

Melody 291

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 291

Chapter 291: Beating of my heart Part 3

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Jun kept staring at him, thinking he would change his mind and say it was a joke. But there was nothing but a serious look in his eyes.

"There is no man out there who will be happy when the girl they like has the child of another man."

Indeed, he thought that Terashima would play the supportive boyfriend role and pretend to be okay with it. So far, the man has not shown any signs of displeasure regarding the child.

"But this isn't her fault, and the fault is mine for leaving her alone for so long. I should have stayed by her side instead of returning to Tokyo. No, I should have come to see her much sooner."

Jun could sense the regret in his tone as sadness appeared in his eyes, and for a moment, Jun froze. So this person can also make that kind of expression? Whenever he watched the man on Tv, all he saw was a brave and confident person. That look in his eyes is very familiar, and it resembles the look on Sumire-san's eyes.

For the first time, he understood something immediately without much analysis.

This person and Sumire-san are the same.

"So you see, I have no right to judge her for falling in love with another man."

Indeed this person is genuinely different.

There is another reason why he came to Tokyo, half his reason was Ibuki Sumire, but the other half was because of this person. Jun wanted to see with his own eyes regarding the man named Terashima Yuhi.

When he heard word that Sumire-san was changing because of him and getting better, Jun did not believe it. How can that be? When he last saw her, she was in a terrible state. But when that news article came about regarding her school festival and even the videos, Jun noticed.

Indeed there is something different about her now. The main catalyst for that change, Jun wanted to meet Terashima in person. Before he could get another word out, Sumire appeared with a large bag in her hands.

"I was only going to buy drinks, but I saw some sales and bought other stuff too."

"Gee, don't run; you will drop it."

Sumire paused for a moment before she extended the bag out. "Then half."

There was something about how the girl said that, but Jun could swear that he saw flowers around her again.

"Kira, do you have some water?"

Jun pulled out a bottle from his bag and passed it to him. Yuhi immediately tipped the bottle over his head.

"Wah-wait Yuhi-san?"

"Damn, I still feel hot."

At that comment, Jun watched as her face slowly turned red. "Wah- I didn't do anything. Are you stupid?"

Yuhi flicked her forehead. "You carry everything."

"How mean!"

"Kira, join us for a meal."

"Ah, right? Jun-kun, come with us."

"That smile is different." But what is this strange feeling? She seems so happy, and yet why does he get this bad feeling? Perhaps he is wrong.

....

At the akagaumi bar.

Hamano Atushi was there waiting alongside a man called Jae. The latter did not have much data, but Jun intended to start collecting information. After all, this man is one of the rare few that Terashima Yuhi calls a friend. Currently, Sumire-san was finishing the final preparations for the meal.

"So what do you think of our King and Princess?" Atushi asked as he placed a drink in front of him.

"They get along, and they have mutual feelings."

There were a lot of things he wanted to say, but this is the best way to simplify everything he saw. Just watching them interact briefly, Jun understood.

"They also stuff you with PDA." Atushi sighed.

The definition for PDA is public display of affection. He knew what it was, of course. Jun thought of how they greeted each other. Even though a bunch of people blocked his way, he could guess what they did. To think they would do something like that in public?

"King, didn't you have work with that pretty lady?"

At that comment, a menacing aura wrapped around the brunette haired girl. "I noticed that you were a bit more dressed up than usual but what is that about a girl?"

If looks could kill then, Terashima would be dead now. It did not help how Sumire-san was polishing the knife in her hands with a cloth.

"Hey, listen." Yuhi calmly took the knife from her hands and hugged her. "The reason I finished so quickly is because I refused."

"Refused?" She eyed him with suspicion, but Jun noticed that she was playing with Terashima's hands.

"Well, such things involve getting close, right? Female models have a bad habit of going overboard. I don't want you to get upset, and I hate the idea of getting near another woman."

At that, Sumire clung to Terashima. "Then Yuhi-san, I will have to reward you later."

Sumire-san still has a bad habit of teasing people, but this is different. Indeed it seems like he was right to listen to that person.

"Right, what should I ask you for?"

"Uh." She laughed awkwardly. "On second thoughts, maybe I am too tired."

"Sumire-chan, I think we are missing something."

"Oh, your right!" Sumire quickly took her apron off. "Then I will go out quickly."

"I will-" Yuhi trailed off. "Rather Kira go with her."

Sumire's gaze softened as she leaned forward and lightly kissed Terashima. "I will be quick."

....

It was quite cold when they exited the bar. But Sumire wore several layers thanks to Terashima and Hamanos fussing. He wondered if the latter still had feelings for Sumire. Since they left the bar, though, the girl got into several accidents.

Still, isn't she quite reckless?

The issue earlier added by her almost getting run over and tripping over too. Jun sweat drops, he knew she was clumsy, but it is something else to this extent. Even so, whenever he is with her, a warmth seems to spread from his heart. A warm light that he doesn't understand.

But he wants to see more and more of it. He wants to see more of that light.

"Thank you for being by my side."

That time he understood full well what those words meant in the script. However, he knew he wouldn't have come to a decision had it not been for her.

"You will fall..."

The brown-haired girl was currently standing on the wall area, the vast ocean on the other side.

Sumire chuckles. "Don't worry, and I do this all the time."

Jun doesn't say anything. She does like doing everything at her own pace. But this person, out of the rest of them, is undoubtedly experiencing the most sadness.

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Chapter 292: Beating of my heart Part 4

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When Tsueno Mamoru passed away, he did not think much of it. After all, he and that man were not close. He was just somebody his friends knew, that was all. But when Jun saw how everybody around him was so badly affected, he had to get involved.

"The whispers of the wind bring a smile to my face.

I pray that these feelings will reach you someday.

Shaking a tiny bud in the morning sun

I closed my eyes and made a wish softly.

The emotions I cannot voice pain me.

Is it okay if I showed you my true self?

If only I could sing with the wind, and fly together with it for always,

How nice it would be. The sky's beautiful.

The whispers of the wind bring a smile to my face.

I pray that these feelings will reach you someday." Sumire sang.

Her voice is really good. It's on a completely different level than there's. He listened to it, her one shot CD debut. The cover didn't have her face but her back facing the ocean. It gave off a mysterious feeling to him.

That last line, feelings reaching someone, huh?

That feeling during the last election, an overwhelming feeling he didn't know existed in him, emerged. Yes, he was sure everyone in the hall heard it too. People who heard her performance there, people who were there, will surely have felt that sensation. Ever since then, something has changed within him.

He still observed people and collected data about them, but something has changed.

"You asked Terashima to say that beforehand. Why did you do that?" Jun asked.

"Aha, you caught me." She laughed lightly.

Jun nods. "I knew about it from the very beginning."

"As expected. But Jun-kun, you didn't ask me till now? That's different."

Indeed, normally he would directly confront her. "You're different now," Jun muttered. "You seem freer."

Sumire laughed. "I wondered why you were giving me that odd look. Mm, I suppose something has changed. My mind feels a lot more calmer these days, and I no longer have as many nightmares as before. I am sure the reason why things are like this now is because of Yuhi."

