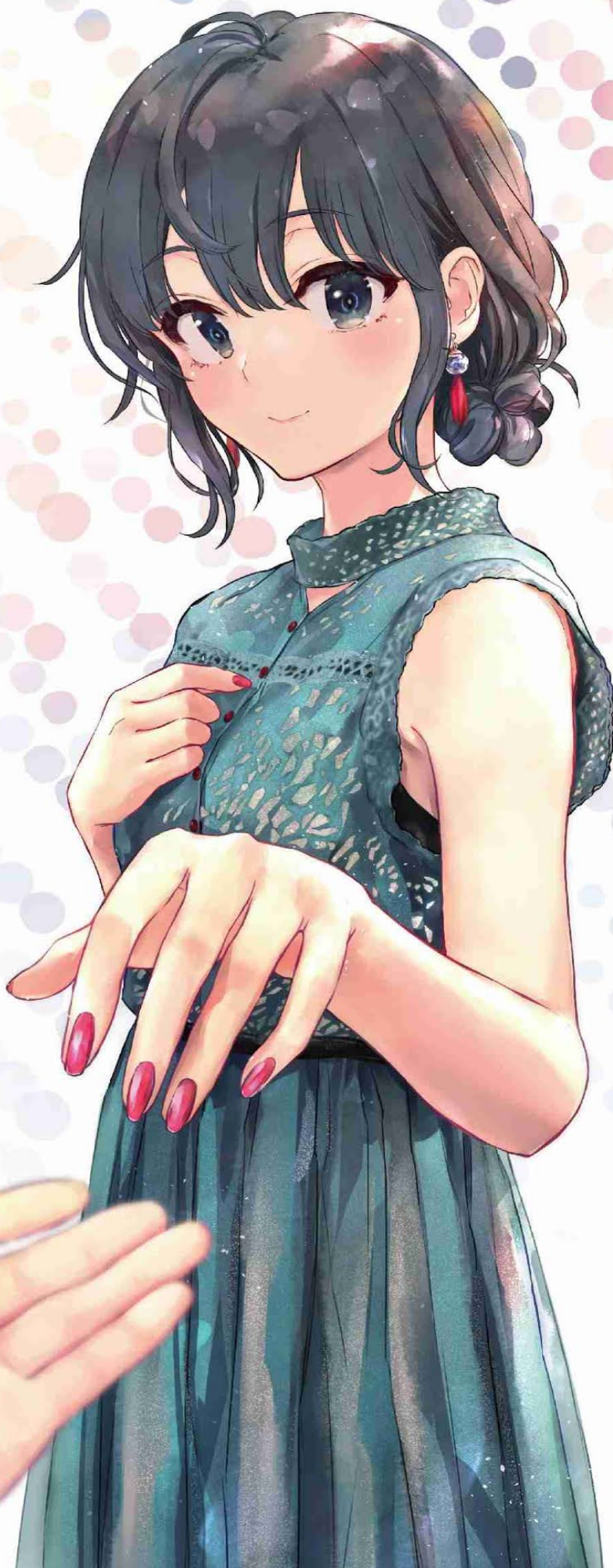


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TBS  
Animation

MARVELOUS!

# Table of Contents

[Prelude: So, Hikigaya Komachi Says It Like This](#)

[Chapter 1: And So, Our Youth Will Not End.](#)

[Chapter 2: Even So, His and Her Routine Will Continue On](#)

[Interlude](#)

[Chapter 3: Above the roadside, see the world from the train windows that Chiba is proud of.\[12\]](#)

[Author's Afterword](#)

# Prelude: So, Hikigaya Komachi Says It Like This

What is all of this about?

Even if you ask Komachi that, Komachi wouldn't know ... rather, Komachi would like to ask him.

Komachi wanted to ask Onii-chan about it, but every time I tried asking, I couldn't go any further, as I was too shy to continue ...

No, it's not like that. It's not because "Onii-chan is going to be taken away from me, I'm going to be so lonely, uwuwuu ... ah, that scored a lot of Komachi points!". No, for real, no!

I'm not lying to you! You're asking how honest I'm being? I'm as honest as I can be! To say the truth, it's probably best for Onii-chan to get married away quickly, that's what I had always thought. Yes, I really didn't lie to you. I'm not feeling lonely at all, it's true! So, what I'm saying the truth, it can't be truer than that.

... I already said, it's true!

This person is so annoying, not giving up at all! How many times do you have to ask about the same thing! Are your parents parrots or something? Ah, so that's what it was, I understand now! If it's like this, then there's nothing I can do ... to think that I would meet the alternate champion of the Birdman Competition here ...

For real, I'm not feeling lonely or jealous or anything. It's not that I'm in denial.

It's just that I'm too shy him about it ...

It's like asking your parents how they started dating.

Hearing how your dad courted your mom, isn't that just awful to hear? If he was making an embarrassed face and speaking in a deeply emotional manner, that would make it even worse!

So, you would feel uneasy and naturally start playing with your fingers. That's right, you will make the face that Komachi is making now.

Listening to your brother talk about his love stories would be a similar scenario. Can you understand? Hey, can you understand?

I think that in daily life, I've always kept an appropriate distance from my brother, so even when I hear about topics related to relationships, I can stay calm. You're saying that's not the case, that we're very close? Really? Aren't all siblings like this? Well, actually I'm not too sure myself.

So, until today I had no problem hearing about things like this. I don't know if it was just that I couldn't understand in that moment, anyways it just didn't feel realistic.

... Ah, no no, it's not like I never imagined it, rather, it's just that I hadn't imagined enough. A blurry scene of "I'm so blessed! So happy! Onee-chan!", that type of scene I have imagined.

But in reality, it was not that simple ...

What? Repeat what I said again? I'm so blessed, so happy, Onee-chan! You mean this?

Another round? This isn't a sauna, why another round? But I'll say it again anyways. Komachi has a great spirit for service after all.

One, two, three, Onee-chan!

Whew ...

What's up with this person ... ah, let me have some tea first.

... Wheeew ...

Ah, sorry, I'll continue. It doesn't feel like Komachi should be the one to apologize though ... whatever, let's just put that matter aside.

I did hear Onii-chan try to bring it up once. He promised me he would tell me if anything was to happen.

But, being the person he is, even if I went to ask him, he would try hiding it and make excuses, so I guess I'll just take it slowly, he'll reveal it bit by bit anyways. That way, Komachi can also accept reality bit by bit, that's what I thought ...

But things were not what I had imagined ...

No, at first I was just going with the flow, teasing him in an attempt to squeeze some information out of him, but when it came to the "So? Are you two actually dating?" part, the conversation suddenly became unbearable.

Because, it's that Onii-chan! My Onii-chan!

You know what happened? Onii-chan made a serious expression and cleared his throat, then in a serious manner he told me "Komachi, actually I have something I want to tell you ...".

I thought he was going to get into the topic, he was finally going to get into the topic!

So, Komachi sat straight immediately.

I waited ages for him to start talking, but he never did.

And in the end, all he could say sounded broken and small like a mosquito “Um, so like, I think, it went pretty well”, his ears were red, he couldn’t make eye contact, and he sighed, but still, he forced a smile.

I don’t even know if I should call him disgusting, cute, or pure, I don’t even know if he is happy or not, anyways, even I started to feel bashful ...

And then I couldn’t help but say “Oh, oh! So that’s how it is! That’s great! Then Komachi can rest easy”, faking a calm expression and ending the conversation. Oh my, that really gave me a fright, I didn’t even know that I had such talent in acting ... if I don’t keep myself in check, I could turn into an evil woman that toys with men’s hearts!

Hmm? You’re saying that we’re similar in how we try to muddle past our problems? No no no, there is no resemblance, not a bit. If you keep saying that I’ll get angry!

Because, we’re not the same at all! Onii-chan muddles past his problems by adding weird selfdeprecation, which makes it especially disgusting, but Komachi’s technique has an indescribable cuteness to it, a flair of personality ... what are you laughing at! Uh ... no, like I said, we bear no resemblance ...

You’re saying that I’m trying to muddle past this? That, I admit.

We both have the same idea.

Yes, Komachi accidentally muddled past the problem again ...

Onii-chan is the same too, I think.

Like a thorn stuck in his heart, there are things he isn’t prepared to let out, and therefore can’t say out loud, which is why he didn’t tell Komachi more about it.

But that is just what I selfishly thought ...

Ah, no, it’s not like there’s any real evidence. After all, Komachi wasn’t even with him, didn’t hear about everything, and still have a lot I don’t understand.

But during activities in the club room, I can’t help but have the thought that “Ah, Onii-chan is daydreaming again”.

Do you know? When Onii-chan is daydreaming, he’s usually thinking about complicated things, and his face becomes this jumbled mess.

Yes yes yes! Like the face you make when you eat sour candy!

Ah, so you already knew. You’re smarter than you look.

Yeah, so like, it’s ok if he makes a normal expression like frowning, but his entire face gives off a sour and off-putting vibe when he’s daydreaming.

Things like this, if you hadn't been together for a long time, you wouldn't possibly know right? ... That's what I thought. Oh really? There are also people that know this other than Komachi? Oh, ok.

Well since everyone knows already ... looks like Komachi has said something unnecessary.

... Ah.

Aaah, stop it, stop patting my head. It took me so much effort to tidy my hair ... say, this person uses so much force when touching someone's head ... ouch, take your hand off my head! Hmm, that wasn't really all that bad.

... Yes, you're right.

Indeed, even if Komachi does nothing, those other people will do something, I think.

Heh-heh, hearing you say that, I think I've cheered up a little.

Ah! Wait! I said stop patting my head! No! I'm not that down!

But the future really puts me in unease, ah what a troublesome future ... thinking about what will happen from now on, Komachi gets really worried ...

Yes, just as you thought.

This is probably going to go on for a while.

But I think things will slowly start to change.

No matter it being Komachi, or Onii-chan.

... Or for all of the members of the service club.

My new life? Yeah, it's going pretty well! I'm slowly but surely working hard.

As for the club ... things are considerably well ... not good but not bad ...

So, if you can look over him for a little while longer, I will be very happy as a little sister. Ah!

That scored pretty high on Komachi points! Then if there's anything else I'll let you know!

So that's how it is —

I'll be in your care for a little while longer!

# Chapter 1: And So, Our Youth Will Not End.

No matter how the seasons alternate, some things never change.

It's already half-way through April, looking outside the window from the classroom, you could see the cherry blossoms starting to wilt.

However, the branches reaching into the sky, the thick tree trunks accumulating energy, and the roots deeply plunging into the ground, remained the same.

From a flowering cherry blossom to a tree starting to sprout new leaves, despite the changes in its appearance, it still doesn't affect its overall look.

Human nature may also be the same.

In the third spring of my high school life, no, if we're talking about spring in my high school life, because of some reasons, it's only my second time, but if we're including elementary and middle school, I've already passed countless new semesters.

No matter how long time has passed, I still don't like this season.

The atmosphere of mutual greetings, superficial conversations, those, I've already long been accustomed to.

Because I have to go through this every year, all I can do now is just sigh and say: "It's that season of the year again ...". It's like in the summer when friends give salad oil to your family as a greeting gift. You thought it was a bottle of Calpis, but uncapping it, you see that, it's all oil, and mom and Komachi are happy. But then, getting oil as a gift is pretty exciting too, as you can use it to fry things to eat.

I should have already grown accustomed to the new semester by now, but I still felt uncomfortable somehow, even more so than previous years, which made me suspect whether I had a pollen allergy.

But I already knew the real culprit.

It was the classroom redistribution after we became third years.

No, the redistribution itself was not the issue.

