

The Game We Play

Tags: OiSuga; Confessions; Getting Together; Flirting; First Kiss

"Nii-chan! We're going to be late!" Suga's little brother whined from the other side of his bedroom door. Each word was strung out, raising in pitch near the end.

Suga sighed. It was his day off, or that had been the plan before he had been told—forced—to watch his younger brother. Normally, such a task wouldn't have been a huge deal. They would have just lounged around the house and watched movies. However, today Toshiro had classes at the Lil'Tykes Volleyball Club.

Don't get Suga wrong, he loved spending time with Toshiro. He was even ecstatic that Toshiro was getting into volleyball. It was just-

Bang. Bang. Bang. "Oniiii-aaaaannn!"

It was just the day of do-nothings Suga had planned was no longer an option.

Suga let his brother shout and knock on the door a few more times before he closed out of the video he had been watching and pocketed his phone. He took his sweet time as he sauntered over to the door to open it.

"Alright, we can go," he said as Toshiro glared at him. "No need to get all grumpy. It's not that far away and we still have plenty of time."

Suga knew the reassurance meant nothing to him; after all, their mother always said the only way to make sure you are on time is to be early.

Toshiro dragged Suga into the hallway and ushered him to the genkan. They donned their coats and shoes. Although Toshiro complained, noting it wasn't that cold outside, Suga forced him to wear gloves, a scarf, and a hat. The last thing Suga needed was Toshiro catching a cold and the blame falling to him.

It took them a little longer than Suga planned to walk there, forgetting to factor the slower pace due to Toshiro's smaller steps. They still arrived plenty early for Toshiro to catch up with a few friends before the class started.

Suga barely received a goodbye before Toshiro ran off. He wondered if he was supposed to stay and watch, or if he was allowed to leave. A quick scan around the gym revealed a few groups of mothers standing together, most likely gossiping. There were also several volunteers walking around setting up for the activities or corralling kids. He decided that he'd be bored out of his mind if he were to stay.

Next time he would have to wear something more comfortable so he could go running. For now, he assumed there were probably a few cafés or konbinis in the area. It would be easy to grab some coffee and then come back to pick up Toshiro...

"Karasuno's third-year setter, Mr. Refreshing himself."

Suga recognized the voice, so it wasn't a surprise to see Oikawa after he turned to greet the person. He was, however, surprised at the knot in his stomach when Oikawa shot him that signature smile. This was the first time he was seeing Oikawa outside of a volleyball match—practice or official.

He determined the warmth he felt to be merely excitement from seeing someone you know outside of the context you knew them in.

The smile on Suga's face was involuntary as he asked, "Oikawa, what are you doing here?"

"My nephew comes to this club, and I volunteer from time to time. Are you volunteering today, too??"

"No no, I just brought my little brother." Suga waved a hand at Oikawa with a (purposefully) sweet smile. When Suga met Oikawa's stare again, his expression changed. He felt the tugs of a smirk as he said, "Besides, I don't have time to volunteer right now with nationals coming up."

"Low blow, Refreshing-kun." Oikawa's eyes narrowed.

"I do have a name."

It was Oikawa's turn to give him a teasing smile. In a sly, playful cadence, Oikawa replied, "Well of course you do, Refreshing-kun..."

Another volunteer blew a whistle in the distance. The gym filled with the familiar sounds of sneakers running across the floor as the kids converged to the center.

"Well that's my cue, but I'm sure we'll meet again." Oikawa waved before jogging away.

Suga turned to leave, thinking nothing of the interaction until he stepped outside. The questions hit him like the cold wind blowing in his face. Had he been flirting with Oikawa? Had Oikawa flirted back?

He replayed the interaction in his head, noting Oikawa's body language, his smile, the intonation of his voice. It all seemed flirty enough, but Suga couldn't tell if it was that or Oikawa just being... Oikawa.

Unfortunately, he wasn't able to figure it out that afternoon. When he returned to pick up Toshiro, he was immediately dragged away before he was even able to locate the other setter.

Suga's phone pinged in his bag. A few students turned toward him, but, thankfully, their teacher remained unaware. Without looking, Suga reached behind to grab the phone from the side pocket, quickly hiding it under his desk. He looked down briefly, skimming the message. After replying, he double-checked that his phone was on silent before he slipped it into his bag again.

A piece of crumpled paper fell to his desk. He didn't have to turn to see where it came from because he knew it was from Daichi. The handwriting inside only further confirmed this.

Who was that?

