Which then raises the question:  
  
>Just how bad is Yukino’s relationship with her family and why is it like this?  
  
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1. Yukino is a disappointment to her mother.  
2. Yukino thinks that her parents merely see her as a replacement for Haruno (at least during social events).   
<http://imgur.com/a/T3vxz>  
<http://imgur.com/a/Q2Eyg>  
3. Yukino sees her family (or at least her sister) as her closest strangers.   
<http://imgur.com/a/kcgPc>  
  
> Yukino is surrounded only by strangers.   
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“Hikigaya‐kun is surrounded solely by strangers, so nothing is ever his problem,” said Yukinoshita.   
“Why are you saying that with a kinda nice smile? I don’t want to hear it from you. You’re the one who regards everyone as a stranger,”(!) I retorted to the grinning Yukinoshita.   
This prompted her to flick her hair and assume a self‐assured expression.   
“Indeed. I am surrounded only by strang‐”(!)   
“Huuuuuh…?!” A crestfallen Yuigahama prodded Yukinoshita’s back incessantly.   
“Yuigahama‐san, could you please stop prodding my back?”   
That didn’t stop Yuigahama. “Nrrgghhh…” She went on with the prodding with a sullen face.   
Yukinoshita let out a short cough, as if unable to stand it any longer.   
“Hrmm, I’ll correct myself. There may be the odd exception, but most are strangers.”   
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<http://imgur.com/LfKK85l>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WzRb5G1cmA>  
6:05  
  
4. During the Saki episode, it’s the first time Yukino hints at her having problems with her family. Saki brings up how she needs money and that since Yukino has money, she would never understand Saki’s problems. This causes Yukino to spill her drink. This implies that while money has never been an issue in the Yukinoshita household, clearly not everything is as peachy as one might think.  
<http://imgur.com/a/E9DHG>  
<http://imgur.com/a/cOjLE>  
<http://imgur.com/kVaMGCS>  
5. Yukino would rather live on her own than with her family. When given the choice, she doesn’t like meeting up with them, but she doesn’t want them to hate her.  
<http://imgur.com/a/B3oid>  
6. Yukino isn’t on good terms with Hayato either.  
  
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> What happened to cause all of this?  
  
To determine this, we first need to take a look at a couple of things.  
  
1. There’s constantly this idea being pushed forward of how Hayato, Haruno and Yukino used to hang out a lot when they were kids/younger. Why are they constantly talking about those good old nostalgic times and not some of the more recent years?  
  
Hayato and Haruno both got chocolates before Hayato and Yukino went to grade school/elementary school, but for some reason not after they entered?  
<http://imgur.com/a/fNKdB>  
  
> Volume 10, when Haruno calls Yukino to come meet with them because Hachiman is there as well.  
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“It’s been a long time since we all got together for tea like this, huh?”(!)  
“That’s true.”   
“……”   
While Hayama answered and nodded in agreement, Yukinoshita kept her eyes closed with her cup in hand. When the chat stagnated, Yuigahama spoke up trying to find something to talk about.   
“Ah, ummm… Hayato-kun has known you two since a long time ago, after all.”   
“Yep, yep. You know how Hayato’s an only child? Thanks to that, his parents were really affectionate with us. Right, Yukino-chan?”   
“I don’t really think so.”   
“That’s not true. It wasn’t just our parents that were affectionate with you two. Everyone else was too.”   
Even when Haruno-san spoke to them and even when Hayama maintained his smile and answered, Yukinoshita’s attitude didn’t change. But Haruno-san didn’t pay that any attention and her gaze turned distant.   
“It’s so nostalgic…(!) Back when we were younger(!), whenever our parents had business to take care of, I’d always be the one taking care of you two.”   
Hearing that, Yukinoshita twitched and frowned. “You must be mistaken with forcing us to follow you around and do what you want. You were a real nuisance.”   
She set her cup on her saucer and sent a cold tone and indifferent gaze to Haruno-san. Hayama responded in turn.   
“Ahh, like the time when we were at the public zoo… We went through a lot of trouble at the amusement park zone, didn’t we…?”   
“It was like that at the Rinkai Park, too. She’d leave us stranded, she’d shake the Ferris wheel…”   
Hayama and Yukinoshita made gloomy expressions from recalling the days of the past. But Haruno-san was nodding with a happy look.   
“Ahh, that happened, didn’t it? And Yukino-chan would always cry afterwards.”   
“Wait… Stop making up things.”   
“But they’re not made up though. Right, Hayato?”   
“Ahaha… I wonder.”   
Haruno-san would talk to them, Hayama would smile and respond, and Yukinoshita would nod silently.   
As I watched them engaged in their nostalgic chatter, a feeling of reality suddenly sank in. Those three certainly had accumulated time together back then and they were memories that outsiders could not touch on.   
Yuigahama couldn’t join in on their conversation, let alone me.   
I don’t know what kind of relation these two sisters had a long time ago(!). Even if I knew, there was nothing I could do.   
The only things I could do were occasionally carry the bitter coffee to my mouth and ignore their stories of the past that continued even and respond agreeably. And lastly, imagine them.   
I don’t know when it was, but I was asked something before.   
That if I had went to the same elementary school as those two, would anything have changed.   
Just what did I answer at the time?   
As I indulged in my memories and thoughts, there was the simultaneous sound of a sigh and a placed cup. I looked in its direction and Haruno-san was resting her chin in her hands, gazing at Hayama and Yukinoshita with eyes lacking warmth.   
“Both of you were sooo adorable back then… Nowadays… you two just seem so boring.”   
The more beautiful her nicely shaped, vivid lips were, the colder the words that came out of them. With a pinning glare and an icy smile, the voices of everyone there were stifled.   
Yukinoshita slightly squeezed her fist above the table while Hayama gritted his teeth and looked away.   
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<http://imgur.com/8NZJ5kz>  
  