After all, I wasn't all that comfortable with our class when I was in my second year, so I doubt I have any nostalgia. At the most, it's just crying into my pillow and complaining "I'm in a different class as Totsuka!", I'll never forgive you Ministry of Education!

But as the saying goes, good things don't last forever, life is filled with goodbyes. Separations in the short term are inevitable. Rather, I've already gotten used to it. Looking from another perspective, I

can finally go to the tennis court alone in the afternoon break and just squat there. So, the class redistribution itself really has no downsides for me.

So, the culprit that is making me uncomfortable is not the class redistribution.

Unknowingly, I squinted at the culprit, even softly clicking my tongue.

I'm not sure if he heard the sound, or if he felt the stare of hatred on his back, but the culprit of my uncomfortableness turned around to face me. His tie swung in front of his chest, and his bangs fluttered in the wind.

*Hayama Hayato.*

He's my former classmate slash current classmate, and the main cause of my uncomfortableness.

Hayama originally had a cool smile on his face, but as soon as his eyes met mine, they flashed a teasing look. He raised the corners of his mouth, then bowed his head slightly.

With that action, it was as if he was saying "Is there a problem?"

*I have no business with you ...*

I shook my head slightly in response.

Hayama shrugged his shoulders, as if saying "Don't call me if you gave nothing to say".

*No, I didn't call you ...*

I sighed impatiently, and at that moment—

"Huhuhu..."

A weird laughter reached my ears.

In an instance, Hayama and I had straightened our backs.

*It's over! That person's coming!* I raised my alertness, discovering a female student in the corner of my eyesight.

She had soft shoulder-length black hair, a pair of red-rimmed glasses, and the sides of her mouth were contorted in an unpleasant manner, showing a delighted smile.

*Ebina Hina.*

She is also my former classmate slash current classmate, and another cause of my uncomfortableness. She showed a satisfied smile, pulled the chair beside her, and started pointing between me and Hayama.

"We're in the same class as Hikigaya again huh"



“Hahaha ...”

Hayama let out an awkward laughter after hearing Ebina’s meaningless comment.

“Um, yeah, I guess this is fate ...”

He helplessly replied, but, towards Ebina, he made a grave mistake. Who knew Ebina would snicker and say:

“Fate ... fufufu ...”[u](#)

She licked her lips, looking like a devil with no decency at all.

Miura had always been here to stop her rampage! Great queen, please come here quickly! I shrunk my shoulders and prayed that this rotten storm would blow over.

As our new semester seat arrangement was based on our school number, Hayama was the one to sit in front of me.

Up until middle school, schools in Chiba arranged our school numbers by birthday, but for some reason they decided to arrange it by alphabetical order in high school. Damn it! Hayama’s birthday is on September 28th, if our seats were arranged by birthday, he would be in the back ...

*God, oh god, I just clearly remembered Hayama’s birthday ... doesn’t that look like I care a lot about him ...?!*

Ebina seemed to have picked up on the maiden-in-love scene playing in my heart, as she quickly walked over and her rotten energy intensified.

Since becoming a third year, everyday has been like this.

Of course, the three of us aren’t always together.

From an outsider’s perspective, Hayama and Ebina frequently talk with the other classmates, and seem to socialize well. Rather, they seem to always be happy with everyone.

But maybe because of the seating arrangement, sometimes things like this happen.

For example, after school when everyone is thinking of what to do next, or during the brief time before and after class.

At times like these, a situation like this would gradually form, and Hayama, Ebina, and I would end up together.

Even if we did make eye contact, we seldomly talked, and any talk that did come up always ended in a simple two lines, not even counting as a conversation, pretty much the only way we “make conversation” is through sighing. But it’s still one month before the next seat change, so before then, this situation can only continue on.

If it's just one month, I think I can make it through.

Furthermore, I've already had a whole year's worth of experience with Hayama and Ebina, and at least know how to handle being with them.

We respect the same rules, that is, not to meddle too much with someone else's business.

Because both Hayama and Ebina are inclined to maintain the status quo, getting along with them is quite easy. As of the other classmates ... that's not the case.

Hayama Hayato had always been one of those attention-hoarding people, same goes as Ebina.

Many people in the class have already known them to an extent, plus, there were definitely some that wanted to use this chance to get to know them.

And so, all the attention in the class naturally falls onto Hayama and his friends.

Even so, Hayama often uses a non-offensive manner to coolly block their gazes, while Ebina uses her rotten mode to make herself look like a clown character, so, no one has actually gotten close to them.

*To be able to break through all these protective layers is probably pretty impressive ...*

Can't say that I called it, but just as I was thinking about these things, a large ruckus sounded from outside the classroom, and the door in the back was opened.

"Hayato! Listen to me." Accompanied by the ambient noise, someone came in crying out like how Nobita calls for Doraemon's help. The one noisily running towards him is our former classmate, Tobe.

"This is bad! Yumiko is making me in charge of the 2F class gathering, but the soccer club is also preparing for the imminent competition, I already said I have no time to spare ..."

Tobe came towards us and started playing with the hair on his nape, crying and complaining about his situation.

*So that's the case, that really does sound like trouble.*

As for the people remaining in the classroom, they had heard what Hayama and his circle were talking about, and formed a discussion that went "Ah ... Miura ... ah ... so that's it".

But that level of understanding is not sufficient to truly understand Hayama and his circle.

Hayama and Ebina made no response. Surprisingly, Tobe subsequently changed the tone of his voice.

"This is not good; I'm betting my all on this last competition for the soccer club."

With that said he took a glance at Ebina.

"But she's forcing me to plan the gathering, what should I do? This is bad. I'm also in charge of the gathering for our new class, I wonder if there's anyone else that can do it."

With every sentence, no, every section, no, every word, he glanced towards Ebina. Even without deciphering the contents of his speech, it was evident that he was using a super self-humiliating way to boast about himself. But it seemed that it had little effect on his target Ebina. From the beginning of his speech, she had not uttered a word, only smiling and nodding.

“Sure is hard for you huh, Tobe-kun.”

Ebina’s indifference made Tobe stop talking for a moment, but that wouldn’t be enough to let Tobe down, that’s the kind of person he is.

“This is bad, this is really bad. Ah! If there was someone else that could do this other than me!

But I also want to prepare for my club! Ah! I’m in trouble! After all, this is our last year in high school, so we also have to do something about class gatherings.”

He was making it as if it was his last move before victory, with only one weapon called “boasting” to carry him on. *Um, that weapon you have, it’s a bamboo gun...*

His gallant effort sure was touching, but in the past few days, the frequency of his visits and boasting had increased substantially, to say the truth, as a bystander, it is quite sad to watch.

*This dude, I feel like he’s the type of person who will one day send a “I may look frivolous, but during Mother’s Day I went home with my childhood bros to give her carnations” kind of uninteresting and crazy tweet.*

The bystanders listening to him have also gradually made a “what’s up with that person...” kind of look.

*But the one person that could solve this problem was non-other than the human air purifier Hayama Hayato, although I don’t know whether he has that plasma cluster-something function, it’s like he always has the fresh breath after eating a Frisk mint candy.* He silently looked at Tobe and showed a smile.

Seeing his cool smile, Tobe somewhat shyly scratched his nose.

Hayama started speaking while maintaining his smile: “Doesn’t that mean everyone thinks you’re very reliable? That’s pretty good. Don’t worry about club, you can focus on planning the gatherings.”

*An almost perfect reply.* His speech really shows his matureness. Tobe was annoyingly boasting about himself there, and yet he could still reply with a smile and decent tone, he really is something.

Actually, the people listening to Hayama were also radiating a “Ah...Hayama really is something, he’s so mature...” kind of vibe.

But that level of understanding is not sufficient to truly understand Hayama and his circle.

For people that know Hayama well enough, his message was very evident.

It seemed that Tobe had picked up on this, and reached his hand towards Hayama’s shoulders, complaining: “Wait, wait! Hayato! Nonono! I also want to work hard for our club!”

But Hayama swiftly dodged Tobe's incoming hand, and with a hammering smile, he said: "No need to worry about that anymore, worry about the class gathering, I'll be cheering for you." He showed off a cool smile with perfect white teeth that made Tobe brim with tears. It was like he was saying that the soccer club no longer needed him ... the only person that could force Hayama to say such toxic things is probably Tobe only.

On the flip side, Tobe was able to make this annoying, twisted, cool, and dark-sided handsome person open up his heart, that's really impressive in its own.

Seeing Hayama reveal his dark side, Ebina and I nodded without any surprise. As for the others still remaining in the classroom, they started to secretly chat with one another.

"Should we also consider arranging a class gathering?"

"Right? Let's think of something too."

The people in the class started to make conversation. Their conversation was supposed to be happening within their own circles, yet they were secretly shooting glances at Hayama in anticipation.

Things like class gatherings are usually organized by the leading figure of a group.

Although our classmates didn't openly request for it, their intention was obviously to get Hayama to grant their wish for a class gathering. The whole class were waiting for Hayama to say "*Let's do it then (shiny white teeth ☆)!.*"

Noticing this, Hayama lightly sighed.

*That sure looks exhausting ...* this year he was sure to be the center of the class again, stuck being everybody's Hayama Hayato. Just as I was trying my best to show my indifference, Tobe made an "Eh?" sound, and showed a worried expression.

It seemed that Tobe had also heard our classmates murmuring. He looked around his surroundings, pulled at the hair on his nape, and directed a question to Ebina.

"Ebina, have you guys not had a class gathering yet?"

"Yeah. No one's planning one."

Ebina troubledly laughed after being asked that question, turning to look at me and Hayama.

"Is there anyone that would plan one?"

"Who knows ..."

Seeing that Ebina was elongating her sentences and feigning ignorance, Hayama lowered his shoulders in response. And then, as if he remembered something, the corners of his mouth floated into an annoying smile.

“Right?”

He directed this simple question towards me, and tilted his head towards me in fake concern.

*Stop that, don't ask me ... what does this have to do with me ... please don't pull me into this mess ...*

To express my thoughts out loud, I took my new textbooks and straightened them on my desk, then I stowed them in my drawer. At the same time, picking up my bag to express my intention to leave. After all, it was nearing club time ...

I tried getting out of my seat, but Ebina and Hayama continued speaking to me, completely ignoring my signals.

“But I *do* want to have a class gathering.”

“After all, if we don't plan one now, there won't be time later.”

“Yeah!”

Even Tobe, who was unrelated to our class matters, had joined in on the conversation, gradually, anticipation for a class gathering was growing in the classroom.

*Not good ... if I stay here, I will surely be forced to participate!*

Even the three of them had begun to throw glances at me that said “what to do”, like they were waiting for my reply. We were enveloped by a strange silence.

If I were to agree now, they would probably say something like “Then I'll tell the girls, Hayama, you'll be in charge of the boys, Hikigaya you're in charge of contacting everybody, choosing the location and booking it, and we'll rely on you for all the other errands”.

Even so, if I objected to the class gathering it would not stop this growing anticipation. Towards Hayama and Ebina, I feel like I can't muddle past this with just an excuse. I'm really not adept at handling those two ...

And so, there was only one thing for me to say: “If everything's settled, remember to tell me ...”

That was my killer technique.

Whenever there was going to be an activity, if I said those magic words, I could covertly express that I had no intention to be the leader.

The person saying this basically doesn't need to do anything, not even chip in on the finances.

They are people that others would call an asshole, and so in most situations, this person would not be called on in the future. But if things were to actually shape up, they could solve it by saying “I'll go if I can”. This technique originated from the polite way that people in Kyoto use to refuse others, but it seemed that Hayama and Ebina had caught up on what I was implying, the two of them showed a troubled smile, and lightly nodded their heads, with a look that said “Thought so”.

