

Melody 171

### **Eternal Melody 171 Shadows**

The two of them took a stroll around the hospital grounds, nobody spoke. A comforting silence filled the air. How strange, when she is with Yuhi - she isn't scared of the silence. Why is everything so different when she is with this person? There is nothing special about Terashima Yuhi. He is just like any other kind guy. But, she

can't help but think there is something.

'Maybe I just like him too much.' Ever since she was younger, she liked Yuhi. It's normal to think there is something different when there isn't.

"Hey, can you tell me about Mamoru?"

Sumire blinked when she heard his question. "About Ru?"

"Yeah, I don't know much about how you two met other than that story where he got furious at you."

So he knows about it, then again it is that stupid guy's fault for always getting so close to her. Indeed a stupid person. "Ru was mad about that too, but yeah, the anger directed more at Inoue than me."

"You two got along."

Sumire laughs lightly, "You think so? Because at the beginning I didn't really think I'd get along with him. After all, when we first met, he called me a neet and shut-in. Long story short, a lot happened, but I didn't think I'd meet him again, yet he transferred to my school, and I was surprised. He immediately recognized me and said 'hey miss shut-in', it irritated me, and so I dragged him outside and told him to forget it completely. I told him my name, and he was like, 'Then I'll call you Ki-chan, it's cute like you'."

"Too direct." Yuhi agreed. "Or rather coincidences do happen, huh?"

"I thought so too. We ended up sitting next to each other the whole year too. No matter how many times we changed seats, they would place me next to him. Even though it's a lottery so at one point Ru was like 'When it happens this many times don't you think its fate?' He said something cheesy and out loud too. Loads of people teased him straight afterward, yet that smile never faltered.

I would call him the class clown - but it seemed like something more than that. Although he was always messing around, and although the teachers scolded him, they always wore a smile on their faces. He was someone who brought everyone together, everyone was naturally attracted to him and eventually me too. Though I was stubborn to admit it at first."

Yuhi seemed to pause, and Sumire laughed. "I was stubborn, very stubborn."

"It sounds like you liked him from the start, though."

Her gaze softened. "Well, maybe. I know what you're thinking that he is similar to Shuuske. Ru is different from Shuuske, though. Those two are completely different, whenever something goes wrong - whenever someone does something bad. He doesn't hesitate at all to tell it to them straight. Once Ru

was like 'Your an eyesore,' and oh there was that time too during a case. 'His own mother doesn't believe in him, then who else is he supposed to believe in? Your really horrible.'

"Even to a client...unbelievable. He is quite the guy. However, he is nice a person." Yuhi sighed. "I hate to admit this, though."

Sumire laughed. "He was truly a good person."

"When I met him for the first time, he treated me like an old friend."

Ru mentioned; briefly, they were in contact, but it still felt weird. Huh...how strange she couldn't picture them as friends. Yet when she thought about it. "It was exactly like him."

Her thoughts broke off when Yuhi stopped walking. He suddenly pulled her into his arms. "I won't lose."

It was a mere three words, and yet Sumire understood what he meant by that. He won't lose, huh?

"Then, Yuhi-san, could you grant a few of my requests?"

"Hmm? You have some?"

"I would like for you to kiss me whenever we meet after parting."

His lips curve to a smile. "That I don't mind doing. But even in school?"

"Yes, please."

It makes her forget all the unpleasant feelings. It makes her feel wanted even if it is just for a fleeting second. When she is with this person, she can delude herself into thinking she is normal, and just like everybody else.

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Several hours later

Sumire did not know when it started.

But she eventually slept with the lights on. At the start, it started with a small light source, the lamp. However, when she saw the small shadows where the light did not shine, she would quiver in fear. Before long, she kept the main light on, so she would wake up to brightness. But even this did little to stop the shadows she saw every night.

This did little to stop the darkness from the nightmares she saw. But it was still a better solution than before.

Her nightmares started off the same no matter what. In that dark space, covered in nothing but black. No source of light and no trace of another person. She was there, and yet at the same time, she wasn't. She could not see herself or anything else.

This is just a dream; it will go away. But that thought vanished in an instance. That thought disappeared when she realized it did not go away even after she closed her eyes. If this was a dream, should she not

wake up the moment she wants it to end? But it didn't end; she would remain in that pitch-black space for a very long time.

It felt like there was something else there with her, too, something she could not see. Something frightening and something that would consume her. She has to get out of here, but how does she? She can't even wake up.

Sumire stirred awake and blinked. She read the time on her phone two am in the morning. She scanned her surroundings and noticed something; the room mainly lit up. Only some corners were dark.

Yuhi had his arms wrapped around her protectively, almost like he was shielding her from the darkness.

Her gaze softened when she saw this. So Yuhi figured it out, huh?

### **Eternal Melody 172 I will be the last one**

Sumire stared at him for a few minutes. 'I wonder why he decided to stay.' There is still a chance for Yuhi to abandon her just like anybody else. But, so far, he has remained. Even though she showed him plenty of her weak side, he remained by her. Her gaze fell on the arms wrapped around her waist.

'Stupid. What good will it do?' His actions seemed meaningless to her, and yet it made her heart feel warm.

She remained like that for a few minutes before she eventually got up. She picked up her coat on the side when she spotted something else. 'Yuhi's coat...' She didn't hesitate and slipped it on. It was a bit bigger for her, but it felt comfortable.

Sumire exited the room quickly and walked down the corridor. It was quiet and dark. 'Well, the hospital needs to save energy at night.' She wondered how Yuhi managed to convince them to keep the lights on.

She quietly made her way across the hall and made her way up several flights of stairs.

It did not take long before she reached the rooftop. A strong gust of wind blew the moment she opened the door. Sumire shrugged it off and walked over to the railing. A memory from the past appeared in her head.

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'That's the kind of person I want to be.'

'You already know what you want to do.'

Everyone around her doesn't hesitate to say what they're thinking in front of her, huh? Or maybe they do hesitate, but her actions are making them act. In the end, all of this is still one big spiral that's difficult to comprehend. It's that kind of story.

Her thoughts broke off when she felt a pair of arms wrapped around her waist. This led to her halting her in her tracks. "Ru?"

"It's dangerous, and you'll fall."

"It's fine. I always do this." Sumire reassures him, yet he took her down anyway. She noticed the distressed expression on his face. "Is something wrong?"

The maroon colored haired boy buried his head on her chest.

"Ki, you don't have to keep suffering for my sake, you know? Aki-san told me about it, what you've been doing as of late. You don't have to do that much. Your road of atonement, stop it already".

So that's it. It seems like he couldn't keep it a secret for long. Aki-san isn't usually a person to blab secrets unless somebody forces him. But when it concerns Mamoru, he's not able to say no. That's true if it's in front of Mamoru. No one can disagree that easily, that's how it's always been. He's always had that sphere of influence after all.

