

Melody 151

Eternal Melody 151 How do I make you mine?

Yuhi suddenly cupped her cheeks. "So what I am saying is, it's because of you that I came this far. You told me something honestly without holding anything back." He trailed off. "I don't need to search for a place to belong anymore. I don't know of a better place than here with you. I want you so badly. I realized it after the first time I touched you. I no longer want to let you out of my sight. I want to possess you completely. But until you settle your feelings, I won't do anything."

Will he wait until she settles her feelings? But that might take a long time. Can he really hold back and wait until then? What if he gets tired of waiting? She is afraid of that scenario, what if he leaves halfway? What if he leaves when she is getting attached to him? She is so scared. But Sumire looked up and met Yuhi's gentle gaze.

It seems like she can't dislike this person. No matter what she does, she ends up getting attached to him. Yuhi lowered his face and brushed his lips against hers.

"But I will do things like this occasionally. Mm, open your mouth a bit Sumire."

She listened to him, and she felt his tongue intertwined in hers. But it was only a brief kiss. Yuhi cherishes her so much, and yet she can't do anything to repay his kindness. "Yuhi..."

"Do you like kissing Sumire?"

Uhh--? Sumire looked at him, puzzled. What is with this strange question? "Just if you liked kissing, we could do it more."

Why is he even asking her about this?

"Do we really have to discuss this?"

YUhi blinked when he heard her words. "Is there something wrong with discussing it? I thought it would be fine...Why are you getting flustered?"

Does he not understand why she is getting flustered?

"Seriously, how should I make you mine?"

Sumire pulled away from him. "I will be honest with you, Yuhi-san. I don't understand that stuff well. I know we did it twice, but it still feels foreign. I am fine with what we have now. I love you, and I am your girlfriend..." She trailed off. "I guess we do have to do it.."

"You seem reluctant, that doesn't make me happy."

"Uhh, sorry."

Yuhi sighed. "Well, this is fine; you look adorable." He slammed his hand against the wall behind her trapping her in the process. "So you want to learn about things you don't know? I mean, that is how I interpreted your words. You need to learn since you don't understand."

"I suppose."

"I wonder why I want you so much, Sumire. How far will these feelings grow? Do you want to know or no?"

"I want to know..." Sumire mumbled.

Yuhi kissed her again and intertwined their hands together. Oh, what is this feeling? She feels like crying again.

Is this how it feels to be loved and treasured by somebody? Ru, she didn't know love could be like this. But it is exactly like what he said. He told her if it was Yuhi, she would not have to worry about anything.

She does not understand. Her mind is becoming fuzzy due to the intense feeling of his lips on hers.

He is kissing her so passionately. Sumire refrained from repeating his name over and over.

"You smell like flowers. But I guess that's normal, you're just like a flower."

"Such a teas--" Her sentence fell short when Yuhi bent down and kissed her neck.

It is no good; she is so happy right now. The places he touches her burns with a sensation she does not understand. It does not make sense to her, but she does like it, that is the one thing that makes sense to her. The more Yuhi does this to her, the more she wants something. She wants him to do something else.

I want him to hold me again...

Sumire quickly realized what was happening and kicked him away. "This is enough!"

"Ouch...Ouch, I should have known. A kick right at my stomach."

She looked over-worried, but Yuhi shook his head. "It's fine, but well now you understand. Its that sort of mood."

Ah, does he feel bad about the first two times? Indeed it wasn't exactly romantic or anything. But Sumire did not mind it; she does not dislike him touching her. While she reacted violently against other men, it was different with Yuhi.

When she realized this, Sumire became even more curious about him. How come it is okay with him? What makes him so different? Is it okay for her to learn the answer to that question?

"A little."

Yuhi gently kissed her forehead. "That's fine for now."

There is one thing she understands very well. Yuhi is very warm. The sensation of his lips aside and his hands. She could not forget the sensation of his body pressed against her own. So peculiar, that feeling from earlier.

Sumire wrapped her arms around him from the back and hugged him. "I will keep trying."

"Well, I look forward to it, before that could you get changed? You're driving me crazy."

She bursts into laughter then. "I thought so since earlier you were acting weird."

"If you knew, don't wear things like this." Yuhi trailed off and placed his hand on his face. "You know you don't have to try too hard, at least not there... I mean please stop it—"

Sumire looked at him, puzzled. Yuhi seemed to be murmuring something in English. Did she do something weird? His behavior seems strange right now. Still, she truly wants to learn things about him. At the start, when she accepted his hand, she did not have such thoughts.

It was difficult for her to adjust, holding hands, hugging, and doing anything with someone who wasn't Mamoru. But it did not take her too long to adapt.

"Yuhi-san, I want to do some bad things."

Yuhi turned around and sighed deeply. He extended his hand out, and she closed her eyes. But after waiting for a few minutes, she noticed that he only pulled her down and wrapped a blanket around her. "I will carry you to the bed later, but for now, rest."

Her gaze softened, and she giggled. "I am not used to somebody pampering me this much."

"It seems like you will have to learn then. I am good at spoiling people."

At that comment, her eyes twitched, annoyed. Is he talking about his past experiences? He ruined the mood completely—her thoughts broke off when Yuhi burst into laughter. Sumire immediately understood, and she hits his chest with her hands.

"Don't tease me!"

"It was too good of an opportunity to pass on. But your right; there is no need for me to do that."

She wants to learn more. But she wonders if it is possible for her to do that when she is still so broken?

Eternal Melody 152 Opening Ceremony

Iro Road High School - Opening Ceremony -

The third years had their ceremony earlier, so this current reception was for the new students. Sumire looked around the place in a daze. It still felt a bit weird to her. She only just came to this school, but she would eventually have to say goodbye to everybody. This is a nice place; it is a shame that she found out about it too late.

'If I attended this school from the start, would something have changed?'

The people here and the environment is good for her. While there are the usual issues like jealous girls, she does not feel suffocated in this place. Is it because there is less pressure on her here?

Feeling warmth lingers on her hands, she notices that Yuhi brushed them deliberately when he picked up the box. Sumire blinked, but before she could react, he was already walking over to the other end of the hallway.

Before the first years finished with the opening ceremony, they had to finish clearing up the classrooms for unnecessary stuff and replace the equipment. The principal picked some people to display their artwork, of course, that included her and Yuhi.