"They haven't disappeared completely?"

"It seems I am cursed."

"That is not a good joke."

The girl only laughed as a reply. So she still has those horrible nightmares? How does she cope with that pain? It must be suffocating.

"When Yuhi goes on tour again, I will be lonely."

Jun looked up at this and glanced at the girl back. He could not see her expression but sensed her uncertainty.

"It was normal for me to be alone back then. I often said say it before that friendships do not last and we shouldn't count on it, since if we depend on it too much, we will fall apart. I did not want something superficial. However, after I met everyone that changed, that's why maybe I will be okay now."

"Maybe" isn't reassuring at all! Jun wanted to shout out, but he kept it to himself, knowing how out of character it was for him.

Even if she says it like that, she is most-likely uncertain. Jun wanted to say it, but the words wouldn't leave his lips.

"Did you decide properly?"

"Huh...maybe."

Alright, now he was very worried.

"Maybe isn't a proper answer, remember?"

"Oh." Sumire trailed off. "Right, it's a placeholder. Thanks for spotting it."

Here she is having her fun again. Will she really be okay?

Jun sighed. "You know people like you end up ruining themselves."

He didn't want to say it in that sense, but he said this for her own good. After all, if she is not certain,, maybe she shouldn't have chosen the venue quickly. There is still some time left after all. Is she really okay with it? He wished he could see the expression on her face right now.

He pauses in mid-thought. If he could see it, would he be able to tell? No, he knew that even if he could see her current expression, it would make no difference.

"Ruin myself, huh? I like that. It sounds dramatic."

Of course, she takes it in this manner. This girl it is hard to tell what she is thinking.

"You should take this more seriously." Jun paused when the brunette stopped and turned her attention to the left side.

On that side, there was nothing but tall buildings in the far distance and a mid-length river.

The buildings blocked it.

The buildings blocked the sky on purpose. As if trying to ensure that nobody gets lost and caught up in their thoughts.

"Then if I do that, will I end up at the end of the world and meet the person I want to meet."

Jun's eyes widened, just now when she said it. It seemed like he could see it. Even if it wasn't clear, all the colors blending into one like a single color. Sumire perhaps what she is looking for is... His thoughts broke off when he saw her look over at him.

"Hmm perhaps, but you know what kind of person I am full well. I can't exactly say my parents "raised" me well since they were always busy most of the time. Ah, it's not like I blame them. I get it that they had responsibilities dealing with the people and that I couldn't be selfish about it. I understood that well. In the end, I am a pragmatic person, my brother raised me, and even then, he's not exactly the best role model, you know?"

Sumire's brother, huh? Jun had only met him once, only once. But that was enough for him to figure it out, figure out how much he cared for her. It was something he never got round to mentioning to Sumire. While they're on the topic now, now would be a good time to say it. This may be the only opportunity he will get to say this. But for some reason, he is hesitating.

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Chapter 293: Beating of my heart Part 5

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"So I hear from the others."

"Yeah, and I heard too that he's been snooping around here as of late. He went on about wanting to see me and all that."

Wait, wait, wait, is that guy around?

She turned to him then. A weak smile appeared on her face.

"Honestly, on that matter, I don't know what to do. It seems like he heard about my upcoming life and will be coming to see it as well. I have avoided it this entire time, but it's not like I can do it forever. In the first place, avoiding isn't something you can do for a long time. Especially in a small city like this." Sumire trailed off as she turned back to look at the river.

But he still had a good view of her face from where he stood. An indescribable look on her face once again yet seemed to fit at the right moment.

"Will you try to escape?"

Sumire chuckles lightly. "If only I could."

"It's simple, you know? You can just not show up tomorrow and hide away somewhere. Take the train to another city for the day and then come back when he is gone."

What was he even suggesting? Such an illogical and reckless plan is not like him at all.

It sounds like he is making a foolish excuse again. When he is with this girl, all his logic and calm composure immediately vanish.

What does she mean by that?

"I understand."

What does she expect him to say to that? What is that she wants? Numerous questions flashed through his head.

"Yeah, I could do that. But you know something like that isn't going to work."

His thoughts broke off when she suddenly got off the wall and hugged him. His eyes widened. "Ah, I shouldn't be doing this. You're a big shot idol; after all, you will get caught."

Jun tightens his grip around her. "I...I don't...care about that."

"I see, as expected, Jun-kun you're still this way after all. But that's fine, that's alright. So let me answer your question, you know that even if I do want to run away. Because I am so stubborn, I won't do something like that. Since I am stubborn, I can't do it. After all, I already made my mind up a long time to enter a concert again and give it a second chance. Back then, I received a lot of help from you; you supported me a lot then. Sure Nao, Masato was entering then too. However, I felt like I received the most support from you."

Her voice is like a gentle whisper, something similar to a symphony of colors. He didn't need to have color synesthesia to see it.

Sumire pulls away from him then. "Besides, didn't I just say it? A transient escape is not something that will last long."

....

It was quite late when they returned since they took several detours because Sumire-san kept rushing off. After the meal, it did not take long before it was dark. Sumire insisted on him staying the night since the mansion is on the other side of town.

"Sorry about this, there aren't any rooms except the one Sumire stays in with me," Yuhi said as he rearranged the couch to make it comfortable.

"I do not mind," Jun interjected. "Was there something else?"

He finds it hard to believe that Terashima stayed behind just to rearrange the couch.

Yuhi awkwardly hands him a few discs. "This?"

"Just some old stuff I recorded before but did not release. Sumire seems to be having a hard time with your song. I figured if you worked together, it would be easier for you."

Jun paused when he accepted the stuff. "Terashima, do you like her that much?"

"I love her more than anybody in this world. I will give her the world if she asks for it."

There it is, no hesitation. Jun wondered how this person could say such things with such confidence. After all, everybody knows what Sumire-san's current state is with romance.

Before he could say anymore, a sleepy looking Sumire appeared in the door way.

"Yuhi?"

"Hey, there, love."

Sumire groggily made her way over and wrapped her arms around Yuhi. "I'm tired; let's go to sleep."

"Mm, but you didn't have to wait."

"I can't sleep without you."

Yuhi laughed and picked her up. "Stubborn girl. Goodnight, Kira."

Despite her sleepy state, Sumire turned to him and pointed to something on the side table. "Drafts. Goodnight, Jun-kun." With those words said, the couple quickly left the room.

Jun stood up and walked over to the side table, and picked up the score sheets. Drafts? The music was practically glowing, that girl and her amazing ability.

An idol, huh? From the very beginning, he did not want to become an idol. But his younger brother wanted to, and Jun worried. He was worried that his brother could not handle the harshness of the entertainment industry. So he became one first, and indeed it was a good thing.

Everything seemed to flow very smoothly until it was time for his brother to debut. Was it because he guided him wrong? But Jun recalled how much his brother hesitated.

"What if I mess up? What if I don't debut at all. I will have to redo everything from the start or even give up."

On the day of his younger brothers enrolling into Moonlight academy, they had such a conversation at the gate. At that time, Jun did his best to encourage him, and he reluctantly agreed, but perhaps he should have said more things.