"I'm sorry. I can't do that, I already said it once before. Although it was a long time ago, you know full well that it's still the same now. I don't like myself and let's face it who would? A person like me who's rude, violent, and not cute at all. There's not a single person in this world who will truly like me."

That's right because people will always hate her, that's how it usually is.

It's already too late to change things.

Mamoru looks up then. "If that's true, then why are you crying?"

Indeed once again, she could feel the crystal tears falling from her eyes at a rapid rate like waterfalls. The maroon colored haired boy lifts his hand, wiping them away before pulling her into a hug.

Ah, really once again, this person. He's always like this. How come he's able to tell? Not even she will ever be able to understand it. Why was it always this person? Out of all the others, she's met, it's always been him.

"You know Ki; you're a huge contradictor. You're the kind of person who doesn't hesitate to say what's on their mind - and you're always honest. That's the kind of person you are; you stood out to me being like that. However, despite how strong you were, I could tell that you're just as fragile and even weaker at the end of the day than all the others. That's why..." He tightened their laced hands.

"That's why I'm afraid of leaving you alone, even though you now have others. I don't believe that anyone can truly understand you and care for you in the same degree as I do."

Sumire managed to laugh despite her strange mood. "That's a huge compliment for yourself."

"I'm that kind of guy. But ....you agree, don't you?"

His hands - no, his whole body shook. Sumire knew the reason why this was, and it was because of her.

"I'll be okay, Ru. I managed to survive this many years without seeing you after all....that's why this won't be any different...." Sumire said, struggling to keep her voice proper. Yet it was useless since her tears rapidly feel.

"Don't lie in front of me," Mamoru muttered. "Ki. There is no need to pretend when you're in front of me; you know that full well."

Once Mamoru said those words, she didn't hold back the tears any longer and said all that was going on in her head. Everything, everything she was feeling. She didn't hesitate to say them all. She couldn't hold back anymore. There's no way she could.

"Ssh Ki. I am sorry...I really am. For now, I'll stay by your side."

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Sumire snapped her attention back to the present when she saw something from the corner of her eye. Not too far from the hospital, she saw a mini-explosion in the forest.

All the signs are appearing now. The signs he told her.

He was so kind and gentle. But in the end, he also left her. There is nobody who will stay; in the end, they all leave. The only one that remains is her. In this place, she will be the last one.

But isn't that what she saw from the beginning? In that place, she saw it, a future - a destroyed world. In that lonely world, only she remained. The people she cared for all disappeared, and she was the only one there.

She wonders if that was the future. Was that her 'power?' Could she see things people couldn't? Yet occasionally, she would feel something else. Something was burning across her right eye, her dry throat craving for something.

### **Eternal Melody 173 I don't know what to think**

Light Academy - Monday XX April 2035- 16:40 -

Sumire lost count how many times she fainted and ended up in the infirmary. When she woke up and found herself there again, she cursed. Her body felt very weak but she somehow managed to get up.

She picked up her bag and quickly left. The hallways were quiet - signalling that classes long finished. Orange and yellow hues spread across the vast sky.

She took out her phone and her eyes widened when she saw thirty missed calls. Eh? What? Sumire immediately opened up thinking it was an emergency. Did something happen at home? However when she opened it up, she saw it was thirty missed calls from Yuhi.

Why did he call her so much?

Sumire hesitated but she quickly called him. Did she miss some important work? Lately she doesn't know what to think when it comes to him.

She slipped her shoes back on. 'That day, she must have fainted too.' When she woke up she was no longer on the roof but in Yuhi's arms. He was carrying her down the steps. But, she recalled the expression on his face and sighed.

'Why did he look so sad?'

The wind was uncomfortable as usual, as she tried to hold my papers in place against her chest.

Sumire didn't expect to step out of the building to see snow of all things.

The wind whipped the cold crystals of snow against her legs.

The winter was beautiful in late April, She couldn't argue with that. But, she didn't get a chance to admire that scenery when she felt another strong gust of wind. Soon however the cold stopped. A familiar black scarf wrapped around her neck and coat dropped on her shoulders.

She whipped her head around to see Yuhi. He was on the phone, but wrapped his arms around her. "I got it Hino. But let me have some free time, I've been working non stop since I left the hospital. Yeah, alright see you."

Yuhi turned to her and caressed her cheeks. "Cold."

"Aha." Sumire laughed. "Um, so this is why you called?"

"Yeah, I was going to pick you up."

She thought something happened.

"You slept in the infirmary most of the day? Aika told me."

"Mmmm, lately I keep sleeping a lot more. I'm still sleepy even now." She trailed off and buried her face in his arms. "But I think I'll be wide awake soon."

Yuhi caressed her hair and patted her back. "I see. Should we take a leisure stroll back then? I was going to bring my bike, but I think the roads are a bit dangerous. So I left it in the studio."

"I want to go shopping for groceries."

"Cool, let's go."

Sumire glanced at the man beside her and leaned forward. "Yuhi-san, did you forget something?"

He bent down and kissed her lips without saying anything else. "I forgot something?"

"Uhh, nope you didn't."

She feels so relaxed when she is with him. But Sumire glanced at his waist. 'His injury hasn't healed yet.'

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"Atushi, were b-" Her sentence fell short the moment Yuhi fell into her arms. "Uhh, Yuhi?"

Atushi exited the kitchen area and chuckled. "Am I interrupting?"

"I think he fell asleep."

"Yeah, he must be exhausted."

Sumire's gaze fell on the tired Yuhi and placed the shopping bags down. She ran her hands through his hair. 'He looks so tired. Why didn't I realize it earlier?'

She somehow managed to get him onto the sofa. But she saw how uncomfortable he seemed. "Hey Atushi, do we have a blanket?"

"I'm keeping everything downstairs knowing that the King likes his naps."

Sumire laughed and took the blanket from him.

After a few minutes however Yuhi woke up and kissed her passionately.

"Mmmmmmm..."

"Yuhi stop!"

Yuhi deeply sighed and rubbed his head. "That wasn't a nice way to wake up."

"Y--you--!" She was speechless.

"What?"

Sumire sighed deeply. 'Why am I freaking out? It was only a kiss, and he touched me a little.'

"If you were tired, you didn't have to pick me up."

"Mmm, well I wanted to go on a walk with you." Yuhi kissed her lips again. "Besides it would be a waste not your flirt when your wearing uniform."

Yuhi-san has such strange fetishes. It's hard to deal with him. Still, it seems like he is more comfortable around her these days. She sighed in content when he kept lightly kissing her.

"Yuhi...are you hungry?"

"Yeah, your tasty."

Her cheeks grew hot. "Yuhi, don't act strange."

Yuhi kissed her earlobe then her neck. "Sorry, I'm drunk too."