Hachiman wonders if things would have turned out differently if he had gone to the same elementary school as Yukino and Hayato, implying that this was a key point that has led to things becoming the way they are now.  
  
2. Yukino and Hayato went to the same elementary school.  
<https://imgur.com/k95JAgG>  
  
>Yukino used to study abroad, but for “some reason” she transferred back to Japan during middle school.  
----  
“Yes. I returned from overseas in middle school, so naturally I started at a new place, but all the girls in my class… Or, rather, all the girls in the school were desperate to drive me out. Even so, not a single person tried to better themselves to the point where they could beat me. What imbeciles…”   
----  
“Oh, right… I came to Chiba Village for an outdoor ed camp back in middle school…”(!)   
“This is Chiba City’s recreation centre in the Gunma Prefecture, if I recall correctly,” Yukinoshita piped in.   
“Oh, so you went to Chiba Village too?”   
“Since I returned in my third year(!), I never participated in the outdoor camp. I know of the event’s existence thanks to the graduation album.”   
“You returned? Where’d you go? Or more like why’d you come back?”   
“I can sense your spite in the way you phrase your questions… not that I mind.”   
Yukinoshita turned around and looked out the window. I couldn’t catch a glimpse of her expression thanks to her fluttering black hair, buffeted by the wind coming through the slightly open window. “I went on exchange.(!) Perhaps I failed to mention it before. My memory capacity is comparable to a floppy disk.”  
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<http://imgur.com/a/EyRPW>  
  
>Before transferring back, Yukino did attempt to go to middle school in America.  
<http://imgur.com/a/ZOmuq>  
----  
Yukinoshita met her gaze directly. “The people you go to elementary school with now will progress to the same middle school as you. In that case, history will only repeat itself,”(!) she declared coldly, not mincing any words. “Next time, those ‘people who come in from other schools’ will merely join in.”(!)   
For those who graduated from a local public elementary school to a public middle school, the relationships they’d established until then would perpetuate themselves.(!) You had to start with all the baggage you accumulated from elementary school.(!) Even if you were to make new friends, your debts from the past would get in the way. Your past would be shared around mercilessly, taking the form of funny stories and in‐jokes.(!) Once you were reduced to a handy communication tool for those boys and girls, you were finished.

Nobody said anything.   
I was unable to form a rebuttal. Not only did I have no objections, Yuigahama also kept silent in discomfort. But even Rumi had nothing to say, not a single thing.

“You know that much, don’t you?” Yukinoshita said, as if delivering the final blow.   
Then, as she peered at the silent Rumi, she pursed her lips tightly, as if trying to withstand something. Maybe, just maybe, Yukinoshita could make out the face of her past in the girl in front of her.(!)   
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>Since transferring back to Japan, Yukino hasn’t met any of her “friends” from elementary school.  
<http://imgur.com/a/uZEzX>  
  
-  
  
So how does Hayato tie into all of this?  
  