Suga scribbled his reply: My mom, she needs me to pick up Toshiro later because she has to work late. The “I’ll have to leave practice early” was implicit.

The crumpling of the paper as Suga prepared to toss the note back to Daichi was enough to get their teacher to look back. Her eyes narrowed to Suga. He was used to being the subject of her suspicions (and most times, like today, it was him), so he had plenty of practice keeping his expression cool, as if he’d been doing nothing but taking notes.

When her attention returned to the chalkboard, Suga threw the note over his shoulder. It was something he had done a hundred times before. He knew exactly how much force to give the toss to make sure it landed right in front of Daichi.

Suga was distracted during practice that afternoon. His sets were a little low and his serves never seemed to go where he planned. But it wasn’t his fault. Around lunch time he had realized that picking up his younger brother also meant seeing Oikawa—or the possibility to.

If he arrived early, he may be able to at least see him. However, Toshiro was sure to drag him away before they could have a conversation. If he arrived late, he might be able to catch Oikawa on his way out. Since Oikawa was a volunteer, he was probably one of the last people to leave.

Suga could blame his tardiness on having come from practice. Toshiro couldn’t be angry if it was something (supposedly) out of Suga’s control. He would have to understand-

“Suga!”

He came back to the task in front of him just in time to see the volleyball closing in on his face. Though unable to avoid it completely, he did manage to turn his head. The ball hit his cheek before it went flying back over the net. There was a beat of silence before his teammates ran over to make sure he was okay.

“I am so sorry Suga!” Asahi proclaimed.

“It’s okay, really. I was the one not paying attention,” Suga reassured them.

After a few more underclassmen checked in on him, the team continued practice. It wasn’t anything new for someone to be getting hit in the face with a volleyball. (Though it was the first time it had happened to Suga in awhile.)

Suga walked off, rubbing his cheek, knowing a bruise was likely to form. When he reached his bag, he checked the time. He calculated the time it would take him to hop on a bus (or jog) to get to the Lil'Tykes Volleyball club.

"So who were you thinking about?" Kiyoko asked. She had a water bottle outstretched as an offering that Suga accepted with thanks.

"What do you mean?"

"It's just that you had a love-sick smile on your face right before you got hit." Kiyoko's eyes narrowed, giving Suga that look that said she would know if he was lying.

"Oh, that. Well... You see, there is this... um... cute volunteer at the volleyball club Toshiro goes to, so I was just thinking about him." Vague, but truthful.

Kiyoko could tell there was more to the story, but she wasn't going to pry any further. Besides, Suga still hadn't figured out if Oikawa had actually been flirting with him before (or whether he even had feelings for Oikawa). He needed a few more interactions before he could determine what move to make next.

When Suga walked into the gym, he heard Toshiro shout at him from the other side. He was sitting next to another boy around his age. Most people seemed to have cleared out, just volunteers and a few parents who were standing around and talking.

Suga looked around, hoping to see Oikawa. Unfortunately, the (now former) Seijoh captain didn't seem to be around. A part of Suga beat himself up for choosing to show up late. From all the scenarios he ran through in his head, it seemed like the right plan, but now he wasn't so sure.

"What happened to your cheek, Onii-chan?" Toshiro asked as Suga walked up to the two sitting on the floor.

He placed his hand on his cheek, feeling the sting of a tender bruise forming. "I got hit by a volleyball at practice."

Toshiro didn't seem to find the story amusing enough to keep his attention. "Takeru-kun said his uncle is buying him steamed buns after this. Can we get some too?" Toshiro asked. He leaned onto his hands. His face lit in a smile.

"You should come with us!" Takeru draped himself over Toshiro, also giving Suga a large grin.

Together, the two boys looked up at Suga, their eyes pleading for him to agree. It wasn't like he and Toshiro had anywhere to be. Their mother was working, late so she couldn't yell at them for staying out a little longer. Of course Suga couldn't only feed Toshiro steamed buns, but it could hold him over so they could still have dinner together as a family.

"Well, we can grab some, but we shouldn't invite ourselves without—"

"I knew Toshiro seemed a bit familiar." The voice was silky smooth—charismatic. It was easily recognizable as Oikawa's. He replayed their last conversation when Oikawa told him that his nephew also attended the club.

Suga turned to meet a warm smile. He started to realize that all of Oikawa's smiles seemed the same. Warm, but shallow, and he wondered if there was another one that Oikawa kept hidden from the world.

"Are you going to join us for steamed buns, Refreshing-kun?"