Yuhi would not stop kissing her so she had no choice to bring him upstairs.

Sumire felt very embarrassed and self-conscious. What is with him? He did say he was drunk, but this is a bit— He lowered his face, so it brushed against her ear. "Too much?"

Sumire closed her eyes and shook her head. She is just feeling strangely conscious right now. But that does not mean she hates it. Sumire allowed him to continue his strange advances. It was a good thing she decided to go upstairs; otherwise, who knows what Atushi would say?

"Sumire, your so pretty."

"Yuhi...."

"Sorry, I know this is a bit overwhelming for you. But would you let me?"

Let him? Sumire quickly understood what he meant and paused. Yuhi seems to be very needy right now. Maybe she should just allow him?

Sumire placed her fingers against his lips. "Take a walk with me again, Yuhi-san?"

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"Uwaah, it's so cold. What is this? It wasn't like this when I arrived."

"Well, it is April. Dressed up in a fashionable coat like you are, of course, you aren't going to be warm."

"Ah, then I have an idea. Give me half of that."

"Huh- wha—" his sentence fell short when she wrapped half his scarf around herself, pulling them closer together.

"Yup, now I'm warm."

Sumire waited until he made the first move. Sure enough, Yuhi laced their hands together. This led to her cheeks growing hot, and she laughed softly. "Now, we're both warm."

Yuhi did not reply, and Sumire continued to stare at his face. "I haven't had the upper hand in a while."

At that comment, Yuhi deeply sighed. "Why do you even want the upper hand?"

Why he asks... "Isn't it so I could make you miserable? Yuhi-san, you hold back too much when you're with me."

"Just now I wasn't holding back but you—"

Sumire brought her sleeves and covered her mouth as she laughed. "That was a bit, uhh..."

Yuhi flicked her forehead. "Don't get me so worked up and then stop." He trailed off. "But I guess that is what I like about you."

A tender smile appeared on his face.

Yuhi isn't playing fair, smiling like that. Doesn't he know how bad that smile of his on her heart? But still, she glanced at their hands firmly entwined with each other.

She is happy too, being able to spend time with him like this. She already had so many moments like this since they have been dating for a long time.

Certainly, most couples who have gone out with each other for as long as she and Yuhi have would be bored with each other. But it's different with Yuhi. Even if they have fallen into a routine whenever they are with each other, whenever they spend time with each other like this, everything still feels like a fresh and new experience.

### **Eternal Melody 174 If we realized it sooner**

He guessed immediately that she thought of Ru; and that something happened with Arashi too. Who would have thought that she would find someone who could read her like an open book like this? What a strange twist of events this is.

Terashima Yuhi, without a doubt, is a completely different person than Ichinose Arashi, that was something she had already longed established. But it still surprises her how different they are—seeing



even the small difference between the two. How is it that both of these guys who are polar opposites to each other managed to draw her attention?

Others have said many things about her. Some terrible rumors - some that label her as a wicked woman. But to her amazement, those two never feared her. What's more, they treated her like a normal girl. In the end, Sumire could never tell if they were slow or had a screw loose.

Oh, she probably just looked weak. They probably thought that they needed to come to her aid and protect her from danger.

How hopeless, did they both want to play hero? But even if that's the case, those two have always believed in her strength too. Both Yuhi and Arashi, they've always believed in her. But if she thinks about it now, she chuckles to herself. Being a hero certainly doesn't suit a wimp like Arashi; and Yuhi, now that's even more of an amusing thought.

"Hey, if your smiling like that to yourself. I'm going to start thinking about your kiss with Ichinose."

Sumire blinked when she heard those words. Did somebody tell Yuhi about that? The kiss she shared with Arashi before she left.

She shouldn't give him too much leeway. "Who knows? It was quite the romantic kiss under the cherry blossoms."

"A kiss under the cherry blossoms, eh? Well, I have better ideas."

The brunette doesn't get a chance to say anything to him

as Yuhi gently pulled her chin up with his hand and grabbed her waist with the other. Sumire looked at him and waited until their lips collided; first, he grazed her lips intending to tease her. He gradually applied more pressure until he finally stuck his tongue inside.

There was something gentle about the way he kissed her. She slipped her hands onto his shirt and tugged on the material. A hum of approval escaped Yuhi's lips, and she bore her nails underneath- feeling his skin. Yuhi also did the same. She felt the cold air brush against her stomach as Yuhi touched her breasts.

Before it could get any more heated though, they both see people approach from the corner. Sumire immediately pulled away from Yuhi. W-what was she doing there? It took her a moment to realize what just happened.

"How about that? A kiss under the winter stary night."

Eh, star— Sumire glanced up indeed to confirm her boyfriend's words. Right above them was a gorgeous night sky; the small sparkling white lights caught her attention. "Uwaahhh, it's so beautiful."

"Hey hey, no comment about our passionate kiss just now? Che."

Sumire chuckled at his expression and reached over to kiss his cheek, clearly surprising him. "Thank you, Yuhi."

"You know, I'm starting to think you're messing with me."

She blinks and tilts her head in confusion at his words. "I am?"

"You just admitted it. Well, that makes you a good woman."

Sumire smiles at his words, "What happened to the insults from last time?"

"Aah? Those? I've forgotten it already. Besides, I've seen enough now. Your beautiful Sumire, so beautiful." Yuhi trailed off. "-whether you stood on stage and sang or when you paint, even when you talk to someone. In my eyes you're always sparkling and shining so very brightly. Your stage was very impressive. Even if I'm jealous that it was because of Mamoru that your wings released. Those bitter emotions disappear when I think of your stage."

Her eyes widened when she heard those words. So that was what he thought of her stage during the festival?

It took her a moment before she finally replied to him. She did not know how to react to his kindness. "Thank you for the compliment Yuhi."

Even now, it is difficult for her to sincerely thank somebody. But things are getting better.

She will treasure everything he tells her.

"Silly girl. I will say them as plenty of times as you want. "Yuhi trails off. "You know back then, I didn't think I would continue with music. I was 'content' with just composing. I didn't want to get attached to another group last time. Touko and Morris betrayal aside, I realized that I became too attached when I was in that group. A person like me who is completely different than the rest of them.

One day I would end up hurting them with my actions. So when Touko and Morris betrayed me, I may have been shocked. But I understood right away, 'ah, so it's time now. 'Because I got caught up in my surroundings, I didn't properly take care of Touko. It's only natural that her feelings would sway towards someone else."

"But Yuhi, weren't you working hard for you to be with Touko-san? I think it's unfair for you to put the blame solely on yourself. Touko-san knew that you over-exhausted yourself because you were working towards a future with her. It's true that you probably overdid it slightly. But I don't see anything wrong with what you did. If she loved you, she would have waited for you."

Yuhi sighs deeply. "You and that positive mind set of yours. I wonder where it comes from. I don't remember your parents being so level-headed."

