XXIX

"That was really embarrassing," Yuina mumbled as she slurped her soup.

The group had finished their karaoke session and returned to Yuuto's family restaurant to grab something to eat. Both off his parents had been visibly shocked to see their son come home with three girls all at once, but had calmed down upon sight of Nori. They now all sat in Yuuto's room, eating and joking around about the events of the day thus far.

"So what's the plan or this afternoon?" Sayaka asked cheerfully. "My parents insisted on heading to America since summer is out, so I'll be going straight home to help them pack. We're leaving in three days. But don't miss me too much," she winked, "I'll be back before summer break ends."

"Oh, parting is such sweet sorrow," Yuuto laughed.

"Why do I feel like I've heard that somewhere before?" Nori asked, his mouth still stuffed full of noodles.

"I dunno, man," Yuuto answered as he continued to cook the next batch of noodles. "Why don't you go figure that one out and we can discuss it?" Turning his attention away from Nori, Yuuto looked at Sayaka. "You want some help with packing, maybe?" he asked.

"O-oh, no! I...erm...I can't make you do *that* much, it's not right," she stammered. "B-b-but perhaps you could call me tomorrow morning to see if I'm alright after all the work?"

"Sure," Yuuto replied with a chuckle.

Hanae walked over to his and tugged gently on his sleeve. He turned to her, only to be met by her puffed out cheeks.

"Quit pouting at me," he said.

Hanae, in response, pushed her ace into his chest and nuzzled him gently. "My parents want me to go shopping with them," Nori said suddenly, checking his phone. "That means being a model for their clothes, by the way," he added in dismay. Yuuto, trying to pry his fiancée off, only chuckled in response.

Hanae, seeming to have reacted to Nori's comment, let go immediately. "I almost forgot!" she cried. "I was going to buy a sundress!" She turned to Yuuto. "Darling, do you like girls in sundresses?"

"I...how the hell do I answer that?" Yuuto responded.

"Be honest!" Hanae pressed.

"I...kinda, yeah," Yuuto admitted reluctantly.

"Then it's settled! I'll see you tomorrow!" she shouted, running out of the room.

"Did she even finish her lunch?" Sayaka asked.

"Thankfully, yes," Yuina said with a sigh.

Sayaka and Nori waved to Yuuto as they left. Turning to Yuina, he smiled. "Got nothing to do?" he asked.

"Y-yeah," she replied nervously.

"Well, you're free to hang out with me for a while, if you like. If not I could always walk you home—"

"What do you wanna do?" Yuina asked, cutting him off and sitting down.

"...or not," Yuuto laughed. "I dunno though. You're older, so surely you have something interesting in mind, right? I'll go with it."

Yuina paused for a second, thinking it over. "S-so we'll do whatever I suggest?"

"Yeah," Yuuto laughed. "Anything, as long as we can do it, that is."

"Oh...is *that* the case?" Yuina asked suggestively, putting a finger to her lip. "Well then..." She leaned in close and placed a kiss on his cheek. "I suppose that, as your senior, I *should* be the one taking the lead here," she giggled, poking Yuuto in the chest gently.

"Say what now?" Yuuto asked in surprise, leaning back slightly.

Yuina tugged at her shirt. "Well, I bought this black lace underwear at one point, but never got around to using it. I was thinking maybe you'd like to see?" "Err..."

Yuina sighed. "Alright, alright, that's enough. I'm just joking, you don't know me well enough for that yet," she said. "I mean, if you *seriously* wanna I guess I could...but y'know..."

"Yeah," Yuuto replied, "maybe not yet. I mean, we really should get to know each other some more first."

"Well then," Yuina sighed, sitting down, "let's do something for real, then." She reached into her bag, pulling out a large black box. "How about I play you a song? I've been learning the flute for a bit, so I kinda wanna play a tune."

"Sounds good," Yuuto smiled, sitting down. "I'm all ears."

Yuina slowly pulled her flute out off the box, carefully assembling it. She then tuned the flute for a few moments, singing each note and playing it afterwards. Yuuto sat in silence, watching her in awe. After she had finished preparing, she smiled at him. "Ready?" she asked.

"So that's why you sang so well, huh," Yuuto mumbled. "Amazing...I'm ready when you are."

Nodding, Yuina raised her flute into playing position and began to play her song. The notes filled the air, majestic sounds ringing through the room as she continued to play. Yuuto sat mesmerized.

Minutes later, she finally finished, putting her instrument down. "Did you like it?" she asked nervously.

"I loved it!" Yuuto declared. "That was absolutely amazing!"

Yuina giggled and gave a small bow. "Thank you," she said. "I haven't performed often, so I'm relieved to hear you say that." She hugged him tightly. "I just wish life could be like this every day," she added, "so I could be happy, just like this. I don't need anything else, you know that?"

"Huh," Yuuto mumbled. Shoot, he thought, it's gonna be impossible for me to choose one of these girls! But I still have to...dammit! But still...I will. For them. He put his arms around Yuina, pulling her in for a hug. "Thanks," he whispered. "I...I've just been thinking, though, I'll eventually have to pick one of you to be my real girlfriend, right?"

"Inevitably, yes," Yuina nodded.

Yuuto sighed. "Well, it's gonna be a hell of a difficult decision then," he mumbled. "But I suppose it's about time I stopped avoiding that problem and take it on."

Yuina tilted her head in confusion.

"I'm gonna pick someone," Yuuto declared. "It's gonna have to happen eventually, but the longer I wait, the harder the decision will be. And besides, I don't wanna lead anyone on...I wanna pick early so that the other two don't have any regrets."

Yuina nodded in response to his words. "I see," she said with a serious tone. "Then please make the choice with your best judgement."

"I will," Yuuto said.