

Melody 121

Eternal Melody 121 Bloody Rose Part 5

"Thanks for having me here."

"I will pour us some tea. So make yourself at home." Yuhi said as he walked over to the kitchen. Through the small mirror on the wall, he could get a clear glimpse of her. Sumire was looking around curiously.

"It's the first time I've been inside your studio, Yuhi."

"Indeed."

Where did he put those tea bags? Although it's not a place, he comes to frequently anymore unlike the old man's manor. He hasn't left this place vacant for a long time.

"I'm kinda nervous."

'Is she stupid?'

"The nervous part will come later. So shouldn't you relax for now?"

From the mirror, he saw it. Her flustered red cheeks and nervous sounding laughter.

"Well, okay. But we will start with my lips, right?"

"Mmm, sounds like a plan."

Once he finished making tea, he placed it down on the table where she was sitting. Usually, he would sit beside her. But they ought to get the serious business out of the way first.

For the next ten minutes, no words were spoken at all as the brunette haired girl with the cup in her hands, letting it cool down before taking a sip.

In that somewhat tense atmosphere, it was her brightly lit eyes when she took a sip of the tea that made him feel at ease.

If Morris and the other guys heard that he was having such soft-sounding thoughts, they would undoubtedly laugh at him. But he can no longer return to how he was before.

Since he was pondering on his own thoughts, those 10 minutes went by quickly.

Sumire spoke up. "We've delivered all the threats or rather greetings that we had to. I'm sorry that most of them didn't look happy about it at all."

After his conference finished, they received a call from Soujiro saying. 'The paperwork is complete. I shall submit it to the government office by tonight. Please go to all these people's places and make the announcement yourselves.' Seeing how long the list was. Yuhi decided to cancel both their work for the rest of the day. Once he saw that long list, he did think that it would take all day. However, Sumire handled everything so smoothly.

"Why do you have to apologize? Besides, we are older now; we don't have to apologize for every single thing."

She doesn't say anything to that. "So about what you said the other day. About starting over from the beginning --" Yuhi is cut off when he saw her expression.

"Old .." A dark, depressing aura wraps around the brunette, as she slumps her head on the table.

"Indeed. I can feel it too."

"You don't have to worry. I will grow old with you too."

The brunette doesn't respond, but he noticed her staring at him for a few minutes.

"What is it?" Yuhi questioned.

"Nothing."

"Actually, I don't understand what you mean by starting over from step one."

Why would they need to start over? For the past two days, Sumire did not see him in the hospital, but she did send that heartfelt note. On that note, she said something about starting over.

Sumire looks up. "Isn't it about doing stuff together and getting to know each other?"

"Really?"

"For example, naturally holding hands."

"Don't we always do that?"

What does she mean by naturally? It's something they always do, so isn't that natural?

"Or eating meals together, or going on walks and other places together."

"We did that every day in high school." he trails off seeing her innocent expression change to a dark one. His sweatdropped, "We can just do it again. What's with that funny face."

Sumire sighed. "Well, I don't get it either. But I do want things to be different from now on." She trailed off. "I don't want things to be awkward anymore."

It seems like she noticed that too. No matter how well they get along, some of their conversations are awkward. Is it because of Mamoru? He needs to do something about this. He stood up and sat beside her.

For a moment, he does not say a word before he cupped her cheeks.

Yuhi covered his mouth with hers.

This is all he can do to reassure her.

....

Yuhi didn't know how they got upstairs to his room. But before he knew it, he was all over her.

"Sumire, this is bad." He mumbled.

She extended her hand out. "Bad?"

"Yeah, I might do something." Yuhi trailed off and sighed. "I really want to have sex with you right now."

Sumire laughs softly. "Did Hino give you a warning?"

Recalling the words the redhead said earlier, a scowl appears on his face, "If you ask me. He's doing it on purpose."

"Perhaps. But we ought to listen to him."

His gaze dimmed when something came to mind. "That reminds me, you stayed overnight at Hino's place recently."

Sumire giggled. "Mmm, I did. Jealous?"

"Damn." He trailed off and saw her red-stained face. "Are you sick?"

"No, I'm just embarrassed."

"Yeah. I should probably stop using my tongue."

Sumire hits him, but he grabbed hold of her wrist. "Even if you're not sick, I think you should sleep a bit."

He tucked the blanket around her.

"Hey, Yuhi?"

"Yeah?"

"If your ex-girlfriend showed up. Would you get back together with her?"

'Why is she asking something so stupid for?' Yuhi sighed. "Of course, I won't."

"Hmmm..." She trailed off. "But you know something Yuhi, I heard that you did it a lot with your previous girlfriends."

Yuhi almost dropped the cigarette he was about to put in his mouth. "How on-ear-"

'That dammed Hino.'

"Am I not pretty enough? You always stop."

"Look here, and I just told you that I couldn't control myself. Don't provoke me."

Sumire laughed. "I know, sorry."

This girl probably has no idea what she is doing to him. It is harder than he thought, holding back. Yuhi figured he could do it before; he felt he could hold back. But spending time with her every day is having the reverse effect.

Maybe it would have helped if he did not touch her the first day they went out with one another. A deep sigh crossed his lips. What is he doing thinking such things now of all times? What use is there?

He glanced over at the girl who was staring at him. Why does she keep staring at him? This is one thing he noticed about her since he first asked her out. She has a bad habit of staring, and doesn't she touch him far too easily?

Eternal Melody 122 Bloody Rose Part 6

Yuhi understood that Sumire was the type of person who liked to tease people. But he always believed that he would be fine no matter what she threw at him. It seems like he has underestimated her though. "You spent the past two days with Hino, did that not bother Soujiro?"

Sumire sighed. "Mm, it didn't bother him."

That man must have excellent self control. Yuhi has to admit that he is impressed. Not only can Soujiro control himself from getting jealous. But Soujiro also controls his desires towards Sumire. Yuhi knew from the very start that man liked Sumire, otherwise he would not have provoked him on national TV.

An arranged marriage since birth huh? It is not uncommon for the two to fall for one another. For awhile Yuhi speculated that Sumire liked Soujiro. But he could not say so for sure, since he has not seen how the two interacted with one another.

"It bothered me."

At that comment Sumire laughed. She covered her mouth shyly with her hands. "Uhh, it seems like I have underestimated you a bit Yuhi-san."

"That is my line." He turned to her and caressed her cheeks. "You look sick."

"Aha."

"It isn't funny." Yuhi frowned. "Why are you wearing such little clothing?"

"Uh, because I only wanted to go to the market."

Is that so? Yuhi only half paid attention to her words. He did not understand why, but today she seemed prettier than usual. Would it be okay for him to look at her for awhile? Would she find it weird if all he did was look at her?

"Why are you blushing?"

"Because this is embarrassing. If your going to kiss me, please do so already."