"Is it bad?"

"No, I've always liked that about you."

Wah wah, did he just say --- Yuhi, is he doing it on purpose? She really doesn't know anymore. Her heart won't stop beating. That's right, even if her actions may seem selfish to others. Her heart already chose this person. From the very moment they met, it could only be Terashima Yuhi for her.

"Honestly speaking, I don't know exactly why she cheated on Morris with me. If she felt unsatisfied and neglected, she could have easily reached out and told me that. She didn't have to date my best friend behind my back."

Even though she knew him longer than his ex-girlfriends, they spent all that time together. She couldn't aide him even though she was beside him.

Sumire wondered if those people knew. The truth was she watched Yuhi since a long time ago. Although she was dating Ren then, she still liked Yuhi. She could never directly help him. But during the times he had fallen asleep, she would warmly give him an embrace.

"Sorry." Yuhi suddenly said.

She looked at him, puzzled. Why did he suddenly apologize?

"Is this topic disturbing you? It's negative."

Sumire shook her head. "No, I am relieved. After all, you never spoke about your past with me. I more or less put the pieces together from what other people have said. But this is the first time I heard it from you."

The reason why Yuhi never told her before is undoubtedly that; because he doesn't want to worry her. He doesn't want to trouble her with even more problems when she already has a lot going on.

"My bad, I should have told you sooner."

She shook her head. "You did it for my sake. By not saying anything I would be able to focus on the matters troubling me. I would be able to focus on being able to help everyone else. I already knew it, a long time ago. When we were partners, you didn't want to burden me with any of your troubles. But you know Yuhi, since then I've always wanted to be a form of strength for you.

I went out with others then yes, but all I could think of was how I could help you. Perhaps I already knew. But, I wouldn't have realised it the way I was back then." She trails off and extends her free hand to extend her palm up to reach the sky. "Relationships are fickle, whether its relationships based on romantic affection, or family and friend. Nothing lasts forever and things come to an end much sooner then we think. Something like that, I don't have any need for it. That's why I was content with what we had. We were partners and had each other's backs, and everyday was fun. But there was always a line of distance. Something we couldn't cross."

"But you were curious about love, weren't you? Even if you saw it as something pointless, there were occasions where you crossed that line too."

Sumire smiles softly. "So you noticed that, rather of course you would. You were awake, weren't you, Yuhi?"

"I was, and I've thought it through. Do you think that if we got together then. We could avoid this current mess?"

Sumire nodded. "Yes, it would have. Were both to blame for being slow to realise everything. However, because we were young, then we can blame it on youth."

If they realized it, then the future would be different.

### **Eternal Melody 175 The correct path**

"Huh? But haven't you always been searching for the path that leads to the ending where everyone is happy?"

For a moment, Sumire looked at him, shocked. It seems like she has underestimated him more than she thought so initially. How come he knows that?

"Then, before I go into further details about why I said that. Why does Yuhi think that?"

Why is it that he knows so much about her? How come Yuhi can stir the emotions, she kept locked away? Even now, she still doesn't understand it very well. Why does this person know so much about her? It does not make any sense.

"Because you use to say it before, didn't you? ' . . The actors on stage cannot ignore their scripts and do as they wish. If they make a beautiful exit, I feel they fulfill their role.'"

"That's right, the actors on stage cannot ignore their scripts even if they want to."

This is destiny; the script predetermined. It cannot be changed.

"But that's a lie. You have already ignored the script in more ways than one. Perhaps from the start, you never intended to follow it. Because in the correct ending, you would have gotten together with Ichinose and not me. "

"Are you implying that an ending with Arashi is a tragedy and yours is 'happiness?'"

"No. It's reverse. I said it once before didn't that I'll write and act my ending. I shall write it out, or rather I'm in the middle of it right now. Whether it ends as a tragedy or not, I will create our future together. The correct ending was clearly with you and Ichinose, yet you still strayed from that and chose me. Does that not mean the correct path here is where your happiness lies? Sumire, do you love me?"

Really, this is exactly why. This is exactly why she held herself back for so long. She already noticed it a long time ago; that she was in love with you. Mamoru extended his hand out to her and showed her the possibilities of the world; she cannot be any more than grateful to him.

Arashi showed her the pureness and joy of being love. But it was indeed Terashima Yuhi, who taught her how no matter how much pain and separations you go through, as long as there is a deep love, there will be a connection. The truth was, she had already realized it.

"Sumire?"

"I love you, Yuhi. Saying this is embarrassing, and I can't keep still whenever I'm around you. I become frantic and nervous. I lose my calm composure so easily. But I feel like a burden has been lifted from my shoulders now. I want to be able to fly freely in the stary night sky. I want to walk hand in hand to a future with you."

She wants to keep aiming further and further. But it's useless to do that unless she has him with her. Isn't she becoming too dependent on him? But, this sort of feeling isn't bad. She doesn't want to discard him; she wants to treasure him.

"Just now, I said it didn't I? That I wouldn't like it if we realized our feelings back then?" At that, Yuhi nodded, and she continued. "That's because I believe it; the encounters I had with everyone else is something special. Of course, I saw our meeting as 'fate,' but how to put it. ..If we just got together like that without struggling, it would have been a pretty dull story, wouldn't it?"

"Encounters and meetings are what shapes a person, huh? I guess I'm also grateful for it. Sumire, I'll also aim for something higher and higher. Right now, there is something I can't tell you. But like before, will you wait until I'm ready to say it?"

"I will because I love you, Yuhi. I believe in you. Besides, I'm already used to waiting."

"Brat, that part was unnecessary." Yuhi moved a strand of hair away from her face. "So, you brought me outside because you forgot to buy something, right?"

Sumire nodded. "We need soy sauce."

Yuhi sighed. "We could get Atushi to buy it. It's cold." Yuhi pointed out.

She buried her face in his arms. "Yuhi-san, are you still cold?"

"You know if you do this with me, I can never say no." Yuhi deeply sighed as he patted her back. "Maybe it was a good thing that your visit to the SF did not go through that day."

Sumire blinked when she heard those words. Why is he talking about SF suddenly?

Right at that moment, she felt something metallic brush against her shoulder. Yuhi quickly wrapped his arms around her, but Sumire felt a scratch on her shoulder. Ah--? How could she not recognize it? It was a bullet.

He pulled her tightly into his hold and threw them both down on the ground.

"Don't look, Sumire."

"But what is--" She trailed off when she felt a scorching pain in her right eye.

Bthump, thump. The sound of her rapid heartbeat. She felt her entire body burn. It felt like she was in a sea of flames. She felt the sweat cling to her face, arms, shoulders, and legs.

"Sumire?! Hey?!"

"Yuhi..." Sumire said weakly. What is happening to her?