But sometimes you'll meet that one person that just doesn't understand.

The person I'm referring to is Tobe.

Tobe played with his annoyingly long hair, made a solemn expression after being immersed in his thoughts, then he suddenly patted my shoulder.

"You're wrong, this type of thing needs to be done in the moment! We need to decide it, now or never, or else if we consider everyone's plans, this matter would never be settled. Just WEI it! WEI!"

"Oh, ok ... don't suddenly say something so correct ..."

Because his smile directed towards me was too handsome, I accidentally made a casual reply.

Even I had a reaction.

Tobe's rude loud voice seemed to have entered the ears of all the people remaining in the classroom.

In front of the classroom, a few boys and girls that had formed a group suddenly looked back towards us.

The impression they gave at first glance, were not of people that caught the attention of others, and not like Hayama and his circle's outstanding appearances, also not like the weird type you would find with the woodworks or game creation club's members. Plus, they also did not seem to have the dark vibe that Sagami had..

To put it simply, they were what we call normal people. You might disagree at what the threshold is to be a normal person, but looking at the people I'm acquainted with, calling them normal would be most fitting.

Because of this, they blended in to school life very well. Rather, they did it so well that it was hard to even remember their names or faces.

Two of our classmates glanced at Hayama, then at each other, and softly spoke to one another: "What do we do?" "Do we say something?", or something like that.

At last it seemed like they had reached a conclusion, one of the short black-haired girls in the group nodded and stood up.

Under her friend's scrutiny, she nervously marched towards us.

Her hair was slightly curled in, its length going just around her shoulders, and her bangs rested on her pretty forehead. With each step, her hair bounced around.

Her facial features were favorable, and she gave off a lively vibe, adding to that, her stature was quite short, and the way she walked was like that of a small wild deer.

Because we had just recently been distributed to new classes, there were still many classmates that I could not recognize, yet, I knew this girl.

I think she was the one that became our class leader.

*Her name was ... uh ... name ... I think was Tomioka Mio?*

*No, Tomioka Mito? Or Tomioka Mika? Nono, it's Tomioka something ... well it could be in reverse too ...*

*No matter what it was, I was certain was she was a To-something-san. I'm actually pretty good at remembering names, so much so that I haven't forgotten the name of that Kawa-somethingsan. I wonder if Kawa-something-san is doing well now ...*

Just as I was trying to remember To-something-san's name, To-something-san came beside us, took in a breath of air, and said to us:

"Um, about ...!"

Out of nervousness, her voice came out somewhat sharp, but unexpectedly energetic. Because of the sudden disturbance from his back, Tobe jumped and gasped.

To-something was frightened back, and couldn't speak for a moment.

Her sharp voice and Tobe's unsightly gasp attracted the attention of everyone. Perhaps still being embarrassed from that, her face became all red. In the silence of the classroom, to make up for the awkwardness, she repeated again and again "Um ...".

Seeing the situation, Ebina lunged forward to hug her.

"Oh Toto, what's up?"

Ebina called her with a nickname and started patting her head. *That really is impressive ...* Ebina was talented at reading the mood, so her ability to resolve awkwardness was top class ...

*She really is the person that tamed the Miura-lion and the endangered Kawa-something-leopard ... if this goes on, Toto could become a new member of "Ebina's Exotic Animal Kingdom ..."*

Just as I was thinking about that, Toto seemed to have slowly calmed down in Ebina's embrace.

Hayama saw that she had calmed down, and took the chance to ask her:

"Is there anything we can help you, Tomioka-san?"

*Ah, it was Tomioka, yes, Tomioka-san. Uh-huh I already knew that. As I nodded my head, Hayama shot me a contemptuous glance that said "You forgot her name right?". No, I remembered, ok? Wasn't it To-something-san? You sure mind my business a lot. That said, in the end he would still remind me, Hayama-san is really such a gentleman ☆!*

Just as my maiden heart was going doki-doki  
Hayama.

★Tomioka-san was just like me, doki-doki-ing for

"Um, you were talking about a class gathering, right?"

Tomioka-san stuttered as her face turned red, glancing at Hayama.

“Yeah, we were just discussing about. Were you talking about it over there as well?”

Hayama answered with his usual cool smile, making Tomioka-san frantically avert her gaze.

*Wow, what a maiden-in-love reaction that was. Hayama senpai-pai is so handsome, just his looks set him apart from everyone, if it weren't for me being used to it, I wouldn't be able to gaze at him directly. I understand. Sometimes, I too don't dare to gaze at him directly.*

I smiled at the sight in front of me, just then, Tomioka-san's averted gaze fell onto me, and we made direct eye contact.

Of course, of course. Her gaze didn't leave me after that.

“Then, what do you plan to do after this ...? Um? A class gathering? Dinner together? Something like that ...?”

Tomioka-san tightly held onto the ribbon in front of her chest, and looked at me with her earnest eyes. Because she couldn't yet calculate the distance between us, she had a soft tone to her voice, from that, I could tell that she was a serious but air-headed person.

I'm guessing she said all of this because of the nonsense that Tobe was spouting earlier, like “We need to decide it, now or never, or else if we consider everyone's plans, this matter would never be settled. Just WEI it!” *Tobe, it's all your fault, quick, apologize.*

As a brotherly figure, seeing a girl try so hard makes me want to just go along with what she wants, but if we were to go for a class gathering right after this, it would be way too sudden.

I still have my own plans for later. Normally, “I have plans later” is just a common excuse to push away an event, and in reality, they are probably just watching re-runs of idol shows at home. But today I really did have plans that I couldn't push away ... to be honest if I could I really would want to.

To get away from Tomioka-san's searing gaze, I could only look away to the side, towards Hayama for help.

*Say, weren't you the one being asked that question? Shouldn't you be the one to answer?* I silently pressured him, and gestured for him to respond quickly.

Hayama lightly sighed, nodding in answer to my plea, then, he immediately put on his usual cool smile and turned towards Tomioka-san.

“I'm sorry, but I have to go to club.”

“Ah, sorry Toto. We are very serious about soccer practice. I'm not sure about Hikigaya though.”

After Hayama rejected her with a smile, Tobe quickly followed up. *Say, no one even called for you, you're not even in the same class as us ...* but because I also have my own club to go to, I obediently nodded in agreement with them.



And so, Tomioka-san also nodded.

“Yeah, yeah I guess ...! So, like, after club ends or something ...”

She nodded her head like she understood, but despite her apologetic attitude, she didn't give up just yet. *Ah-ha, so we have a troublesome girl here.*

Hayama and Ebina were also shocked by how stubborn she was.

Usually when Hayama uses his cool smile to reject others, the other side would give up. From what I know, the only person that this strategy wouldn't work on is Yukinoshita Haruno.

“Toto, that's some real spirit you got there. You're right, we could always go after club!”

It seemed that Tobe had been swayed by Tomioka-san's stubbornness, so he voted a yes for the gathering. *Wait, I'm pretty sure you're not in our class though ...*

“I have time today as well.”

Ebina slowly raised her hand in approval, and Hayama also nodded his head.

“After club huh ...”

And then he glanced at me, asking me what I what I was going to do.

“Ah, today is not so convenient for me ...”

I reflexively used that lame excuse, Hayama seemed to be baffled for a second after hearing that, but he quickly thought it through and regained his composure, nodding his head and saying: “Oh yeah. Then it looks like we really can't go.”

“Huh?”

Because Hayama became so understanding out of nowhere, I couldn't help but throw some suspicion at him. But before I could think any further, Tomioka-san hurriedly interrupted.

“Ah, anytime is fine! We're just out to have fun, it's fine even if we go at night ...! Yeah?” “Um ... so like, how do I say, it's just that the timing really isn't good ...”

She really was being way too stubborn; I didn't even know how to reply in that moment.

Meanwhile, Hayama was holding back a laugh, his shoulders shaking non-stop. Then he suddenly raised his head, and greeted me with his cool smile.

“Why not just say you're not available tonight.”

“Yeah ... that's right, but why are you the one saying that ... and how do you know ...?”

*Wait, what's up with this guy, he's been smiling so slyly since just now ... hey, wait. He wouldn't really know what's up right? Wait a minute, wait a minute, no, are you kidding me? Wait, hey, what the hell is up with this person? God, he has been way too interested in my matters, right?*

How scary.

I stared at Hayama, attempting to read past his cunning and annoying smile, but from the corner of my vision Tomioka-san raised her hand abruptly, her jumpy actions making me think how much she was like a hyper deer.

"Well, if that's the case then let's just do it next time! We can reschedule it to a time where Hikigaya-san can also participate!"

"Um, ah, excuse me ... actually you really don't need to care about me ... I'll go if I can next time, you guys should have fun, no need to mind me ..."

If it was someone that knew me, they would quickly pick on the fact that I didn't want to go, but for someone that's speaking to me for the first time, it seemed that they didn't understand.

Tomioka-san stared into my eyes, then shook her head side by side.

"No, I don't think that is ok"

"Ah, really ..."

*Isn't this kid way too serious ...?*

*How have I been able to muddle past situations like this when my excuses didn't work?* Just as I was pondering this question, it looked like Tobe couldn't bear the situation any further, and he stepped in to resolve the awkwardness.

"Then let's just do it next week or the week after and see if our schedules meet!"

"Yeah."

Hayato nodded in confirmation, and Tomioka-san also nodded back. *Thank you, Tobe, even if we are in different classes, even if our class gathering has nothing to do with you, still, thank you.*

With that matter solved, it was nearing club time. Hayama grabbed his schoolbag, noticing that, Ebina said to Tomioka-san:

"Want to go get dinner later? If we're going to do a class gathering it would be best if we could talk about it first."

"Ah, mm! Ok! Let's go get dinner!"

"Let's go, let's go!"

It was supposed to be a girl's gathering, but Tobe was inviting himself in, seeing that, Hayama smiled and said:

"Oh, so that's how it is. Then you go along with them, have fun."

"Heyyy, don't be like that, Hayato."

The scene of Tobe leaning on Hayama made Tomioka-san panic a bit, but as soon as she realized it was just how the two of them joked around, she showed a gentle smile. At the same time, Ebina was deep in thought, muttering:

"Ooh, that's the kind of scene I want to see ..."

*That so, Tobe X Hayama, it actually sounds pretty good ... no, or is it Hayama X Tobe ...?*

As I was thinking about these things, I picked up my bag and stood up from my seat.

As if that were the signal to leave, Hayama also stood up, and we left the classroom and entered the hallway. Tobe, Ebina, and Tomioka-san also followed along.

"I'm going ahead."

After leaving the classroom, I muttered a useless comment, but just as I was heading to the club building—

"Hikigaya."

Hayama abruptly called me, making me turn around.

"Good luck."

"... What nonsense are you spewing."

*What are you talking about?* — I wasn't able to say that in time, and neither did I want to go back to ask. Most importantly, what I have to do today that would require luck, I know all too well.

Even if I were to feign ignorance, Hayama would definitely just say something like "Whatever, as long as you're fine with", it would be an empty comment, but something I can't ignore.

And so, all I did was raise one side of my cheek, contort the corners of my mouth, and sigh as I replied in a harsh manner.

As for whether Hayama heard it, I'm not sure, as we left in different directions and there was no way to confirm.

But because I could still hear the sound of Ebina's high pitched rotten speak "Hahaha that's what I like, fufufu", it's safe to say that he heard what I had said. I was too scared to look back anyways, so I hurriedly fled the scene.

I walked speedily through the hallway, outside of the windows I could see the cherry blossoms in the courtyard.