The painting Yuhi picked was his recent festival piece. Even though Yuhi has many outstanding paintings from the past two years, he still chose the recent one. She only just came to this school, so she had nothing else other than the festival piece.

Is he trying to flirt with her? A hum escaped her lips at that thought. It seems like they both have the same idea. She picked up one of the boxes and walked over to the other end of the hall. Yuhi was helping somebody set up his work.

She slumped her head on his back.

"You alright?" Yuhi turned around.

"Ah-huh."

The warmth of his hand, he's so kind. "Didn't want to disturb you and Shin, but I was watching you. If you still feel bad, rest,

Sumire nodded. She buries her face on his chest, and Kiryu's hands, his strong, large hands that hold her so lovingly was once again caressing her hair gently.

"If you need anything, just say it. Anything, I'll give it to you."

Ah.

"What about you, Yuhi?"

"You already gave me enough, the other day."

The other day, 'ore, you want more? Thank you.' C--come to think of it, she behaved quite boldly. What was with that nightgown? Aika suggested that she wore it, but she did not have to agree. Sumire deeply sighed. She was the one who intended to seduce and tease Yuhi, but in the end, he got the upper hand. She does not understand how that man takes advantage of her every single time.

"So, let me do something for you today."

"Give yourself to me?"

"... you, really are killing me."

Sumire tilted her head confused, but Yuhi was already dragging her down the hallway. Yuhi stopped once they reached the back of the staircase, he pushed her against the wall. Soon his lips fell on hers. He kissed her so passionately and ran his hands through her back.

"Yu--" Her sentence fell short when he nibbled her bottom lip. What is he trying to do now?

"I'll do what you say. So, stop being cute just for a few minutes. It's getting dangerous."

Cute? But she didn't do anything? Sure since earlier, she stared at him a few times. However, that was all she did. "Yuhi-san--"

"This is nice; you're so soft."

Uwaaaaahhhh! Woaaaaahhh? Dangerous, this is dangerous...

"Mmmm, it's nice that you switched to the spring uniform before leaving."

"N--nice for who?"

"I wonder, this benefits us both after all," Yuhi muttered as he licked her earlobe. A soft moan passed her lips. "Mm, you really are tasty today."

"We have to work."

"They won't miss us if I'm quick."

That's true.

"Sumire, do you want this?"

She shyly nods, and Yuhi laughed. She does still feel embarrassed, but since the other day, it felt like something has changed.

The remaining space completely vanished.

Hearing him chuckle against her ear, she hits him lightly. Or at least she was supposed to; he grabs her hands and kisses between her fingers.

Thump, thump. Sumire felt the rapid sound of her heartbeat.

"I like it when your nervous," Yuhi admitted. "I don't mind if you are always like this. Sure I like your confident self, but it makes me want you more when you are like this."

"That's a weird fetish Yuhi."

Isn't he going to stop kissing her fingers? It feels weird... Her heart is already beating so loudly. But, indeed, she doesn't want him to stop. Before Yuhi could do anything else, something comes flying in their direction and hits his head.

"Ouch..."

Uh... Sumire looked at the large book that fell on the ground. She glanced over and saw an angry looking Asami.

"Inside. Work."

Yuhi exhaled deeply. "Can't you see you are interrupting something?"

Asami glared, and Yuhi immediately pulled away.

"Alright, alright. Sheesh."

He quickly fixes her clothes up.

"We'll have to continue this later."

Sumire nodded. The places he touched just now still feels hot.

Yuhi mumbled against his ear. "Music building, room 555. One of the practice roomsu003e"

"Y--yes."

He hugs her for a good five minutes. Yuhi patted her head and told her to be good. He dropped his coat around her and left.

She wanted to go with him but when she saw her friend walk in the opposite direction. Sumire understood that she had to follow.

This was the first time she saw Asami get mad like this. But then again, since earlier, Sumire noted how serious the girl seemed. She thought it was just her imagination at first, but just now she saw it.

"Asami-san, are you frustrated about something?" Sumire asked.

She still isn't close enough with her to tell. Despite the girl's friendly approach, Sumire felt closer to Aika.

At that comment, the girl turned around with a tearful expression. "You have to help me."

Eternal Melody 153 The Red Queen Theory Part 1

Meanwhile back with Yuhi. He was amid having a serious discussion with Shin.

"Thanks for doing this, I know it's risky for you."

Shin shook his head, "It's fine. Or rather since I snuck those documents successfully. He probably wanted me to bring them to you. Even with my skills, I wouldn't have been able to hack without him noticing."

"I know."

From the moment Yuhi first met him, he got that sort of impression from that guy. It was the same as him, the same vibe. Whenever that guy looked at Sumire, he likes her, but it's not just that. Shin willing to risk so much for her sake, a feeling that resembles the one he has for her. But the methods are different. That must be why Sumire acts like that towards him.

"Still, it's rare for you to admit someone is better than you at hacking."

"Please, even I know there are many better people, and it's easy to admit defeat when you see a better candidate."

Yuhi senses the meaning behind Shin's words and puts the documents away. He takes out two cigarettes and extends one towards his friend; Shin murmurs something about having quit. But after a few seconds, he takes one and Yuhi lit alongside his. The two leaned on the wall.

"That guy Atushi introduced to Mina?"

Shin nodded. "When she told me that day during the historical park opening, she was frantically exclaiming. She didn't want me to misunderstand. But at the same time, she told me that guy asked her out."

"Well, isn't it a good sign that she told you?"

"I think so too when I asked her how she met him. She told me that it was Eijiro's friend, that's when I realized there was an issue."

"Atsuro isn't any better at you at romance."

"But, he's always cared for Sumire. That's the one thing that has always been transparent about him. Even though he moved out and barely has contact with his parents."

Yuhi sighed. "When is he coming?"

"A week or so. It could be longer, but he will come here."

A complicated look appeared on his face when he heard those words. It's not like he does not understand. "I spoke to Sumire about Atsuro, and she told me that she might have liked him before. But it was a fleeting feeling that she crushed before it became too big."

"That doesn't sound reassuring."

"Yeah." Yuhi trailed off and recalled her expression. "But I think this answer is better than nothing." If it were the past Sumire, she would have brushed aside that question and looked at him with those cold eyes.

"Did she tell you what happened the other day?" Shin asked.

"No, I wanted to ask you since she wouldn't give me the details. But is it regarding what you were doing for Mamoru?"