She hears the sound of approaching footsteps. Despite Yuhi's hold on her, she spotted a cloaked man with grey hair. A cold shudder ran down her body despite the burning sensation. What is this feeling? It feels like somebody is trying to stare deeply into her soul.

"The Queen?" The man mumbled.

"You two stay down!" A familiar voice bellowed. At that comment, her eyes widened when a rain of bullets rushed past.

The cloaked man remained unphased and dodged the bullets easily. But from the start, it did not seem like they were aimed at him. The bullets landed at the man's feet and formed a circle.

Sumire looked up and saw a man with purple-colored hair. Her eyes widened when she saw who it was. "Hino?"

Indeed it was none other than Hino; she could not mistake that purple-colored hair anywhere. But huh? Just now, those bullets that traveled so quickly - no, perfect aim?

### **Eternal Melody 176 I'm pregnant?**

Now that she thought it through, did Ru not mention something like this before in one of his unusual stories? Ru often rushed off and went somewhere. Whenever he came back, he would bring back stories from different lands.

Among them, Ru spoke about a man with an unusual ability. No matter how clumsy he aimed, it would still hit the target. Sumire did not see from the start how Hino aimed, but she could see now how bad he held his gun. He clearly has never used one before.

Does Hino have an ability too?

Yuhi pulled her to her feet. He took her to the minibus shelter nearby and whispered a few things in her ear. "Stay here."

"Yuhi?"

Yuhi turned to Hino and sighed. "If you're going to do this, can't you take it elsewhere?"

Hino kept his gaze on the man. "You should thank me; this person was after you. Your, lucky; he didn't charge into the bar."

"Well thanks I guess. If he charged in, somebody would have had his head anyway." Yuhi looked back at her. "Sumire, close your eyes and don't open it until I tell you."

I am not weak. I can fight too.

A voice whispered in her head. But she understood now was not the time for this. She reluctantly closed her eyes. The moment she saw nothing but darkness, though, Sumire regretted it. She hated closing her eyes when she was still conscious. It would remind her of her dream, and she would end up panicking.

The same applied to this situation too. It did not help that she was standing up. The entire time she felt something grab onto her leg and dragging her down.

This was why she disliked sleeping unless she knew she would pass out immediately. Closing her eyes and trying to sleep did not work with her. Her subconscious and consciousness would play games with her, and by the time she realized what was happening, the situation would be irreversible. Seconds turned into minutes quickly.

She could hear everything from more gunfire, to a strange gust of heavy wind. The skies rumbled every time the strange wind appeared—the movements of that cloaked man. Perhaps Yuhi should have told her to block her ears out too.

After hearing those sounds for a long time, eventually, she felt somebody pick her up. That person placed a gentle kiss on her temple. "Open your eyes."

Sumire hesitated but did so. She opened her eyes and discovered that the landscape changed. On the ground were traces of the fight that just took place. Traces of gunpowder and Sumire glanced over at the trees.

A scythe? A large dent like slices on the center of several trees. She tilted her head, puzzled when she saw that sight. What on earth is going on here?

"You okay?" Yuhi asked.

"I am--" Sumire sentence felt short when she felt the throbbing pain again. She thought it went away already, but it suddenly started up. This time around, it was louder, her rapid heartbeat and her unsteady breathing—the scorching pain in her right eye.

Yuhi parted her bangs and brushed their forehead together. "--hanyou fever." He mumbled. Despite the mumbling, she managed to catch the last two words that left his lips.

She looked at him, puzzled at the unfamiliar term. Hanyou fever?

"Hey, Hino, come back with us."

At that comment, the purple-haired man frowned, he walked over to them and grabbed her hand.

"Ouch..." Hino replied as he pulled away. "Hey Yuhi, Sano's family hospital is nearby here. Why don't we go there?"

"I don't trust the Nagawa family one bit."

"But it is one of the only hospitals that deal with this kind of thing. Relax, I will come with you."

Sumire did not understand what either of them was talking about. She suspected for a long time that Yuhi knew what was wrong with her. But it seems like Hino knew about it too. Exactly what is wrong with her? Sumire wanted to speak, but she felt herself gradually lose consciousness.

.....

Hospital - Several hours later -

When she next woke up, she found a wire on her arm attached to an IV drip—the familiar white walls and ceilings from a typical hospital room.

"How are you feeling?"

The first voice she heard when she woke up was not the one she wanted to hear. But she recognized it. "Sano?"

Dressed in a doctor's gown was Nagawa Sano. He held a clipboard in his hands and pen. "It's me."

"Yuhi?"

"I sent your boyfriend to wait outside, and he was far too loud. How are you feeling?"

How is she feeling... It took a moment for those words to even register in her head. She felt terrible; she couldn't feel the strength in her body; her arms and legs did not feel like hers. She felt paralyzed, and her throat felt dry.

"I will guess you feel bad from that silence."

"What happened?"

"You encountered the man Hino was chasing down, and that person's ability affected you," Sano explained. "Normally, something like that would not affect a normal person, but..."

Sano did not say anything, but Sumire knew what he was getting at. A normal person would be somebody without evolved genetics. But her? It seems like she has something. Ru knew that, and that was why he did his best to protect her from harm.

"Don't stress over it; it will harm the child in your belly."

For a moment, Sumire froze. She thought she heard things.

"What...child?"

Sano looked at her, puzzled. "You didn't know? Your pregnant Sumire."

Is she pregnant? Sumire glanced at her stomach, but she saw no signs.

"It's Yuhis?" That was the only thing that could come to mind. If it were that person, her stomach would be larger.

At that comment, Sano's gaze dimmed, but he shook his head. "Unless you slept with Terashima five months ago, then it can't be his."

Five months ago? An image of that rainy day where Ru appeared at her house after their fight appeared in her head. The words he said and his gentle touches.

Rus child? Sumire could not believe it. But why would Sano lie to her? He would not do that now.

"The reason why that man's ability affected you is because of your child; it reacted to defend you."

"Is--"

Sano cut her off. "The child is okay. But it seems to also be an ability user."

Right now, so many things were happening. So many things revealed one by one. Not only is she pregnant with Rus child, but this one also has an ability?

**Eternal Melody 177 Come back to me**



Ru's child.. that sentence kept echoing in her head like some trance, and she felt the tears well up in her eyes. Oh no, this isn't good. She does not want Sano of all people to see her like this.

But, right now, she cannot hold her tears back. Right at that moment, the windows burst open, and a strong gust of wind blew. But there was something gentle about this wind. It lifted her off the bed, and soon she was in a familiar person's embrace.

"Yuhi..."

"Sorry." Yuhi hugged her tightly. "I should have been the first person to tell you since I noticed it, but I didn't due to my feelings. I thought if you knew it was his, then you would leave me."