Kiss? He wasnt planning to. Beside she is sick, he obviously wont do anything now that he knows that. "I only want to look at you."

"Look at me?"

Sumire seemed very puzzled at his words. Yuhi did not understand it either so he could not explain it to her. Maybe he should just let her go. But he wants to keep loo- his thoughts broke off when he felt Sumire's lips on his.

Yuhi immediately froze in shock at her actions.

What on earth is she doing?

No he knows what she is doing. But shouldnt she stop before he ends up liking it? What will she do when he likes it?

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A few hours later - 7:00pm -

When he saw the lights from the outside, Yuhi already knew who it was. Akatsuki too has been sneaking off somewhere, it can't be that woman.

He rushed up the steps and unlocked the door. The girls shoes from earlier remained at the front. So she stayed? Yuhi looked around and noticed that the hallway was sparkling clean. The traces of the dirt that were on the walls previously were gone now.

Yuhi put his bag down and took his shoes off. He walked across the hall and took heavy strides until he arrived in front of the kitchen door.

Sumire had left it open so he spotted brunette hair from the distance. So Soujiro really was right, ' She told me she has practice. But that's her excuse to see you isn't it?'

He took a deep breath before he made his way over.

"--hey Sumire. "

No response. She must be deep in thought about something again. Guess there is no choice. He slid up closer to her and spoke directly at her ear. "Heyyy Sumire, answer me! What are you doing spacing out like that? Let's eat. "

Clearly this snapped the brunette's thoughts, since her face immediately turned a cherry red colour seeing how close he was.

"Ahh, um. .Yuhi, welcome home. "

Yuhi blinked when he saw how nervous she was. Huh? Why is she red? What happened to her teasing and playful attitude from earlier?

"Hmm, the contents of the pot is spilling is it alright?"

"Ahh yes." Sumire reached over and quickly fixed it. "You came back earlier than, I expected Yuhi. "

"Yeah, since I left pretty early this morning. I thought I would come back earlier. Brr it's cold. What did you make?"

"Meat and potato stew. "

"Hmm, this meat and potato stew. Isn't the colour a little too light? I like strong flavours. "

"It's not light. I've checked. Taste it Yuhi. " Sumire brought out some chopsticks and took some meat and potato out of the pot. "Come on Yuhi, go ahh."

Hey hey, isn't she embarrassed? One moment she is all red and flustered, then the next she does bold things like this. Well either way, Yuhi bends down to eat. A delicious sensation entered the tip of his tongue. "Mmm."

"How is it? I adjusted the flavour to suit your taste buds. "

"To impress me?" Yuhi teased. It was a joke of course. Why would she do something like that for his sake?

At that comment the brunette turned around to face him. "There is no --- " their gaze met and her cheeks coloured. "An--yway, I am very confident in my cooking today. So if you're ready to eat I'll start grilling the fish."

Yuhi cuts her sentence short as he reached over and kissed a strand of her hair.

"Yuhi...."

Oh, her tone changed. Yuhi gently cups her cheek and kissed her lips softly, only to have her cling on to him. "Shall we sit down? On the couch at least? "

The brunette nodded slowly and he easily carried her in his arms, as he reached over and switched the frying pan of. He tipped the contents into the other bowl and covered it with a lid.

He exited the kitchen with the girl in his arms and headed to the living room She seems a bit lighter than before, did she lose some wait? As Yuhi debated about it in his head, Sumire begins to undo his shirt collar. Well he guesses he can worry about it later.

His hands wrapped around her waist as he fondled her chest through her clothes. Cute sounds escaped her lips.

"Sumire, you're coming onto me strongly. Did you miss me?"

". .missed you, I missed you Yuhi. "

His gaze softened, geez she is so silly. "As much as I want us to do it right now. I'm quite worn out, and from the looks of it so are you. "

"S--sorry." Sumire said startled and she pulled away from him.

"Don't worry about it. I'm just glad you came back to me tonight. Soujiro doesn't mind?"

Sumire shook her head. "He doesn't mind. I told him I would practice overtime with the others, and he said that I should do my best. I feel bad lying, but I wanted to see you. So before I knew it I was lying."

So so very silly, this girl. He can't tell her that he knew she would be here, or the context of Soujiro's message either. Instead Yuhi plants kisses on her neck gently as he nibbles on her exposed chest.

"Sumire. You're driving me crazy. "

"Aha." Sumire laughed softly. "I am?"

"Yeah, you are."

She is very silly but a content sigh escapes his lips when he caresses his hair, she is so beautiful. "Well, I'm sure it's fine even if you don't practice."

"Eh, what is that supposed to mean?"

"It simply means I want to monopolise you."

If she practices more and more and gets better. For sure she will reach her goal. But it wouldn't be because of him, it would be because she found what she was missing through that song. Although he has accepted that Mamoru will always remain special to her; he doesn't like the idea of her spreading her wings because of him. He doesn't like the idea of him interfering with the present Sumire.

The present Sumire has something only she can achieve.

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After he calmed her down, Yuhi learned that Aika gave her some strange book to read. A quick skim through was all it took for him to understand. That stupid woman, what is she trying to do? Yuhi was skeptical about Aika's friendship towards Sumire. While Aika is a good person-- that person is not pure at all.

His gaze fell towards the girl who was busy sketching away. He was tired but when she suggested cuddling he could hardly refuse her. It seems like the one who is in charge of this relationship is her. Not that he minds it too much.

"Say Yuhi? Did you watch the news today? It seems like the government is planning on introducing that paradise program."

The Paradise program was something the government cabinet members came up with to deal with the class division. Those who are deemed fit for the new paradise, the new space will be separated from others.

"A safe and perfect society is just an illusion." Those words slipped out before he could stop himself. He saw with his own eyes how people easily relied on an external force for safety, and he also witnessed the violent reaction in its absence. "The society we live in now is still a dangerous society."

"Dangerous?" Her question came out in a whisper.

"In this society, people depend on things that are convenient but also dangerous. Our government made us take risks, but the risks were dispersed and distributed so cleverly that no one was able to notice it." He paused when he saw that she put the pencil down.

Should I continue or not?

Yuhi took her silence as a yes and continued. "No, people noticed it. Despite what it would seem like, not all humans out there are stupid. Some would even say that the human race is smarter than most. Humans can easily mask their feelings and become a completely different person. They pretended not to notice, they pushed it aside because they understood it was dangerous."

"So in other words everybody is a coward."

He chuckled at her conclusion. "I suppose."

"But at the same time humans are clever. They assessed their situation, realized they were powerless. Rather than act recklessly and end up putting the ones they care about at risk, they chose to going along with it. By going along with everything, nobody will get hurt. By listening to the rules, their normal lives are not in danger."

Yuhi had to admit that he was impressed. It seems like the only person who can understand his way of thinking is Ibuki Sumire.