"Yes." Shin trailed off. "Yuhi, you heard about those mysterious disappearances, right?"

"The one where people got teleported to another world that resembles this one?"

Shin nodded. "That's the one. Mamoru was investigating that case in detail. The day before he got into the accident, he met with those people."

At that comment, he frowned. "That's--"

"We still aren't sure. But surely something must have happened."

It would be far too easy to conclude that those people did something to Mamoru. Besides, "You came with him?"

"I did since he wanted a third opinion. They mainly discussed rather scientific things, so I did not find anything unusual about it. But there was a time where I stepped out to answer a call. When I returned, the atmosphere seemed tense."

"How long did you leave for?"

"Fifteen minutes."

Not a long time or is it? At that time, Mamoru could have changed the topic altogether. Something about this bothers him, though. It is unlike that person to get so involved in something like this. When he joined the underworld society, Yuhi noticed that Tsueno Mamoru did not actively get involved. Nobody could tell if he was a member or not, with how he went in and out of the organization so freely.

Yuhi paused when something came to mind. The only time Mamoru got involved in something this large was when Sumire was concerned. Does it have something to do with her?

That guy was the reckless type, but he was, without a doubt, a genius. Yuhi doubted that somebody like that would do something like this without reason. If everything happens for a reason, then Tsueno Mamoru investigated this case for a good cause.

"Let me get involved."

It seems like Sumire will concern herself with this more from now on.

Shin sighed and pulled something out of his bag. "Take this."

Yuhi raised his eyebrows. "Aren't you too prepared?"

"Read it first and then give it to her."

He opened the folder and pulled out some documents. Something caught his eye immediately. "The red queen hypothesis?"

"Do you know what it is?"

"Something to do with evolution?"

Shin nodded. "It is an evolutionary theory that states that species must constantly adapt and evolve to survive against evolving species. In our time, it would be mankind against society. Humans must constantly evolve to continue living in this world." He trailed off. "There was a good example of this awhile ago, the story of the woman who became the first songstress. She met that man with an unusual bloodline, and their children developed strange abilities. I guess the correct term is supernatural powers."

Yuhi recalled the story he heard not too long ago and sighed. "If it's to do with the latter, you already know, right?"

"Well, as a scientist, unless I see things myself, it is hard to believe. But I believe you. Besides, those who know about the red queen hypothesis do not rule out supernatural powers. The only way for humans to evolve is for something unusual to happen in their bodies. I looked at some strange cases from several centuries ago. I found cases where humans turned into monsters."

"This is turning into a horror story. But I guess it would not be unusual for such things to happen several centuries ago."

"Species involvement also includes how to prolong somebody's life span. However, there are no cases so far of somebody living that long."

"Is that so? Maybe you haven't found anyone, but surely there is

somebody."

"I want to test your understanding a bit. Despite your behavior, I know you are smarter than most people."

Yuhi sighed and took a long exhale from his cigarette. "Leigh Van Valen proposed an explanation to explain the law of extinction. People end up extinct not because of their lifetime but due to their level of adapting." He paused. "If one species deteriorates due to their evolution, it would deteriorate their co-existing species too. But what if the other species evolve too? Nobody could get ahead of the other."

Eternal Melody 154 Red Queen Theory Part 2

"You're a better scholar than I thought."

"You can compliment me, but Sumire was the one who taught me this stuff."

"I see. Your right there. In Lewis Carrolls, through looking at glass, the red Queen commented now here you see it takes all the running you can do to keep the same pace. To simplify what you said, Van Valen concluded that species have to run to evolve. If two species want to co-exist and stay in the same place, this is the only thing they can do; otherwise, they will go extinct."

"So?"

"There is an underworld organization called the black phoenix. These people are ruthless individuals who want to take advantage of individuals who have evolved and manifested abilities." Shin sighed. "Sumire is one of those people."

"Yeah."

"Why didn't you say something sooner?"

"You make it sound so simple. If I told you that Sumire has powers, you would look at me like I was some kind of crazy person. But I thought you saw the signs anyway, like her unusual strength..."

It never crossed Yuhis's mind to inform Shin regarding this and simply discussed it with Atushi and Jae. The main reason was because he did not want Atsuro to know.

"She needs protection."

Yuhi shook his head. "She won't trust the police even if it is the special forces. Shin, if you want to protect her, you don't need something fancy."

He knew that Shin had feelings for Sumire even now. It is strange for him to give his rival advice like this. But this was the only thing he could do to ensure that she is safe. It is difficult to protect her openly with his status, but with Shin, it is much easier.

No matter what happens, he will ensure that she is safe.

.....

It seemed like he arrived too early, so Yuhi decided to play the piano for a bit. If he delays that concert anymore, then it would be troublesome for Hino and the company. He does not want to cause Hino any

problems. If he practices for the concert, it would mean leaving Sumire alone a lot. It seems like he has no choice.

I should tell Shin everything else.

Her safety is the most important thing right now. It is better that she is left alone with Shin than anybody else. Sure there is Atushi and Jae too, including the other guys, but Shin is different from them.

The special police force, people refer to it as SF. A group of individuals scouted from different police departments all across the world. At first, Yuhi assumed that Shin only had a minimum involvement, like knowing somebody from the force. But from his words earlier and based on past behavior, he is a member of the police force.

Yuhi thought he was the only weird one with multiple occupations, but Shin is stranger. An idol, teacher, and now somebody from the SF? That man is busier than anybody else. But he is still the best choice to become Sumire's protector.

His thoughts broke off when he spotted somebody staring at him, intently from the corner.

Yuhi chuckles and calls her over, "Come over here."

"En!"

Sumire made her way over and looked around, wondering where she should sit. There were no other chairs in the room. He pulled the girl towards him that lead to her sitting on his lap. The girl's back against the piano. He murmurs against her neck. "Hah, I'm sort of tired."

That talk with Shin wore him out. Yuhi understood that Shin wanted to discuss something important but who would have thought it was that? It seems like he has underestimated that man.

He feels her gentle hands run through his hair.

"Go to sleep?"

"Mm, later. I want to flirt with you for a bit."

Sumire laughed softly. "That is quite straight forward of you Yuhi-san, but that is the part of you that I like the most."

It is huh?

"What have you been up to?"