Even now, he could remember it clearly, seeing his brother from the rooftop and Kou trying to stop him. In the next second, his brother fell from the roof. Thankfully, a bush cushioned his landing, but even then, he has not woken up since that day.

Later on, during the police investigation, it turned out there was a large number of drugs and alcohol in his room, including a rope large enough to hang at the window on his desk.

His brother's room screamed suicide all over, so nobody blamed Kou, who had been with him. But Jun understood how much the man blamed himself after all the two were lovers. They were both men, but something like that did not bother him. His brother Junie was happy with Kou.

He was happy watching over the two people who meant so much to him. But after that day, everything changed. He and Kou are still in the same group, but his friend no longer smiled as he did before. A fake smile and laughter just to keep up with appearance's sake. The second nobody is looking; his gaze would look hollow and dead.

But since they met Ibuki Sumire, a bit of light has returned to his friends' eyes.

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Chapter 294: Beating of my Heart Part 6

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Jun opened his cyan blue eyes when he heard a very familiar voice call out to him.

"Hey, are you finally awake?"

He blinked a few times, and eventually, he could see. He found himself in the water but was able to breathe. The person who called out to him sat a few feet away from him.

"Junie?" Jun asks as he walked over.

"This is going to sound strange coming from me. But you have to remember the truth, and I am not your brother."

Not his brother...? What is he talking about?

"Aha, that face, it looks like you don't believe me at all."

"Affirmative. According to my data, we are indeed blood-related siblings. Our appearances resemble each other too much." Jun states in a monotone voice, his bangs were starting to annoy him slightly. Unfortunately, since Junie had a firm hold on him, he could not move.

"True with that, I really can't convince you. But, you'll remember soon enough the reason why I ended up looking like this."

Jun looked at him puzzled, "I do not understand... I'm aware I have amnesia, but...it can't be possible that I could mistake my brother."

"Ah ah, what to do with that girl's ability is amazing. But it's weakening, and that's exactly why I'm able to talk to you like this." Junie's gaze turned serious. "You have to remember Jun because that person has always been so very important to you. Someone who could bring tears to your eyes. Someone who can stir up your emotions."

"If I don't wish to remember?"

"But you already care quite a bit about that person. I am sure a part of you has always wanted to remember."

.....

After that odd dream, Jun was not in the mood to work. But he was not the type who would skip out and ditch his responsibilities because of his mood swings. Since they arrived in Tokyo, they are busy every day, and although they enrolled in school, they seldom attend. Jun, however, intended to rearrange his schedule when the summer finishes.

Jun recalled Terashima Yuhi's words and paused. That person is more interesting than he thought; he requires more data.

"Slow down a little bit on the crane shot at the start."

"Camera two, move back before we enter melody B."

"Could we raise the volume on our voices more?" Ran said through the megaphone.

"Please turn down the rhythm section a little."

"Ten seconds till rehearsal. Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, one."

"(ALL) Shining starlight!

"My legs are trembling because of

a sudden happening -

We gotta power!

Changing my crumbled heart with a single hit

, is that also fate?" Jun sang.

"A real every day, various memories

Give me a true love beyond reality!" Ran and Tetsuo sang.

(ALL) Maybe love!

Embrace the tearful smile and throw away the crumbled heart

When the shadows getting closer become.

One, I'll vow - can't stop kiss!

Go through love ignited, beyond the deep heartbeats.

Looking at each other with fingertips overlapped, the two of us - Oh maybe love!

(ALL) Shining starlight!"

"That is a wrap. Perfect, you three."

"Thank you very much."

Even so, to think that the three of them would continue receiving tons of projects together is quite surprising. For a while, the media stuck the three of them on several jobs with the other two. But even that settled down for a bit, and he mainly had work with Ran and Tetsuo.

It's not as though he has a problem with receiving work with these two. But it seems quite strange before they became a group of four, they were three, So every time they receive a job as a group of three together, he half expects to see maroon colored hair and annoying smiles popping up somewhere. But it appears as though he is not present today.

Jun had wanted to question him because that person for sure would know what Junie is talking about. Although it happened in his dream, he really can't be too sure. . However, as he thought so earlier, it felt far too real to be a dream.

Sumire has always said that dreams are the manifestations of people's desires and thoughts," Nobody can tell a lie in dreams or even a secret. Because not sure whether it is real or not. It is a free space to let your thoughts overflow. In a place like that, isn't it the best place to let a secret out?"

It can't be, can it? Junie is his brother. He can remember it clearly; from a young age, he was the only other person besides her, even though he cannot remember their parents. Now that Jun thought about it, that person turned stiff and made up some sort of excuse before he got into a coma.

Jun quickly learned not to mention it in front of him. It can't be a coincidence, can it? He sighs deeply; that is the fifth night in a row he could not sleep properly. Although Junie only appeared in his dream this morning. It felt like the dreams prior was getting him ready for today.

His thoughts broke off when he felt a sudden warmth on his forehead. His eyes widened when he discovered who the hand belonged to, and it belonged to his team member Ran.

"You have a mild fever. Crap, I knew I should have taken that photoshoot in the rain for you the other day." He cursed.

"I am feverish," he murmurs. He hadn't noticed it at all, but if Ran says so, it's most likely to be true. More importantly, just now, why did the warmth from his hand feel so familiar?

Jun didn't get a chance to say anything since Ran carried him away already. Once he laid down, Ran placed the cooling pad on his forehead and stuck the thermometer on his mouth.

"Thirty seven-point eight--holy.." Ran trails off. Jun half expected him to start lecturing him but instead feels his hand touch his cheeks. "As I thought you've been looking of for a few days. The light on your room has been on quite a bit these past few nights."

"You noticed that?"

Their rooms are nowhere near each other. So unless he had been walking by that area, he should not have noticed it.

"I did."

Odd, why would this person pay that much attention.

"Ah, Ibuki-san! Welcome."

At that comment, he immediately turned his head and spotted Sumire at the doorway. She had a small bag in her hands and passed it to the director. "I apologize for being late; if you would like, I made a few extra."

As considerate as ever, even though she does not have to do that. Made a few extra? That is a lie. Jun knew she must have woken up early. He hears approaching footsteps, and soon violet-colored eyes peered at him.

"Are you sick, Jun-kun?"

"The idiot has a thirty-eight-degree fever. I'm going to call the hospital. Can you stay with him for a bit Sumire?"

"Mmm, okay." Ran dashed off with those words, and Sumire casually sat down on the ground beside the couch.

"You know Jun-kun, you haven't changed."

"I haven't?"

"Whenever you worry about something, you overthink and end up sick."

Indeed that is what happened this time too. It seems that Sumire-san still knows more things about himself than he does. "It was something stupid."

"But even stupid things have a meaning." Sumire trailed off. "Say I wanted to ask you, back then why did you tell me to chase after Ru?"

"I thought he would make you happy."

Sumire laughed softly. "Indeed, you were right there. That person gave me so much happiness. It was because I gained the courage from you that time that I took that step forward, so I wanted to thank you."