>We know that while Haruno and Hayato hang out, Hayato is someone Haruno has lost interest in for “some reason”.  
<http://imgur.com/a/eUCxv>  
  
-  
  
3. Yukino was bullied for her excellence.  
<http://imgur.com/a/PUXtJ>  
  
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Well, there was probably no way anyone could sleep easy after being made to do what he did today. I’d only watched from the shadows and I didn’t feel too good about it. “Sorry I pushed the villain role on you.”   
“I don’t mind, really. I don’t feel *that* hung up about it. It just brought back some memories… a long time ago, I did nothing when a similar scene played out in front of me,”(!) Hayama said, not jokingly or dejectedly, but with something like yearning.   
Knowing nothing of Hayama and Yukinoshita’s past, I had no idea how I was supposed to answer that. Instead of make some generic response, all I could do was simply pretend to be asleep.   
“Things would probably have turned out better if Yukinoshita‐san had been like her sister.”(!)   
Ah, so this guy knew about Haruno as well, probably from meeting her at home or whatever. But even if we knew the same person, I had to disagree with Hayama.   
“Nah… you don’t have to say that. Just imagining Yukinoshita with good social graces creeps me out.”(!)   
“Haha, guess you’re right.”   
It was dark so I couldn’t see him, but it was hard to imagine Hayama’s smile from the way he spoke. His tone suddenly dropped, and I could hear him breathing slightly.   
“…hey, I wonder how things would’ve turned out if we went to the same elementary school, Hikitani‐kun.”   
I answered his question promptly. “It’s obvious. There would’ve just been one more loner in your school.”   
“You think so?”   
“I think so.” My voice was extremely thick with confidence.   
I could somewhat make out the sound of Hayama’s quiet chuckling. In order to distract me from the fact he had been laughing, Hayama let out a little cough.   
“I think a lot of things would’ve been ended up differently. It’s just… even so…”   
There was a pause as if he was choosing his words.   
“I probably wouldn’t have gotten along with you, Hikigaya‐kun.”   
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>Yukino, who has always looked up to her sister, strived to be like her in terms of academics, accomplishments, talents and hobbies. Except unlike her (and Hayato), Yukino lacked the “social skills” or the fake façade Haruno and Hayato have to get away with it.  
<http://imgur.com/a/BpV7F>  
  
>Her classmates and upperclassmen start bullying/isolating her.  
----  
“So what’s it like being popular?” I asked. Yukinoshita closed her eyes as though she was thinking about it a little bit.

After clearing her throat a little, she spoke. “For someone like you, who isn’t at all popular, this may be a little unpleasant to hear.”

“Since I have always been cute, boys who approached me generally did so harboring feelings for me.”

“I believe it began during my final years of elementary school. Ever since then….”(!) Yukinoshita’s expression was different from what it was just previously. It was a little melancholy.

…  
“Well, being liked has gotta be somewhat better than being constantly hated. You’re spoiled. Too spoiled.” I blurted out after that unpleasant memory just crossed my mind.

Yukinoshita gave a short sigh. It seemed a lot like she was smiling but yet her expression was clearly different.

“It’s not as if I have ever wanted to be liked by people though.”(!) She asserted and then added only a few more words. “Otherwise, if people genuinely did like me then that would have probably been a good thing.”(!)   
“If you had a friend who was generally popular with girls, what would you think?”(!)   
“That’s a stupid question. I don’t have any friends so I wouldn’t need to worry about such a thing.” I gave an exceedingly forceful reply. Like a man would. Even if I do say so myself, I was surprised at how I quickly cut in with a reply before she had even finish talking.

It seemed Yukinoshita was also surprised. She was at a loss for words with her mouth hanging open.

“…..For a second, I actually thought you said something cool.” Yukinoshita gently put a hand on temple as though she had a headache, and hung her head low. “Think of it as a hypothetical and give me an answer.”

“I’d kill him.” I didn’t know if my quick reply satisfied her or not but Yukinoshita nodded her head knowingly.

“See, wouldn’t you try to eliminate that person? Just like a brute that doesn’t have any sense. No, they would have even less sense than an animal…..The school I went to had many people like that. Although I believe they were pitiful people who could only ascertain the meaning of their existence by doing those things.” Yukinoshita suddenly chortled.