A breeze of wind passed by me, blowing up a storm of white flower petals, and as the wind blew away, all that was left on the branches were fresh green shoots.

The sense of finality to the scene made me stop in my tracks and ponder.

*This is the last spring of my high school life.*

Summer is coming soon, but even as the new leaves sprout, spring doesn't end just yet, instead a touch of green grows on.

—And so, our youth will not end, and spring will continue on.

## Chapter 2: Even So, His and Her Routine Will Continue On

No matter how the seasons alternate, some things never change.

Inversely, some things *do* change.

For example, the service club that I'm in has had some change.

A while after parting with Hayama—

I entered the special building and headed towards the club room, immediately, something running towards me appeared in my peripheral vision.

“Oh, Onii-chan, what took you so long?”

The biggest change here, is that we now have an adorable new club member, who was coming to greet me in smiles.

The one and only, best sister in the world, Hikigaya Komachi—wearing the Sobu High uniform and joining the service club. That was a scene that I never imagined I'd see one day.

During spring break, I'd already seen her in uniform at home plenty of times, but to see it in school made me more emotional than I thought possible. Because of how precious she is, I don't even dare to talk to her when we run into each other on the hallway. To be exact, Komachi treats me like air in school, but talks to me normally in the club room, *Onii-chan is so happy ...*

Perhaps because she was still not used to it, she wore her uniform jacket with her sleeves slightly rolled up, and had a new hair pin to put down her bangs, and now, there she was, applying Sock Touch casually like it was no big deal..<sup>[2]</sup>

When she had just joined the club, she was like a new cat in the house exploring its new home, however, just a few days later, she had already completely adjusted, thus exposing such a defenseless pose now. *Don't do that in front of other boys, alright? With how cute you are, I'm afraid that you will awaken a Sock Touch fetish in them.*

*Sock Touch ... sounds pretty good ...*

Of course, the change is not only in my newly discovered fetish, there are other things that have changed here.

“Ah, Senpai, what took you so long?”

Isshiki Iroha puffed her cheeks in an adorable manner, and was busy doing a manicure on her nails ...

*This person is just the same as the last huh? Say, what are you even doing here ...? You're not a club member, right?*

But the one sitting next to Isshiki, Yuigahama Yui, *did* undergo a bit of a change.

"Hikki, yahallo!"

Her smile and cheerful waving had not changed, neither did her weird but lively greeting.

Although, she sat in a different place compared to before, now, she sat at the other side of the table, right beside Isshiki.

"... Oh, good afternoon."

The change from the usual distance made me confused, thus, I was slow in my reply. To cover that up, I speedily walked towards my seat.

But even this seat was different from before.

"Good afternoon."

As I was sitting down, a soft voice came from beside the window. As usual, this voice was quiet and composed, but it felt closer than before. And so, I replied with a quieter voice than usual:

"... Yeah, good afternoon."

This was probably the smallest change of all.

Yukinoshita Yukino sat in front of the windows, the sunlight shining in and forming a glowing backlight on her. She was lightly combing her hair, with an elegant smile on her face.

The distance between us had become slightly closer than before, just by a few millimeters.

In the past, my seating arrangement had always been diagonal to Yukinoshita's, but now, we were on the same line.

Looking back at the past, it was clear to me that however far I stretched out my hand, it would never be enough to reach her, and so I never tried. In the past, the distance between us was as far as that.

But now, the distance between us was such that, if we both took a step forward, and tried our best to reach out, we would be within each other's grasp.

Even so, the distance between us now was still not all that close, that point hadn't changed that much from the past.

Despite being an almost negligible change, it was still something.

## 2-2

The ambient noise and faint scent of tea gradually filled the club room.

Interrupted by the fragrant scent, I looked up from the novel I was reading, and faced the source of the fragrance.

In front of a billowing cloud of steam, Yukinoshita Yukino elegantly brewed some tea. The sunlight reflecting off the cloud of steam made it look like there was a veil over her face.

I gazed at this marvelous scene, just then, Yukinoshita's eyes suddenly met with mine.

*"Anything wrong?"*

Yukinoshita tilted her head, silently asking me.

To that, I responded by shaking my head, and looked down to shift my attention back onto the novel. At that moment, I saw the corners of her lips move into a gentle smile.

There was nothing special about this type of exchange, but it made me feel a bit uneasy, so I decided to concentrate harder on my novel.

That's what I thought ... but I couldn't concentrate at all ...

Getting used to a new environment is a time-consuming process. The subtle change in relationship, the deviation in our position, and the unfamiliar distance. All of this was inevitable.

Other than that, there was still something bugging me.

Hayama's words as we parted stayed in my heart and wouldn't go away, it really was troubling me ...

The moment I thought about that and the upcoming event,, I couldn't focus on the novel, all I could do was scan through the lines one by one.

In situations like this, when only your ears are hard at work, naturally, you will be attracted by the trivial conversations around you.

*"Did you know a new café opened around here?"*

The one that said that was Isshiki. She tapped at her phone, and showed it to Yuigahama.

Yuigahama took a look at it, then exclaimed:

*"Ah, it really is close!"*

*"Yeah, I think we can go after school. It looks like the shop was originally from Kobe, so the décor is pretty stylish. There's quite a diversity of drinks too."*

The two sat shoulder by shoulder, and chatted as they swiped away at the phone screen. Just then, Komachi pulled a chair over and sat beside Yuigahama, looking at the phone.

“Ooh, pearl milk tea.”

“No one’s drinking this stuff anymore, only old-fashioned people drink this now.”

Hearing Isshiki’s mean comment, Komachi was greatly impacted. I’m not sure whether it was the force of the mental impact, but Komachi sat slanted on her seat upon hearing that. Then, she said in a shaky voice: “Eh, but, but Onii-chan said he quite likes it ...”

“Ah—that’s probably because he’s is like an old-fashioned person ...”

Hearing what Yuigahama said to Komachi, I was impacted even harder than Komachi was, so much so that I also sat slanted on my chair.

*Hey ... I didn’t drink it because I knew it was all the rage, um, it’s just that I enjoy sweet things like milk tea, and the stickiness of the pearls were quite intriguing ... say, in it’s originating place in Taiwan it is already a mainstream beverage, you can’t even describe it as “the rage” anymore ... I feel that it should also gradually have such a presence in Japan ... like how even the convenience stores sell ice cream sundaes in the summer ...*

Just as I was furiously protecting my pearl milk tea, or my old-fashioned-ness, Isshiki added to the insult, as if she was not satisfied yet: “Old-fashioned people really do like to chase trends from two weeks ago.”

“I understand, sometimes I feel that way too ... that type of person that comes over and says ‘This is all the rage now right?’, really makes you feel annoyed ...”

Yuigahama said with an impatient tone, making a very annoyed expression.

Yet, the one listening to their conversation, Komachi, showed a frightened expression.

“Both of you are way too familiar with old-fashioned people ...”

“Yeah, cause daddy ...”

“Yeah, because dad ...”

Komachi heard both Isshiki and Yuigahama answer in a similar manner, and, as if noticing something, started murmuring non-stop: “Ah, so that’s how it is ...”

*What’s wrong ...? What type of “daddy” are they talking about ... I don’t really understand, but it sounds pretty scary, better for me to pretend that I never heard anything!*

I removed my gaze on them, and saw that Yukinoshita had prepared five servings of tea. She poured the tea into the mug with the dog illustration, the plain teacup, and a paper cup.

“Here, have some tea.”



Yukinoshita said, and the three people opposite of her reached over for their cups and said their thanks.

“Ah, thank you.”

“Thank you, Yukino-san.”

“Thanks, Senpai.”

Yuigahama, Komachi, and Isshiki held the tea in their hands. Then, Yukinoshita quietly poured one last cup of tea into the mug with the Pan-san illustration and gave it to me.

“Thank you.”

Hearing my quiet thanks, she lightly nodded. A look of satisfaction appeared on her face, she’s probably confident in the taste of today’s tea. Or it could have been because I properly thanked her, and she thought that her daily teachings had finally paid off. *She’s always reminding me to be polite ...*

Even without direct conversation, both of us weakly signaled to each other similar feelings. This type of lovely-old couple interaction made me feel a bit uneasy, so to conceal the reddening of my cheeks, I blew at my tea, deciding to forget about it.

Looking sideways, I could see that Komachi was using her long sleeves to hold the teacup as she blew on her tea.

And then, both of us took a sip at the same time.

“Ah, hot...! Not really ...”

My voice and Komachi’s overlapped in perfect unison. This made both of us stare at each other, but despite our shared surprise, no one else felt that way.

“You could even say it’s not hot enough.”

Isshiki held the paper cup to her lips, and made an unsatisfied expression. Then she glanced at me and put on a face that said “What’s this guy talking about?”, and added:

“What’s this guy talking about?”

*Hey, what type of expression was that? It was cute, sure, but also so irritating ... how can you be dissatisfied with the temperature of Yukinoshita’s tea, pupu!*

Just as I was thinking that, Yuigahama showed an interesting expression and looked me in the eye, saying:

“Ah, it’s because Hikki is afraid of hot things.”

Her smile seemed a bit awkward, and I returned a similar expression in agreement. From my peripheral vision, I saw Komachi with a look of gratefulness as she sipped her tea, and then she moved her chair to sit beside Yukinoshita.

“Everyone in the household is afraid of hot things, even Kamakura.”

“Well, he does have a cat’s tongue.”<sup>[3]</sup>

“So, this warmth is perfect for our whole family ... what do I do, Yukino-san ...? I like you too much ...”

And then she put her hand on Yukinoshita’s thigh, and meowed as she cuddled on her.

“Don’t be like that, Komachi ...”

Yukinoshita looked like she was at a loss then and there, but it seemed that she didn’t dislike Komachi’s feline way of expressing intimacy, so, she just left Komachi to do whatever she wanted. A short while later, she cautiously reached towards Komachi’s head, and started to pat her gently. *Hm, not bad, Komachi’s preciousness really is something to behold ... it made me want to sing like Remeoroman “Machi —Yuki —ah ...”.*

I really wanted to become a wall then ... but just as I was acting a bystander role, suddenly, an ice-cold sound “GURAWAEGOWARAGAKIN” knocked down my imagination.<sup>[4]</sup>

“Oh, that so.”

I glanced towards the side, only to see Isshiki make a very cold expression, saying something so harsh without a damn. Then she took a sip of tea and made a disgusted expression, then she murmured:

“So that’s how it is ... it is pretty hot, and it’s bitter, sour, and annoying.”

She had changed from her previous opinion, and let out her feelings in a stream of consciousness, rivalling the excitement of Okada’s triple home run.<sup>[5]</sup>

*What are you saying ...? It’s not hot, I don’t think so at all ...* I averted my gaze and sipped my tea.

It was neither hot nor cold, it wasn’t at either state, it was just perfect in that moment.

## 2-3

After drinking the perfectly prepared tea, I finally felt more relieved.

Around me, everyone had a look of satisfaction, and the club room returned to its usual calm atmosphere. It was silent as if nothing had happened, anyways, we were very idle, not much different from the usual. Me, Yukinoshita, Yuigahama, and Isshiki were all doing what we wanted to do, drinking tea, reading, and playing on the phone.

The only person panicking from the idleness was Komachi.

“... No one’s coming.”

She held her face with her hand, and lightly sighed.

“That’s just how it is. This silly club is basically idle all the time.”

You could say that being idle and not doing anything was what we did in the service club.

There’s only the occasional troublesome request, other times, the service club = passing time in the club room.

And so, I held up my novel, gesturing for Komachi to bring a book or phone to pass time here.

Just then, Yukinoshita, who was also reading, lifted her head, and amusingly said:

“Yeah, that’s why there’s one silly club member that treats this place like a library.”