"Do you think the citizens of this town, including me, were that clever?"

Yuhi paused when he heard those words. A strange feeling overcame him and he immediately stood up. He realized that he was one of the guilty few who had chosen to look the other way, accepting his fate. Even if it meant protecting her, is it not a sin to look away? He is not like everybody else, unlike them he is not powerless. He has the power to change things.

"I don't like to lump people together when I speak, since everyone is different, but let me tell you my thoughts. Humans are clever, we make our choices based on our situation. We can avoid our responsibilities or take action recklessly."

"Then what about those who have the power to change things but chose to look away?"

At that comment Yuhi sighed. "Are you upset about something?"

"I am. Why did you stand up? Weren't we cuddling?"

His lips curve to a smile. "I thought you wanted me to listen to Hino?"

"Did he say anything about hugging?"

"Come over here Sumire."

Sumire nodded and got up. She walked across the room to where he was and he led her to the balcony. He wrapped his arms from behind her and hugged her from behind.

"Yuhi.."

"I am tired."

She turned to face him and caressed his cheeks. "Then we should go inside and sleep."

He shook his head and slumped his head on her chest.

"Let us remain this way for a bit longer."

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Iro Road High School - Festival Day one -

A deep sigh crossed Yuhi's lips as he carried the signboard in one hand. He thought back to the events of last night and shook his head. What was he doing showing Sumire his weak side like that?

He wondered if she noticed it, otherwise why else would she have agreed to live with him? When he first proposed the idea of Sumire living together with him he insisted it was for her own good. This way she would no longer have to face the nightmares alone. But the other reason was for his sake.

One of his greatest fears is closing his eyes and sleeping. Sleep was the last thing on his mind at the end of the day.

The enveloping darkness only brought him anxious feelings on the future. It reminded him of the bloody memories that plagued his subconsciousness. These memories that he can't move on from and thus trapping him in the past.

He spent countless nights regretting. Yuhi learned that guilt was a double-edged sword. While he could use that time to investigate and hone his skills more, it led to countless sleepless nights. At the start he accepted his situation. He accepted that he could not sleep since his mind told him it was not time to move forward yet.

He would spend the entire night awake, reading through past case files. He read through any material that would lead to him finding the killer and learned to adapt to the world without sleeping. He learned how to make good coffee and he exercised daily to prevent the mental strain, it also helped increase his stamina.

So he could function as a regular member of society, he would take naps during the day. As the years went by he continued living this way until he met her, until he met Ibuki Sumire.

His thoughts broke off when he spotted the woman that occupied his thoughts. She was talking to Aika about something and laughing. For a moment all he could do was stare at her. Why is she so beautiful? Why does he find everything she does endearing? Ever since she returned to his life, she completely messed up his rhythm.

She turned around and their gaze met. Sumire extended her hand out. "Cigarette."

Yuhi blinked before he chuckled. He passed her the packet in his pocket immediately. She looked at the one he was smoking. "Finish that one then no more till later."

"Yes mam." Yuhi joked.

Sumire however wore a serious expression on her face. "As a vocalist you should treasure your voice more. I know there are many vocalists who smoke but--" Yuhi cut her off by hugging her. "Yuhi-san, it seems you are learning how to bribe me."

"Yeah."

Whenever she starts lecturing, the best thing to do is hold her like this. Not only does it calm her down but he also gets something out of this. He felt a pair of soft lips against his neck. "Yuhi." She mumbled.

"Mm?"

"Good morning."

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Over something this normal, Sumire treats it as something special. A simple greeting becomes a sweet moment for them both.

He slept without experiencing any of his nightmares, and Yuhi didn't know if he should hate her for destroying the pattern he built up. Or should he praise her for making him realize how important sleep was?

As long as Sumire stays by his side, he would be able to sleep well. The darkness that would generally appear and haunt him would disappear. Yuhi realized how selfish that was, but he could not help it. After not sleeping for so long for many years, Yuhi wanted something different.

It is not an exaggeration to say that he needs her to sleep now. She has to be beside him; otherwise, he could not rest. It is more comfortable sleeping beside another person.

Yuhi brushed his lips against her ear and played with her hands intertwined with his. "What are we doing today? For lunch?"

They could stay on the school grounds and look around the stalls. But they could also go out of school and eat out somewhere since the teachers on patrol would be distracted.

"Lunch..." Sumire trailed off. "I think we should go around. I haven't been to a festival in a while. I am interested in seeing how different it is."

"Mm, got it."

"Yuhi-san, when will I see your painting?" Sumire suddenly inquired.

He chuckled when he heard her words. "The last day. I haven't brought mine to school yet; the same goes for you, right?" When he passed by the exhibition hall earlier, he did not see her painting among the works there.

"I will bring mine when you do."

Geez, what a helpless girl. Yuhi kissed her forehead softly and mumbled. "Alright, then."

Aika coughed. "You know this is the first time I've witnessed it personally. The famous lovey-dovey couple flirting so boldly in broad daylight."

Sumire sighed. "It is hard these days since Yuhi insists on being a gentleman."

"Eh? That is something..."

Yuhis eyes twitched, annoyed at their words. It is Aika's fault for putting strange things in Sumire's head. In the past, such thoughts would not have crossed Sumire's mind at all.

Yuhi knew that the brunette would continue growing more beautiful as she matured into an adult. But he wasn't expecting such a drastic change. He didn't realize it until seeing the girl's performance. Although he has been around for a while now, he hasn't had many opportunities to observe her properly.

He's been assisting the board and helping out with the preparations for the summer tournaments. His position as the number one idol kept him quite busy, and when he isn't running around constantly, he catches up on well-deserved rest he needed. Although he touched her then and held her in his arms, she was far too sickly the-- but now? These days she seems happier and more cheerful.

When she first came here, her gaze was cold, and maybe that was why he could not see it.

She looks prettier when she smiles.

After a few more words with Aika, Sumire suggested they look around now. She claims that Aika will cover for them.

He likes how she takes the initiative these days to make plans with him.

Every single year, he always received a mysterious gift from someone in the post. Every single year on his birthday, he always gets a present from someone without fail. Without fail, it's always the first one he gets. At first, Yuhi couldn't determine who it was from. After a while, he linked the presents and realized something.

He recalled a conversation he had with someone before. Only one person could have done it, and indeed when he pulled out the draw filled with the girl's gifts from him. All the gifts connected.

Every single year, she does something for him, yet he never gives her anything in return.

If it's this year, even if it's just this year, he wants to be able to return that kindness that she's always shown him.

Now that they are a couple, surely he could do that?

It was difficult for him to enjoy the festival, however. With the current situation anyway. After this festival ends, the new school term will start. They will become third-year students, and Atsuro will come here.

"That guy is right; you do bold things."

Sumire realized what he was talking about instantly since she pulled away. "T--that's because you run slowly..."