Despite her weakened state, how could she miss the fear in his eyes? His trembling shoulders? She wanted to scold him for doubting her, but right now, that did not matter at all.

Just now, she was shocked and afraid. There is another life inside her, but the child will not have a father, she would have to take care of the child alone. No matter how mature she is for her age, she is still young. She did not know what to do...

Yuhi kissed her eyelids. "But that is not important. Let me help you, Sumire."

She already knew what he meant by those words. He would help her raise the child. Even though Yuhi is just as clueless as her, he said he would help her out.

"Close the window already. She will catch a cold." An icy voice destroyed this moment.

Sumire recalled Sano was still in the room. She could not miss the hostile look in his eyes. She quickly left Yuhis hold. "Um, doctor. Could I eat something? Or am I not allowed to.."

"You can eat. I will get them to bring the food here."

"Thank you."

Yuhi wrapped his arms around her waist. "Your still unsteady on your feet, let me help you."

At that comment, she hears Sano tap his pen impatiently against the clipboard. Yuhi helped her back onto the bed and closed the window. He grabbed the chair from the side and sat down. Her sweat fell when she looked back at the two. What on earth is this situation?

Sano is the doctor here? Sumire knew that his family ran a hospital business. But they mainly focused on business, so only some of the branch families ran the hospitals. Something must have changed. He often complained to her in the past that his relatives are unreasonable.

Why do I have to study both business and medicine? Do they think it is that easy?

Sano quickly changed the drip and attached it to her arm again. Sumire noted that he was careful not to touch her arm.

She blinked, puzzled at his actions. Since she opened her eyes earlier, something seemed strange about him. Her gaze fell towards Yuhi, who kept looking at his phone with a frown on his face. "What's wrong?"

"I need to step out for a bit and make a few calls." Yuhi sighed. "Do you mind?"

Sumire shook her head. "It's okay." She felt content and at ease after what just happened.

Yuhi looked very reluctant. He leaned forward and kissed her again. "Are you sure?"

"Yes. But hurry back, okay? You have to feed me as punishment."

"Sounds good." With those words said, Yuhi quickly rushed off. She watched him until she could no longer see his back. The moment he left, she turned to Sano.

"Could you stop behaving like a child?"

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Your behaving like a child. You weren't upset about me being pregnant, but Yuhi's decision just now, right? It is up to me who will help me with this child."

Each word she said with authority, she does not want this man to think he has an advantage over her.

In the next second, Sano has her arms pinned against the bed frame. He hovered over her with a menacing look on his face. He loosened his tie. "I told you before not to provoke me. Do you think just because I am nicer these days, I will allow you to step over me. Do you think I will allow you to continue cheating?"

"Sano, I—" Sumire paused when she saw the look in his eyes. She wanted to say that she no longer belonged to him. But it would be far too dangerous for her.

"Good girl." Sano brought his lips to her ear. "Do you know how crazy you drive me? How dare you find somebody else. Did you think you could escape me? Sumire you're already mine."

These words, she occasionally heard them in the past. After her relationship with Sano became strained. Sumire quickly noticed that he often said such possessive words. Sumire was not the type of person to judge, so she didn't think much of it. But such possessiveness and desire. She wondered if he was like this from the very start.

"Sumire." He said gently. "I am serious, so come back already. I will treat you well. You're pregnant now too. No matter how good you are at taking care of yourself, you cannot raise a child alone."

"I have Yuhi."

"Be realistic. Terashima has his career and his education. Do you think he will throw that away to take care of you and the child? He already has problems taking care of you now, let alone the future. His career is on the rise, and he is very successful. Do you want to destroy it?"

Each of his words echoed in her head, and she clenched her fist. Just a few minutes ago, she felt happy when Yuhi said those words to her. But Sano is right, isn't he? Yuhi is older than her, but he is still young, he has his entire life ahead of him. Could she destroy that just for the sake of her happiness?

Sumire understood how unreasonable that sounded. Did Yuhi consider all those things before he said it? She knew how reckless he was, but would he say such words without thinking it through? Maybe she

ought to accept Sano again? But for what? Only to be abused and thrown away the moment she gets too attached?

She already made a promise before.

### **Eternal Melody 178 If**

She made a promise not to go through that same pain again. Why is this man trying so hard? Does he genuinely just want somebody to possess and claim as his own?

There are many other girls out there who would agree to be his plaything for the sake of his money. There are girls out there who are purer than her and would love him regardless. So why on earth would he continue going after her?

To her surprise, Sano suddenly let her go, not before kissing her cheek. The unfamiliar contact of his lips made her shudder.

Sano picked up the clipboard from the ground. "I know you would rather have somebody else. But I will be your doctor during your stay."

"Okay."

"Also, I meant what I said, so think it through." With those words said, he exited the room.

The moment he left, Sumire sighed deeply. The sensation of his lips on her skin still lingered. She weakly sat up and placed her hand on her neck. It does not make sense to her, after all. Why is he behaving like that? An irking feeling in the back of her mind told her that she was wrong all this time.

Did she make a mistake somewhere and didn't realize it? Sure at the start, she blamed herself for Sano dumping her. She felt so much self hate and self-loathing. But after she settled her feelings, she started to blame him instead.

Maybe she is missing something. Sumire hesitantly took out her phone and was about to do some research when the doors opened.

It was Hino, his hair seemed slightly messy, and he had kiss marks on his neck. Sumire blinked. "Did you go out and have fun?"

"Like hell," Hino muttered as he sat down on the chair. He extended his hand out and brought out a bouquet.

Her eyes brightened. "How beautiful!"

"Yeah."

"Thank you, Hino."

"Did Sano do something just now? He left a mark on your neck."

At that comment, she put the flowers down. She placed her hand on her neck and turned to the bedside table's mirror to confirm his words. A troubled look appeared on her face when she saw that. "Yuhi-san will get angry."

"Your reaction is low."

"I dated Sano for quite some time. I know his behavior patterns and mood swings very well. He often did this in the past." Sumire kept sighing. It seems like that man has not changed. But just now, she saw something in his eyes.

"I see."

Sumire raised her eyebrows when she saw how quiet he was. Why is everybody around her acting so strange today? "Did you know I was pregnant too?" She decided to change the topic as swiftly as she could.

"Yeah. I have an older sister; when she was pregnant, she showed the same symptoms as you. Also," He looked down at the ground. "When I investigated you, I found out."

At that comment, Sumire looked at him even more puzzled. How did he find that out during his investigation? It's not like she ever visited the hospital and left such records— visit the hospital? She visited it plenty, but she did so when she checked up on Ru. Who would occasionally tell her to do some blood tests, and get some other tests done?

Back then, she assumed that he only did it because he worried about her health. Could it be that he knew? How could he, the short amount of time when they did it, and his accident wasn't too far away. How did he think to check those things?