“So you do now that you’re that silly club member.”

Yukinoshita pressed her temples as if she were in great pain, being left speechless, she sighed a breath. Just as she lowered her head to get back into her novel, she silently added:

“... It’s better than it was before, at least he knows he’s a club member now ...”

The way she flipped the pages was very gentle, and the way she gazed into the distance, paired with the novel in her hand, made it look like she was holding an album of memories.

“Hm, huh, ok.”

A year ago, as I was dragged into this place, all I could think about was how I could get out of here. Remembering how I was in the past compared to now made me feel super embarrassed, and I wanted to kill the me in the past. *In times like this you need to cough twice to cover up the shame!*

Cough, cough.

After coughing a couple of times to perfectly cover my shame, I turned to Komachi like nothing happened and said:

“Whatever, isn’t it good that we have no work to do?”

*Either way, we’re not getting paid for this. Such unfair labor, calling it evil is not enough to describe it. Say, why are we still relying on manpower in this day and age? Can’t we rely on AI?*

Just as I was talking nonsense in my heart, Ms. Isshiki enthusiastically said:

“Yeah that’s right. That way, I can casually redistribute student council work to here.”

“In your dreams. Say, what are you even doing here ...? You’re not even a club member, right?”

The second we let our guards down this girl appears here ...

“Don’t you have work in the student council and soccer club ...?”

I asked in concern, and Isshiki tilted her head with a finger on her chin.

“I’m not a club member, but as a client, shouldn’t I be entitled to being here?”

“Showa-era thinking?!”

This type of work-abuse attitude made Yuigahama exclaim in shock. Isshiki saw the unbelieving expression on Yuigahama’s face and seemed to realize she had said something bad, so, she cleared her throat and said:

“I mean, last year we really went overboard with our budget, so, I’ll need some help from you guys to make up for it.”

“Over 80 percent of that is your fault, isn’t it?”

*Isn’t it because you keep planning those meaningless activities ...? What was up with that free newspaper thing ...? Of course the budget is not enough.*

Hearing me speak such annoying logic, Isshiki adorably pouted at me.

“What about the joint prom from earlier ...”

“Yes, you’re right, I’m so sorry.”

I really couldn’t refute that, so I just admitted that I was in the wrong, forcibly ending this conversation. Then, Isshiki exhaled dissatisfiedly.

“To say the truth, I’ve even thought of borrowing the cat’s paw”<sup>[6]</sup>

“Ah, then you can borrow the one we have at home, our cat is really cute!”

Noticing the commotion, Komachi suddenly interrupted and pulled out her phone from her pocket. She tapped a few times and showed the screen to Isshiki.

On the screen was an out of focus and blurry picture—a picture of our housecat Kamakura's butt facing the camera.

*Say, Komachi, couldn't you have taken a better picture ...? If you were to participate in a worst cat photos competition this would surely be the champion ... anyone seeing this picture would just make a confused face, I think ...*

That's what I thought, but there was one of us that showed a strong reaction.

"..."

Yukinoshita was peering over Komachi to look at the phone, it looked like she was jumping up and down on her seat. *This person really loves cats like they love their Friskies ... that's so cute.*

But other than Yukinoshita, no one was making any reaction. Isshiki was wearing a cold expression and waving her hand dismissively.

"No, I don't need a real cat's paw."

"Oh really ...?"

Isshiki's coldness made Komachi droop her shoulders in disappointment, but she immediately lifted her head, as if she had thought of something.

"Ah, then Komachi can lend you my hand?"

As she suggested that, she made a gesture like a lucky cat. She really is a cat owner, the curve of her fingers, angle of her wrist, and cuteness of her action, even the lurking danger of hidden claws was shown in her glamorous display.

But her outstretched hand did not reach Isshiki.

Because before that could happen, another hand from beside had taken hers away. This made Komachi look back in surprise. Behind her, of course, was Yukinoshita Yukino-san. Yukinoshita made a serious expression and started to caress Komachi's hand.

"Oh, oh? What's up ...? Ah, Yukino-san's hands are so warm ..."

At first, Komachi was surprised, but after that she snuggled onto her like a cat. Yukinoshita also took the chance to obtain the phone from Komachi's hand, enjoying the cat photo while patting Cat-machi (cat-form Komachi). *This can be considered VR, right? That's way too advanced.*

Yuigahama and I looked at this warm scene leisurely, but Isshiki didn't look happy at all.

She pouted at Komachi, and as if she had thought of something, she turned around to face me, then she squeamishly pulled at my uniform jacket and said:

“Senpaiiii ... can’t you think of something?”

“There’s no use talking to me ...”

She tried convincing me with her squeamish voice, gleaming eyes, and soft pull on my jacket uniform. I gently pried her hand away. *Don’t think that would work on me every time!* I looked towards Yukinoshita and Komachi, then gestured to Isshiki to ask someone else.

“Go ask the club president.”

Hearing the term “club president”, Isshiki and Yuigahama looked towards the same direction.

At the other end was a playful Komachi, making purring noises as if she were in a dream, on the other hand, Yukinoshita stroke her chin while holding Komachi’s phone, it was like she was a villain of some sorts.

Noticing our attention being focused on her, Yukinoshita nodded her head, and calmly expressed her opinion in a clear voice.

“Yeah, borrowing a cat is a good idea. Rather, we should just get a cat.”

With that said, she revealed a smile of wisdom, but her actions were totally the opposite of smart. *Yukinoshita ... she’s gotten cat-deficiency syndrome ...*

“You aren’t even listening to what we’re saying? This can’t go on! Komachi, wake up! Come back! House! House!”<sup>[7]</sup>

Yuigahama shrieked, trying to get Komachi to wake up, as a result, Komachi sprang up abruptly.

“Woah! Whew, that was close ... I almost fell asleep ...”

*This person really is scary—she had such a loving expression for Yukinoshita, but I think the intimate Komachi is really deadly ... it can’t be ...! Are you Beast* <sup>[8]</sup>~~—?~~*That’s what I had thought, but Yukinoshita drooped her shoulders and looked distraught after Komachi left. Yukinoshita-san, you’re pretty scary too!*

After getting some vitamin c (cat), Yukinoshita returned to her usual calm self, and sipped at her tea as if nothing had happened.

“Anyways, this is something the club president has to decide.”

“Yeah.”

Saying that, Komachi continued to leisurely sip at her tea, but then she realized everyone had a “No, um...” look and were silently staring at her. Noticing that, she suddenly raised her head.

“Eh, ah, eh?! Komachi?! Komachi should make a decision?!”

Komachi tilted her head, and continuously pointed at herself. Towards this, all of us frantically nodded. The club president of the service club had now become Komachi. No, to be exact, it only began this spring, as the first president for the reformed service club was registered as Hikigaya Komachi.

Also, Yukinoshita's service club had never even *been* officially recognized. Hiratsuka-sensei must have done some funny business to get the club running.

But since we are now an official club, we need Komachi to be the leader for it. Considering we're only third years, it would be best for Komachi to start being the club president from now on.

It seemed that Yukinoshita and Yuigahama had a similar idea as me.

Yuigahama lightly patted Komachi's shoulder, and cheered her on:

"Yeah, since the club president *is* Komachi."

"Eh, eh...?"

Komachi's worries and confusions were all over her face, so to help her relieve those feelings, Yuigahama gave a smile and said:

"It's ok, we'll help out as well."

"Yui-san!"

Komachi lunged forward to hug Yuigahama, and it was now Yuigahama's turn to playfully ruffle Komachi's hair.

"What're you going to do about it?"

Isshiki glanced at Yuigahama and Komachi, then whispered towards me.

"... She'll get used to it after some time, I think."

I said as I grabbed my teacup and drunk some tea.

No matter it being the role of the club president, or some other things, it'll all work out after you get used to it. A year ago, this club also felt very wrong, but as time passed, everything began to fall into place.

To be honest, even now, regarding this club, this relationship, or its current situation, something still feels out of place.

Sometimes, I feel as if there's a thorn in my heart that I can't pull out, leaving me with pangs of pain.

But even with all these scars, from the bottom of my heart, I really think that this is a place that I belong to.

It's a good thing this club continued on.

Because of Isshiki and Komachi, this place that would not have continued existing was preserved. Although they didn't tell me exactly what was happening, this kind of thing, I'd still understand.

Not too long later, I'll have to leave this club behind, in the limited time that we have left here, I want to repay for this kindness.

The biggest problem at hand is probably Komachi's transition to the club president, which would ensure that the club could continue on. *Oh, and of course, the student council would have more lackeys to order around.*

But even without all this talk about repaying kindness, all of these problems have to be solved in due time.

After all, the service club is one hell of a fishy club ...

Up until now we had Hiratsuka-sensei to rely on, so even if the meaning for this club was ambiguous, we could still continue on through her dubious methods. But now, it was only because of Isshiki's role in the student council that allowed for the preservation of this club.

The problem is what will happen after Isshiki steps down.

If we want the service club to continue existing, we'll need to set a clear basis for our activities.

A proclamation of independence without any backdoors involved.

*Ah, feels like that's not possible at all ... the future sure is looking grim ...*

I lightly sighed, and finished the rest of the tea in my cup.

After I put the lightened teacup on the table, Yukinoshita silently stood up, and naturally poured a new cup for me.

Thank you.

I lightly nodded to express my thanks, then I sipped my perfectly warm tea. I was thinking of getting some snacks to go along with the tea, but as I raised my head, Yuigahama's eyes met mine from across the table.

However, she said nothing, and immediately averted her gaze, continuing to play with the phone in her hands.

That was all, nothing had happened, but just thinking that our silent exchange may had been noticed made me feel a bit uneasy. This type of thing used to happen a lot, but now it felt quite awkward ... *I feel like I'm starting to sweat ... anyways, let's drink some tea and have some snacks to calm down!*

To get away from my feelings of unease, I reached out for the snacks on the table.

But just as I touched the plate, it suddenly moved towards the side, and my hand grabbed at air. I reached out my hand another time, but the plate escaped once again.



“...”

*What?* —I stared in protest at the culprit behind the moving plate.

With her flowing black hair, snowy white skin, and clear blue eyes, she looked elegant even when she was standing and drinking tea.

The culprit behind the moving plate, Yukinoshita Yukino, directed her gaze at me, and her long eyelashes drooped as she cautiously shook her head.

*Eh ...? What ...? What's wrong?*

*Are you telling me I don't have the rights to snack? Having snacks when we don't have any bread is pretty fine in itself, but not even letting me have the snacks? Is she telling me to starve? You're even more harsh than Marie Antoinette!*<sup>[9]</sup>

*But I'm the rebellious type, how could I just give up then and there? My stomach demanded snacks now!*

*I reached at the snack again, but once again, the plate moved away from me. Eh? Is this a flying saucer? A UFO ...?*

“... Hey, trying to bully me?”

Because of the illogical treatment I was being given, I couldn't help but say that. But then, Yukinoshita glared at me from the side.

“Have you forgotten our plans for later?”

Hearing her say that, my shoulders immediately drooped down.

“... I really want to forget.”

For the whole day, the thought of tonight's plans had been in my mind, failing to dissipate.

After thinking about it again, I deeply sighed.

It may have been that I looked too down, as Isshiki tilted her head and asked:

“Is there anything happening later?”

“Um, yeah I guess ...”

It wasn't anything worth talking about. I answered as ambiguously as I could, as there was the saying that there are always ears on the wall, people can't keep secrets.

Komachi made a knowing look and murmured, then she clapped, and energetically said:

“Say, I think I've heard something about that.”

“You know something, rice girl?”