"I spoke with Asami for a bit. Then afterwards, I watched Aikas drama rehearsal. I ended up joining, too; it was a lot of fun."

"I see, that's good." He lifts his head up to see the girl was looking at him with a somewhat complicated expression.

"What's wrong?"

"Yuhi, Im a good singer, right?"

"Yeah, a very pretty one too."

"But, unlike you. I still lack many skills. It was fun performing with Aika. But, in the process, I realized I was missing something."

So that's it. Yuhi supposes it was only normal for her to realize.

"You don't have to rush, there's still plenty of time. What?" He cut his speech short, seeing her expression unchanged—even growing worst.

"I get what you're saying, Yuhi. But, if I don't hurry. You'll leave me behind."

For a moment, Yuhi looked at her with wide eyes. Huh? Huh? Wait, what is she talking about?

Sumire sighed. "Don't you remember what I wrote in that letter?"

So that's it, he nuzzles his head against hers, "Don't be silly, I won't leave you behind. I said that earlier too. Learn to believe me more, or else I'll be sad."

"Don't be sad, Yuhi."

He chuckles.

She always notices things about him rather than herself. Really, what's going on, in that pretty head of hers? Just thoughts about him? When he saw her gaze, he leans forward and lightly kisses her lips, causing her to pout.

"Yuhi-san, you have become a boring person these days. Are you truly satisfied with that?"

If she is asking him whether he is satisfied, the answer is obviously known. But like he told her not too long ago, he wants to treasure her properly.

"You seem tired; you need to rest," Sumire said.

"Rest, huh? I suppose I do; there is no place to lay down here, though." He thinks for a minute.

...

When they arrived at the atler, Yuhi scanned the room and found the pillow he left on the ground last time. Sumire quickly joins him. When he saw this, though, he mustered some strength to make it more comfortable for her. He got out a futon and laid it out, alongside additional blankets. It may be getting warmer, but Sumire keeps getting a fever these days.

It must be because of her pregnancy. She sleeps a lot, fatigue, nausea - the only thing left to confirm is that. But as a guy, it is a bit awkward for him to ask her. How does he bring it up?

Despite these troubling thoughts, unknowingly, he ended up kissing her hair, cheeks and held her hand.

"Aha."

Sumire always finds it funny when he spoils her. Yuhi simply pats her hair and lays back down next to her.

"Yuhi, you need to be more attentive towards yourself too."

"Na, it's fine if I have strength only when it's for you."

"But, you have to take care of yourself."

Hearing the loving tone behind her scolding, he laughed softly in her hair, and she puffed her cheeks.

"I'm serious! You're just as bad as me."

Eternal Melody 155 No Longer Human

"So, you admit your bad, huh?" Yuhi said, amused.

The girl sighed deeply. "Well, I know I am hopeless at times. Whenever I end up working seriously on something, I end up neglecting my health a lot. I know it is stupid since, without good health, I won't be able to do anything anyway. But whenever I concentrate, it is so easy to forget everything else."

That does not make her stupid, though. Yuhi noticed this a long time ago, but Sumire is very negative toward herself. Why does she use such words like stupid and idiot so easily? It upset me whenever he heard it. She has so much potential but has such little confidence.

"I met with Shin earlier, and he told me everything." Yuhi decided to say it instead of beating around the bush.

The innocent expression on the girl's face vanished, and she sighed. "Yuhi-san, do you genuinely want to involve yourself in this?"

"Huh?"

She looked at him with a serious gaze. "You could die."

"Sumire...thats--"

"You should understand it better than anybody. These people are chasing after individuals with unusual abilities, such as somebody with unusual strength."

Yuhi blinked when he heard those words. Huh? So it seems like she knows that much? Then again, that information was in the documents Shin gave him. "What do you think about the red queen theory?"

At that comment, Sumire left his arms and stood up. She walked towards the bookshelves and picked up a book from the shelf. "I think it's true. I am no scientist, and I will not pretend to be one. But if the world is the only thing that evolves, then won't humanity become stale?"

"In the first place, I am surprised...I thought you..." He trailed off when he saw the book she picked up.

Osamu Dazais no longer human. The protagonist Oba Yozo leaves behind a set of notebooks regarding his true self and explaining how he lived a life of lies. A troubled man who could not reveal his true self to others and maintaining a facade. He pretended to be the fool hoping that he would learn about humanity this way. Not only could he not explain to others his true nature. But he could not understand humans; he did not know how to feel anger, happiness, or sadness.

No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't understand it. Why are those people so happy all the time? Even though people surrounded him, he felt alienated and isolated from the rest of the world.

One of his classmates Takeichi, saw through this facade and so Oba decided to befriend him to keep the secret safe.

"The protagonist Oba concluded that art is a form of human cruelty. Humans can express such cruelty due to their own trauma." Sumire spoke up like she read his thoughts. "Do you think a person like this will understand that humans can evolve and change? There is no person out there who is completely hopeless?"

Yuhi shook his head. "He won't understand because no matter what he tried, he still couldn't relate to humans."

"Correct. After meeting a fellow artist Horiki, who influenced his life badly. He ended up resorting to drinking and smoking heavily. A one night stand with a married woman that ended up with a double suicide via drowning. The woman survives, but he doesn't. At this point in the story, one can see that Yozo is slowly surrendering. He slowly realizes that no matter how much he struggled, he will never be human."

"The end of the story is tragic. Even though it looked like his life would turn around after meeting his wife."

"Confined in the walls of a mental institution, far from humans. Ah, it was a tragedy. He who tried to understand humans better than anyone ended up separated from them." Sumire trailed off. "It was a tragedy, even after he left the institution, he isolated himself from the world. He gave up. Despite this, I like this book a lot. I find it beautiful how he struggled to be human right to the very end."

Yuhi clenched his fist when he heard those words. He understood the meaning of her words.

She likes this book because she can relate to the protagonist. When he met her during that snowy concert several years ago and stayed at his place, he noticed it.

He noticed that there was something wrong with her emotions. Whenever she smiled, it felt hollow, and the look in her eyes seemed the same. Whenever she got angry or sad, it was the same too.

His thoughts broke off when Sumire put the book down on the table. She walked over to him and brushed her hands on his cheeks. "I told you before that everything happens for a reason, correct?"

"Yes."