But if it were like that, then it makes sense. "No wonder you treat me like a gentleman when you're cruel to other girls."

Hino rubbed the back of his neck. "Even if you weren't, I would still treat you well. Your not a bad person, after all."

She chuckled when she heard the end of his sentence. Indeed it seems like she has underestimated this man a great deal. But there is plenty of time to fix that and learn things about him.

"So, how do you feel?"

"It doesn't feel real to me." Sumire sighed. "If I am what four months pregnant, why does it not show? I don't understand this very well. How come I didn't notice?"

"Maybe because you never thought about it?"

It cant be that simple. Sure, a lot happened in the last few months, but is this not too much?

"Sumire, you went through severe mental trauma and strain after the incident. Of course, you wouldn't think of being pregnant. It was hard for you just to survive every day." Hino trailed off and extended his hand out. He patted her hair. "Don't blame yourself for not noticing, okay?"

Whenever Hino pats his hair like this, it reminds her of her elder brother. He was cold-hearted to others, and he did not hold back against her either. But she often recalls moments where he would pat her hair to comfort her.

Her older brother, huh? It seems strange thinking of him now. After the accident, Sumire tried not to think of her family. She did not attend the funeral, either. She already decided that she would strengthen her resolve.

.From now on she is alone, there is nobody else there for her. No matter how close she becomes with other people, they will never compare to her family. The things her family could do for her, nobody else will be able to do it.

Despite the strained relationship and atmosphere at times, those people were her family. They let her live under their roof, gave her food, clothes, and anything she wanted. They gave her everything, but in the end, she could never repay them.

'If only I spoke up back then. If I told them what I really thought, would my situation change?'

"Say Hino, where's your family?"

"My family?" Hino repeated. "Right now there's only Yuhi."

Sumire immediately understood. So this person is going through a bad family situation too. "You see Yuhi as your family?"

"Is that bad?"

### **Eternal Melody 179 I have to face the truth**

Before Sumire could ask him anything else, the doors opened, revealing Yuhi carrying a bag. Sumire blinked, but then she caught a whiff of the items. "Give me."

Yuhi chuckled. "You still have a craving for these, huh?"

"Yuhi," Hino said sharply.

"Pregnant women get cravings. Sumire craves these pastries the same time every day."

Sumire tilted her head confused. Is that why she gets cravings for random things recently? Well, whatever it was, she opened the bag up, and inside was the usual pastries.

"Don't eat so fast; there are plenty."

"Yuhi." Sumire extended one towards him.

He bent down and ate the piece of pie from her fingers. Her eyes widened at this action of his. Thump-thump, Sumire felt the rapid sound of her heartbeat again. It felt stupid getting nervous, but she glanced over at Yuhi and saw a foolish smile.

This is him; he is different. Is it truly fine to accept him and give him everything? If she were to do that and he left her like all the others did, what would she do then? She still had her doubts. But one of the reasons she accepted him was Ru. Ru would not allow her to go to somebody who did not treasure and care for her.

Sumire buried her face in his arms, dropping the other pie she was about to eat.

"Ah, what are you doing? That's a waste..."

"Yuhi."

"Hino, leave us alone for a moment."

Hino stood up and left without saying another word. She could not miss the clouded look in his eyes. Maybe she shouldn't have asked him that. But she wanted to test him a bit.

The moment Hino left, she pulled Yuhi onto the bed until he was on top of her. "My dear, what kind of games are you playing?"

"Mm." Sumire traced his lips with her hands. "I like it when you make an effort to spoil me."

Yuhi sighed. "Well, I wanted to get some fresh air and think for a bit."

"What were you thinking?"

"How to make that pie, so you don't have to bother me to go there."

Sumire laughed when she heard his words. Honestly, this person. She sat up and wrapped her arms around his neck, and she buried her face there.

"Yuhi..."

"Yeah?" She felt his large hands gently caress her back. "What is it?"

"I want you to know that I really like you." She liked him for the longest time, but she could not say anything. "Even if I become a monster, I will still like you."

Eventually, she has to face it, the truth.

"I know already, don't be so silly. Finish your food up."

Sumire paused when she heard his sensible reply. "Yuhi-san, here I am trying to make a move on you, but you're pushing me away?"

At that comment, Yuhi raised his eyebrow and sighed. "Why are you even making a move on me? You need to rest."

Sumire pouted. "Fine then." She let go of him and buried her face under the blankets instead.

At that comment, she suddenly heard movement. Yuhi wrapped his arms around her. "You know I am just nervous, Sumire. What am I supposed to do if you act this way?"

Nervous? Yuhi is? It never crossed her mind that Yuhi would get nervous. After all, he is as equally as bold as her. He is equally as bold and equally as clumsy, honestly, what are they both doing right now? It does not make any sense anymore.

She can't let him get any more involved. Sumire tried to push it to the back of her mind. But it was hard for her to forget about that blood-stained letter. Shortly after the accident and she locked herself up in Rus home, that letter - no several blood-stained letters arrive.

This was one of the reasons why she did not want Yuhi to get involved in this. It seems like this is more serious than anything they faced before; she also recalled Shin's words. That organization is openly targeting her. He learned that from his recent job at the SF.

If she continues to get attached to Yuhi like this, there is no doubt that he will get hurt. But if she were to let him go, won't he do something careless just to get her attention?

Sumire turned around and buried her face in his arms. Yuhi wrapped his arms around her waist and drew her closer.

"I understand that you don't want me in danger, Sumire."

Huh? Her eyes widened when she heard his words.

"But you should know something. The reason why Hino is sheltering me is because I did something stupid in the past. Something that will potentially harm me, that's why it is stupid for you to protect me. I know your thinking of my safety, but the people I offended are just as bad."

Sumire blinked. Exactly who did Yuhi offend? This man, what is he doing when she isn't with him? Back then, she did not have the kind of relationship with Yuhi like she does now. It would be difficult for her to intervene in his matters.

"The organization after you, and the one who hunted me down several years ago are most likely related. But even then we do not have enough information. If we act carelessly and the general public finds out about superpowers amid investigating, there will be a riot."

Indeed, this isn't a simple matter. But that is exactly why, why she has to get involved. If it is something complicated, she should be able to solve it. Up till now, that is how things have worked.

"What will you do?"

For now, she could not reply, almost like he understood. Yuhi brushed his lips against her forehead.

"Sumire, I don't mind you having Mamoru's child. Bit," His lips curve to a devilish smile. "-- you'll have more with me, right?"

Sumire looked at him, dumbfounded. 'He's so shameless!'

"Yuhi-san your--" Her sentence fell short when he pushed her down onto the bed.

"I want to kiss you. Will you let me?"

"Why are you even asking?"

Yuhi kissed her forehead gently. "I don't want you to hate me."

"I won't hate you. I like you."

"So, I hear."