Run slowly...

He does karate though; she doesn't think things through when she is nervous, huh? However, he knew that the girl's flustered expression now was barely due to the contact of their hands.

It must have something to do with Atsuro. Yuhi learned from Soujiro that Sumire did decide to call him back. When it came to such matters, it would be childish to brush it off as 'embarrassing'. However, Yuhi never thought about it much before.

Huh? Come to think of it, does that make him childish in contrast to Sumire? You have to look at her to know that she's used to that stuff. Somehow, that thought irked him.

"Yuhi, what is wrong?"

"Hey, that thing you always have with you. Bring it out."

"Oh, you mean this?"

Once he saw the toy hammer, he took it from her, and she proceeded into a stance recalling what happened before.

But Yuhi proceeded to hit himself across with it instead.

"Eh...? H--old on?" The brunette said puzzled, yet he didn't stop himself from hitting himself. "Uwaa, what's gotten into you? Are you finally losing it?"

Says the one who carries this around with her.

Before he could land another hit, Sumire grabbed hold of the hammer. "U--! Even if this is a toy, you'll hurt yourself if you keep that up."

When he saw how concerned she was, Yuhi decided to stop it. "Yeah."

He wanted to clear his head a bit. But it seemed like he would have to use another method there.

Sumire shook her head. "Gee, what's with you? I thought so earlier. But there's something wrong after all isn't there?"

"What makes you say that?"

"Because you had such a spaced-out look on your face...and well, it's a feeling I get..."

A feeling, huh.

That's right, and something was wrong with him. But once again the problem is her. The problem is her, but she clearly doesn't understand that, though. "Do you....like Kusaji?"

His question caught her off guard since she dropped the hammer.

"--- wh---a are you talking about all of a sudden?"

Yuhi doesn't say anything and merely glances over at her, meeting her violet orbs. The brunette notices, and her expression though flustered changed slightly.

"Well I don't dislike Atsuro, I'm sure you can see that. Truthfully speaking, I did use to harbor affections of love towards him. There was such a time when he was all I thought about. However, he turned me down."

Eternal Melody 125 One of the things I like about you

Yuhi couldn't hide his surprise then.

"Kusaji..turned you down?" Yuhi mumbled. So he was right that Sumire liked Atsuro at some point, she asked him out. That thought bothered him, but first, he needs an answer.

"That's right, fufu! I'm not completely lucky when it comes to love, after all, you know. Good looks aren't everything, and just because you're close to a person doesn't mean it will go well."

Though Sumire said that in an oddly cheerful tone, he noticed something was wrong. He sensed the loneliness behind those words.

"He turned me down, and I really was hurt, but I had the other guys with me then in Nanairo feather, and they all helped me out a lot. Because of them all being there for me, I was able to cope with the pain and take a step forward."

With the other guys, she will be okay.

Those were the words he repeated to himself endlessly on the way to the airport that day, and even when he saw the brunette, he believed that to be the case. But thinking it through now, just one person isn't enough. If it's only one person besides her, she will think she is burdening or relying on them too much.

However, if it's loads of people, then it's a different story altogether isn't it? In the end, going to that place was probably better for her.

"What about now?"

Even though she said all that, he knew that it was different now. That matter of being rejected was already the case of the 'past' for the brunette.

"En, that's right...right now, it's slightly different. I said this recently. 'I love Yuhi, I sincerely do. Although people may call him violent and scary, that person is truly gentle. And so very fragile at times, almost like a kid. I feel warm knowing that he needs me. So that's why I feel like I'm doing this for myself. And I feel like Yuhi is the most important to me, too'."

At that comment, his entire face turned red. His cheeks colored embarrassed. What on earth is she going around telling people that for?

Sumire laughed softly. "The other girls were exchanging love stories. So I thought I would talk about you and me."

... Yuhi looked at her dumbfounded. Is it just him, or does she say those words far too easily? It is difficult for her to say love, but she says it without hesitation when it concerns other cheesy lines.

She will always have others...always going to have others who are beside her who aren't him. Yuhi understood that from the very beginning, Sumire does not belong to him alone. But he already made his mind up, Yuhi wrapped his arms around the brunette.

He felt the sound of her heartbeat, thumping just as loud as his.

"As usual, your selfish, huh? But I guess that's why I love you."

He loves her so much,

"Ah..what is this? A confession? Fuuu."

She tried to brush it off as jokey situation again, yet he tightened his hold on her. This time around, he will tell her everything.

"A confession, huh? Or maybe it's atonement. But I will listen to you."

Listen huh?

Yuhi felt several pairs of eyes on them and pulled away. He squeezed Sumire's hands. "Let's go somewhere else."

Sumire nodded.

...

Yuhi found a quiet spot behind the small church on the school grounds. The two of them sat down on the grass, and he sighed in relief. "Sorry about this, we ended up having to run."

"Don't worry about it, and it seems a lot of the visitors are your fans."

Yuhi raised his eyebrow at how casually she said this. Is she not jealous at all? Well, forget it, there are other things he needs to do now. There are more important things to discuss. It should be fine now. When they first saw each other again.

"What I told you almost a month ago now. I am sorry--- that's what I wanted to say. Yet I know it is because of me. Even with everything that has happened, Sumire, you never once hated me. Never once have you looked at me with those scornful eyes." Yuhi paused as he placed

Did you know? I dreamed of holding you like this again—your so close and yet so far away from my reach. Back when we were younger, I pushed you off that cliff because I couldn't believe it. The person you called for so desperately back then wasn't me."

Whenever he thought of what happened then, Yuhi felt very bitter. It was an accident. He did not mean to corner her like that, but it frustrated him when he saw her looking away. He did something unspeakable to her, and yet he still had the nerve to confess a month later.

Sumire sighed. For a moment, she did not say anything other than that causing him to worry. But in the next moment, she rested her head on his shoulders.

"You know, Yuhi, I do love you."

H--huh?

"I mean, I know I said all that stuff at the start, but I have always had feelings for you. Back then, I believed that even if we do meet again, it would only be as rivals on stage. I didn't think of a relationship with you because I did not think it was possible. You were so far from my reach." Sumire trailed off. "Ru, however, scolded me for thinking that way."

Mamoru scolded her? Why would he do that? Sumire did not do anything wrong.

Her gaze softened. "He got mad at me for belittling me. Even if I say that, you would still get mad at Ru for yelling at me, won't you?"

Yuhi looked away. "I know it is stupid of me. But you went through a lot back then. I don't think yelling and criticizing you about your choices will do any good."

"Yuhi, this is one of the things I like about you."

Damn, why does she keep catching him off guard like this? It is not like she is saying anything particularly. But for some reason, his heart is beating loudly, and his entire face is red. Right now, he feels like the biggest fool of all.

"Yuhi, did you drink your face is bright red?" Sumire asked innocently.