"In this story, the protagonist gave up, despite all the pain he went through. He most likely did not realize how much he was suffering; he did not realize that he was in pain. When that incident happened with his wife, he didn't realize he was angry. He simply despaired without giving it much thought." Sumire leaned forward and lightly kissed him. "Tell me something, Yuhi-san. If I were to give up on everything like that, would you finally leave me?"

His eyes widened when he heard her words. What is she trying to do?

"I want to be honest with you. I am afraid." Sumire mumbled. "I thought I understood what I was getting involved in. But after I saw that sight with Shin the other day, I realized that this would be dangerous."

"But?"

"But I can't let this go. I want to find out the truth. Ru did not deserve to die like that. He was already battling with his life. He only had a short amount of time, but they even took that from him."

Yuhi sensed the anger behind her words and pulled her into his arms. He wanted to tell her that it was all going to be okay. He wanted to tell her that she did not have to do this alone. But Yuhi understood that words would be futile now.

Osamu Dazai, no longer human, is his most famous work and also his last book. People saw it as his will since he shortly took his own life after this. A book that the author has put so much thought and emotion into. For a person who could not understand humans, his last book deciphered so many emotions.

For Ibuki Sumire, this book is her savior. There was somebody out there who had similar feelings as her; she is not unusual.

Yuhi understood that the girl most-likely had such thoughts in her head right now.

Eternal Melody 156 It is already too late

The extent of her sadness and pain is far greater than what he thought. Yuhi believed that he was the only one who could understand the present her. But it seems like even he will have a hard time here. She uses books as a substitute to explain what is actually going on in her head. Living with suffocating feelings, Yuhi wondered how Sumire could do it. How can this girl be so strong despite suffering so much? He wrapped his arms around her and patted her back. "Are you okay?" Yuhi mumbled.

"I guess so." Sumire leaned into his hold. "I wonder why I am so comfortable when I am with you Yuhi-san, do you understand? It does not make any sense to me."

"Maybe because you like me a lot."

Sumire blinked. "I suppose that is the best answer." She trailed off. "I am indeed more fond of you than before."

"Sorry that was—" Yuhi paused when he saw her expression. It was the same cold and hollow gaze from before they went out. For a moment he completely froze when he felt her hold his hand. "Are you really okay now?"

"I seem to have a fever again."

Yuhi brushed his hands across her forehead. "Yeah, your hot." He trailed off. "Want to go to the infirmary?"

"Don't we have to give a speech to new students?"

"I can take care of that, you go and rest."

At that comment he watched as a dark aura surrounded her. Yuhi looked at the girl puzzled.

"If I leave you alone even for a moment Yuhi-san, the new freshman will surround you and steal you away. You don't understand what kind of creatures young girls are."

Creatures? Yuhi chuckled when he saw her troubled expression. So this how she shows her jealousy? Despite her strange speech. Yuhi understood what she was getting at. Sumire did not feel well, but she would rather sacrifice her health than risk it.

"Should I skip it too then? Let's go cuddle in the infirmary."

Sumire blinked and sighed. "Yuhi-san, I noticed this before, but why do you come to school if you keep skipping everything?"

"Hmmm? I already have enough credits just to let you know." Yuhi inhaled her scent and brought his lips to her neck. "Why I come into school? Before you came here, people seldom saw me around. I come in for you."

He saw her look dumbfounded, and he chuckled. "For someone who just came, you need more credits to pass."

"Yet, you encourage me to skip!"

Yuhi laughed. "You will be fine. I will teach you everything."

Sumire sighed but relaxed in his hold. "I still think we should go to the ceremony."

"Alright." Yuhi squeezed her hands. "Tell me if you feel unwell."

Sumire glanced down at their hands. "Are we going there like this?"

"Of course we are. We should demonstrate what a senior couple is like."

"Your so silly, alright let's get going."

The two of them quickly left the room, and exited the building. The moment they walked outside though, people surrounded him, leading to Sumire letting go of his hand. He looked at her desperately but saw her mumble. "It's okay."

With those words said, he watched as Sumire sat down on the curb and pulled out the copy of Osamu Dazais, only human. A deep sigh crossed his lips as he turned to the people who surrounded him. A mixture of students and business people.

He does not want to bother with them at all. But for Sumire's sake, he will put up with it.

By the time he finally gets free from the crowd, Yuhi realized that Sumire was no longer there. He looked around worriedly when something caught his attention; on the ninth floor, he spotted her. Ah...

—

Sumire intended to stay and wait for Yuhi. But after watching for a few minutes she slowly realized something. This is the difference between him and her. So many people love and support Yuhi, so many people care. If something were to happen to him people would notice. As for her? Nobody would give her a second thought?

She leaned against the railing with a cigarette in her hands and looked down. It seemed like the crowd already left Yuhi-san behind. He will most likely arrive soon.

She didn't know when it started.

But at some point, it felt like she was no longer breathing. The pain, anguish, all those tears - at some point her emotions became numb. She no longer had trouble breathing, there was nothing there.

'Ah now I am truly empty.'

If only it was like this from the beginning, then she would not have caused such painful experiences for those she cared for.

All of them leave in the end of the day, she never expected anybody to stay by her side. They all leave because they get tired, they get sick of her, they all get fed up with her behaviour. Of course she cannot blame them. They have every right to leave somebody like her.

A person like her does not deserve happiness and that was why she remained distant. Friendship? If she bothered with it again would they leave like they did before? If people are going to end up leaving anyway, then why does she have to get involved with them?

It's better if she is alone. But it is frightening to be left alone. She is a hypocrite, even though she understood that it is better to remain distant from everybody. There is still something she clings to so desperately even though it is falling apart.

Back then it was family. She clung to it desperately. It's okay if they don't understand, it's okay if they don't listen. It's okay if they think she is weird, as long as they stay with her. But in the end maybe she should have just told them everything. As a young girl she often read books and stories about fairies and mythical creatures. Ah, that looks nice. The power to change something with a simple wave of their hand.

Reality is not that simple, change doesn't happen overnight. It depends on the individual.

If they knew about the pain and anguish she felt since she was a child, would they have come to understand her? It is already too late for that.

Eternal Melody 157 It could break them

Sumire does not know when she stopped breathing. But she noticed when it started to get better. No she found a method to deal with the emptiness. Whenever she read books she felt calmer. Ah, so there are other people who feel this way too.

'I am not the only weird one. If others feel like this too, does that make me normal?'