What is she doing thanking him for? That is his line, and he is the one who should say thank you. The sheet music she brushed off as a draft was the final version of the song. Even though she struggled like Terashima said, she found the inspiration to write it without realizing it.

"The hands of the clock marking the passage of time,

I was a little jealous of the sound

Becoming even more beautiful in the not-so-distant future,

You're floating

That figure, as your appearance becomes similar enough to compare,

Time was slipping away

As if tricked into it,

I gave up my heart to the music.

But you were angry at some time or another.

Frantically, desperately fighting back tears.

Saying "But still... But still, I'm glad we're able to love each other"

Even if we overcame the bars of the cage of life

By saying "Take my hand.." Jun sang.

It was only a few verses of the song, but he watched as her expression brightened. A brighter smile than before appeared on her face. It reminds him of that time, the time he asked her to go after Mamoru.

That bright smile on her face was so very beautiful.

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Chapter 295: Only One Part 1

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ST Hospital.

"Thanks for settling everything."

Sumire laughed. "It's okay, and it was rare to see you panic and grab him before anybody else could say anything." She trailed off. "But not even bringing his stuff with his health insurance card and ID."

"Sorry."

"You're lucky I am familiar with the hospital."

At that comment, he frowned. "Why did it have to be a hospital-owned by the Nagawa family?" Then again, the Nagawa's own nearly all the hospitals in this area. A deep sigh escaped his lips. He only just stopped trembling a few minutes ago. To think Jun would suddenly collapse like that.

"It's okay! He is still breathing, and he is alive." But even though he knew that for a moment, he panicked. His gaze fell on Sumire, who was beside him. If she hadn't been there and said those things while holding his hand, it would be a worse situation.

Ever since he met her, he has more control of his temper. But he cannot erase it. He almost lost control there; it was dangerous.

A man with black hair and ruby-colored eyes approached them.

"Razel." Sumire called out.

"Are you worried?"

"A little. Is he alright?"

"I heard from Hino-san that he has not picked up his phone the last few days.

"..."

"Did something happen with you two again?"

Sumire deeply sighed. "Nothing happened, but I've been busy. Lately, he is probably upset." A dark aura wrapped around her. "If I see him now, he will surely sulk."

"Then you should at least message him and see his mood."

"Well, that's true. Mm, I got it. If he does drop by, inform me."

"You will see him?"

"I'm not that unreasonable. Besides, I owe him."

"She owes him?" What does she owe Nagawa Sano of all people? Ran felt very uncomfortable, but he knew he couldn't get mad now. After a few more words with the black-haired man, he walked away, leaving him with Sumire.

Ran walked over to the vending machines and picked a drink. "Are you tired?"

The moment the other guy left, Sumire sat down on the benches. "Mmm, lately, I am working a lot more."

Indeed whenever he read the news, he saw a lot of topics on Sumire. Many people were interested in her comeback. However, she isn't taking on major singing jobs yet. It seems the fans and the public have noticed but are waiting to see what will happen.

At least nobody is harassing her. Even though there are dissatisfied voices, nobody is hurting her like before.

Ran understood the reason why. She is now Terashima Yuhi's girlfriend. Even if they dislike her, they will not harm her like before. Ran hates to admit it, but that man is useful.

"So where is he? You're boyfriend."

Sumire sighed and pointed to the TV that hung on the wall not too far from where they were. Footage of Terashima singing, and then another showing him doing several other jobs.

"He is catching up on all the work he missed while he took care of me. Yuhi made a deal with his company to watch over me until I gave birth."

"No wonder he could stay by her."

"Don't you two get work together?"

Sumire shook her head. "I'm not on his level at all..." She looked over at him. "Ran-chan, you've seen him, right?"

"Oh yeah, the other day."

A dark aura wrapped around the girl as she exclaimed. "It's not fair at all. How come you can see him, and I can't?"

Ran awkwardly scratched his hair; he did not know what to say. "If you're bothered by it. Why don't you come with me to the next job? You're still officially our composer, so you can tag along as you did before."

Her eyes brightened, and she beamed happily. "I can really go with you?" She suddenly appeared in front of him.

"Uh yeah."

"Alright!! I will have a lot of fun from now on."

....

It was a bad idea.

Ran didn't even know why he suggested it. But when he saw that expression on her face, he couldn't say no.

So he brought her to the studio with him the next day. It was a gamble since it was a coincidence that he kept bumping into Terashima. But when they arrived, sure enough, Terashima was there.

"My dearest darling!" Sumire flung her arms around Terashima's neck.

Yuhi looked baffled but laughed. "I see, so you came?"

"I missed you."

"Mmm." Yuhi kissed her lips lightly. "Sorry, but I was going to come home in a few days."

"I can't wait anymore."

"These two have no shame whatsoever." Ran awkwardly averted his gaze as the two kissed rather passionately.

"Yuhi! Sumire you two--!" A voice bellowed.

"Che Hino. Can't you leave us alone for a second?"

"No! Sumire, what are you doing here? You have work elsewhere--"

A dark aura wrapped around Sumire. "So it was you! I wondered why I couldn't see Yuhi at all."

Right, Ran thought it was strange when she mentioned it. Even new singers have a chance to bump into popular singers.

Sumire isn't exactly a newbie. Her singing ability is the real deal. Even if she is starting over, nobody will give her low-level jobs.

"This man is Terashima's company president."

"Uh, look, Sumire, that's not it. It's just." Hino scratched his hair. "Aah damn, why do I have to take the blame?"

"I got it, and it was him, right?!!" Sumire exclaimed.

"I'm going to give him a piece of my mind--"

"And leave me?"

Sumire looked down, and Yuhi flicked her forehead. "Since you're here anyway, stay and be impressed."

At that, Ran watched as he walked over to the center. This was a photo shoot, but there was a mic in the center. Is it a prop? No, it's a real one.

"Today comes to an end..

Before we know it

Our hearts are left behind.

Cloudy day.

Words we gave up on.

Words that we spun.

Disappear into the sky.

What should we do?

I want my voice to ride on a song.

It'll come true someday.

Shining through the clouds, it goes on forever." Yuhi sang.

Ran's eyes widened. Huh?

What--what is this? How come.... How come this guy can sing like this?

"I already heard Terashima sing live before. So why do I feel like this?" Ran felt goosebumps appear in his arms as he trembled all over. His heartbeat increased.

A year ago, there was somebody else's singing which made him feel this way.

"We pick up the pieces of a dream.

Changing loneliness into hope.

A whisper guides me.

To take the next step forward.

The beginning of our story."

The moment Terashima finished singing, Sumire immediately rushed over. She beamed happily. "Yuhi, that was amazing! As expected, stronger rivals are better."

"Are you kidding me?" Yuhi sighed. "I was singing for you stupid. What is that rival statement for?"

"But you're very good."

Just good? Ran couldn't get rid of the goosebumps in his arm. "So this is the ability of a number one idol? It's not like he and the other guys are too far behind Terashima in the rankings. Their unit ranks two after Terashima, so Ran thought their abilities were equal.