"Damn brat, quit teasing me," Yuhi mumbled. Why is she pretending? Of course, she can see the effect her words have on him.

Sumire laughed. "So cute."

Cute? Did she call him cute? Yuhi frowned when he registered these words. It seems like he has to teach her again. This brat won't be calling him cute later.

"Do you want anything to eat? Stay here, and I will get something from the stalls." Yuhi wanted to change the topic quickly.

"Then, I have a few requests."

Eternal Melody 126 Stay with me

Iro Road School Main Building -

Unfortunately for him, it was far too good to be true. One of his teachers heard he was back in school and decided to give him an assignment to complete.

"Terashima finally comes to school, and he's painting rather dark images..."

"Is that the pit of hell?"

"Ssh, don't say anything."

Tsk, it's too late.

He could hear every word they were saying. But they were right; he couldn't concentrate at all. His gaze landed on the canvas in front of him and noticed the bright colors had somehow turned black. Huh? When did that happen?

Yuhi sighs, really what's going on with him?

Ever since what happened the other day, he can't get the image of her crying face out of his head. She is suffering in more ways than one, although he knew that she had been holding herself back this entire time.

When he saw her in that state once again, he didn't know what to do and unexpectedly found himself rather angry and irritated. Dam, what's wrong with him?

A girl like her...someone like her, he already knew that further involving himself with her would end up this way. But now that it has gotten this far, he can't help but be frustrated. The old man said his fate is tied with Sumire. Is it okay for him to hope?

Is it okay for him to take action? Usually, he would be calmer than this. But yesterday and the events as of late had made him start thinking. 'If I don't do anything, won't other guys get to her?'

Does that mean it's okay for him to do the same?

Yuhi left the classroom and headed down to the vending machine area outside. Many students were still outside, and yet it was less noisy than being inside the classroom. Inside there, without her for some reason, it was suffocating.

How annoying, he never used to see their endless bickering and chattering as a bother. So how come it was suddenly bothering him now? He didn't like it at all. Since when did he start noticing matters like that.

Ever since school started, he was well aware that people stayed far and cleared from him. After all, he emits that sort of aura, that aura where there is a huge wall. So he has been left alone and considering his 'genius' status, which pushed people even further away from him.

Yuhi didn't mind that as long as he could paint. He would drown away all the feelings and all the emotions he felt within a single painting.

Back then, he couldn't hear those voices at all.

Yuhi took a deep breath and felt a cool gust of wind brush against his cheeks.

"Exactly what do you want to do with that girl? Many people are curious?" A familiar voice said.

At that comment, he sighed. "Even out here, I can't seem to get any peace, huh?"

"Sorry about that. But I'm your annoying guard for a reason. Irohchan will cry if she finds out your destroying school property."

Yuhi glanced over to find that he had indeed kicked the vending machine.

"You always bring up Iroha in times like this."

"Someone needs to remind you that if you do anything too foolish. Some people will be affected."

"I won't do anything."

Akatsuki sighs. "Usually, I would believe you. But you didn't heed my previous warning and became her partner again. Whether or not the force of love between you two is strong or not. Yuhi, you should understand it. It would be better for you to keep away from that girl. Even if she doesn't have anything to do with the matter directly, it's her fault that person disappeared. That person is no longer here for you, me, or Irohchan. Between her and us, who do you intend to choose?"

Who does he...

A series of memories flashed through his head.

The black hair boy reached over into his blazer pocket and fiddled with the charm she had gotten him. Gee, it's like that after all, huh?

His answer has changed, huh?

It's different than how it was before. His expression gave it away since Akatsuki panicked.

Akatsuki shook his head. "Yuhi, you can't be serious. Getting involved with her is"

But his sentence fell short by the sound of his phone ringing. The black hair boy pulled it out, only to see the message on his phone and placed his hand covering his mouth, trying to hide his expression.

"Shin, you said something to Sumire, didn't you?"

Shin emerged from behind the pillar. "Only that you have a terrible personality. But you have a kind enough heart when you want. And so? Answer your friend here?"

"Sorry, Akatsuki, the Princess is waiting for me. I'm out."

It's not like he doesn't understand why Akatsuki is behaving that way. But, Yuhi disliked it when people thought badly of Sumire. 'Even if my friends tell me to stay away from her, I won't do it.'

—

She didn't intend to fall in love.

That's how it was supposed to be. As a member of the elite - such rules were drilled into her head from a very young age. That she wasn't supposed to fall in love, she should treat marriage as a political matter.

Due to the circumstances, Sumire never got a chance to ask either of her parents if they loved each other. Whenever her parents appeared in public, they looked like the perfect couple. But now that she thought of it was it not only for show? She can't be too sure, and now she doesn't have anyone to ask.

The brown-haired girl kicks the stone in her feet to a nearby curb. In the end, exactly why did she submit to such an emotion?

She closed her eyes. For a moment, she didn't think about anything, particularly, but then his face came to mind. That person's color was so very pretty and to her, for her, whose world is monotone. She didn't understand why that person seemed to be so very bright—a gorgeous red.

Perhaps it was fate.

After all, despite being a member of the high elite. She rejected it, she ejected the lifestyle and didn't want to live like that. Even now, it's the same; she doesn't want to be bound by any rules. She wonders if that's the reason she fell in love. Is it because she wanted to rebel? If so, then it is quite amusing.

'It may be the country's wish for you to remain ignorant. Defer to their will and think of that as for being the sake of your country, and I'm sure they will be happy.'

In the end, she couldn't do that.

To her, it may have started to become important despite how empty and fleeting her days were. When she met that person, she desired it. She desired the strength to be able to protect the others around her.

If she ended up failing at becoming stronger, then perhaps things may not have ended up this way. Indeed it may have been different.

But now that it has.... -- her thoughts broke off when she saw a motorbike parked in front of her. She didn't notice the person getting off until he was directly in front of her.

He placed his hand on her eyes. "You're troublesome. How many times do you have to cry?"

Her eyes widened at his words.

"I don't want to hear that from the person who was stalking. You can't justify yourself now, Mr. Stalker-san."

Yuhi took a deep breath. "Sumire."

Sumire slumped her head on his back. "Sorry, but just for a few minutes, stay with me."

Eternal Melody 127 Being Illogical

Nearby their school was a small beach. Or rather, it was directly opposite. Yuhi suggested that they go there to relax.

Once they arrived at the beach, Sumire took her shoes off and walked towards the ocean. She let the coolness of the sea brush against her feet. "This feels great! Yuhi, you should also ----"

Her sentence fell short when she felt the black hair boy grab hold of her hand.

'Such a warm hand despite a black flame.'

"...Ah, I didn't know you were bold...that's quite an unpleasant thought." She changed her words halfway when she saw the look in his eyes.

Why does he look so serious? Did she do something wrong?

"Sumire, are you hiding something from me?"