Back then people often told me to behave normally. But I did not understand that. What did they mean by normal? I am alive aren't I?'

Sometimes Sumire felt like a dead person walking. She could no longer breathe and her emotions slowly became numb. She could cry and shout for hours but nobody would care, nobody would come to her. Who else would come to her? She is already all alone. The people who cared all left because they got tired.

Maybe its time to go? Maybe it is time to end this all. To the very end there was nothing she could do, she will die as a useless, and wretched person. Did death frighten her?

Yes it did, she was scared to die. Scared to die with such negativity, scared to die as a piece of trash.

"I was always on your side."

Is that so? Ha, then..then if that was the case.

'Where were you when I was in so much pain? Where we you when I felt alienated from those close to me? Where were you when I was bullied? Where were you when I felt so hopeless, lost and depressed? When I felt so useless, weak and unwanted? Did you even notice? The reason why I turned out this way, the reason I cannot move forward, do you know?'

People are liars, there is nobody out there who is sincere and genuine. Everybody thinks what they are doing is normal, they assume they are the right ones, they are the normal ones. It is the other person at fault. But the reality is? Those words and actions can severely hurt another person. It could break them.

If something like that can break another person, then what about somebody who is already broken?

Her thoughts broke off when she felt a pair of arms wrap around her from the back. Yuhi brushed his lips against her neck and muttered something softly before pulling away.

"You alright?"

"Mm, I just thought it was too noisy."

Also, she noticed the looks they gave her. It seems like many people do not approve of her relationship with Yuhi. She does not have to listen to their bullshit, but if it will affect Yuhi, then it is better to remain distant. At least when they are around other people.

She turned around and wrapped her arms around his neck. "Yuhi-san, let me do something bad to you."

Yuhi chuckled. "Well, I don't mind if you do. But I think people can see us from here."

"I don't care."

"You know, back when I was in the underworld, you frustrated me a lot."

She raised her eyebrows at his words. "Are you complaining now?"

"Just a bit of discussion. I always wondered why I could not do things as well as you. Even though I had more experience and skill, you still managed to succeed in many places that I couldn't."

"I wonder about that. I always thought I was a failure who could not do anything right. Whenever I watched you, Yuhi-san, I thought ah this person is amazing. Whether it is the underworld society, music, or art world, your amazing."

Yuhi chuckled softly. "You respect me that much?"

"Is it unusual?"

"Well, a little since your the girl I like."

The girl he likes, huh? She still found it weird that he loved her. No, what she found strange was how long Yuhi liked her for. Why did he like her for so long? Sumire thought back to that snowy night several years ago and paused. Did she do something back then? She was only a child, though.

Yuhi kissed the temple of her forehead. "I wanted to ask you about those documents Shin told me to give you. Do you mind if I keep them for a while?"

Sumire sighed. It seems like she cannot persuade him there. If Yuhi-san helps, though, then this investigation could run a lot smoother. When he worked in the underworld as her subordinate, Sumire recalled how helpful Yuhi was. He can grasp things so quickly, and his understanding of the criminal's methods is amazing. Indeed, it would help more if Yuhi was on their side.

"Then, okay. But you have to tell me everything."

"Got it. It seems like we will be working together again. I look forward to seeing how much you have improved."

"For now, I would like to go to a larger library. I know the school has one of the largest ones in the city. But there is another one, right?"

Yuhi nodded. "You need a special membership, which I have." He trailed off. "I guess I could bring you with me; you can get a membership too since Hino owns the library."

Sumire blinked when she heard those words. She understood that Hino was rich. But this amount of influence is indeed incredible. Maybe she should tease him less and start to treat him with respect.

"That sounds good."

"Also since were on his subject. What do you feel about individuals with supernatural powers?"

"If you ask me whether they exist or not, then yes. After all, anything is possible in this world. A more scientific explanation would be the Red Queen evolution theory. If humans evolve, something unnatural will occur in their bodies. It would not be peculiar for people to manifest strange abilities due to gene mutation."

That's right; it isn't unusual. It was the same for that person too. Sumire always found it strange how quickly Mamoru could get to her. No matter how far apart they were from one another. It did not take long for her to realize why she formed a hypothesis in her head. But she still could not grasp everything.

So she confronted him directly about it one day.

Eternal Melody 158 Like a treasure

September 7th, 2014

"Do you have supernatural powers?" Sumire asked.

Mamoru, who was reading a newspaper, looked over at her and nodded. "Right, I do."

Sumire blinked, surprised that he answered her so easily. Wait what? He actually has it? At first, she thought he was joking until she saw the expression on his face. What kind of situation is this?

"Ki," Mamoru said gently. "Come here, sit next to me."

She nodded and made her way over. No sooner did she reach the couch did he slump his head on her chest. Sumire looked around frantically. "What if people come in?"

"We are a couple now, so it doesn't matter."

Indeed, only two weeks have passed since she agreed to date him. But Sumire understood Mamoru's signs. He wants to be spoiled right now.

She hesitated but caressed his hair. "So, you have an ability?"

"Sonic."

"The power to move at the speed of sound." Sumire trailed off, and her eyes widened. So that is why he could rescue her from so many tricky situations. It all makes sense now. But there is one thing that puzzled her.

"You don't seem surprised? Normally people would ask for proof."

"I've already seen it, and also this is normal. According to any evolutionary theory, humans are supposed to evolve to keep up with the environment's changes."

Mamoru blinked before he burst into laughter. "Of course, you see it that way."

"Am I wrong?"

"No, maybe you are right. I just woke up one day and noticed these strange abilities or so I would like to say. But I am not a hero from a book. This ability was with me ever since I was a child. I never bothered to question where it came from. But listening to you just now, my curiosity is piqued. How many people in this world are like me?"

How many people, huh? Sumire noticed the loneliness in his eyes and the pain in his words. Even though he is always smiling, Mamoru is in pain too.

.....

Present Day

He was so strong, so brave, yet he broke down a lot in front of her. She saw many sides of him that he did not show other people, sides that he showed only her.

"Sumire?" Yuhi said, concerned.

It seemed like she was in a daze for a longer time than she thought. Sumire shook her head. "I am okay now."

"Were you thinking of him?"

His question surprised her. At the same time, it is more comfortable to speak about Mamoru in front of Yuhi, unlike with other people. Sumire understood how awkward it was.