Isshiki said in a serious voice, urging for her to continue on. The two sandwiched Yuigahama, and started to whisper to each other.

“Um, according to Haruno-san’s intel ...”

Hearing that name, a wave of despair came over me.

*“Why would that person go out of her way to tell Komachi? The intel has leaked in full already, this is way too unbearable ...”*

That explains Hayama’s attitude today. Of course, Haruno had already told him ... *Ahhh! The person I wanted least to know was him!*

*Hey! Say, what is up with that sister of yours?* —I shot a protesting glance at Yukinoshita, but she too was shaking in anger.

“That person has told Komachi ...”

The hatred in her voice made her speech feel colder and colder, but then, her voice started to weaken, until I almost couldn’t hear it, then she said:

“I already said it was embarrassing, I told her not to do that ...”

Her face was red, and her eyes were brimming with tears as she put her face down and shivered.

*... Hm, that was different from what I thought, but being able to see something so rare, not bad.*

*The root of all evil was that good-for-nothing big sister.*

*Younger sisters aren’t in the wrong, younger sisters are justice!*

That’s what I thought, but my sister continued leaking the intel like it was nothing.

“I heard that Onii-chan is dining with Yukinoshita-san’s mother tonight ...”

*Ahh, she really said it!* Actually, after the joint prom ended, Yukinoshita’s mom had invited us out for dinner.

I already resolved myself for it to be revealed, but I was beaten to the punch, and it was answered before I could say anything, thus, the awkward situation now.

“Ah ... so that’s how it is.” Yuigahama tugged at her hair buns, revealing a troubled look. Beside her, Isshiki was eating snacks, and uninterestedly replied:

“Oh, so that’s it.”

Isshiki's dull tone shocked Komachi. Then, Isshiki looked at me while chewing her snacks with a teacup in hand.

"Well, I'm not all that interested ... but, hearing you say that, Senpai's face *does* looks a bit awful now huh."

"Really? It doesn't look all that different from usual though."

Isshiki's words made Yukinoshita stare intently at me in wonder. And so, I did my best to put on a lifeless expression. My dead fish eyes were world renowned, and by relaxing my facial muscles to make a lifeless expression, I could really make the anguish at the bottom of my heart surface.

Just then, Yukinoshita giggled.

"See, I told you he looks the same as usual."

"How have you been looking at me?"

*Can I ask how you have been looking at me? Yukinoshita-san, have you really seen Hikigaya-san's expression? Although I don't want to admit it myself, I'm basically no different from a zombie now. Being able to express the rottenness of a zombie without any makeup, even the zombie film makers all around the world are interested in me. Say, do you think that is the expression that I have all the time?*

Just as I was about to launch into an emphatic speech, Isshiki used an overpowering voice to say:

"I can understand how Senpai is feeling, having to go out for dinner with that old hag must be pretty exhausting."

"Old ... you ..."

Yukinoshita was speechless.

*Isshiki, how could you say that? That's not the case at all! —Was what I wanted to say, but what she said really resonated with me, so I couldn't refute her. Ah, no, I don't think Yukinoshita's mom is an old hag, I think that she's a pretty, young, elegant, and scary woman, and sometimes I can even see her humorous side, which is quite lovable.*

It's just that, out of all the good the scary part really stands out, in conclusion, *going out for dinner with her is pretty exhausting.*

As I nodded, on the other side, Komachi and Isshiki were deep in conversation, appearing to be pretty entertained.

"Woah, Iroha-senpai, you're bad mouthing really is excellent, sister! ♪"

☆ I defin

"I didn't ask for it, and I don't want to be called that either."

"Komachi, what even is your standard for calling someone your sister?"<sup>[10]</sup>

Yukinoshita also added in to their conversation. *What are you even asking about ...?*

Because Yukinoshita's attention was now diverted, it was the perfect chance for me reach for the snacks I wasn't able to get to earlier.

*Don't look down on the appetite of a healthy teen. Eating some snacks is nothing for me, and considering the hardships later, filling up my belly now is important.*

This time I was definitely going to get my hands on some snacks.

Just as I thought that, my hands grasped at air yet again.

"Huh?"

*Eh? Why? Wasn't Yukinoshita with Komachi?* I lifted my head in confusion, seeing that Yuigahama had the plate in her hands.

"Aren't you having dinner later? I'll be taking this."

With that said, she held the plate in a protective manner, and started eating away at the snacks.

"No, why are you the one eating then ...?"

"Because, it would be wasteful if no one ate it."

As she said that she turned to look at the clock, and so did I, it was nearing evening, outside the window in the direction of west, the sky had already been dyed a thin layer of red.

"Yukinon, shouldn't it be time for you guys to leave? We'll clean up here."

Hearing that, Yukinoshita also looked towards the clock. Although I didn't know the exact time they had arranged, now was probably the time to leave. Yukinoshita thought for a while, then nodded and responded:

"You're right ... then I'll let you take care of it ...thanks."

Yukinoshita showed a smile and thanked her, in response to that, Yuigahama shook her head as if to say it was no big deal.

"Then let's go."

"... Yes."

Yukinoshita picked up her schoolbag and urged me to leave, and I also started keeping my things in preparation for leaving. There was nothing much in my bag, but it felt particularly heavy now.

Yukinoshita had already packed all her things earlier, and was waiting for me by the door.

*Nothing else I can do but resolve myself and go ...* I sighed one last sigh, stood up, and slung my bag behind my shoulder.

“Then we’ll go first, see you tomorrow.”

“Yeah, see you tomorrow.”

Yuigahama and Komachi waved their hands at me, and Isshiki added in a “Good luck.”, but didn’t turn to face me. Under their supervision, we opened the door and entered the hallway. *Wait, one person wasn’t paying attention to us at all.*

Just then—

“Ah, Yukino-san, you forgot this.”

Komachi called for Yukinoshita, and ran towards us, holding a small paper bag in her hands.

She firmly placed the paper bag in Yukinoshita’s hands, Yukinoshita looked down at the bag and tilted her head in confusion, but she carefully opened the bag and peeked at its contents, then abruptly smiled.

“Thanks, this will help a lot.”

“Don’t mind it!”

Komachi elegantly bowed while standing by the door, and waved her hand while saying:

“Be careful on your way!”

Inside the club room, Yuigahama waved us goodbye, while Isshiki continued playing with her phone.

This time under everyone’s gaze, we left for real.

*Wait, there was one person that didn’t look at us. Whatever, it’s easier on me like this, it makes no difference, really!*

# Interlude

After seeing off Senpai and Yukinoshita-san, rice girl slowly closed the door.

Because of that, the club room plunged into an eerie silence.

And so, Yui-senpai put down her hand, and an audible sigh reached my ears.

I peered over my phone look at her, and I could see that she had a smidge of a smile. Her face looked the same as usual, but perhaps because of the light shining in from dusk, she looked a bit lonely.

I pretended not to have noticed Yui-senpai's lonely smile and sigh, and directed my gaze towards rice girl.

For some reason, rice girl also sighed.

"... Is Onii-chan going to be fine?"

"There's no need to worry so much."

Yui-senpai comforted the pouting rice girl.

"No, it sounds like Haruno-san will also be there."

Hearing that, I also sighed.

Haruno-senpai looks pretty, has a good figure, and a big chest, she's like an ideal woman, but I couldn't quite understand her stubbornness towards Yukino-senpai. Between the two of them, there was surely some complicated and hidden matters, but what made matters worse was the existence of Senpai. Ignoring Yukino-senpai, I think if Senpai was involved in the equation anyhow, it would surely turn into a mess.

"Ah—some conflict is definitely going to happen. I bet one perica[uu](#) that those two will argue on the way."

Hearing me say that, Komachi enthusiastically replied:

"Ah then Komachi bets 1000 points that Onii-chan will hole himself up in a toilet and never come out for the rest of his life, what does Yui-san want to bet?"

"No, I'm not betting anything ..."

Our betting seemed to have frightened Yui-senpai, but I think I can understand how she was feeling. *Anyways, Senpai's defeat was already a fact, so this round of betting wouldn't even establish, and most importantly, rice girl was still worried a while ago, but now she's fooling around with me, so scary. What is up with this kid ...?*

It was because our motives met that we were able to create the service club we have now, as for what thoughts resided deep in her heart, I still didn't understand to this day.

She really is Senpai's sister ... as I was deep in thought, Yui-senpai tilted her head, as if thinking about something.

"But, a big fight ... I don't think that will be the case."

"Eh? Why is that so? Aren't the two of them always arguing?"

Ever since I began hanging around the service club, that had been the case for them.

Yui-senpai showed a shocked expression, then laughed out loud, as if she had heard some kind of joke. "Ah, that's funny ..." she pressed the corners of her eyes, then smiled as if nothing had happened and said:

"That's not the case at all, you're being too dramatic, that can't even count as a fight. It'll probably be just two weeks of ignoring each other?"

"Isn't that even worse ...?"

"Woah, now everyone surrounding them have walk on egg shells."

Both me and rice girl were shocked.

*How could this person say such heavy things with a calm expression ...?*

*Anyways, Yui-senpai doesn't even consider that as a fight, that's really something ... she really is experienced after dealing with them for a whole year ...*

Just as I thought of that, I looked towards the seats that both of them were sitting in just now.

"Those two, they really are troublesome ..."

My catchphrase is "All girls are trouble", but just as rice girl has said, Senpai is pretty troublesome too as a boy. *So Senpai's saying that "All human beings are trouble" really is true ...*

Anyways, the two of them together means trouble ... but that's not something that I hate about the two of them.

But that's another matter.

Thinking about the trouble that may come tomorrow made me feel as if the club room's atmosphere has become murky.

"It'll be fine! Completely fine!"

Yui-senpai must have felt the atmosphere sink, as she exclaimed in an optimistic tone.

“Is that so ...?”

Rice girl shot her a doubting gaze, and in return, Yui-senpai clenched her fists in front of her chest and made a victory pose.

“Yeah, you’ll get used to it in no time! It’s not like it hasn’t happened before! It’s quite the common occurrence!”

*Woah, what an awful response. Could it be that you’re the mythical optimistic monster? That’s what I thought, but I found what she was saying to be quite negative. If this person were to start working, she would definitely be taken advantage of like crazy ...*

Of course, I wasn’t the only one shocked, as it looked like rice girl also had quite the fright.

She shifted her gaze away from Yui-senpai and whispered towards me:

“Um, Iroha-senpai, where do I submit the form to leave this club?”

“Not sure, I’m not even a club member, I think it should be submitted to the club president?”

“But you’re the club president.”

Saying that, I couldn’t resist my laughter anymore. *Hum, during these troubling times, I guess it would be best to not come here anymore.*

“Ah, I need to head back to the student council.”

Just as I said that and prepared to excuse myself—

“Wait! Don’t leave me here alone!”

Komachi tightly hugged my waist.

“Hey, what is up with you? Let go of me! I suddenly remembered that I have two weeks’ worth of work that I need to finish ...”

*Depending on the situation it could also be three weeks, but if things cooled down faster, I could be back within two days, so don’t come to find me!*

I pushed her hands away, trying to get out of her grip.

But Komachi tightly held me and refused to release me.

“Wait! Komachi was also in the student council in middle school! I could definitely be of help! Take me along!”

*Ah for real, she is annoying. There’s nothing else I can do I guess, I’ll just let her stay with the student council for now—just as I thought that:*



“Ah, but I think it won’t be a problem.”

Me and rice girl looked at each other, communicating with a “What do you think?” and “Nonono, that’s not possible” gaze. Considering her wrong optimism just now, it didn’t feel believable at all.

“Eh? Are you really saying the truth?”

Me and rice girl said at the same time, even matching in our doubting demeanor.