He is direct, huh? But she supposed that was one of his rather good quality traits.

"Hey, aren't you going to let go of my hand? If people see us like this, they will misunderstand. It's not too far from school, and I know people pass by this way." Sumire did not reply to his question and said something else.

Sumire tried to tease him like usual, but her cheeks colored when she saw how serious he looked.

"Yeah, I am aware. That's why I am doing it."

At that comment, her violet-colored eyes widened.

"I already told you before, did I not? Back then, I told you not to act like your life based on a script. Since many unexpected things occur."

Sumire nodded. "Yes, you told me that you would write your ending."

"Yeah, that's right. Even now, that hasn't changed. No, perhaps there's been alterations. I also want to write a part of your ending, even if it doesn't match mine." Yuhi said.

Yuhi closed the distance between them. He lowered his face until their lips touched. He didn't kiss her, yet he nibbled on her lip - almost as if he was trying to savor it.

Yuhi quickly let go of her and scratched the back of his head again. His entire face beat red. She usually would savor his embarrassed looking face, but right now, she couldn't.

"W--hat was that for?" Sumire stuttered.

"Being illogical..."

At that remark, her eyes widened. Isn't he the idiot here? She took a step forward and rested her head against his chest. "Yuhi's color is warm. Even now, I think so."

He suddenly flicked her forehead. "You really do have to be more careful. Next time I'll attack you."

"I don't mind."

Yuhi looked at her dumbfounded. "Sumire, has anybody ever told you that you're too straight forward?"

"Is that wrong?"

"No, but..." Yuhi sighed. "This is a problem."

A problem?

He doesn't say anything but lightly kissed her lips again. "If this makes you nervous, I guess we need to practice more."

Practice?

"Okay." She trailed off. "After the festival, I have to attend a few gatherings with Soujiro. Do you mind?"

"I see another souriee. Man, you guys have to keep appearances."

At that, she chuckled. "It clearly won't fit your sort of personality, right?"

"You got that right."

Sumire realized that Yuhi laced their hands with each other again, as they walked across the ocean. They were pretty far away, huh. Even so, his hand it's different than the time they came before. He was holding her wrist then, and now it's her hand.

No matter how close they got to each other, Yuhi always ensured that there was a distance. But now that is different; he is firmly holding onto her hand like he doesn't want to let her go.

This back and this sight somehow it's familiar. Where did she see it before?

It does seem nostalgic...? Did something like this happen before? If so, then how come she doesn't remember.

"Hey."

"Hmm?" Sumire said.

"You heard that I'm in charge of the major paintings, right? For our final year."

"Ah yeah." Though it had been a while since she had been in school, that much she did here. "Everyone was making a big deal out of it. I saw your previous works too. I know that if it's you, it will be amazing."

That's right.

Since already figured it out a long time ago, who owned that painting. Even before she saw him paint, Sumire got the same feeling as from that painting when she saw him again. It was then when she thought. 'Ah, coincidences do exist.'

Yet even now, she kept quiet. If he were to know, if Yuhi were to know, then he would surely disappear again. For some reason, she didn't want that.

She didn't want anyone else to leave.

"That is I was thinking, would you like to paint it together?" Yuhi offered.

Eh?

"Does that mean...."

"Be my partner," Yuhi said.

It was just three words, and yet it felt so powerful. Sumire was about to reply when she noticed his entire face turned red up to his ears. Oh, it's cute. He is usually a person who gives off Yankee's appearance and aura even without any piercings or anything.

Someone who gives off a distant aura. That's why such an expression is.....

Sumire shook her head, no. There is already no more means of....keeping such feelings.

It's different now; right now, he is the closest person to her.

"Sumire?"

"I would love to be your partner. Please take care of me!"

Yuhi brushed his hands across her forehead. "We shouldn't stay in the water for too long, and you might get a fever."

Sumire nodded, and the two of them quickly left the ocean.

Despite what it looked like, she wasn't a person who believed in fate. She didn't disregard it to a complete degree like some people do by saying 'it's make-belief,' or a figment of a person's imaginations.

But she couldn't believe it since it held no meaning to her, and that's why it isn't important. However, from the very beginning, she never got attached to anything or anyone.

From the very start, she was empty, and that's why she unconsciously found a wall around her and others. Sumire reached over and extended her free hand out to the sky.

Even though things are different now, then they are before. 'I have accepted it to a degree ..about needing others.'

But she understood that her core views still haven't changed. No matter how many times she gets shaken up or amazed by someone's actions. In the end, it will always revolt back to this.

'It's your color. Ru, have I gotten stronger now? Is it truly okay for me to take hold of this power and take another step forward? On days where I am left alone, I still think about this.'

Still, her gaze fell on Yuhi beside her. She isn't alone anymore.

Eternal Melody 128 The Most Beautiful Colour

Sumire was surprised when she entered the hall filled with paintings. No, not just paintings but different works. Sculptures and any form of art.

'I like you.'

'To reach you and stay by your side. I accepted the director's offer. I understand that he probably holds a form of dislike against me, and that's understandable. By accepting this challenge, I could more or less understand why he did it to taunt me. To isolate me. Either way, it's because I do like you that I can do this. It's lonely now, but be patient, because of that you have to paint your world.'

She already made her mind up. That's right, to be able to catch up to him - to have the right to be by his side. She will paint, paint the colors of her world that have grown even brighter ever since meeting him.

'Ru, in the end, it's because of you that the colors in her world became so bright. That is something I will never forget.

It is because of Ru that she no longer saw a monotone world. However, the one who initiated and made those bright colors in my world is indeed without a doubt, Yuhi.' Sumire thought.

'But I see now you have that sort of feeling. That's why I want to draw with you. Your pain, your joy. Instead of telling them with word. You're showing them through your drawings. Usually, such miracles are impossible. But I know you can do it'.

That's right; it was that simple. There was no need for her to cry, nor for her to grief so much that it showed on her face.

There wasn't any need for something like that at all. The things she can't say or express, she can do so in her painting.

The words she normally expressed through her songs, there is another way.

Her thoughts broke off when Aika patted her shoulder. "Impressed?"

"Very." Sumire nodded. "This is certainly an art's specialized school.

Aika laughed. "Well, we haven't seen Yuhi's stuff yet. That's when you will be amazed."

"Ah, there you are, Sumire-chan." A cheerful voice said.

"Asami-san."

"Where's your painting?"

"Actually---" Her sentence fell short when she heard her phone beep.

From: Atushi

We brought your painting. Aren't we nice?

Her eyes twitched, annoyed.

—

"You managed it on time. We were starting to worry." Akatsuki said as he placed his painting in the center of the room. Guess this spot should do. From the corner of his eye, he could spot several other works most likely from the third years.

"Right right, let's send a picture for Touko-san..."

However, the black hair boy extended his hand forward and snatched the phone.