Sure enough, he didn't think the guy was special when he saw Terashima before not too long ago. Actually, there were rumors that he was reaching his limit, so Ran went to see his live. It disappointed him.

Chapter end

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 296

Chapter 296: Only One Part 2

If audio player doesn't work, press Stop then Play button again

It was a disappointment, so Ran even left the man a note saying, "have you reached your limit?" In the time frame since then, what happened? How come his singing--no, why is he surprised? His gaze fell on Sumire, who Terashima was teasing. Indeed it's because of her again. The real amazing one is Ibuki Sumire. The ability she has to change people is amazing. Yet, Ran looked over at Terashima with interest.

"This guy might turn out to be something."

A few hours later, 23:00

Sumire woke up screaming in bed, pale face and sweating. She gripped the sheets tightly. She was panting heavily, and her heartbeat still pounding very loudly.

She walked over to the window and opened it to let the fresh air in. The night breeze caressed her skin, but it did not relax her as it would normally.

"This is so weird." It was so relaxing around her, and yet she felt the opposite of relaxed. She has goosebumps all over her body. Unconsciously tears formed from the corner of her eyes.

She buried her head into her knees.

Why did this happen to her? It is only a nightmare. This isn't the first time this has happened. But the amount of nightmares the last few weeks is frightening.

She disliked these new nightmares. They aren't on the same level as before, and this is why she doesn't know what to do. Sumire felt a sudden chill as she recalls the images from the nightmare. The images and the voice it was so very frightening.

The voice terrified her, and she heard it so very loudly, almost like it was right beside her. There are so many things out of her control, many she has accepted. But this is something different.

A deep sigh escaped her lips. Even if she sits here and thinks about it, nothing will change. If she overthinks it, she will deprive herself of sleep and food again.

Sumire clutched the sheets tighter as she recalled what the reporters asked her the other day. It was something that briefly happened after a shoot. He did not threaten her directly, but that look in his eyes resembled something she saw before.

She knew the reporters who harassed her were in Tokyo now. After they heard that she was here, they all transferred over—such pointless dedication to her.

No matter how much she thought of it, nothing came to mind. Why is she like this recently? Her everyday life is normal and carefree, so what has caused the disturbing nightmares?

In the past, it made more sense since many things stressed her. But her life in Tokyo is a lot more carefree.

She couldn't think of a single thing, and yet maybe it was that. "Because Yuhi isn't beside me all the time." Indeed, she felt his absence a lot recently.

A deep sigh escaped her lips. Since when did she become so reliant on him? Even though she was the one who said that relying on another person is too frightening.

It means giving everything once again. She does not want to do that anymore. What if she ends up betrayed again? What if they leave her alone when they realize how helpless she is?

It is scary, and yet she gave everything to Yuhi. She trusts him, she believes in him, and believes in the words he said to her.

She walked over to her wardrobe and pulled out a shawl as she wrapped it around her. "This should do." There is a park nearby, and she can spend time there. She knew it was futile for her to go back to sleep.

She walked around for a few minutes before she arrived at the nearby park.

Indeed the gardens were beautiful and gorgeous roses of all colors filled the place. What a nice place...

Her thoughts broke off when she spotted somebody standing in front of a pale lilac rose bush. Silver hair?

Sumire blinked. "Ran-chan?"

She didn't waste her time rushing over, yet she didn't notice one of the pebbles and ended up almost falling. However, after a few seconds passed and she hadn't hit the ground, Sumire wondered why and opened her eyes.

She met a familiar pair of eyes. "Ran."

"Geez, you idiot." Ran scolded.

So close, she felt his breath trickling down on her skin. Sumire realized how close they were and drew back.

"S--sorry."

What on earth was that? Why did her heart beat then? Stupid stupid.

There was silence for a few moments before Ran spoke up. "Say....why did you come here?"

"Oh...uh....I was...taking a walk."

"It's almost midnight, you know?" Subaru said.

"Ah...well, I was asleep. But I woke up and couldn't sleep again." Sumire half lied.

That was the case, but it was because of the nightmares. However, she didn't want to admit that to him. After all, she hadn't even admitted to Yuhi yet. It wouldn't be right.

When she saw Yuhi a few days ago, she could have told him. "I ended up focussing on kissing rather than talking..."

"I see---and I know a few days have passed. But you're pretty rude."

Oh right, she had her back turned from him. However, if she turned around now, there would be that weird sensation again.

He deeply sighed. "Forget it. But you are pretty brave."

Brave?

"Look at the moon."

Sumire glanced up at the dark skies to see the half-moon and realized what he was talking about.

"Oh...that"s...."

"You probably didn't think about it again." Ran shook his head.

That's right, even though she recalled the warning, she still ended up coming here. It was strange, and she felt like there was something that was pulling her to this place. But it really has been a while, huh, since she last spoke to Subaru properly like this.

When she was in Star Town, she saw him every day, and they became close in a sense. There was a strange relationship between them even though she couldn't understand what that was.

She suddenly she felt him wrap something around her and noticed that it was his cloak.

Sumire blinked and stared at the piece of black cloth. A confused look appears on her face at his kind gesture.

"I--m giving that to you idiot. It's cold out here, and you will freeze." Ran said as he looked away.

Oh.... That"s right, and he is this kind of person.

Sumire chuckles and yet smiles at him. She wrapped it tightly around her body. "Thank you."

"So why are you out here this late?" Sumire wondered.

"I just returned from a job." Ran sighed. "That damned Kou."

Sumire laughed. "Well, you know how he gets when he is serious."

"Why is he suddenly serious?"

"Isn"t it the same for you? After watching Yuhi sing."

Ran flinched when he heard those words and sighed. "Well, anybody would be impressed after hearing that."

"That?" Sumire said threateningly.

"You"re way too scary when it comes to him."

"I have to be. Don"t you see how many pests go after him?"

Yuhi"s popularity bothers her a lot, but she doesn"t want to be petty. She no longer wants to lose another person ever again or stumble upon that sight. A deep sigh escaped her lips. She needs to get over her past relationship with Sano already, and this is enough.

Her thoughts broke off when Ran hugged her.

"Ran, what are you...?"

"Do you remember already?" Ran said. He trailed off. "Who made such a promise too?"

Sumire froze, but she knew there was no use hiding it anymore. "How long have you known?"

"Honestly, in the beginning, I didn"t get it. You know, before I saved you from your fight, I was watching you for a while. Watching and hoping something would come to me. But nothing like that happened. However, after I spoke with you, that night something triggered, and after we left the mansion that was when I remembered everything." Ran said. "Shit, it wasn"t long either, was it? But I feel possessive."

Sumire chuckled. "Well, maybe you"re just addicted."

"Tsk, what an annoying addiction."

"Now, now, shouldn"t you be more honest about that?"

"Honesty isn"t me, Princessa." Ran said.

That"s right, and this person is stubborn like this. Though he is stubborn, Sumire knew he was a gentle person by nature.

"Nobody has called me that in a while."

"Well, it is my nickname for you."

"You know...maybe you ought to let go. Though no one goes to this area, people are awake, you know.."
Ran said.

