

## X

Sayaka sipped her drink with a big smile on her face. She gently squeezed Yuuto's hand, her face turning slightly red. She leaned in close to him, tilting her head over playfully.

"So where do you wanna go next, Sayaka?" Yuuto laughed.

"Mm...how about to a lov—I mean...uhh...wanna go to the amusement park?" Sayaka suggested, giggling nervously.

"Err...what was that first one?" Yuuto chuckled. "Ah, never mind. Sure, the amusement park sounds great."

The two turned and walked towards the amusement park. Minutes later, they had arrived and bought their tickets. Walking through the park, Sayaka's eyes lit up. "Yuuto, wanna ride the ferris wheel?" she asked excitedly.

"Yeah! It's been a few years since I've ridden one, so that sounds fun." Yuuto answered enthusiastically. The two got in line and soon got onto the ferris wheel.

At the back of the line, Haane and Kaho bit their lips in unison.

"Shit, I can't believe we had to pay for tickets to get in here and watch them...I'm just trying to be there for my darling!" Hanae cried.

"And I can't believe I had to pay for *your* friggin' ticket!" Kaho snapped in frustration.

"Hey, I said I'll pay you back! I swear!"

"You better!"

"The view up here is incredible, ain't it?" Yuuto smiled, looking out the window. "I can see the family restaurant from here..."

"Wait, your family has a restaurant?" Sayaka asked. "What do you sell?"

"Eh, mainly noodles. It was pretty popular before I moved, and apparently it was even more popular in this city before my grandfather decided to move it. Some of our recipes have been passed down for generations now," Yuuto chuckled.

"W-well...we haven't had lunch yet and it'll be noon in about an hour...so how about we head there after we're done playing here? You can treat me to a meal then! I know you don't have much cash left. I peeked into your wallet," Sayaka giggled.

"Yeah, that's true. I didn't bring much too much cash on me...besides, I made a minimum wage salary by working at the restaurant. Two hours on weekdays and a full eight on Sundays."

"W-wait, *seriously?*" Sayaka asked. "My Daddy just gives me 20,000 yen a week as allowance..."

"Wow. And you make *more* than I do, too," Yuuto mumbled. "I should ask for a raise...or just work Saturdays too..."

"Wait, what?"

"I make about 60,000 yen a month. I put half of that in my bank account though, just so I don't get tempted to waste it. Saving is a good habit to get into."

"T-tempted, eh?"

"Yeah. After all, I pretty much spend all the money I don't end up depositing every week."

"So 7500 yen? A week? I couldn't imagine living off that..." Sayaka mumbled. "Maybe I'm just too much of a princess, huh? Do you...dislike that?"

"N-not exactly," Yuuto chuckled in response. "I mean, I understand it. Yeah, it's a frivolous lifestyle, but it's nothing I disapprove of per se. I just don't think I'd like to live like that. Sure, it's nice to not have a care in the world about losing cash, but I'd rather not have people like me *just* for my money. If I had a lot of money, I'd go and save it. Maybe invest it. You kinda get what I'm saying? Err...shit, I'm rambling, aren't I? Sorry."

Sayaka looked absolutely stunned. "Wow...you sound kinda like my Daddy. He keeps telling me to save some of the money he gives me, but I don't listen...maybe I should. He always says stuff like 'we're rich so I can give you a large allowance but you need to learn to save some of it. It's your own money, so you have to manage it,' and whatnot," she said, imitating her father's voice. "That means you're either super rich or super wise."

"Well, I'm not super rich, that's for sure," Yuuto smiled. "I'm just average. We're a middle class family."

"Then that makes you wise!" Sayaka laughed. She hugged Yuuto tightly, nuzzling him. "Say...y'know, we could join the mile high club right about now..."

"Err...what?" Yuuto froze, staring straight at her. *Th-this IS out class rep, right?* he thought. *What kinda fantasies does this girl even have?*

"I'm joking!" Sayaka giggled to herself. "What, you thought I was serious?" She winked at him. "I'm not *that* easy to get with, alright? Besides, I think I'd rather do that on a plane—I mean...never mind, that didn't just happen..."

"R-right..."

Hanae and Kaho stared out the window of their pod.

They each held a pair of binoculars, looking for Yuuto and Sayaka. Suddenly, Kaho screamed out in frustration. "DAMMIT! They got off!"

Hanae immediately turned and looked in the direction her partner was pointing to. Sure enough, Yuuto and Sayaka had gotten off the ferris wheel and were headed off towards the booths to play carnival games.

