly, I will still serve wholeheartedly."

"So you're still serving, huh..."

"Yes, I've received some training in such cases."

"T-Training... Funyaa~"

Apparently, her brain was completely over-capacity. Alisa's whole body was flushed as if she had been boiled, and she let out a soul-crushing cry and fell flat on her back on the bed.

"! Alisa-san, are you alright? What exactly is..."

"Puhahahahahaha...!"

Ayano stared blankly at Alisa, whose eyesight seemed to be fogged up on the bed. Yuki, who could no longer stand the funny scene, started laughing out loud. Then, while wiping the tears from the corner of her eyes, she said to Ayano whose eyes were shaking with a puzzled look.

"Fufufu... it looks like Alya-san is a little tired, huh? Oh yeah, Ayano, how about you take care of your future (temporary) master?"

"Take care of her...?"

"Yes. Specifically..."

.....After that.

About ten minutes later, Alisa's consciousness began to return and found herself lying on the bed on a pillow on Ayano's lap who was fanning her face thanks to the misunderstanding of various things, Alisa let out a strange scream.

Chapter 13 - Masachika and Alya

A train traveled through the countryside that stretched as far as the eye could see.

The train ride home on the last day of the student council training camp was filled with a calm atmosphere.

Perhaps due to its rural location and the fact that it was already half past three in the afternoon, there were no other passengers in the main carriage. Masachika and the other student council members were traveling in. And there were no conversations amongst the student council members; the only sound that could be heard was the clatter of the moving train.

Perhaps due to the soothing vibrations of the train, Yuki, who was sitting to the right of Masachika, tilted her head and rested her head on Masachika's shoulder with her eyes closed. Shortly after that, Ayano who was on the other side also looked sleepy as well.

(Well, everyone feels tired, so I guess it's only natural...)

Masachika thought so while leaning his body on the passenger seat. Last night she had stayed up late at the festival, and this morning she had frolicked on the beach for the last time. After lunch, she cleaned and tidied up the villa before taking the train home. So it would be expected if she fell asleep due to exhaustion. It's okay, but...

(But Yuki, you're still awake, right?!)

Staring at his sister's head leaning against him, Masachika lightly pushed Yuki away with his elbow. However

"Uuu~~~~n..."

At the moment when Masachika lightly moved his arm to the side, the left arm of Yuki slipped through the open gap and grabbed his arm. Yuki then hugged Masachika's right arm and carefully positioned her head to return to the sleeping position again.

(What a little sister...)

Masachika's cheek twitched at his sister's bold and outrageous decision to sleep on his shoulder. She might indeed be trying to sleep but this overly aggressive sleeping style was clearly very dangerous.

(This is not the right way to sleep unless we're lovers, you know! You must be deliberately doing this to show off to Alya, right!)

While shouting inwardly like that, Masachika glanced to his left side. Then there was also...

"Wait, come on Masha, move away a little."

"Hmmm."

Alisa's arm was also entangled in her sister's arm as she leaned against her. Masachika's cheeks twitched as he was stunned, because he didn't expect there to be someone who was as natural, and did the same thing, as Yuki.

"...Huh"

Soon after, Alisa let out a resigned sigh and stopped resisting. Then, after looking at Yuki who was also leaning on Masachika and furrowing her brows for a moment, she then smiled ironically.

"This is really annoying, huh."

"Ha, haha..."

Masachika laughed awkwardly at Alisa, who said that while glancing at Maria. Because the sight of Maria's head moving on Alisa's shoulder made him recall the events of yesterday morning.

(Y-Yes, delirious Masha-san does look amazing in many ways...)

Recalling the sight of Maria who gracefully fell asleep on top of him, Masachika turned to face forward guiltily.

As someone who had realized Alisa's feelings of affection towards himself yesterday, he couldn't help but feel guilty about the fact that he and her sister had shared the same bed.

(No, I didn't do anything weird...)

After making such excuses in his heart, Masachika suddenly realized that he was in a situation where he was alone with Alisa.

Of the five people sitting side by side, the other three were (allegedly) sleeping. It's not an exaggeration to say that it was just the two of them. Then how about the President and Vice-President of the Student Council? If anyone was looking for the two of them, they were sitting in the two-person seats at the very front of the carriage, the only seats facing the direction of travel, and were too busy in their own world.