However, that wasn't what was bothering her, and she was more worried about Yuhi finding out she remembered. If he knew, would he hate her?

"Whatever. Were hardly doing anything, you know? Worried about your boyfriend?"

"Although I am sure he would be happy to hear you say that, Ran." She thought for a moment, then altered her words. "Actually, no, he would probably say he couldn't give a dam. Thank you."

"Will you tell me what's changed?" he muttered. "One day?"

Sumire laughed as she drew back. "One day or maybe now?"

Ran sighed. "I don't think you have an answer yet."

"That is true, but I am certain of one thing. I need Yuhi, and he needs me."

For her, that is enough right now. It is more than enough.

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 297

Chapter 297: Only One Part 3

If audio player doesn't work, press Stop then Play button again

Whenever he spoke to Sumire, time would pass by very quickly. It was no exception this time too, and before he knew it, they parted ways. Moreover, he did not want her to stay outside any longer. He felt something ominous in the air.

For people like them, the night is a dangerous time. Even before she was aware of her ability, staying out was not an option for her. As a member of the underworld organization Holy Knights, Sumire undertook many dangerous jobs. Many were after her.

He is sure there is a bounty for her head. A deep sigh escaped his lips as he recalled something. That girl had a bad habit of deliberately provoking people and getting into trouble. Ran observed her life in Tokyo so far and saw nothing unusual, but it might be far too soon to tell.

Ran knew Sumire very well; he was one of the few who knew her personally. So he understood that she most likely has not told Terashima about her little adventures at night. Whenever she can't sleep, she would end up wandering around; that would be fine if it were a simple walk.

She often got into brawls back then. His thoughts broke off when he approached the bushes, and there he saw the figure of a cloaked man.

Ran sighs and yet stretched his hand out in mid-air and pulled the cloak revealing a certain half blonde half ginger hair boy. "Azuma."

A bored expression plastered on his companion's face. Captain."

".....did you decide to come back?"

Azuma nodded. "Well, it's no good if you don't have your third seat. Besides, even if it's a bother, it's almost time and all." He trailed off. "The others got attacked."

His eyes went wide slightly, but he nodded. He wasn't close enough with his other brothers to actually concern himself too much when they got attacked. He more or less suspected it any day now, since somebody attacked that man.

"They're foolish to think this will spite you. It doesn't bother you, does it?"

"Tsk, why would it?"

Besides...he really couldn't care less about that. Right now, the only thing that was going on in his mind is Sumire. To think she remembered everything, how long has she known? He never did get a chance to ask. But from that look on her face, it's probably been awhile - perhaps longer than him.

"What would worry you the most is if that girl got hurt, right?"

He sent Azuma a harsh glare, causing him to shrug. "Easy now. I'm not going to lay a hand on her anymore as I told you before it was the drugs...but..."

The expression on his face turns to a much serious one.

"You should stop goofing around and just take her already... Though I am nothing like the rest of them. It matters more if your the one who does it."

Ran did not reply and turned away from Azuma. He knew that even if he did this eventually, he would not be able to avoid it. He ought to ask Hamano for an update on Sumire's condition. She knows about her abilities but to what extent? How much does she know, and how much does she have to find out?

It will be hard for her to learn about that. Ran clenched his fist. If only Tsueno were still alive, then perhaps it would not be-. He paused mid thought and shook his head. If Tsueno was alive, then that guy would not tell her. He would do whatever he could to keep it from her, even at the risk of her hating him.

....

The following morning, Ran did not have any work, so he remained at his residence.

Sumire just finished Jun's solo song recently, so Ran did not want to bother too much. So he started to work on the song alone; however, it did not end up very well. Whenever he thought of Sumire, Terashima Yuhi would also appear in his head.

It is frustrating, after all, watching her with another guy.

The feelings he has for her he suppressed when she was dating Tsueno Mamoru because he knew. Ran knew that the man did not have that much time left to live; that was why he respected their relationship and did not interfere much. But even back then, he did not feel like this.

He felt sick all over. Sumire kissed Terashima so easily in public, and she clung to him like a child. It is a first to see her behave that way. During that time, he had other things in his mind that kept him occupied but

Ran shook his head. There is no use thinking such things; he slumped down on his bed and was about to close his eyes. But he immediately spotted white hair at the entranceway from his window leading to him sitting up.

He recognized the woman, his childhood friend Hikari Yuki. Ran opened the window when he saw who found her. He forgot to tell him about Yuki. "Saguchi let her in. She's a guest of mine and a friend of Sumire's."

Saguache Wei, a person Sumire picked up during the many dangerous jobs she went on as a member of the underworld. One day she said to him about increasing the guards they have, and before he knew it, this man worked with them.

We nodded and led her inside. "Alright then this way....."

"Ran-sama, I'm back!"

My my, she really doesn't change.

After he closed the window, he stood up from his bed and made his way to the door. Upon passing, he recalls the book. Guess he should just leave it be for later. What did she write in that book?

He recalled what Jun said. He said it was something Sumire wrote in a lot last year. Indeed he recalled that the girl often had a little notebook with her, but he did not know how it ended up in their possession. Did Sumire give it to Jun when she left for Tokyo?

It did not take him long before he went downstairs and headed to the lounge area. When he entered, he saw the white-haired girl sitting on the red velvet couch that had a golden outline.

He watched her for a few seconds. There is something about this scene that is familiar. She does look like she belongs in this kind of place.

Chapter end

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 298

Chapter 298: Only One Part 4

If audio player doesn't work, press Stop then Play button again

"Thank you." Yuki thanked Wei, who offered her tea.

At least Wei knew how to act polite. Luckily he saw what happened just now, though; otherwise, it could have ended up badly. He got to know Wei quite well since he spent nearly every day with Sumire before. After Tsueno Mamoru passed away, this guy became even more cautious of his surrounding. Even to the extent that he carefully observes the mailman and follows him till he's in his van.

Ran sighed. It keeps them all safe, and because of that, the media does not harass them as much. But it keeps even the important people away. The mansion they lived in is located in a secluded area of Tokyo, a place slightly further out from the main city but not too far.

"Yuki." Ran called out.

He watched as her eyes lit up once she saw him. "Ran-sama!" Yuki stood up and rushed over. The moment she was near, she embraced him tightly.

This action of hers was so unlike her that he looked baffled.

"Hey, Yuki, what the..." Ran paused when he noticed her hands trembling as she clutched his shirt tightly.

"I missed you so much."

His gaze softened when he heard those words. Despite the many years of conflict, it seems he still cares a lot for his childhood friend. She was the girl who caused him much heartache and sorrow, and yet he can't dislike her.

They remained like that for a few minutes before Yuki drew back, and they sat down on the couch. But Ran noticed that he still didn't let go of his arm.

Oi oi, even if he is softhearted towards her, someone over there is getting the wrong idea. Wei, who was quietly watching over by the door, was glaring very harshly.

Now that he thought about it, this girl liked him for so long that she drove away the people surrounding him. The last time he saw her, they had an odd discussion.

...