"Hey," Kaho started, "do you think they're gonna pl—"

"Wait, lemme ask you a question first," Hanae interrupted, "it's important."

"F-fine, what is it?"

"Do you think they joined the mile high club?"

"The—HOLY SHIT!" Kaho cried. "If they did...wait, no, I think Sayaka would rather do that the traditional way: on a *plane*."

"What? She would?"

"Yeah, it's a little more vanill—why am I telling you this again?"

"Huh," Goro chuckled. "Good job, son."

"Whaddya mean, Pops?" Yuuto asked, raising an eyebrow and putting his arm on the counter. "I come home and the first thing you do is ambiguously congratulate me? I'll take it," he smiled.

"Sure you will. Anything else?"

"Hmmm...gimme two bowls of the house specialty noodles, Pops."

"Alright," his father replied with a stupidly big grin on his face. "Hell, it's on the house this time, kiddo."

"Sounds good to me," Yuuto rubbed the back of his head. "Thanks Pops. We'll be upstairs."

"Ah! Not so fast," Goro said.

"Huh?"

"You're cooking."

"Oh for the love of—"

"You know how to cook?" Sayaka asked, tilting her head.

"Y-yeah, I work in the kitchen. For friggin' minimum wage," Yuuto said jokingly. "It's...kinda embarrassing, actually."

"What? That's cool! I never learned to cook. The servants at home don't even let me into the kitchen...they think I'm gonna burn myself..."

"It's not that easy, y'know?"

"So can I come and watch?" Sayaka begged. "*Please?* I just wanna see how you cook..."

"Err...s-sure, c'mon into the back. We can eat upstairs later. The tables are all full so it'll be a pain to wait for one to open up during the lunch rush," Yuuto said.

"Awesome!" Sayaka cried, throwing her arms around him. "Let's go!"

The two walked into the kitchen. Goro, still standing at the counter, laughed to himself. "Yeah, show off those skills, kiddo," he mumbled to himself.

Entering the kitchen, Yuuto greeted the other chefs on duty. He walked over to an empty workstation. "Alright, let's get this done," he mumbled. "Wait, where's my apron?" He looked around. Walking over to a locker in the room with his name labelled on it, he opened it. A tiny apron sat inside. "DAMMIT, THAT'S THE OLD ONE!" he shouted. "I CAN'T FIT INTO THAT ANYMORE!"

Turning back around, he sighed. "I need to run upstairs for sec," he said to Sayaka. "Literally give me a minute, 'kay? It has to be in my room. I *would* just use the one in my locker but that's from when I was nine years old. I can't wear it anymore," he chuckled.

"No problem," Sayaka replied. "I'll just look around and try to stay out of the way."

A minute later, Yuuto came back with his apron on. Looking around the kitchen, he found Sayaka standing by the station he had previously prepared. He waved and walked over. "Alright, so I'm gonna make the noodles first..."

Outside, Goro looked up, confused. "Uhhh...who are you and why are you in a trench coat?" he asked.

"Never mind who I am," Hanae replied in a faked deep voice, "where is Yuuto Ishikawa? I'm looking for him."

"Stop it, you look like a robber," Kaho said. "I'm really sorry about her, sir, but we really do need Yuuto right now. We're both his classmates."

"R-right..." Goro replied, "but why are you two dressed like that?"

"Err..." Kaho began. "About that..."

Ten minutes or so later, Yuuto had started brewing the broth for the noodle soup. He lowered the finished noodles into the pot. "Alright, give it about five more minutes," he said. The other chefs had taken a break to come and admire the work of the restaurant's young cook. "While we're here, you want any side dishes?" he asked Sayaka, handing her a take-out copy of their menu.

Sayaka scanned it over. "Hmm...maybe not a side dish, but can I get a soda and some ice cream for dessert?" she asked.

"Sure," Yuuto replied. "Those are in the freezer though. I'll just go get 'em before we run upstairs." Before he could continue, he heard his father calling for him.

"Son, you have some visitors!" Goro said.

Yuuto sighed. "R-right," he called back, "just lemme finish cooking in here, will you? I don't wanna burn the food or anything, 'kay?"

"Yeah, but once the dish is served and everything, come back out here, alright?"

"You got it, Pops!" Yuuto cried. "Alright," he said, turning to Sayaka, "after I finish the cooking, I'll help bring everything upstairs for you. You can go ahead and start eating. I'll take care of whatever this may be quickly, and then I'll join you. Sound good?"

"Yeah!" Sayaka replied. "Don't worry about it!"