He then gave her what he called an adult-like kiss. Strange enough, she didn't mind it.

**Eternal Melody 180 A treasure**

Following morning, Iro Road High School

"I already told you to go back to Star town!" Sumire exclaimed. "So why on earth am I hearing that your having a concert here?"

The person on the other end of the phone is Tachibana Masaru.

"Lady your so cruel, why can't it be here?"

Sumire sighed. "Are you doing this on purpose?"

There was a pause followed by laughter. Sumire clenched her fist. Whenever she spoke to this person, she would end up getting angry.

"Anyhow, lady, something exciting will happen soon. We will see each other then." With those words said, he cut the line off.

That person--! Ah, forget it; there is no use getting mad. Besides her gaze darted towards her stomach, it will not be good for the little one. She still found it surreal.

Sumire felt herself getting drowsy and looked around for a quiet area. She found some benches right at the side and quickly sat down. Yuhi hasn't told the school about it, but if they find out, the situation could escalate.

Should she find an excuse to take leave from school for a while? She could ask Atsuro. He is definitely around, and Shin is always sneaking around these days. But if she were to ask him, it would mean having to meet with him. That is something she wants to avoid for as long as possible.

Sumire pulled out her sketchpad from her bag and sighed. When she went out the other day, she thought she saw him and managed to capture the back of someone similar. If he is coming to see her without saying a word, she will get mad too.

But does she even have the right to meet with him after saying such hurtful sounding things? This is too complicated. But if it is that person he should know, shouldn't he? Shin mentioned a key to Rus investigation notebook. He said no matter where they looked; they could not find it.

A key, huh? It felt like she may have seen something like that before, but right now, she could not think where. She felt very tired, and she wanted to see Yuh-- her thoughts broke off when she saw an approaching figure.

"Mmmmm, hey." Yuhi took a seat beside her and slumped his head on her shoulders. "Five minutes."

Sumire laughed. "Good boy, you went to class."

"Where were you?"

"Mmm, I got asked to help the freshman." Sumire caressed his soft black hair. "I missed you Yuhi."

"Well, if that's the case." He lifted his head and cupped her cheeks. "Let's do something exciting."

"Like?"

"Like me kissing you senseless."



"Alright."

Yuhi blinked. "You sure?"

"I said I'm fine with it. Don't make me repeat myself."

Yuhi lowered his face and gently kissed her lips. She wonders what this person is trying to do to her, she goes crazy when she is around him. Then again maybe it's okay to go crazy and lose it for awhile. Since Ru passed away, she hasn't had time to relax. But ever since she met Yuhi again, she is gradually returning to how she was before.

If it's this person, he will accept everything about her. 'I already knew that from the beginning though.' But due to the Sano incident, she ended up not trusting others.

"Yuhi, stop for a moment."

At that comment he drew back. "You okay?"

"I just need to catch my breath." She trailed off. "--and remember were outside." Sumire didn't realize the cafeteria was visible from here until half way.

Yuhi sighed. "Well, that part doesn't bother me."

Sumire felt her cheeks grow hot understanding what he meant. "Dummy."

"Yes, I'm a dummy. But lately, your becoming too popular. That news article was a bad idea. Now many people come here just to get a glimpse of you. Most of them being guys."

He seems genuinely bothered by it. Even though she won't look at other guys.

"Sumire."

"Mmmm?"

She likes burying her face into his neck. This way she can smell him -- she paused in mid-thought. 'I probably shouldn't say this out loud.'

"I know you're getting comfortable. But your phone is ringing."

Sumire tu

rned her attention to the phone on her side, then back to Yuhi. She quickly switched it off. "Mmmm, continue?"

"Such a selfish girl."

She likes him so much.

"Quit sniffing me for a second."

"But it's nice."

Sumire quickly realized what she said but Yuhi didn't make fun of her. "Yuhi...I like you so much."

"Your so honest these days." Yuhi gently caresses her hair. "Do you need anything?"

"I'm not craving anything today."

Yuhi kissed her lips. "Not even me?"

She leaned forward and kissed him back. "I do crave something."

He laughed. "So good. Well, I am glad that you're being more open with me. I told you before that you can rely on me and stuff. But, also you can do whatever you want to me too."

"Whatever I want?" Sumire mumbled.

"Mmm, whatever you want love."

She does want to try something. But unfortunately they are in school so it will have to wait. Yuhi however brushed his lips against her ear.

"I don't mind."

Lately it feels like her desires towards this person has increased a lot. 'What has changed?'

"Sumire, don't kiss me there." At some point she found herself kissing his neck.

"Nnnhh, but I want to."

"Damn, what are you doing to me? Don't do this stuff Sumire, you'll make me want you."

"I'm sorry, is it bad?"

"It's not like that." Yuhi trailed off and gently ran his hands through her back. "I just don't want you to regret anything."

"But I like you."

'In my head I'm trying to remind myself. Yuhi went out with plenty of other girls before. So it's normal that he is experienced.' Thump, thump - Sumire felt her heart beat again. But this time around this beating felt painful. What is this?

Her thoughts broke off when Yuhi let's go of her. "Sorry, let me answer this call for a second."

Sumire nodded.

"Don't give me that crap, I told you to leave me alone. Hah? I don't care if Touko sent you."

Despite Yuhi talking in English, Sumire immediately understood when she heard the last sentence. 'Touko?' Isn't that Yuhi's ex girlfriend.

Yuhi sighed. "We've already broken up. Whoever I date now has nothing to do with her. I can paint the way I want yo without restrictions." Yuhi scoffed. "So why would I regret things?"

At that comment Sumire extended her hand out. To her surprise Yuhi pulled her into his arms.

"My new girlfriend is cuter, smarter and ten times better at art than her. So, please tell me what is there to regret?"

Cute? Sumire blinked at the unfamiliar term.

With a few more exchanges Yuhi angrily hung up the phone. However his anger vanished when she held him tightly.

"Sorry about that."

"Your ex girlfriend?"

"Saw the news and wanted us to break up. She said something like 'The Yuhi I know doesn't paint such gentle pictures.' She criticized it a lot."

Sumire paused. "What's wrong with painting gentle pictures?"

"For her it's a sign of weakness."

A sign of weakness?

"Think of it like this. When your singing, you try to convey your current emotions. It's the same with art. People who paint gentle pictures are usually very kind hearted. For Touko, being kind means people can step all over you. I don't disagree with that logic, I've had it happen to me before. The moment I let my guard down, people used and threw me away like garbage."

Sumire tried to look at his expression but Yuhi wouldn't let her.

"I don't want that to ever happen again. So I painted dark images that showed how cruel my mindset. Powerful pictures that would frighten people."

"Yuhi..."

"But, I want that to change. Even if people try to take advantage of me now. I will know I'm not garbage."

"How will you know?"

"Because I have a treasure at my side."