Akatsuki looked puzzled. "What?"

Yuhi sighs. "Don't. Touko doesn't need to see it."

Akatsuki seemed rather flustered. "What? That's strange. You've always...always shown your pieces to Touko-san even after your break up."

That's true. For a while, he still kept doing that. He did it to spite her, to show her what she lost. But Yuhi realized that there was no need to do that since he has already gained something precious.

"It doesn't matter anymore.!

Before Akatsuki could make another retort, though, they were disturbed by several voices. Only to find several individuals cloaked in red carrying a huge canvas, "

"Alright, now you guys. Settle it opposite Yuhi's." Atushi directed.

Is that Sumire's painting ---?

So she had Atushi, and the other guys carry it. Did that mean it was at the bar before? How could he have missed that?

Once the guys settled it down, his eyes went widened. This usage of colors is... However, he didn't have much time to admire the painting since the brunette hair girl showed up.

"Guys! Don't just take my painting without permission."

"Hmm? What's wrong. It's finished anyway." Atushi said nonchalantly.

"That is beside the point ---!" Sumire exclaimed. Their gaze interlocked with each other then. "Yuhi...."

"It seems like you made it."

"Well, I wanted to be late, but I guess not. That aside, what about your painting?"

It was when she said those he found a grin creep up onto his face. He pointed to the large canvas opposite. "My painting is over there."

Yuhi watches his girlfriend's reaction and finds it quite amusing; she's really stunned, huh?

Yuhi understood her thoughts. Even he is surprised that he could paint with such a bright and vibrant painting. It isn't like him at all. It seems like she has influenced him in this short amount of time.

"Amazing, what is this? The bright light from Sumire-chan's painting reflects down on your road of stars. The two paintings connect." Akatsuki said beside him, completely stunned.

Heh.

"I think when two people are in complete harmony, this happens naturally. I mean, I'm sure us dating helps, but we've always shared a beautiful connection."

Yuhi said that intentionally loud so that the film crew who was nearby would overhear. In an instant, they surrounded the brunette.

"Err, excuse me. I am from a monthly arts magazine. Your Terashima Yuhi's partner and girlfriend, right? Could we take a picture of you two together?" The reporters said with a glint in her eyes.

"Sumire looked completely puzzled, "Huh? Em...that's..."

He chuckled at his girlfriend's reaction and walked over. He looped his arm across the girl's shoulder. "It's alright, come on smile."

Sumire shyly covered her face, but she whispered something in his ear. "Thank you, Yuhi-san."

A single word and yet it contained so many powerful emotions. "Thank you, huh?"

Although he had completed the painting, Yuhi still wasn't satisfied with it. Even to the very end. However, he realized something in the process; of course, it's normal not to be satisfied.

After all, it's only 'half' the painting. It will only come to life when their work is together. But the black hair boy didn't realize it would be like this.

Heh, she continues to amaze him. His gaze landed on his best friend, who shook his head and yet still snapped a photo. He supposed it couldn't be helped on that department; those two were always good friends. By those two, he meant Touko and Akatsuki.

Yuhi understood why his friend would be dissatisfied, but he cares about Sumire more.

Well, even if Akatsuki doesn't take a photo. The reporters will write an article about it.

Touko huh? He will eventually have to tell Sumire the full story eventually. But for now, there is no need for that.

It seems to be that way. The most beautiful color only shows up when she is around.

Only when he is together with her does this hollow feeling disappear.

Eternal Melody 129 Smile more

Three hours later

Yuhi stood in front of the painting deep in thought.

"Yuhi?"

Yuhi glanced over at the door and saw Sumire standing by the door. "Hey, how was it?"

"Mm, the rest of the events went smoothly. I thought I didn't see you, you were here this entire time?"

He nodded. "Yeah. I was looking at your painting again."

Her gaze softened at his words and she walked over. "I guess that means you like it?"

"How did you come up with this painting?"

"What I want to convey to everyone today, is - 'my brilliant days'. Ever since coming here to TOKYO, certainly a lot has happened and I never imagined that it would turn out like this. You should all know about it, yes i am nanairo feather's composer. Even now that is still the case. I didn't want to leave them behind, since those people are so very important and dear to me. Its because of all of them that I was able to regain my smile and the reason why I made it this far. Even now. Even though were far apart I've always kept them so very close to my heart.

Although our paths are separated now I'm sure the day will come when we will all truly come together again on the same road. Since coming to TOKYO, I've met so many people and everything's changed so drastically in my life. At one point I was on the verge of giving up, but there has always been someone who's been there for me no matter what. My brilliant days started after I met this person again."

His lips curve to a smile. "Is that part about me?"

Sumire laughed softly. "Of course it is."

"Heh, it seems like you are getting better at flattery."

She buried her face in his arms suddenly. "What's wrong? Do you feel sick?"

"No, I am happy. Thank you so much Yuhi. You know I was traumatized due to the accident, I felt like an empty shell. I no longer saw the point in living, all my hopes and dreams - all of it was meaningless. But since I came here, slowly I have gotten better. It is still painful but now..."

"Now you can smile more." Yuhi interjected.

At that comment he caressed her hair and heard a content sigh pass her lips. "Its okay isnt it? For me to continue dating you?"

"Were you worried?"

"Mmm, a little. Even though I liked you since back then. I felt guilty towards Ru."

Indeed, Mamoru's accident happened in december. It is only April, only a short amount of time has passed. It is only natural to worry. "That article and the picture, sorry I didn't ask you."

Sumire shook her head. "No. I think it is about time anyway. We wont be able to hide it for long. This way we can at least control the situation."

"A couple of geniuses." Yuhi nodded. "It sounds perfect huh?" A young genius art couple. It is a story that would interest anybody. The reporter took a good picture of the paintings too. This is more effective than holding a press conference.

Due to their identities Yuhi knew that they would still need to hold one. But for now this is enough. People will talk and they will be the center of attention for a while. Yet his gaze fell on Sumire who was resting her head in his arms. She looked so content and at ease. He won't let anybody take away the smile that he took so long to bring back.

Yuhi lifted her head and cupped her cheeks. Lately it seems like he has developed a bad habit of staring at her like this. Not that it was any better before but it seems like it has gotten a lot worse now.

Not too long after he did this, Yuhi noticed that her cheeks slowly turned red.

It really is a rare sight seeing her flustered like this.

Though Sumire is the type who ends up flustered with just a bit of teasing. This is the first time he saw her behave this way toward him. After all, whenever they do anything intimate, she remains calm despite the initial embarrassment. That sort of expression with that look in her eyes.

It is so very empty every single time. It frustrated him, even though they are so close to each other. There always seems to be a wall between them. Ah, those walls aren't the ones being put up by her. In fact they belong to him, it isn't her fault. It's his, because he is still afraid to truly become close to anyone.

He spent so many years alone and without anybody by his side.