Girls who are hated by girls. A category like that definitely exists. I haven’t been going to school for ten years for nothing.   
It’s not like I was at the center of it all but it’s something you can understand just by looking at it from the outside. No, it’s *because* I was looking at it from the outside that I was able to understand.

Yukinoshita was most certainly always at the center of it and as a result, without a doubt, she was surrounded by enemies in all directions.(!) For somebody who lived like that, I can imagine the kinds of things she experienced.   
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<http://imgur.com/a/Ud0xV>  
  
This applies to both Yukino and Hayato. Yukino was cute and a lot of boys approached her. This caused most of the other girls to become incredibly jealous of her and seek out ways to “eliminate” her. This started since the last years of elementary school.  
  
Hayato was popular with girls back in the day. Yukino being his female childhood friend and hanging out with him didn’t make things better for her.   
  
>How did Hayato handle the situation?  
<http://imgur.com/a/T3RYI>  
<http://imgur.com/a/5CNFq>  
<http://imgur.com/a/Ynhg7>  
----  
“I…” Someone spoke up.

It was Hayama, who had shut his mouth so heavily before.

“I’d like to do something to help her if I can.”

It was a very Hayama‐like expression. They were kind words.(!) They were unkind only to Rumi. To those close to Hayama as he spoke, they were very kind words indeed.(!)

A kind lie that would hurt no one.(!) It would only make hope flicker, although the despair was wrapped inside the roundabout phrasing. The possibility that it could not be done loomed unspoken, and everyone was free to interpret it as they wished.(!)

“It’s impossible for you. That’s how it was, right?”(!)

It was Yukinoshita’s voice that cut through those vague and comfortable words. In the dead of the night, a lantern light illuminated her features. As she flicked her hair behind her, her cold gaze pierced Hayama.

She had made that assertion as if it was a patently obvious fact, not bothering to seek an explanation. I wondered if she was talking about what Hayama had said to Rumi earlier.

For a moment, I caught a glimpse of Hayama’s pained expression, as if his very insides had been set afire. “That… might have been how it was.”(!) For a moment, he couldn’t speak. “But this time, it’ll be different.”(!)

“I wonder about that.” Yukinoshita shrugged at Hayama’s answer. It was a cold dismissal.

As we watched this unexpected exchange, a heavy silence hung over the proceedings.

Just like the others, I kept my mouth shut as I peered at Hayama and Yukinoshita.

I’d sensed it that time when Hayama came to the Service Club room(!), but the hardened attitude Yukinoshita showed towards him now was different from her ordinary self.(!)

Her usual coldness was merely an expression of stand‐offishness, but there was a definite sense of forcefulness in Yukinoshita’s words just now.

It was clear as day that something had happened between the two of them, something I didn’t know about.

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Hayato chose preserving his own social status over helping his “friend”.   
<http://imgur.com/a/RMzjU>  
  
-  
  
4. A couple of other smaller noteworthy details:

>Yukino asked Haruno to help her for the very first time during Sagami’s arc.   
<http://imgur.com/a/1dDbT>  
  
>The first time Yukino asked her parents for something was when she wanted to live on her own.  
----  
“My mother’s the type of person who decides on everything and forces people to follow her, so we end up having to make compromises… And Yukino-chan’s a little poor at that.”

Poor’s not the right word. It’d be better to emphasize it by saying, “A little and little and little poor.”

“That’s why it was a big shock to all of us when she said she wanted to live on her own after she entered high school.”(!)

“So Yukinon started living alone after getting into high school?”(!)

“Yep, yep. She wasn’t the type of child to say selfish things like that(!), but our father was so happy he rented out an apartment for her.”

Ahh, just why were fathers of the world so sweet to their daughters?

“Our mother opposed it to the end and I’m sure she still doesn’t acknowledge it even now…”(!)  
----  
  
>Haruno is surprised at how much Yukino has grown.   
<http://imgur.com/a/BuOSH>  
When has Yukino grown exactly? In the year and a half that she’s been living on her own?   
<http://imgur.com/a/kOGnR>  
  
>Yukino and Haruno have never had a quarrel.  
----  
“A quarrel? I hardly think that this qualifies as one. We had never actually argued before.”  
----  
<http://imgur.com/a/zw2tA>  
  
>Yukino has never been scolded before.  
----  
“I don’t mind since I’ve never been scolded before.”

“Yukinoshita, being scolded isn’t necessarily a bad thing. It just means that someone’s looking out for you.”(!)  
----