Last year XX December

"To you then, what is feelings of love?" It was an unexpected question from him, but he wanted to know.

Yuki blinked; surprise flashed through her eyes. "I did not expect you to say that."

"You came up with that answer. So, of course, I would ask." Ran trails of, geez, he is starting to sound like a fool right now.

He suddenly felt a warm hand placed on the center of his chest. W--? Ran found that the white hair girl opposite him had closed her eyes.

"Ran-sama, you know you are very kind. I always thought so before. Kind, compassionate. Even though there were always bad rumors about you, things like you were a delinquent and probably possessed by some bad spirit or something..."

It felt like arrows had pierced him. "Not to mention that your foul mouth and ill-tempered." Yuki continued.

Hey, hey, when will these insults end?

Ran was about to say something when the white hair girl opens her eyes.

"But you used those traits to help those around you. I have always known it, the rumors of you starting a fight and getting expelled for it. You did it for someone else. You probably don't remember it, but that time you saved me."

...

Now that he thought of it, he hasn't seen her at all since that time. She didn't even stay for the ceremony of the participants. She left straight to TOKYO. Although he had been here for a while now, he had yet to see her. That time this girl admitted to liking him.

Ran wonders if that's still the same now. If so, then he wonders how he could deal with it. Even though he said something bravado about the Sumire being the only one for him, Ran understood it would not be easy.

Unlike when she was with Mamoru, he could not spend as much time with her. Whenever she was upset regarding Tsueno, he could comfort her and have an excuse to spend time with her. But now? Now he has nothing.

It was pathetic of him to rely on something like that to be close to her. But due to his promise of not making a move on her to respect Tsueno's health, it was the only way.

Though there was that rather brief moment the other day, Ran felt it was not enough. Besides, the guys in the band EMMA seem to like Sumire. At least Kusaji Atsuro and that other one.

Ran more or less suspected that to be the case. But to think it was happening only after a few meetings. Nakara Shin too, who would have thought of all people he would end up with such a troublesome opponent.

Now he regretted being curious about the girl's uneven eye color. He, too, had uneven eye color, but his was mere contacts. However, Sumire stumbled upon the idea when he saw her fight, and it piqued his curiosity for the longest time, which is why he asked the one person who would know about it.

Only one person would have all the answers he sought. That person laughed and treated it as a joke at first, but then he said something serious.

"Haha you suspect me? I see, I see. Well, it's only natural you would if you saw the color of the other pupil. Turquoise is my color. Your suspicions are right, I'm the cause of that side. I did it so she could forget it. Forget about that person. You know Iwa that girl got herself involved in a rather troublesome mess with the Yakuza.

She rescued someone she should have just left alone. That person was also one of her rivals, someone who wants to take her down from her position. Yet she still helped that person. After all, when she came back, she was saying things like protecting that person. I simply couldn't let her get involved with a matter like that".

Protect huh?

It was exactly like her, and yet at the same time, it was troublesome. Why does she keep getting into trouble? He looks away for a moment, and in the next, danger surrounds her.

It was like her to protect and risk her life for other people who do not care for her. But Ran always disliked that part about her. He disliked that she cared so much for others who do not hesitate to use and throw her away.

Why does she have to live a life like that?

"I went all this way to see you. But I see your thoughts are elsewhere as usual, eh? Thinking about Ibuki-San when I am here, your cold, as usual, Ran-sama." Yuki said as she sighed deeply.

Is it that obvious that he is thinking about Sumire?

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 299

Chapter 299: Only One Part 5

If audio player doesn't work, press Stop then Play button again

Ran apologized to her. This is not the first time this has happened. Whenever he ends up thinking of Sumire, it ends up this way.

Yuki chuckles. "But that's the expression of yours that I quite like."

So she still likes him. But unlike before, that crazy look in her eyes has vanished. Even though she hugged him like that earlier, Ran knew that she meant nothing by it. It seems this person is trying to move on.

"What brings you here today?" Ran changed the topic.

The girl's gaze darkened, and she placed a tape on the table. "I received something rather disturbing the other day and knew I should discuss it with you all as soon as possible."

Disturbing? Yuki could have come here anytime since he arrived, but she did not appear before him until now. The only thing that would bother him so much is if it is something to do with Sumire. Ran frowned before he called Wei over.

Wei took the tape from the table and placed it inside the recorder. Soon images floated onto the screen but not just any normal images, dozens of photos of Sumire. This was.... His eyes widened, horrified. It was not just one or two images but thousands. Some looked like still shots every minute.

"It seems like somebody is targetting her severely. Look closely at the footage."

Ran turned his attention to the screen indeed to see what the white-haired girl was concerned about. Even at the girl's home, and is that not the Iro Road dorms?

They give each student a room even if they live in a different accommodation. Ran knew that Sumire liked to stay there whenever she had time.

But it isn't just the Iro Road dorms but the ones from Tsukuhara high from last year? That can't be possible unless the one who took this footage is a student?

"Ran-sama, where was Ibuki-san the most last year?" Yuki questioned.

The most last ---- he thought back. It did not take him long before he reached an answer. Of course, he didn't need to think about it. It's a place he knew all too well because the same had been for him. "2S," Ran muttered.

Yuki nodded. "I arrived at the same conclusion."

His own classroom? But there is no way they wouldn't have noticed someone suspicious. It can't be -- he felt a bead of sweat falling from his cheeks when something came to mind.

One person, Sumire, spoke to quite a bit that wasn't him and the others. Only one other person since the others weren't brave enough to do that with all of them around.

"Yuki, do you think you can get a copy of the new student roster this year?"

"It shouldn't be a problem if I call Mizue, she's in the student council this year. Ah, you could probably ask your kohai too, Sennsan."

He flinches upon hearing the mention of the pianist after what he read earlier. Even though he had yet to read anything concrete, it didn't stop him from feeling uncomfortable about it. How could the media come up with such crazy accusations?

The media are then targeting Nanairo feather because of Sumire, and they want to lure her out. Ran wondered if she knew the news yet, would she do something? That is a stupid question. Ran knew her quite well. When she hears of this, she will take action.

"That guy is probably busy. Just call your sister." He turned to the dark brunette. "Wei, you have nothing to do today, correct?"

Wei nodded. "I am. Should I find her and follow her around?"

He catches on quickly. "Yeah, do that."

Ran wanted nothing more than to be the person who follows her around but now is not the time for this. He cannot let his feelings get the better of him. He has to take other measures to make sure she is safe.

Yuki grabbed onto his arm. A serious look appeared on her face. "You aren't going to do anything dangerous, are you? Because even if it is for Ibuki-san, I won't let you."

Ran briefly closed his eyes before he opened them again. Dangerous huh? How many dangerous situations did Sumire get caught in last year? He saved her a lot then, too, but it never felt like it was enough. She did so much for his sake, and yet he could not repay her.

He reached over and flicked the girl's forehead. "Don't worry. Not even I am that foolish."

It was a lie, and they both knew it. But Yuki did not say anything else and quickly left the house. Ran did not bother chasing after her. He felt bad for her, but he does not want to give her false hope anymore. He is in love with somebody else now, in love with Ibuki Sumire.