But this time, Yui-senpai revealed a warm and calm smile to us.

“Yeah, for real. Because Hikki probably wouldn’t get angry, at the most he’d just be tired for two or three days and look half dead, probably?”

“Ah ...”

So that’s it ...? Me and rice girl nodded our heads in a somewhat cheerful manner.

Hearing what she said, I couldn’t actually imagine the look of Senpai being angry.

Although we always hear him complain, no one had actually seen him overtly unhappy, at least not to the point that you wouldn’t want to approach him.

*Should I say that he would take care of his matters himself? He is pretty mature in things like that. Although, he doesn’t give others that impression at all.*

*And also, Senpai looks half dead all the time, it wouldn’t make a difference to see it for two or more days longer, hmm.*

Seeing me nod, Yui-senpai also smiled and nodded back.

But then her movements suddenly stopped, and her face darkened. Following that, Yui-senpai turned her head around like a rusty robot, towards the corner of the club room.

*Why do I feel something ominous is about to come ...?* I shivered in my corner, just then, Yui-san said something despairing in a broken voice.

“But on the other hand, Yukinon, she might, take offense, and become very depressed ...”

“Ah ...”

*So that’s how it’ll be ...?* Me and rice girl drooped our heads down, and sighed in a slightly gloomy manner.

I could relate very well, as the image of that happening immediately came to my mind.

Yukino-senpai may be dexterous, but she’s also a cool beauty that’s quick to reach conclusions. If it had anything to do with Senpai, she would also be just like a maiden, even her mentality

would become very fragile.

*But that's something I like about her.*

Giving off a girly impression, I liked that very much.

Yui-senpai probably also thought the same. If she didn't like that, how could she have dealt with them for so long?

They really are troublesome, but I like it that way, so there's nothing I can do about that.

Whew ... I lightly sighed, just then, rice girl suddenly leaned over, and whispered to me:

"Say, without Yui-san, the service club wouldn't be this peaceful, right?"

"Ah ... so you have noticed ..."

Seeing me nod with a wry smile, rice girl also showed a difficult smile and said, "Yeah, that's right."

*You really are impressive, Yui-senpai.*

So, I like her.

I like girls in love and girls that never give up. I like myself, so I like others that are just like me.

I gazed at Yui-senpai with a look filled with respect and gratefulness, while she peered outside with a look of unease.

"... Yukinon, she'll be alright, right?"

What she said sounded like it came out unwittingly, and along with it, a feeling of gentleness way surpassing that of a mom.

*No, instead of saying she's impressive, I'd say she's impressive to the point of being quite scary, Yui-senpai ...*

I continued to gaze at Yui-senpai, albeit with an extra bit of fear compared to earlier. The sunset shining in from the windows enveloped Yui-senpai like a halo, making her gleam so much that I couldn't help but squint my eyes.

"Is this person an angel ...?"

"This should be the level of a goddess ..."

*At least we couldn't count her as a normal person anymore ...* me and rice girl expressed the same opinion, albeit a bit fearfully. The two of us clasped our hands, and prayed towards Yui-senpai.

*Thank you for protecting this place that we love so much ... after this, let's go to a café and hold a conference to bad-mouth Senpai ...*

## Chapter 3: Above the roadside, see the world from the train windows that Chiba is proud of.[\[12\]](#)

The scenery from the windows flowed slowly.

As we were a few minutes ahead of the evening rush hour, hardly any other passengers were on board the monorail. Our cabin did not have any traces of people at all and thanks to that, Yukinoshita and I were able to see the streets of Chiba from the windows on the opposite side.

Beyond the pristine white sand, the evening glow dyed the sea in red. That view gradually faded as the monorail made its way into the city that sank into an indigo colour.

With tail lamps that stretched into a long row and street lights that blurred faintly beneath my eyes, the monorail headed into a cluster of towering buildings as if it was a skyscraper itself.

From evening scenery into night view, the sensation of sprinting across the sky felt like an attraction at the amusement park.

Even though I was thrilled just from riding on the monorail, the view was simply marvellous. Above all else, the route from Chiba-minato station to Chiba station at dusk was my favourite. *It's about time that /See the World by Train/*[\[13\]](#) features it.

I could gaze at this dreamlike scenery forever.

.....I wanted to gaze at it forever.

Undoubtedly, I was averting my gaze from reality.

After this, I would be having dinner with the Yukinoshita family. *No, it's not that I am unwilling to have a meal with Yukinoshita herself. If anything, bring it on! However, the story changes slightly when the Yukinoshita family is the other party involved.*

*Ahhh, what should I do...*

Giving a deep sigh, I hung my head. Then, I felt a soft pull on my cuff. When I looked up, Yukinoshita, who was sitting beside me, had a somewhat troubled look on her face.

"What is it, is something wrong?"

Yukinoshita shook her head slightly. With her mouth firmly shut, she made a face that said, "It's nothing."

Although she made such a face, her eyes were restlessly swimming around and she cast her eyes down onto the floor repeatedly.

*Wha...what's wrong? What happened? I mean, having my cuff gripped makes me incredibly nervous, she smells amazing and whenever the cabin sways, her hair touches me gently! As I become fidgety, my palms start sweating too! Wha, what kind of sign is this?*

Just when my palms were sweating by the gallon, the monorail approached a bend and the cabin tilted to the side.

At that instant, the force holding onto my cuff tightened firmly.

With that, I suddenly remembered.

Roughly five years ago... wait, it wasn't that far back in the past, but at most a few months ago. When we went to Destinyland during the Christmas season, Yukinoshita had shown me a similar state of nervousness on one of the rides. I still remembered her tense figure when we got on the Ferris wheel at Kasai-Rinkai aquarium too.

The conclusion that I came to was that... *Yukinoshita is hopeless with heights.*

Based on my experience, I needed something to divert her attention. I recalled myself doing the same during our trip to Destinyland.

If she turned her attention to something else, she would no longer worry about the height and the rattling monorail. With a light conversation, a few stations would feel like an instant.

*In that case, it can't be helped.*

I edged myself slowly towards her and closed the distance by a little.

*It can't be helped, since we're going to talk. I will be troubled if the trembling and rattling of the moving monorail bury our voices too. That's why, I mean, I have no other choice. This is definitely within the range of tolerance.*

It was not an excuse for someone else, but simply a way to persuade myself. With that in mind, I closed the roughly two fist-length gap that separated us.

Our thighs gently touched... and our shoulders came into contact as well.

Yukinoshita looked at me in surprise. *...If you stare that hard at me, I will get embarrassed too!* Pretending that I did not notice her gaze, I spoke in a hurry.

"I'm asking just in case, but are you afraid of heights?"

"...I might not... be good at it."

Answering in a soft voice, Yukinoshita turned her face away. She had the same reaction when I asked her at Destinyland some time ago. *See! I knew it! I thought that would be the case!*

"Erm... If you told me, I would have chosen a different route, ya know?"

In fact, I had chosen the monorail as it required the least transfers. There were other routes that could have brought us to Chiba station. It just so happened that I said, "Let's take the monorail," excitedly like it was a jazz standard<sup>[14]</sup> and it was decided that way. *Wait, perhaps Yukinoshita knows that I am a true Chiba Monorailer (someone who likes Chiba Monorail) and indulged me. Nah, that can't be. What even is a Monorailer?*

In any case, my words had faint signs of remorse as though I was apologizing for making her indulge me and in response, Yukinoshita shook her head. Next, she placed her hand on her chest, took a deep breath, gently closed her eyes and whispered.

"No, I'm really fine with the monorail... I'm fine because it's a vehicle... I'm fine because... it's a train..."

"You're just trying to convince yourself now..."

*Will she really be fine...?* As I let out a worried sigh, the force applied on my cuff faded slowly.

Her once hesitant fingers then widened and grabbed onto my sleeve as if she wanted to wrap her hand around my whole wrist.

Unconcerned by my nonplussed reaction towards her kitten-like play biting behaviour, Yukinoshita closed the distance between us and delicately rested her weight on my shoulder.

"I'm not good at it..., but I don't dislike it."

As she responded with a sighing smile, Yukinoshita's eyes turned to the windows opposite us, towards buildings illuminated by the evening glow.

The monorail was still high up in the sky and rattling in its own way, but Yukinoshita looked like she had settled down. I could also sense that from her relaxed breathing, as if she had dozed off.

If anything, I was the one who could not keep calm.

Even though the weight of the slender shoulder resting on me was worryingly light, without a doubt, her soothing warmth was conveyed to me through our school uniforms.

Shampoo? Or was it perfume? I could not tell but whenever the Sabon<sup>[15]</sup>-like fresh aromatic scent wafted in the air, my back muscles tensed up.

In order to hide my nervousness, I... Ah, I was sure I had already been exposed. Putting it at the back of my head, I looked at the same scenery Yukinoshita had been gazing at and I whispered.

"Can you tell me about other things that you're not really good at?"

I thought I knew it all. I thought that I understood everything. Even then, I wanted to ask her. Just like today, things about her that I gradually realized but could not understand were countless.

Yukinoshita, who was now sitting at a much closer distance than before, tilted her head in response.

"Even if you say that..."

Yukinoshita placed her hand on her lips and her line of sight moved to the upper right corner. *Well, when you get asked such a question suddenly, nothing really pops up in your mind after all.* If I were to be asked about Yukinoshita's weak points, I would not be able to answer it right away either.

"Well, first of all, dogs, am I right? Next will be ghosts, I guess."

Or so I thought, but I could really come up with quite a number of them! *Doesn't this girl have way too many weaknesses? Is she alright? Can she survive properly?*

"How about others? Is there anything else?"

Heights, dogs and ghosts. I counted each one of them with my fingers and when I turned my head back to her asking for the fourth, Yukinoshita was giving me a rather displeased look.

"I'm not really weak to dogs or ghosts..."

"Ah, that's fine, you don't have to go on."

*It's fine. It's all good. I understand. That's why I'm asking in such a way, for "things you're not really good at".*

When I dismissed her bluntly with a straight face, Yukinoshita sulked and pouted her lips before finally giving up with a sigh.

"I guess I'm really not great with those."

Then, after pondering for a brief moment, she raised her head abruptly and answered candidly in a refreshed expression.

"Bugs are impossible."

"Me too."

Looking at her overly sincere and straightforward declaration, I could not help but agree. *Really, bugs are impossible. I get it~*

As I nodded my head, Yukinoshita giggled.

"What about you? Your weak points."

"Tomatoes, I think. I have vowed never to eat raw ones."

Yukinoshita nodded in acceptance and started typing away on her smartphone that she took out of her pocket. *Hold on, you don't have to take notes. By the way I'm bad with cucumbers as well but pickled ones are fine, got it?*

Before I had the time to remonstrate with her, Yukinoshita shot me a glance, asking me, "Any others?" with just her eyes.

"After that it's maths, I suppose. Hmm...what's next? I wonder if there are more."

*Now that I think about it, I really cannot come up with much when someone asks about my weaknesses in such a serious tone. I am bad at some aspects of everything in the world. In that case, I can say that I'm bad at things in the other world too, since I'm rather weak to ghosts.*

*Are there any more?...* Unable to come up with one that screamed, "This is it!" I could not get anywhere by thinking any further. At this moment, Yukinoshita opened her mouth as though she was exclaiming, "Ah! I thought of something," and tapped on my upper arm lightly as if to say, "Listen! Listen!"

*Hey, this type of gesture makes me shudder and is embarrassing, but it's super cute and surprises me, so stop that, alright?* I turned to look at her as her eyes sparkled, and she spoke with a tone full of confidence.

"When it comes to Hikigaya-kun's weak points, this is it. Human relationships."