After all, what guy would be happy hearing the girl he likes talk so much about another girl? Sumire noticed Yuhi's gaze linger on the cigarette on the ground. "I thought you didn't smoke."

"Like I said last time, it helps me think."

They both know that is BS. The nicotine in these cigarettes is harmful for the mind.

"Sumire."

He caresses her face like she is something precious. Whenever he does this, she tries to refrain from crying. Yuhi kissed her eyelids. "Don't cry so much; you will ruin your pretty face."

"Yuhi, I still miss Ru." She mumbled. No matter how happy she is with Yuhi. Something simple will lead her back to Tsueno Mamoru. Is it because she never got around to telling him, and that was why she had lingering regrets? Either way... "Yuhi-san, this isn't the time to flirt with me."

Sumire noticed that he was drawing small circles in her hands and looking at her lips. Her cheeks reddened slightly. "I know we have been dancing around this whole dating thing for a long time. But you—" She was about to tell him something, but this led to him closing the distance between them.

It was not a passionate kiss, but it was a gentle one to reassure her. When he pulled away, he brushed their foreheads together. "You know you don't have to tell me that every time. I know you feel guilty, but don't be. I understand, Sumire. I am jealous, yes, but not unreasonable. I told you I would wait for you."

He shouldn't have to wait for her. Most people date to have a happy relationship, not a set of complicated trials.

"You need to stop staring at me."

Sumire decided to change the topic swiftly.

"Are you saying I am not allowed to watch you?" He seemed amused.

A content sigh passed her lips when he kissed her forehead. "You make it too obvious." How is she supposed to act normal around him if he stares at her all day?

"It is okay, but keep it under moderation."

"But I like looking at you. I always want to look at you."

Sumire blinked at his straight forward words. Is it just her, or is Yuhi-san more honest these days? Indeed there does appear to be something different. When she first came here, there were many rumors regarding Yuhis behavior. But recently she has not heard any.

She understood why. Yuhi is so kind and gentle these days. He still gets angry occasionally, but it is not as often as before.

"Besides, I can say whatever I want to. If you would like, I can shower you with more affection every day, not just through words." Yuhi said mischievously as he bit her earlobe. She shuddered at his touch, and he mumbled. "I can be patient like I said. But I will have my way with you somehow, so keep that in mind, okay?"

Keep what in mind? This man is far too shameless. Does he not understand that it is bad for her heart-- Sumire paused in midthought when she saw his expression.

He knows what he is doing to her, and yet he continues to do this. What an unfair man. But then again, she likes their relationship. It is different than the relationship she had with Sano, Ren, and Mamoru. Yuhi differs from them. He smoothed his fingers across her heated face.

"You know I never thought we would get such peaceful moments like this. I mean back then we couldn't relax even for a moment. There were many occasions where I wanted to make a move on you, but we ended up getting interrupted."

Sumire rolled her eyes at that comment of his. "You wanted to make a move on me before?"

"Uh, don't look so surprised Sumire. You also tried to make a move on me before."

So he noticed? Indeed she attempted it before. She wanted to see what would happen if she tried to make a move on Yuhi and it seemed like it worked. "Is it okay for me to be happy Yuhi?"

Eternal Melody 159 The truth is

At that comment Yuhi frowned and Sumire immediately understood. He will lecture her for belittling herself again. To her surprise he said nothing and continued to caress her face.

She bit her lip. She would rather he lecture right now than treat her so well. Yuhi is so good to her but how long will that last? How much longer does she have until he leaves too? No matter how good he is to her, Sumire understood that he would also leave her.

Why would he bother staying with somebody as broken as her? Yuhi-san is a kind person and he understands her. He understands because he went through the same pain as her. But things are different now, he has turned his lifestyle around. Everything has changed for the better for him.

When Yuhi realizes how much of a burden she is. Sumire knew that he would also leave her. But until that day comes, she will savour his kindness.

"You know when we were apart from each other. It felt like I was going crazy everyday not seeing you. Sometimes I would find things you liked, things like those sherbet candies hoard it all to myself. The other guys always complained, they knew I didn't like sweet thing. I never ate those sweets but I kept them anyway." Yuhi laughed. "It didn't help how many times I hallucinated that you were right in front of me too."

Sumire leaned forward and kissed him lightly. "Yuhi-san, please stop confessing to me. You will make me feel bad." She trailed off. "The truth is I wanted to go to your side a long time ago. But I still had many insecurities and worries. I was afraid that I would cause you more problems instead."

It seems stupid talking about this stuff now. But it looks like Yuhi wants to talk about the pass. She watched as the creases in his brows deepen. It seems like there is more to it than what he is saying currently. Sumire however knew better than to pry.

It is no good, edging someone on regarding their emotions like that.

Humans can be such cruel creatures.

Such cruel creatures. It is easy for them to hurt others intentionally and unintentionally. Just because they did not intend to hurt the other person does that mean they can be forgiven. In fact, the ones who are the cruelest are those people, the one who does not intentionally intend to hurt but end up doing so repeatedly. People who do not see themselves or wrong or try to look at it from another perspective. In their eyes the one who is wrong is not them.

"Yuhi-san, am I acting strange?"

Yuhi shook his head. "No, but can I do that bad thing?"

Her gaze softened when she heard his words. "Okay."

If there is a way to fill up this hole in her heart, then she would take it any day.

....

That moment was very sweet, but Sumire's eyes twitched, annoyed as she moved his hand from hers. She walked a few steps ahead and angrily said. "I told you not to leave a mark!"

Yuhi rubbed his head sheepishly. "Well, your too pretty."

Does he think that type of excuse would work? Her thoughts broke off when he hugged her from the back. "Alright, you don't sulk so much. I understand that your embarrassed, but everybody knows we are a couple aren't arent children, this stuff is normal."

"Yuhi..."

He turned her around and kissed her lips. "You see people making out on campus grounds all the time. Don't get nervous or panic. Take a deep breath and calm down."

Is it really normal? Sumire still wasn't sure but she knew it would be stupid of her to sulk like this.

"Yeah, it's norm--"

"Normal he says. The teacher doesn't think so." A familiar voice said.

Sumire looked up and spotted Shin walking over. "Ah--" She stopped herself from saying her next words. "Could I talk to you for a bit?"

Yuhi sighed deeply and kissed her cheeks. "Alright, I will leave you two for a bit then. Tell me when you're done."