(E-Ehhh? Isn't this situation dangerous enough?)

Slowly, a bad feeling began to creep up his spine, and caused Masachika's cheeks to twitch.

Last night, after the fireworks were over, he joined the other members and kept the kissing incident a secret, then gave a brief explanation that he needed to kidnap Alya for a while as part of the game's punishment.

(TN: *The game being referred to here was the takoyaki Russian roulette*)

After that, Touya and Chisaki continued to tease them, then Yuki politely bombarded him with questions, so they didn't have a chance to be alone together.

Today it was somehow difficult for them to see each other, so he didn't dare to be alone with her... and this was the first time he was in a situation alone with Alisa since that time. Then, the topic was naturally about...

"The fireworks last night... They were beautiful."

(It was definitely about that, wasn't it!)

Masachika felt his stomach churn at the expected topic of conversation.

"Ah, yes. It was indeed beautiful."

But Alisa didn't say anything to Masachika's obviously unenthusiastic tone. Perhaps that was only natural, since what she really wanted to talk about wasn't fireworks.

Masachika knew that, and as a man, he also understood that he could not run away from her. But right now, this was not the right time. Because there was only one reason.

(Yuki, this little sister, I'm sure she's still awake!)

As long as there was his younger sister who could eavesdrop freely, the topic was very serious. Super duper serious. Never ever bring up the topic of kissing, even if it's wrong. Never.....

"So, ummm..."

(Sooner or later, that talk is likely to be mentioned!)

Masachika inwardly shouted at Alisa, who averted her eyes as if she was at a loss for words. Then, after wracking his brain in an instant, Masachika decided to be a dense guy who couldn't read the atmosphere with all his might.

"Speaking of fireworks! Are there fireworks displays too during the festival in Russia?"

"Eh? Ah, well... yes."

"Heee~, is it different from Japanese fireworks?"

"Um, ummm, I haven't really noticed, but... I guess it's not too different?"

"Really? Ah, then, what are the names of the fireworks? All fireworks have pretty interesting names in Japan, but is it the same in Russia?"

Masachika's communication skills immediately improved by leaps and bounds.

From the start, Masachika's speaking ability was much better than Alisa's. Once you master the flow of the conversation, it's easy to avoid certain topics.

" Hey, are you trying to avoid something?"

However, the results will sting back if you do it blatantly. If she said something like that with furrowed brows and a quivering look in her eyes as if slightly hurt, Masachika would have no choice but to remain silent.

"You don't have to try to blatantly avoid it either. It's not like we both agreed that we would pretend that nothing happened yesterday...."

"No, I'm sorry. Can you calm down for a while?"

"..... What the heck."

"Seriously, please calm down for a while."

Masachika raised his left hand with a serious expression and interrupted Alisa's words.

Then, Masachika suddenly took his cell phone out of his pocket, turned up the speaker volume, and played a video.

『Oi, oi, what's wrong with you all of a sudden? I understand your feelings of wanting to take a picture of me, but If you want to take a picture of me, can't you do it when I'm a little more fashionable? 』

"!!?"

Then Masachika-sama's voice in 'Ore-sama' mode sounded from his smartphone. While Alisa's gaze widened at the video that suddenly played, Masachika looked around to see the reactions of the other three people.

Then, after confirming that there were no particular reactions, he stopped the video.

(TN: 300 IQ move)

"Yup, looks like they're really all asleep, huh?"

"W-What kind of confirmation was that."

Masachika nodded in satisfaction, and Alisa, with a very unusual expression on her face, asked him a question as she scratched her cheeks and tried desperately to contain her laughter. Masachika then responded somewhat distantly.

"Because of this video, if you were still awake, you would have reacted, right? You also reacted like that."

"Y-You dare to say that yourself? Or rather, you're still keeping it, huh..."

The video shared with the student council members was deleted after he explained the situation: "I tried hypnosis with Yuki and ended up like that". That's why the playback of the video this time was really surprising...

"Even though you said that, you actually still have it too, right?"

"O-Of course not. I deleted it properly, it's fine."