"We wouldn't want to impose ourselves," Suga said. He met Oikawa's gaze, switching his soft smile to a smirk. "Unless, of course, you are insisting we come along."

He assumed his look got the point across when Oikawa mirrored a similar one, eyes displaying something between playfulness and intrigue.

"Well I wouldn't want to take you away from your busy training schedule," Oikawa taunted.

Suga couldn't tell if he wanted to punch Oikawa with his fist or his lips. They were playing a game that Suga hadn't really been able to with anyone else before. He realized that Oikawa was someone who could keep up with him.

Like Suga, Oikawa was constantly processing the situation. He observed Suga's every action and read the meaning underneath the words. Oikawa was constantly testing the line, getting to know Suga without actually asking questions. And maybe Suga was getting to know him too.

"I guess I could spare some time for the Grand King," Suga teased. He recalled Hinata's nickname for Oikawa since he continued to use that ridiculous nickname for him. (Though Suga was starting to find it endearing.)

Takeru and Toshiro sprang up with excited shouts before Oikawa could even respond. They were jumping on each other and running around the gym. They began to make their way toward the exit, but Oikawa and Suga yelled at them at the same time to come back and carry their own bags.

After stopping at the nearest konbini, Suga suggested they go to a nearby park. They stuffed their faces as they walked, a moment of silence before the two boys started screaming and chasing each other around the playground. As Suga and Oikawa settled into the swings, Oikawa made a comment about passing this park sometimes on his morning runs.

Suga imagined Oikawa waking up as the sun just started to rise over the horizon. He pictured him stepping out of his house and pausing to pick the perfect song before starting his jog...

His thoughts came to an abrupt halt.

Suga chose this park because it was on their way home, and then Oikawa mentioned he runs by it. He had never even thought about the fact they could live close to each other before. It felt odd to know that there may have been plenty of times they shared the same spaces in public, and yet neither of them had noticed the other.

Oikawa nervously watched the two boys take turns jumping off sections of the playground. Several times he opened his mouth and Suga thought he was about to yell, but he didn't. After a few minutes, Oikawa seemed to accept that Takeru and Toshiro were being safe enough. He turned his attention to Suga, swinging casually.

"So... How's um... training and stuff?" Suga realized Oikawa's stammering wasn't nerves; rather, he seemed slightly annoyed to be asking as it reminded him of the defeat.

"It's going well. How's teaching a bunch of kids volleyball?"

"Exhausting. Sometimes they're little monsters. I swear I was never as bad as them when I was a kid."

Suga threw his head back in laughter. He heard the click of the chains of Oikawa's swing twisting.

"Why are you laughing at me?" Oikawa asked, annoyance clear in his voice. Suga turned his swing toward Oikawa, meeting his scowl with more soft chuckles.

"Even knowing you as little as I do, I know you were a little shit as a kid," Suga answered.

"Again, rude, Refreshing-kun." Oikawa kicked his feet out, letting the swing spring back into place. Then in a soft voice that hung in the air, he remarked, "Besides, you know me more than a little."

"Do I? Because you've never shown me your smile." As Suga spoke, Oikawa turned back to look at him. Oikawa's mouth opened to protest, but Suga continued before he could get a word in. "I'm talking about a real smile, not the one you wear as a shield."

Oikawa's eyes widened briefly at being called out. Whatever shock he felt faded as Suga watched him calculate the next move. Soon, his expression turned smug, a small smirk at the corner of his mouth.

"The fact you know it's a fake smile means that you do know me more than a little," he finally stated. The chain of the swing squeaked as he leaned in toward Suga, who did the same. The distance between them closed.

Afternoon sunlight reflected a warm glow along the edges of Oikawa's face. Suga's eyes trailed along the upturn of Oikawa's lips to the pink in his cheeks until settling to meet his gaze.

"What if I want to know you more," Suga whispered.

Oikawa's own eyes flitted down for a brief moment. His lips parted, and Suga tried to determine what he was debating. Was he thinking of saying something or kissing him?

Though the cold air nipped at his nose, Suga couldn't help but feel warm. His heart rate increased as time slowed down around them. The moment between them was fragile. Oikawa's gravity was pulling him in while the swing worked against him. One slip of his foot and the swing would have pulled him away.

A quiet buzz broke through the silence, and Oikawa pulled away with an apology. Retrieving his phone from his pocket, he checked his messages.

"It's my sister... I should probably get Takeru home," Oikawa spoke just as much to himself as to

Suga.