Sumire nodded and watched as Yuhi pulled away. She turned to Shin and he leaned against the wall. "I already know what you want to ask."

"I don't want Yuhi-san to get involved. Why did you give him so many hints?"

Shin sighed. "Don't be a fool. He is smarter than both of us. Do you think we could keep it a secret from him for long?"

"I know..we can't but--" Sumire recalled what he asked earlier. "Isn't it dangerous for him? He is no longer involved in the underworld society. If those people realize that Yuhi is helping too, won't they disturb him?"

"Indeed, but this is what he chose."

"Is there nothing you can do? He seems to listen to you."

Shin shook his head. "I should be asking you that."

"He won't listen to me on this." Sumire recalled his expression earlier on. "Do you think Yuhi-san is like Ru too? He has a special ability, and that's why he wants to get involved?"

"What makes you say that?"

"They say those with power tend to have a stronger sense of justice."

"Well, I can't argue there. It's because those with power realize they have the duty to help those in need."

"It's a sin to not help when you have power, right?"

Shin nodded. "I agree there. I don't think you have to worry too much, nothing should take into affect so soon. But even if something happens, Yuhi is a public figure, they won't strike him so easily."

"Is it okay for me then?"

"No, that's why I'll be protecting you."

She blinked once and then twice. "You'll protect me Shin?"

"Is that a problem?"

It isn't a problem. But, huh? She placed her hand on her heart. Why does it feel like something like this has happened before?

Eternal Melody 160 Nothing would change

Shin could guess what she was thinking. But that was exactly why. "You have some time now right? Let's finish this elsewhere."

Sumire laughed. "Oh! Are you going g to teach me? You haven't had time recently."

"Only for a bit."

It did not take them long before they reached the physics prep room. The moment he arrived, he noticed that somebody switched his computer on.

It was a message from his sibling.

"Sheesh, if he wanted to make up he could have just called or apologised directly or something. The way they did this, I'm not sure if he wants to apologise directly or make me mad. But well since he took this time to do all this, it's only right for me to give a fitting reply."

"Then let me help." Sumire offered.

Shin would have responded to that until he saw dark marks on the brunettes neck. "Sumire you that's ---"

She immediately placed her hand over it.

"Did that person. . hurt you again. . "

"N-no that's not it. I was with Yuhi earlier and he kinda. .. Um....I would rather not explain this. .. "

Sumire said, her cheeks completely red.

He realises what she means right away and his cheeks turns a similar shade. "Oh--I see. Sorry." Shin clumsily apologized.

"No it's fine. T--hank you for worrying about me. "

But Terashima did that to her huh? The fact that she doesn't bother hiding it just goes to show how much she loves him.

"Sit down. You can't really walk around like that can you?"

"Yeah. . thanks. .." Sumire thanked him as she took a seat.

Shin brought out the medical supplies. His gaze fell on the brunette. She really has changed a lot appearance wise in terms of when they first met. Although there was always a certain flair about her then; he honestly saw her as a kid despite only having a year age gap.

He saw drastic changes in her last year but nothing major. Back then he would never have imagined that she would grow up to be so beautiful.

'I never cared about peoples appearances and even when I fell for her back when she had average looks. However gradually I began to pay more attention to appearance, it's hard to do so when the girl he love has become so beautiful.'

The girl he is in love with is so very beautiful and yet she is very careless too.

Shin made his way back to his chair and placed a bandage over the brunettes neck. As he takes out the antcipetic.

"You don't have to."

"Should you not be asking me, ' How did you know I was hurt?'" Shin said, taking out some cotton buds.

"There's no need to ask that. You're a genius after all."

"Even geniuses make mistakes, were you not the one who told me those words?"

"The fact that you can remember that is amazing enough."

Shin shuts his eyes, as he applied the antiseptic on her hand.

"That's what I would like to know. Why, why do your words pierce me so deeply? If I figured that out a long time ago, then maybe--" Shin paused.

If, if he figured it out a long time ago. Perhaps he would have moved forward like the others. The later despite being slow was the first one who found his answer, confessed, got rejected and moved forward.

"Not only did you strongly reject me before I could say those words you also rejected my help completely. You, wouldn't let me get involved. The later I know wasn't out of spite, your words are confusing but your actions have always made sense."

"My actions huh? Then, when I did that stuff afterwards. Did you understand what I was doing?"

Shin pauses to catch a glimpse of her expression. "I understood. It was frustrating and annoying. Even though we were close enough then for me to be one of your partners, our actual relationship didn't change. You tried to give me a chance, I failed. That's it. "

"You don't think of me as a fickle woman?"

"Who said that to you?"

Sumire shook her head. "No she hasn't actually. You would think she would have noticed it by now. But just recently whenever I'm alone I end up thinking about a lot of stuff. Towards senpai I wasn't fair at all. Although he also contributed to a lot of the mistakes in the past, I can't say I didn't do anything wrong either. I spoke about a lot of things with Atushi.

Atushi that the two of us were practically already going out already...After he said that I reanalyzed our actions in middle school and indeed thought so too. That's why I thought it was fine if we carried on the way we were. But that only caused us more pain. When he got hurt and ended up in hospital, and when he said he would go to L.A I broke down.

It's a blur to me but I can remember the expression he made then. The two of us were being selfish, 'if we continue like this, nothing will change.' That's why we made such a foolish promise on the rooftop of the school on his last day. That promise was only for show, it was never intended to be real."

That promise huh? Atsuro told him to still watch over her for awhile longer since she only just recovered; so he saw and heard everything with his own eyes.

Ichinose Arashi huh? That man will play a important role in this. But for now, it's Atsuro who will be Yuhi's main issue.

"Why are you mentioning this now?"

"I wanted to get this talk out of the way before Atsuro returns." She sighed deeply. "I feel like he will be unreasonable the moment he arrives."

Shin frowned at those words. "Do you want me to..."

Sumire shook her head. "It's fine, I mean I have to speak to him eventually."

When he saw the brunette slump her head on the table; Shin looked up from the work he was doing.
"What's the matter Sumire? Are you alright?"

"No it's nothing."

She says it's nothing and yet she makes that sort of face. What a strange girl; even now the things she does is still a mystery to him. Still, it genuinely seems like she is worried about something.

"If the thing with Atsuro bothers you, why don't you discuss it with Yuhi? Unfortunately, I can't help you with his matters."