When he looked at her, Alisa replied with a denying look. But Masachika did not miss the moment when her gaze shook violently for a moment.

(So you're still keeping it...)

Masachika returned to the topic while feeling the continuing damage to his mental health when reminded of his black history.

"Then, well... I'm sorry. Because I'm still not sure what to say when we are together, so that's what happened... no, that one sounds like an excuse."

It's true that there are reasons like that. But in reality... he did not have the courage to face Alisa's feelings of love. Because he had no desire to respond to it or be determined to accept it. So it wouldn't be wrong to say that he was trying to avoid it.

"Yes, I'm sorry. To be honest, I did try to avoid the topic, but it's not like I'm pretending that it never happened. However... I still can't sort out my feelings."

When Masachika looked straight into Alisa's eyes without messing around and said so sincerely, Alisa's eyes wavered slightly and turned forward. And then she opened her mouth in a low voice.

"You don't need to exaggerate it with something like sorting out your feelings or something. That incident last night was just right, it was kind of like a kiss of grace."

"...Grace?"

"That's right. Last night you did a lot to cheer up Masha and me, but you were a little down because you messed up, right? So umm, kind of like a

consolation prize or something even though it didn't go well, but that kiss just means 'I had enough fun and enjoyed it, really'. Got it!?"

Alisa gradually moved closer to his face while speaking faster and in an increasingly loud voice that was only getting louder.

"Uh, ah yes."

Honestly, he felt like he could either understand it or not understand it, but Masachika nodded because of the momentum. Or rather, he had to nod his head here because he had a premonition that if he answered "I don't know", his stomach would definitely be elbowed.

"That's a very big reward for me too, yes. That means my efforts were really worth it, right?"

Masachika slightly regretted what he had said, having been prompted to say something a little strange.

"...Hmph, of course."

Alisa looked sharply at Masachika and turned away with a frown. Then, while glancing at Masachika, she continued in a dull voice.

"Just so you know, I wouldn't do that to anyone. Yesterday, that situation occurred due to the weight of Yuki-san's order and the romantic atmosphere of the fireworks display."

"Of course, I know that."

While nodding in agreement, Masachika inwardly thought, 'Well, maybe that's the limit? [I wouldn't do that with 'anyone'] maybe that's the best she

could do to show her good intentions. As for Masachika, who had noticed Alisa's love for him, he felt somewhat relieved.

(Well, I don't know if she really didn't realize it, or maybe she already realized it herself and pretended not to notice, but... she's still unwilling to admit it honestly, huh?)

Masachika didn't know which part Alisa liked about him, but for Alisa who had such high self-esteem, how could she admit so easily that she was in love with a slacker like Masachika.

(To be honest, I'm more grateful about that...)

He was still not ready to face Alisa's feelings of love. So at least until he feels ready, Alisa too

{Because I'll only do that with you}

(... Yup, I wish that you wouldn't only use Russian when you're feeling shy~?)

Whether that remark was just a tease, or an expression of her honest feelings... Masachika couldn't tell the difference at all, so he asked as if it was a given.

"Uh, what did you say earlier?"

"I said, 'I'll only do that with you.'"

"O-Ohh, hmm?"

Masachika was surprised at the completely unexpected answer. When Masachika was stunned, Alisa turned around with an expression that seemed to cover up her embarrassment with dissatisfaction. She then said in a tone as if she was complaining.

"I told you before, didn't I? I won't do it with anyone. I would feel offended if you think that I'm a girl who's influenced by the environment and atmosphere, so I'll tell you firmly... because only with you alone, well, I thought I could at least give you a kiss on the cheek, you know?"

"O-Ohh... am I being honored?"

"I also need to say this firmly, this has nothing to do with romantic feelings or anything like that. I trust you to a certain extent as my partner, okay? I also respect you quite a bit? And most importantly, well, I consider you as my closest friend... that's it!"

"Uh, yes. Thank you?"

Alisa's cheeks turned bright red as she glared at Masachika's face and said it quickly, she snorted lightly at Masachika who thanked her awkwardly and turned to face forward.

Masachika couldn't help but giggle at this awkward way of conveying her intentions which was akin to asking for a fight. Somehow, it felt like it described Alisa's nature.

But, because of that... those words reached his heart.

