

XIII

Raizo walked into the classroom, having completed his morning training. He yawned lazily as he headed towards his seat. Spotting Kasumi across the room alongside Mariko, he gave her a little wave. His embarrassed lover blushed, waving back.

Reaching his seat, Raizo placed his bag by his chair and sat down. Checking his watch, he sighed. *Early again, eh?* he thought. *Well, no harm. The lecture hall's mostly empty, so I should be able to get some reading done without being disturbed.* Pulling a book out from his bag, he flipped to his bookmark and began to read.

His eyes scanning through the pages, Raizo diverted his attention to his novel. It was a murder mystery about a detective searching for his wife's killer. Raizo had developed a taste for the genre since his own death, but it was a slow and subtle change. Continuing his reading, he began to lose track of time.

The sound of someone calling his name brought him back to reality. Satomi was beside him, poking him in the arm. "Oh, you *finally* noticed me?" she laughed. "Seems quite different from this morning...did you use up all your attentiveness? Or perhaps you just ignored me," she said.

"No, I was reading. There's a difference," Raizo answered, annoyed. "Everyone has their pastimes, alright?"

"Yeah, yeah," Satomi mumbled. "So...you like mystery novels?"

"Eh. I didn't before, but they grew on me," Raizo said.

Satomi, taking a seat, leaned in closer and started reading over his shoulder. "So who killed who?" she inquired.

"How the hell should I know? I haven't finished it yet, and revealing the mystery too early makes for a crappy piece," Raizo replied. "Please let me read in peace."

"Class starts in three minutes," Satomi said. "Oh, and the mistress went to the washroom last minute so I'm not sure if she'll make it in time."

"Well, that's just *great*," Raizo mumbled. "And are there really three minutes left?" Checking his watch, he confirmed that Satomi was indeed telling the truth. "Damn," he mumbled. "Say, don't you have to do an introduction to the class or something?"

"Yeah, I do," Satomi mumbled, "but it's not a presentation for marks or anything, so I should be just fine, even if I wing it."

"Sure," Raizo said, placing his bookmark between the pages of the book and closing it, slipping the novel back into his bag. "Whatever you say."

"Whatever I say?" Satomi repeated.

"Yeah, yeah, sure," Raizo mumbled, rolling his eyes.

"Then let's have sex right now," Satomi said with a smirk.

"Want me to rip your head from your shoulders?" Raizo replied with a sigh.

"Aww...that's no fun," Satomi complained. As she spoke, the bell rang and their teacher, Chinatsu Saitou, entered the lecture hall. Her puppet, Marie, followed right behind her.

"Huh. Raizo's alive. Glad to see you're still in commission, kid," Chinatsu called to him. "I'd feel bad if Hikari was stuck without her favorite tool—err...*friend*."

"Either's fine and accurate," Raizo mumbled as Satomi covered her mouth, desperately trying to hide her giggles.

"Speaking of Hikari Oshiro, I hear she has a new puppet," Chinatsu continued.

Satomi, standing up, nodded and bowed. "I'm Satomi, the newest puppet in the service of miss Hikari Oshiro. I hope to get along with everyone!" she said, flashing a peace sign.

An loud roar erupted from the male population of the room. Raizo sighed. Looking over to the side, he spotted his friend Jiro rubbing his forehead, his expression seeming to inquire what was wrong with his male classmates. *My thoughts exactly, man*, Raizo thought. Beside Jiro, Fuyuko poked at her own chest gently.

Raizo rolled his eyes. *So the only thing that the guys noticed would be Satomi's tits?* he thought. *Friggin' idiots...that'll cost 'em their lives, but that's not my problem. If anything, it'll work to my advantage.*

Sitting down, Satomi giggled to herself. "Hey," she whispered, turning to Raizo, "did you notice how many of those guys were ogling at my chest?"

Raizo sighed. "I dunno," he replied. "I wasn't looking so I can't really say."

Satomi pouted. "Y'know, you could reach over and give 'em a touch if you like," she said with a smirk.

"I'll pass for the moment," Raizo said.

"Only 'for the moment?' Then how about later?" Satomi joked.

"We'll see," Raizo answered with a light chuckle.

"Say, where the hell is Hikari Oshiro?" Chinatsu asked, looking around in confusion.

Marie shrugged. "I don't see her, mistress," she said.

"Puppets, any idea where your owner is?" Chinatsu asked, looking at Raizo and Satomi.

"In the washroom," Satomi answered. "No idea what she's *doing* though."

Chinatsu rolled her eyes. "Knowing kids these days," she groaned, "I don't even *wanna* find out." Looking around, she raised an eyebrow. "Oh? Elizabeth seems to be missing as well," she mumbled.

"Hmm? That's...odd," Raizo mumbled.

"Who the hell is Elizabeth?" Satomi asked.

"The young miss has a sister named Elizabeth Oshiro," Raizo answered.

"Oh? And they're missing?" Satomi asked. "Well, perfect. C'mon, *mister detective*, let's go find them!"

"W-wait, WHAT?" Raizo shouted in surprise.