"That goes for you too..."

*Why are you making such a triumphant face? Or rather, isn't it a bit too late for something like that? I'm hardly even conscious of that anymore.*

"Everyone is bad at that kind of thing, so it's a no-count. Generally speaking, the only people who say that they're good at human relations are scammers and psychopaths."

No matter how much or how little, everyone had their share of worries with human relationships. *When a fortune teller nonchalantly tells you, "I'm sorry, your horoscope, Leo, comes in at twelfth place. You might worry about your human relationships today. Your lucky item is seven trillion yen!" Isn't he guaranteed to hit the mark? There isn't anyone who doesn't face relationship problems and besides, anyone who strikes seven trillion yen should automatically be considered lucky. Stop fooling around and hand over that seven trillion yen!*

Yukinoshita shrugged her shoulders and chuckled.

"Indeed, everyone has someone they can't handle."

It would have been fine if she had stopped there, but Yukinoshita started pondering and counting with her fingers.

"In your case, there's my mother. Next is my sister."

"I'm going to have dinner with those people later, you know..."

Hahaha you little devil! After letting out a feigned laughter, I remembered the grim reality drawing close to me and my heart became noticeably heavier.

"Erm, can I ask what will we be eating later?"

*It will be paid by someone else after all, so I just have to enjoy myself to the fullest.* As I asked her in order to prepare myself mentally, Yukinoshita inclined her head.



“Didn’t I tell you? We’re having Italian. Don’t you like it?”

“Are you saying it’s Saizeriya? Well, I certainly like Saizeriya, but...”

Hmm... Saizeriya is undoubtedly an Italian restaurant but upon hearing that, I felt a sense of discomfort that I could not seem to clear away. It was likely because I recognized Saizeriya as a genre of its own.

*However, it is highly unlikely for me to be going to Saizeriya with the Yukinoshita family.*

Saizeriya is a restaurant for everyday use. The ally of commoners. Members of high society families like the Yukinoshitas did not give off the impression that they went to Saizeriya. No, it wouldn’t be strange if Haruno-san went somewhere with reasonably priced wine and drank them by the magnum [\[16\]](#).

*However, today is definitely not the day for that. We’re definitely going to a fancy place. Compelled by anxiety, I couldn’t help but ask,*

“I mean, where are we going for dinner?”

“A place my family frequents.”

“Eh, wouldn’t it be expensive? Is my dress code ok? I’m screwed, right?”

Looking at my school uniform in haste, I spotted wrinkles all over. *Oh, this won’t do. With such shabby looking clothes, I’m bound to get kicked out at the front door. Oh crap~ I guess this is impossible after all~ I wanted to meet Hahanon but with wrinkles all over my clothes, I just couldn’t~ I have tried to straighten it but it’s impossible~* As I came up with all these excuses in my head, I patted my uniform vigorously.

Disregarding all of my movements, Yukinoshita lowered my hand quietly before showing me a beaming smile.

“It’s a pretty casual restaurant and is not that strict. Our school uniform is fine.”

“I see...”

*Is that so?* Our school uniform might be fine, but Yukinoshita probably did not know much about life on the streets. At best, a casual restaurant could refer to a privately owned trendy looking cafe. You could not call a place that required a school uniform as the minimum dress code a casual restaurant.

In other words, it would be an expensive restaurant. There were high class restaurants for Italian places too. *In that case, don’t say it’s an Italian place, just tell me it’s an expensive one!*

Meeting Yukinoshita’s mother in such a place...*I’m definitely screwed...*

*My back is against the wall, huh... Just as I was about to give up, I noticed a major flaw in my attire. Yes, my outer wall may have been destroyed but my inner wall remains! Not yet! I’m still barely hanging on in*

*the Summer Siege of Osaka*<sup>171</sup> ! Well, I'll probably lose in the Summer Siege of Osaka and I still have a fighting chance with my back against the wall, but that's beside the point.

".....Ah!"

I stood up from my seat hastily as if I just remembered something.

"This is bad... I forgot my necktie. I'm going back to get it, or rather, I'm going home."

"You don't have to worry about that."

Without a moment's delay, Yukinoshita firmly pulled me back to my seat by my sleeve. Then, she took out a small package from her bag. As she opened it, a necktie made specifically for the Sobu High School male uniform appeared in my sight.

"Komachi-san entrusted me with this. Now there are no more problems, right?"

"O...oh."

*Uh... this sister of mine, isn't she way too capable? She's already like a fresh graduate ready to fight immediately and is far more capable than those job-seeking students who proclaim to be social lubricants in the office.*

Ignoring my conflicted expression, Yukinoshita smoothly extended the necktie and gently pulled my collar towards her. Unable to react to her sudden movement, I stayed still like an obedient kitten being carried.

The collar of my shirt was raised and the necktie was smoothly wrapped around it. After making a full circle around and then going through the loop, a lovely triangular knot was formed. Finally, she grabbed the tie and pushed the knot up to my collar delicately.

At that very moment, my eyes met with Yukinoshita's, who was at a much closer distance to me than ever before.

Upon the sudden realization of her actions and coming back to her senses, Yukinoshita's cheeks flushed in a scarlet colour and her mouth fidgeted in nervousness. Even after fastening my tie and letting it go, her blush did not subside as she fell into silence.

For an instant, a delicate atmosphere lingered around us.

"Th...thank you."

"No worries..."

Having difficulties enduring the silence, I filled in the time by expressing my gratitude. However, Yukinoshita was still hanging her head downwards. Thanks to that, I was able to see her scorching red ears peeking out from her luscious black hair.

*Ahhh I can't take it anymore, you cheeky... If you get embarrassed while doing that, stop it! I will get embarrassed too, you know.*

*I have no idea whether she's unaware or if she's actually conscious about it, but the way she's coming at me with such assertiveness leaves me at a complete loss.*

*The fact that I don't hate it in the slightest, is really troubling.*

# Author's Afterword

Good evening, I am Wataru.

Unexpectedly, one day I would write this “Chronicle” again...

Who can imagine this kind of thing...Of course I imagined it! Rather, I hope I can write it, but I can write it like this, thanks to your support, thank you very much.

That’s it, now it is “My youth romance story really has a problem. 』

Regardless of the postscript or the middle story, after writing it many times, I feel that there is almost nothing to write, but what is incredible is that after writing the main story, there is something I want to write.

Before I started writing, I was still thinking “No, I have nothing to write... It’s enough to write the true story...”, but once I decided and started writing, I wrote it smoothly, sometimes even because too many irrelevant things were written, I abandoned all. Maybe it’s because I wrote it in the middle of the night, and my brain had a bug...

When the original version was made, I mostly wrote the postscript which is a habit.

But after rereading what I wrote before, I found that my writing style and content had changed. Not only did I feel the weight of time, but also the impermanence of time.

Although I don’t think it has changed, it does change after a closer look.

Rather, perhaps it is precisely because there is no change that a small difference leads to a huge change.

I don't just mean postscript and middle story, other things in life should be the same.

In the big storms of the society, I used a mud boat to drift up and down for nearly ten years. The schedule is always full, and the rabbit with a pocket watch (used to refer to a gentler metaphor for editors) on the Kacha Kacha Mountain all day urges him to say “Hurry up, hurry up!” right now. I often want to say to him “You are a dead rabbit”, but calm down and think about it is basically my fault, so I always cursed in my heart, “In my mind you are not a rabbit, but a mountain. “It’s just precious game” to vent my hatred.<sup>[18]</sup>

Living this kind of life every day, and gradually there is nothing worth touching. Even in April, the situation did not improve. There was only a feeling of “beginning BP... so it was (desperate)” in my heart, and then I had to work hard towards the next final account. New gears (a gentler metaphor used to refer to new employees) are new to come in, but since there is a flow of people every season, it is not surprising that it is slowly.

When you gradually get used to it like this, the trouble will often be buried. Deliberate neglect and omissions will produce huge profits and losses.

At this time, if the rabbit inadvertently said something nice to me, I would occasionally be moved and think, “Hey, this rabbit man is too good...”, will it? No way? Probably not, not, how could it be.

It feels like I'm playing the "Ahh", but few people should understand it. Sure enough, the rabbit is unforgivable, but let's leave it alone!

Because life is plain and without ups and downs, some subtle differences will look like huge changes. On the other hand, if you fail to notice the small sense of violation in the smooth daily life, one day may suddenly usher in earth-shaking changes.

I think that even if the actual degree of change is small, as long as one feels “changed”, the feelings will be shaken, and new discoveries will be made and values will be updated.

If this is the case, there must be changes in them and their new daily life.

With the new environment, new relationship, and new sentimentality, "My youth romance story really has a problem. -New-』Started.

Because it is over, I am hesitant to continue writing, but I feel that I haven't written enough yet. Under the mystery theory of "It should be okay for special codes...", I decided to write this. Completely new as a sequel to the orthodox.

I intend to continue to describe the daily life of them, them and the people around them who have reached the third year of high school. I hope you can stay with you for a while and continue to guard him, her and her in the future.

# Translation Notes

1. [»](#) This is a play on words, “fu” meaning rotten, BL
2. [»](#) Sock Touch is a type of glue that prevents knee socks from falling off.
3. [»](#) In Japanese, cat’s tongue is used to describe people that don’t like eating hot things.
4. [»](#) References are too Japanese for me to understand, something about a song and a manga catchphrase.
5. [»](#) Japanese baseball reference, something about a triple home run by some person.
6. [»](#) An idiom in Japanese meaning being understaffed and busy as a result.
7. [»](#) House is a command to get a dog back to their shed, lol.
8. [»](#) Reference to Tiamat in FGO, who has the same CV as Komachi, Yuuki Aoi.
9. [»](#) It is said that when Louis XVI’s wife heard of how the peasants in France had no bread to eat, she said: ‘If there’s no bread than have some snacks!’, this phrase is now used to mock the upper class on know nothing about the common folk.
10. [»](#) The way Komachi has called Yukino and Yui can also be interpreted as “sister”, like “Yukino-nee” and “Yui-nee”, but it felt off, so I used “-san” instead, up to your imagination.
11. [»](#) “Perica” is a reference to the currency in the manga “Kaiji”, 1 perica = 0.1 yen.
12. [»](#) The title has 2 references. One is to the song 「前略、道の上より」by 一世風靡セピア. The other reference is to the TV programme called 「See the World by Train」.
13. [»](#) See the World by Train (世界の車窓から) is a Japanese short factual television programme featuring railway journeys in various countries around the world.
14. [»](#) Jazz standards are musical compositions that are an important part of the musical repertoire of jazz musicians. “Let’s take the monorail,” is a reference to 「Take the A train」 by Duke Ellington.
15. [»](#) SABON is a famous Israeli brand for cosmetics, skin and health care products.
16. [»](#) Magnum is a unit of measurement for wine. 1 magnum = 1.5 litres.8.
17. [»](#) Siege of Osaka was a series of battles in the 17th century and was divided into two stages, summer and winter.

18. [»](#) “Mud Boat”, “Kacha Kacha Mountain”, “Rabbit” neta Japanese fairy tale ” Kacha Kacha Mountain “, “The Rabbit with Pocket Watch” is in neta “Alice in Wonderland”, here is a double play terrier



# Table of Contents

[Prelude: So, Hikigaya Komachi Says It Like This](#)

[Chapter 1: And So, Our Youth Will Not End.](#)

[Chapter 2: Even So, His and Her Routine Will Continue On](#)

[Interlude](#)

[Chapter 3: Above the roadside, see the world from the train windows that Chiba is proud of.\[12\]](#)

[Author's Afterword](#)

## Guide

[Cover](#)