"Right. Toshiro and I should go home too..."

Even though the moment had ended, neither of them seemed too keen to leave. They parted ways without any discussion of the next time. However, Suga was thinking about the next time and he hoped that was Oikawa too.

Suga watched his teammates load their bags into the bus and file inside. It was early in the morning, the night dew still sitting in the air. Today was a new day prime for adventure. Suga closed his eyes and let the warmth of the sun mix with the winter wind, and when he opened them, a familiar face stared back at him from a distance.

"Shimizu, I'll be right back," Suga said. Kiyoko followed Suga's eyes to the boy waiting near the school gate.

"So the volleyball volunteer is Oikawa," Kiyoko mused. Suga opened his mouth to answer, but she waved Suga away, promising to cover for him.

As Suga got closer, Oikawa disappeared behind the wall. Suga realized he probably wanted to avoid being seen by various members of the Karasuno volleyball club. Not that he and Oikawa were doing something wrong; he assumed it was more a matter of pride than anything else.

Suga turned the corner. He could no longer see the small bus, but he did see Oikawa leaning against the wall. His school uniform peeked out from his unzipped winter jacket. Hearing Suga's footsteps, Oikawa looked up from the ground to give Suga a smile—a playful one.

"Don't you have school?" Suga asked.

"I'm on my way. Just thought I would make a quick detour."

"Is the Grand King here to wish me good luck?" Suga teased, settling against the wall next to him.

"Absolutely not."

They fell back into silence. Suga watched his own breath in the cold air, the steam circling around.

After that afternoon at the park, Suga realized that Oikawa was indeed flirting with him. He didn't mind it at all; after all, he was flirting back. But he knew that if they kept at this pace, they would just be playing this back and forth game forever...

"How about we go on a real date when I get back?" he asked. "One without a couple of 8 year olds tagging along."

Oikawa turned his body toward Suga, a small smirk arising on his lips when their eyes met. "Only if you win. I don't date losers."

"I'm sure we will all try our best," Suga said in a sweet tone at first. Then his eyes narrowed onto Oikawa—taunting, intrigued, playful. "Though I suspect you'll date me whether we win or lose."

"Well aren't you a cocky one, Refreshing-kun." Oikawa leaned in toward Suga. Like several days prior at the park, they were close enough for their breath to mingle in the air between them.

Regardless of how he felt on the inside, Suga kept himself composed. It was still a game they were playing, and he wasn't going to give up that easily.

"Just call it well-trained intuition. I know wondering what it would be like to kiss me is driving you crazy," Suga cooed. A playful smile from Oikawa made it known he had been caught when his own eyes fell briefly to Oikawa's mouth.

"Are you sure it's not the other way around?" Oikawa whispered.

"Couldn't both exist?" Suga retorted, Oikawa chuckling in return.

After a moment, Oikawa pushed himself from the wall. He started to walk away but paused before he got too far, turning back briefly as he said, "Good luck, Suga."

Suga thought about teasing him for not using the nickname, but it didn't feel like that type of moment. Oikawa was being genuine. It took a lot for him to wish Suga luck; therefore, he settled for a simple reply.

"Thank you, Oikawa."

Suga sat in the swing at the park. He found it kind of funny that he still didn't have Oikawa's number and had resorted to fabricating a casual interception. He was up earlier than he would have liked, but Suga thought Oikawa to be someone who would go on morning runs at ungodly hours.

He wasn't wrong.

"Refreshing-kun?" Oikawa said, pulling out a headphone as he slowed to a stop at the edge of the street just before the grass.

"So we're back to those nicknames," Suga teased, standing up from the swing.

They didn't talk as Suga walked over. It was obvious Suga had been waiting there on purpose, so Oikawa waited for him to start. Suga spoke only when he was close enough that Oikawa could hear him even if he whispered.

"So we-" Suga started.

"I saw."

"And?"

Oikawa took a small step closer with a charming smile. Suga stopped breathing, a lump in his throat. It was a real smile, one that lit up Oikawa's eyes. The smile wasn't trying to be anything or to cover anything up. It was joy embodied and the butterflies in Suga's stomach fluttered around erratically.

He slipped a hand around the back of Suga's neck and pulled him in. Their lips brushed gently, molding themselves to the shape of the other's. The kiss felt like a release of a breath Suga held in for so long. A sweet exhale that allowed him to breathe in again, this time with Oikawa as his oxygen.

Suga made a silent vow to never wait so long for a kiss again.