That statement must have been Alisa's true feelings. Perhaps Alisa still hadn't realized her faint feelings of love. However, she was able to convey the

answer she found by facing her heart in her own way. While exerting all her courage. With all her ability and sincerity.

(Gosh, what kind of cute creature is this? She looks so adorable)

These thoughts naturally came to his mind when he saw Alisa pouting with the tips of her ears turning red. And he immediately reflected on the ridiculous impression he had made, even if it was only in his mind.

(Huh... that's really a bad habit of mine. Jumping into playing around, making jokes, and trying to obscure my true feelings)

That's how Kuze Masachika defended himself. He lost his affection with his mother, lost love with that girl, even lost his pride, and became the Kuze Masachika that he is now. Then without realizing it, he didn't dare face anyone directly. Always joking, teasing, pretending, and not connecting deeply with anyone.

If he didn't connect deeply, he wouldn't feel sad if he lost them.

If he didn't connect deeply with others... Others will not be able to know this human named Kuze Masachika. If others do not know it, then he does not need to deal with it. To himself, whom he hated so much.

(But... just for now)

Just for now, he needed to face it without trying to avoid it. For the courage and sincerity shown by the girl in front of him... At the very least, he wanted to be sincere for his own sake as well.

"Me too...."

The voice that came out of his throat sounded hoarse and trembling. He said it honestly from the bottom of his heart and conveyed his affection sincerely.

Even though it was just that, it felt very difficult to do. The corners of his mouth smirked to himself and he tried to laugh. The voice in his heart nagged him to make a fool of himself by making jokes like he always did.

He desperately tried to hold it in, and managed to utter the words that got stuck in his throat.

"Me too... since I did it with Alya, I wanted to kiss as well..."

(TN: He's referring to when he kissed her on the hair)

Hearing Masachika's words, Alisa turned around and stared at his increasingly pathetic expression she had never seen before.

"I'm sure if it was with someone else, I would have joked around like I usually do and pretend not to know. But because it was you.... for doing it with Alya, I want to return the kiss as well. Well, there's no way I can just kiss on the cheek, and when asked what my kiss meant, I had a little trouble answering... Well, maybe it's because I got a little carried away too?"

In the end, it ended up being rather silly and a bit of a joke. He intended to speak a little better. Why did the mouth that usually chartered smoothly turn into this?

"...Uuuu, geez. What the hell was that?"

Alisa also sounded dumbfounded at Masachika whose voice gradually became slower and sadder. And as Masachika's face became more and more downcast Alisa's right hand grabbed Masachika's cheek, and gently

pointed him towards her. Then Alisa looked straight into Masachika's face and laughed happily from the bottom of her heart.

"Fufufu, even Masachika-kun can make a face like this, huh?"

"...What the hell? What kind of face did I make?"

Masachika was sure that his face looked pitiful. That kind of thinking caused him to sound like he was sulking. Immediately, he felt even more embarrassed by his childish reaction.

"...."

Masachika slightly averted his gaze in silence. To which Alisa responded with a smile mixed with a hint of mischief.

"Hmm right... your face looks pretty cute, huh?"

"Urgh!"

An evaluation of "cute" that was immediately thrown out bluntly. The smile of the little devil who was staring at him from a close distance made Masachika's spine feel a sweet shudder. In order to cover it up, he raised his eyebrows with an exasperated face.

"...You must be teasing me, right?"

Although Masachika said it in an upset tone, Alisa did not flinch at all.

"No I'm not, you know? Even so, yes I was wondering why you chose to kiss my hair~ but you just felt awkward, right?"

(... No, you've also realized it, right. You yourself clearly instigated me with that "You have no guts" taunt)

Masachika opened his mouth in a reproachful manner at Alisa who was trying hard to confirm it.

"Gosh, it's only natural to feel awkward, right? Even doing it in the hair is still too personal... You yourself must not like having your cheek kissed in a punishment game, right."

"I don't know~?"

While raising one eyebrow and saying so, Alisa removed her hand from Masachika's cheek and poked her own cheek with her finger.



Masachika gasped when he heard those words. Even his heart felt like it stopped beating for a moment.

"What did you say?"