'I got used to living a solidarity life style.'

These walls around him are tall, dark and cold. They surround him everyday and act as a barrier. Almost like he is a fragile object.

He spends so many years adding more bricks to walls to make it stronger. He does this every few months to ensure that things do not fall under the same routine as before. He longer wants to return to those days where people stepped over him and treated him like dirt.

Despite that, somewhere deep down, Yuhi waited for that one person to come; that one person who is willing to not only break the walls around him. But to climb high enough so that they can jump over the walls and stay inside with him.

Depending on who that person is, maybe he would lower the walls just for them.

But he never expected that person to show up.

"Say Sumire, what is with you and Hino recently?"

Yuhi noticed that something seems to have changed between them. At first Yuhi did not think much of the two interacting. It was a good thing for him if the two got along. He didn't see anything specific that would tie Hino to Sumire, the thread was weak. Even weaker than Shins...so he didn't think much of it. But when he checked again, when he checked once more there was something different. It's not as though it was weak, it was just hidden away - it is a different colour.

"Were friends." Sumire immediately answered.

It was the reply he expected to hear and yet at the same time, her response made him feel uneasy.

Friends huh? Friends, would take her away and almost exposing her identity. They would hug, no kiss on the forehead. Right, it seems like he has underestimated friendships these days. "Like hell will I believe that."

At that comment her gaze softens. "You don't have to be jealous, there really is nothing but between us. He's the same as everyone else."

Ah, if she is trying to reassure someone she shouldn't say it like that.

Though the truth was he already knew that too. That no matter how close those two get, as long as Sumire herself cannot accept others truly. No, she's accepted them now - it's different then before and she at least accepts people now. But getting close...and seeing the difference between 'belonging' and 'Love' is something she still doesn't understand. It will still take time huh.

"...somehow that annoys me, you really do like to push my buttons.

Sumire chuckles. "I'm sorry, but aren't I just sticking to my convictions?"

Really, she's unbelievably stubborn.

Eternal Melody 130 Viral overnight

Overnight the news went viral.

It seems like even before the reporter could publish the article. The people who visited the festival and saw what happened took videos.

People could not contain their excitement when they saw the news.

The first piece of news about the newly debuted idol, with her famous debut song superstar of tomorrow.

"Holy...is that really her?"

"Pictures can be photoshopped."

"Dofus, there are videos."

The netizens were in a frenzy; they couldn't believe it. But seeing her aside.

"She has a new boyfriend already?"

Many people pointed this out and expressed their dissatisfaction.

"Who is it?"

"T--Terashima Yuhi?!!!"

This single comment caused an uproar. It seemed like when people first saw the news; they did not recognize Yuhi. That made sense, while Yuhi is a public figure, he is also a master of disguise. It would be easy for him to blend in with a normal crowd.

"I was just about to criticize her. But do I dare? It's Terashima Yuhi of all people... If it were somebody else, then we could call her out for being fickle. But everybody knows how serious the man is about relationships."

"Is the poster above stupid? Who cares who it is? Isn't she supposed to be grieving? Yet look at her."

"Aren't you the stupid one? There were eye witness accounts seeing her have a mental break down after the accident?"

"Who knows if that was faked or not?"

This argument went back and forth until somebody posted several videos.

There were even some hospital admission clips.

This single anonymous user shut people up in just seconds.

"Poor Sumire-sama."

"She already went through something terrible. What is wrong with her finding happiness now?"

"Right, right. Terashima seems to be different than the rumors too. But then again, there are rumors about him being serious when it comes to relationships."

"They look sweet together, but is this for real? Terashima Yuhi is no normal guy. He is the youngest person to debut, and from that very young age, he earned the title of a musical genius. Singing, composing, dancing, you name it. But his talent isn't limited to alone. He is a prominent figure in the business world and art world too."

"Holy-- now that you mention that, how did these two get together? How did they meet?"

Many people started to speculate how Sumire and Yuhi met one another. Some commented that they met through some gatherings or maybe during a concert. Nobody would have guessed the real story, that they knew each other since they were children.

"I've silently listened to all these comments. But are we going to ignore the fact that she looks okay now? Why isn't she returning to work? I was one of the people who stood up for her when others said she was faking her trauma. But I have to say, is this not unprofessional of her? If she is well enough to participate in a festival, should she not be okay to return to the stage?"

I would understand if she is retiring and no longer wants to go back. But if that were the case, then could we please have a reasonable explanation? Her silence does not look good on her at all. Please explain to your fans your decision. We were all worried sick about you.

If you decide in your heart that you can no longer sing, that is fine. We will support you, no matter what. But please say something, say anything."

Normally when somebody sees a large piece of text on a forum or online board, it would get ignored and buried away quickly. People were commenting rather quickly too, and yet this comment slowly became the top liked.

"I agree, please Sumire-sama say something about this."

"We will wait for you."

"What trauma? All of your fans are so blind. That was acting, and anyone can fake records. The real story is simple; she went on hiatus to find herself a rich man. She probably had a dispute with her poor boyfriend that led to the accident so she could hook up with Yuhi-sama."

.....

While the netizens were in a frenzy, a particular entertainment company was receiving many phone calls. Since Sumire did not contact her agency, their side did not understand the situation either. Hino just finished speaking to the president and sighed.

Damn Yuhi...

I knew I should have gone to the festival too.

Unfortunately, he did not have the luxury to attend due to his schedule. Who would have thought something like this would have happened? This brat, right after they had a conversation about this. The issue with Sumire is a tricky one. If she were any other artist, they could hold a simple press conference. But she isn't an average artist.

Hino sighed deeply as he dialed Yuhis number.

To his surprise, he hears a female voice. "Sumire?"

"Ah, sorry, Hino-san, but Yuhi is sleeping now."

"...did you see the news?"

Sumire laughed. "The netizens are as impatient as ever."

"This situation, what do you want to do?" Hino initially wanted to hear Yuhi's opinion on this. But from what he learned from Sumire before. The girl would not have allowed that reporter to take a picture. She must have approved of it.

"I will come out with a statement and explain. A conference, I am still not sure about. But could we post the statement on your site?"

Hino nodded. "That sounds good for now. Besides, the reaction is only like this now because nobody has seen the article yet; once they have, I am sure the public opinion would reverse." He paused before taking a deep breath. "Sumire, do you remember what I said before about joining my company?"

"Mm, I remember."

"I know you never terminated your contract with Star company. But I think you should start looking at other options."

"Are you worried about me?"

Hino almost dropped the phone in his hands once he heard that. He did not understand why he was behaving so strangely.

"Thank you for worrying. But I will be fine. I have Yuhi."

Is that her way of indirectly refusing his help? Hino understood from the very start that Sumire is not the type of person who trusted people easily. But he felt a bit hurt that she did not trust him despite everything that has happened between them.