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Sayaka's mother gazed at the two kids before her. Opposite to her, Yuuto sat nervously, beads of sweat forming on his neck. *Dammit, I knew I was gonna regret this*, he thought to himself. To his side, Sayaka gazed at him apologetically. Her expression seemed to say that she was worried about this happening as well.

Taking a sip of tea, Sayaka's mother smiled calmly. *That seemingly calm smile is only scaring me more*, Yuuto thought.

"So, what's your name, young man?" she asked, putting the tea cup down.

"I'm Yuuto Ishikawa, first year high school student," Yuuto replied without a hint of hesitation in his voice.

"So that puts you in my daughter's grade," Sayaka's mother mumbled.

"Interesting. Are you two classmates?"

"Yes, ma'am," Yuuto answered.

"Mother, you are *really* putting a lot of pressure on us," Sayaka said.

"On *us*? I haven't asked you anything yet, dear," her mother answered. "So, are you two dating?" she asked, turning back to Yuuto.

"Mother!" Sayaka cried.

"N-no, ma'am," Yuuto answered. "We aren't technically dating as of right now."

"Technically, hmm?" Sayaka's mother replied, giggling to herself. "And what do you mean by that?"

Oh, screw it, Yuuto thought. *I may as well deal with the consequences of asking a rich girl out without consulting with her parents*. He sighed. "We've gone out once, but we're not really *dating*, like not a couple, I guess. It was more of a 'let's hang out and get to know each other' sorta thing."

"Y-yeah!" Sayaka chimed in. "We're only friends right now! W-we just went shopping, had a picnic, got some smoothies, went to the amusement park then had a bite to eat—oh I just made it worse, didn't I?"

"Indeed you did, dear," her mother laughed, "but it sounds like you two *did* have a fun date. So why is it that you're not yet a couple? You seem like quite the nice boy, and my daughter certainly seems to have some affection for you in case it wasn't obvious, so why not?"

"Th-that's why we had to go out the other day!" Sayaka interrupted. "We both figured that we don't really know each other well enough to actually start dating, so we kinda went on a little 'practice date' in the meantime! It wasn't anything serious, I swear!"

"I see," her mother answered. "Well, in any case, I do hope you'll consider dating her for real. My precious daughter has never been good around men, so I'd love for you to take good care of her for me. And—oh my," she said, standing up, "look at me, asking this of you when I haven't even introduced myself! My name is Julia Hamasaki. I was born in America, hence why both I and my daughter have

blonde hair and whatnot. Now, you may simply address me as Julia, or you can call me 'dear Mother' if you prefer," she winked.

"MOTHER!" Sayaka cried. "Stop, you're embarrassing me! That's totally verboten!"

"Alright, alright," Julia giggled. "I'll leave you two lovebirds alone," she said, walking out of the room.

Sayaka sighed. "Sorry about that. Well, since we don't have any homework today, wanna keep chatting for a bit? Or do you need to go and work now?" she asked dejectedly.

"N-no, on weekdays I work the night shift from 9 to 11 at night," Yuuto answered.

"W-wonderful! Then please stay for a little longer! A-also, while we're on the subject of your work, does your restaurant do takeout?"

"Yeah, we do deliveries too, depending on what time of day it is. Why do you ask?" Yuuto responded.

"Oh, no reason," Sayaka mumbled as she pulled her phone out of her pocket. "And what was the number for that again?"

"And I thought I had seen it all," the man said, taking a sip of the soup, "but here I am, sipping a bowl of noodle soup."

"To think that commoners can outdo our professional chefs," Julia mumbled, "it's baffling...or perhaps we've just eaten too much of the supposed 'good' food and we've grown numb to it."

"Master Kenji," a maid called, walking over, "would you like some more wine?"

"That would be splendid, Alice," he replied as the maid poured him another glass of wine.

"And you, lady Julia?" she asked.

"Yes, some more would be wonderful, Alice," Julia replied.

Sayaka giggled, staring at Yuuto's stunned expression. "Surprised, huh?" she asked, nudging him gently. "I don't blame you. I never could understand how my parents were able to be this casual despite their positions...but alas."

"Do not swear by the moon, for she changes constantly," Yuuto chuckled.

"Then your love would also change," Julia added. "I see you've read Shakespeare, Yuuto."

"Wait, that's from Shakespeare?" Sayaka asked.

"Yeah, remember how I said I never ended up missing English class?" Yuuto chuckled. "That was part of the reason why."

"Then can you tell me where it's from?" Kenji asked. "I never memorized any Shakespeare back in my day," he admitted.

"It's act 2, scene 2 of Romeo and Juliet. I actually used the modern version. The original was worded differently, though it held the same meaning," Yuuto answered.

"I see," Kenji replied. "Interesting...say, as a quick change of subjects, out of curiosity, where did you two order this soup from?"

"Yuuto's family restaurant!" Sayaka answered. "It's their house specialty soup! I tried it when I was last there!"

"Is that so?" Julia asked, raising an eyebrow. "So how much was this then?"

"1500 yen a bowl," Sayaka answered honestly.

"Alright then," Kenji said. "I suppose you're using a secret recipe then, so I won't pry. However, do be expecting orders from us more often, kiddo."

"O-of course!" Yuuto nodded. *Huh. Guess I didn't regret it*, he thought to himself.

"Now, tell us a bit about your first date," Julia said, turning to Sayaka, who froze in place nervously. "And give us some details on the part when you went to Yuuto's family restaurant. Was that the same day or was it a separate date altogether? Come on, give me details!"

Sayaka continued to try and refuse.

Never mind, Yuuto thought, *I DO regret it a little bit*.