Even replying with such pleasantries made him wonder if his voice didn't sound awkward. Even Masachika did not have enough time to analyze whether his expression showed signs of anxiety.

"I just said, 'I don't know know?'"

But fortunately, Alisa didn't seem to care much and lied as usual with a smile. Then, she lowered her right arm, then easily wrapped it around Masachika's arm and then rested her head on Masachika's shoulder.

"O-Ohh..."

After that provocation, Masachika stiffened when his body was allowed to relax too naturally. Whether or not she realized that Masachika was completely at her mercy, Alisa began to make small yawns.

"Fuwaahh~, I'm getting sleepy too... Will you wake me up when we get to the station?"

"...In other words, I can't sleep?"

"Oh, are you sure you can sleep this close to me?"

"...I don't think I'm that bold."

Alisa chuckled when she heard Masachika's words and closed her eyes. In fact, Masachika was so nervous that his words were no joke... However, he tried to rest his body as soon as he realized that Alisa's attack had ended.

(Haa... this is not very good for my heart)

While facing forward, he muttered to himself inwardly.

The gap between the two of them was quite large due to their mutual teasing as usual. Masachika was sure that half of it was just her banter But when realizing that there were feelings of love behind her actions, he wasn't sure how serious he was about Alisa.

(Geez, I wonder how much she understands what she's doing)

He looked to his side with a relaxed smile and saw Alisa's sleeping face which looked very comfortable. The seriousness and alertness that had always appeared on her face were replaced by a comfortable and peaceful face A warm but hectic feeling welled up in Masachika's chest.

The feeling of wanting to protect, cherish, and not wanting to hurt her appeared in Masachika's mind. This feeling was probably a desire to take care of her and love her.

(I knew it... it's not a feeling of love)

This feeling is different from the feelings he had for that girl... or so he thought. This feeling is different from the feelings he has ever had for that girl... or so he thinks. he thought. Although he couldn't say for sure because he couldn't remember the feeling of love itself now. Ever since that girl left him...

(Ehh, wait?)

There, Masachika questioned his thoughts.

(Was I really abandoned by that girl?)

Even as he tried hard to remember, the thick fog that floated by his memories made it unclear. The girl's smile remained hidden behind the fog. Masachika still could not remember it. And yet... inside, he knew very well that their love was not over.

(Somehow... I kept it bottled up)

Even though he tried to forget it, he still kept remembering it. It reminded him of something. It must be because Masachika himself didn't want to forget that girl from the bottom of his heart. Because he still has regrets and continues to miss that girl in his memories.

{Masaaachika!}

The strange nickname was still ringing in his head. The innocent voice that called out to him from behind the fog made his heart ache and tighten.

"Hmm....."

But then, a faint voice from his left side brought Masachika back to reality. When Masachika blinked his eyes, Alisa, who was small in stature while leaning on his left arm, returned to tightly embrace his left arm. Masachika felt comforted by the soft feeling that enveloped his hand.

(...I have to finish it properly)

When he saw Alisa's face, he naturally made that decision. In order to face the girl in front of him, who was in love with his current self, properly, he would have to really end his first love with that girl and ask her to take back the love that was still trapped inside him. If he did that, then...

"....."

Then suddenly, Yuki gently raised her head. She glanced at her brother who turned around silently, and looked at Alisa, who was sleeping while tightly hugging Masachika's left arm. After seeing that scene, Yuki started nodding with full understanding.

"I see, so this is what is called netorare (NTR), huh."

"You better sleep forever, you little shit."

Hello, I'm NaCl, one of the fan translators and editors for this series. I hoped you enjoyed reading this Volume as much as I did translating it. I would like to say that I will also be working with Darrk (the other fan translator of the series) on making a translation for Roshidere Volume 5, with Indi (one of the fan translators for the Otonari no Tenshi series) helping a little bit too.

I'll be releasing finished chapters here <https://glucosetl.wordpress.com/ongoing-translations/> as we continue to work on it. I'll also make sure to link the finished EPUB/PDF Darrk will make as we finish it, on the website.

I will also be converting my V3 and V4 translations after I finish revising them.

Feel free to join our discord here discord.gg/GAMsRtrztP, and the Roshidere discord here too discord.gg/roshidere.

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