

IX

"So, darling, I absolutely *must* be able to call you! Every single day!" Hanae cried, holding Yuuto's hands tightly.

"R-right," Yuuto answered, "so in short you wanna exchange numbers, right?"

"Precisely!"

"Well, that's fine. I was going to ask you about the same thing, actually."

"W-wait, really?" Hanae asked excitedly.

"Yeah," Yuuto answered, taking out his phone. "Why would I not?"

The two quickly exchanged phone numbers. Hanae's eyes were glued to her phone screen afterwards. *She must be experiencing what Sayaka and I had yesterday*, Yuuto thought. *Too bad it seems to be a one-time thing. The Magic doesn't work twice, it seems.*

The buzzing of his phone snapped Yuuto back to attention. He looked down, entering his password on his smartphone and unlocking it. Hanae had sent him a text with a little heart emoji. He chuckled as she hugged him tightly. "You got my text, right darling?" she asked.

"Yep," Yuuto replied, showing her the screen to confirm that it was indeed the same text she had sent. As Hanae continued to bounce around excitedly, Yuuto turned his attention back to his phone, which had once again started to buzz. Sayaka had texted him. 'R u free 2morrow? <3' the text read.

Nori leaned over, looking at his friend's phone. "Damn, who's texting you man?"

"What the—holy shit, don't jump me like that," Yuuto cried.

Turning so Nori couldn't see his screen, Yuuto sent a text back. 'My schedule's open, what's up?' he texted back.

'I was wondering if u wanted 2 go on a picnic for lunch 2morrow. My treat!' Sayaka texted.

'Sounds great! When do u wanna meet up?'

'How bout 9 a.m. in front of the school?'

'Sure. C u then?'

'Yep, c u!'

Yuuto smiled as he put his phone down, taking a deep breath. Nori look at him with a sly grin on his face. Hanae, on the other hand, had taken notice too and was looking quite confused. Out of the corner of his eye, Yuuto spotted Kaho seemingly interrogating Sayaka about something.

"So, who was it?" Nori laughed.

"D-d-don't tell me another girl is *already* trying to steal you," Hanae cried. "It's too early for that sorta crap to happen!"

"Hey, don't worry about it," Yuuto chuckled as he picked up his bag. "Alright, I'm out for the day. I'm gonna take a nice nap right after I get home. It seems like a miracle that there's no homework today so I'm gonna enjoy it!"

As he walked out of the room, Hanae puffed out her cheeks with jealousy. "Oh, I see how you're gonna play it," she mumbled to herself. "But I'm still one step ahead!"

Nori looked on in confusion as Hanae seemed to give herself a pep talk in her head.

"The fuck?" he mumbled.

"Oh shit," Hanae said, walking back in, "I forgot my bag."

So much for 'one step ahead,' huh? Nori thought.

Yuuto checked his watch. *Damn*, he thought to himself, *Sayaka said to show up at nine in the morning but here I am, and it isn't even eight o'clock yet! I know the guy's supposed to show up early and all but this feels slightly ridiculous...*

He sighed and pulled out his phone, scrolling through his notifications and checking his social media with the school wifi. All of a sudden, he heard a voice calling out to him. Looking up, Yuuto waved at Sayaka, who was running towards him with a bright smile on her face. Instead of her usual school uniform, she wore a beautiful blue dress. Frills covered the shoulders and she had a matching leg band on her left leg. Her blonde hair, tied up with blue ribbons instead of ones that matched her school uniform, stood out amongst the scenery and the few people strolling by.

"S-sorry, did I keep you waiting?" Sayaka asked nervously as she stopped before him. She timidly twiddled her thumbs.

"Not at all," Yuuto laughed. "I just got here myself!" he declared. *And I mean it too*, he added to himself. *Thank God I turned up an hour early...*

"You better not be lying," Sayaka pouted. "I wouldn't forgive you if you were."

"I swear on my heart," Yuuto assured her, patting her gently on the head. "Let's go."

"Y-yeah, let's go..."

The two walked past the school gates and turned left, heading off towards the shopping district.

"Oh, just look at them..." Hanae mumbled, crouching behind a bush. Her bright pink hair still stood out, making her hiding spot painfully obvious to anyone who was actually looking for her.. "Getting close to him already, are you, little-miss-homewrecker? Well...though I did promise to let my darling try dating other girls too, I *didn't* plan on letting anyone take him from me...dammit, why'd I let him do this anyways? Oh well, too late now..."

She got up from her hiding spot, dusting herself off. She stretched and sighed. "Now to follow them," she said, picking up her bag. The people around her stopped to watch with curiosity, wondering what this strange girl who just popped out of a bush planned to do. Hanae pulled a trench coat, fedora and a pair of sunglasses out from

her bag and got dressed, much to the confusion and terror of the people around her who were busy wondering if she was wrong in the head.

Hanae turned to the left and began to walk, whistling to herself calmly. All of a sudden, she bumped right into someone.

"Hey, you brat! Watch where you're going—holy crap, what're you doing here?" a voice asked.

Hanae opened her eyes to find herself face to face with Kaho, who was wearing an equally ridiculous disguise: a t-shirt, a pair of overalls, a pair of glasses without lenses, a headband with two fake bunny ears attached and a pair of high heels.

"I could ask you the same thing," Hanae replied.

"I'm watching out for Sayaka in case something goes wrong on their date!" Kaho cried.

"Funny. I'm doing the same thing, but for my darling instead," Hanae said.

The two girls stared at each other for a moment.

"Temporary truce?" Hanae suggested.

"Truce it is," Kaho agreed. The two shook hands, much to the amusement of the onlookers whom neither of them had noticed, and headed off towards the shopping district.