"Ran-san, do you think Terashima Yuhi knows this?"

Ran sighed deeply. "If he knew, he would not leave her side even for a moment."

So this is something that escaped even Terashima's watchful eyes?

...

A few hours later, Ran decided to go on a walk and take a break instead.

He placed his hand on his forehead and sighed. Despite all that work he did, in the end, he couldn't narrow down the suspects at all. There is only one other person Sumire became close with during her time in 2S, and that was the vice class rep.

Yuki worked efficiently and must have called her sister immediately since he received the new rooster quickly.

Narrowing down who the guy is acquainted with a list of three thousand new students isn't easy. However, he managed to narrow it down to one thousand; in the end, it's still many people.

Moreover, Kou called at the wrong time. What is that guy doing accepting so many jobs for them again? However, Ran knew he ought to get his mind off things and decided to take a walk before going there. His thoughts broke off when he spotted a familiar girl.

Is that not Sumire?

A group of male students wearing the uniform of the Yankee school opposite had her surrounded. Oi oi, doing this thing so early in the morning is dangerous.

Ran examined his surroundings to see if anybody else was around. He scanned only for a second before he spotted an elderly couple nearby.

It would be dangerous if they get caught up in it.

Before he could step forward, though, a glimpse of dark brown went past him and was by Sumire's side.

"Sumire-San, you don't need to bother with these."

Sumire laughed. "There's no way I can pass up such a good source of entertainment. Besides, I need it right now; let me vent some of my frustration."

Despite being quite far away, Ran spotted the darkness that flashed through her eyes. Sumire put her bag down on the ground and turned to the guys. All of them were jeering and mocking her, but she did not flinch at all. When he first saw Ibuki Sumire fight, it amazed him. Her movements looked graceful, almost like she was dancing.

It was a first for him to see such a graceful way of fighting and having such a bloody ending. It was the same this time too, and the fight ended in seconds. There were so many people, and yet she dealt with it easily.

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 300

Chapter 300: Only One Part Part 6

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This is one of the things he admired about her. How can she be so strong despite having such bad health? She is physically and emotionally weak, and yet she can do something like this. But even now, Ran noticed it, the lonely look that flashed through her eyes.

Even now, she is shouldering something heavy.

"Wei...you.." One of the guys said weakly.

"Hm? What's this, were they friends of yours, Wei?"

Wei shook her head. "Hardly. But they have been following me around a lot. When I told them that I follow someone else, they didn't believe me." Wei trailed off. "I am somewhat sorry about this, Sumire-san.."

"No, it's fine." Sumire bends down at the barely conscious guy. "Doing something like this is fine and all. However, think of the order of opponents first before you fight."

With those words said, Sumire picked her bag up and walked in his direction. It was far too late for him to find somewhere to hide.

When she spotted him, she sighs. "What, I didn't know you had a stalker habit too?"

Hey, wait, why is she calling him a stalk- too? Ran looked over at Wei, who looked away. So this is not the first time he followed Sumire around. No wonder he agreed to it so easily, so he did it before.

"Don't put me on the same level as that guy." Ran trails off. "More importantly, are you..."

"Yeah, I'm fine. They were small fry."

That many guys surrounded her, and yet she called them small fry. Yep, only Ibuki Sumire would say that so casually. Then again, even if Wei didn't step in, Sumire would have managed it just fine. In fact, Wei probably stepped in so she would not go crazy.

Ran examined his surroundings again; he did not see any reporters, but this is a public area, so it is too hard to tell.

"Isn't your reaction a little too weak...?"

Sumire pressed her hands against his cheeks, and his eyes widened. She was teasing him, of course, and it meant nothing more, but he still felt his heart skip a beat.

She didn't have to go through the trouble of doing that so slyly... When he looked at the girl's girls' hands,, he noticed that she held her normal bag and a shopping bag.

He naturally extended his hand out, signaling for her to give it to him.

"You're the one acting sly here." Ran countered.

"This is what normal people call honesty. I am comfortable when I am around you, Ran."

Gee, what's with this girl. She suddenly reverts to normal after a fight like that. However, his gaze lands on the brunette; just now, that look in her eyes was the same as back then. Quite some time has passed since he had last saw such a look in her eyes.

When he met her again last year, there was no trace of the darkness in her violet orbs like jewels. It was a relief to see that. But now it has returned. Then again, her expression has brightened a lot since then. After Tsueno Mamoru passed away, it looked like she lost her soul.

"The song. What do you want to do about it?" Sumire suddenly changed the topic.

He blinked, confused at her words.

"You know your solo."

Oh, right, but with his busy schedule as of late, they delayed the matter with the solo song. Initially, she was supposed to write his before Jun, but he has a lot of work. He was supposed to discuss it with her yesterday,,, but Ran decided that he would not bother her with all that happened.

He guessed this is a good opportunity.

"You have an interval break for half an hour today, right? Let's do it then."

It was easy to get work with her since neither of their groups is internationally famous. He is popular, but the people know him in Japan; the same goes for the others. Terashima, on the other hand, is famous internationally.

Sumire pulls a face before she exclaims. "Ah then...come get me in the old music room."

Ha?

"Well, you will see when you get there," Sumire said in a sing-song voice as she skipped away.

Ran did not chase after her. It is a good thing that she did not pass him the bag. Kou will freak if he does not show up to work, but it seems Sumire has something to show him.

....

Three hours later - Iro Road High School-

Even though it was a holiday, the school was still open. Since this is an art and music school, many students dropped by to use the facilities since it is easier. Sumire told him to come to the old music room.

A place located in the middle of the art and music building, so the general students building. The old music room? From the name, it was clear what it was, and yet Ran did not understand why she would go there.

He eventually arrived in the right place; from a distance, he spotted Sumire just entering. Ran was about to call out to her but heard a voice from the room.

"You're late."

Sumire laughed. "Sorry, but I thought you would be late, Mr superstar."

"Hah, give me a break. You know I don't care for any jobs that have nothing to do with music."

The person who was in the room with Sumire was somebody he was familiar with. Terashima? But was he not doing important work on the other side of town today?

Ran watched as Terashima stood up. "Ah, wait-! I don't need to play the piano today." Sumire exclaimed, stopping him.

"Are you sure?"

"Mm, it's okay."

"Well, if you're comfortable. Is your voice okay today?"

Sumire laughed more. "Yuhi, you're too worried. It is okay; nobody is around but you anyway."

"True, but remember why we are doing this."

Ran could guess from bits and pieces of their conversation that the two practiced here. Could Terashima be helping Sumire regain her confidence to sing again? So many things have happened, so the girl has not sung since that art festival. Sumire has gradually returned to working but singing in front of others is still too hard for her.

Nagawa Sano has managed to cover for her, but it won't be long before others notice. She has to return to the stage and sing or give up music forever, and it is one or the other.

To think Terashima has been doing this even though he is busy.

"The sound of raindrops.

Like the clattering percussion.

Ding dong, ding dong..."

Ran's eyes widened when she started to sing. Huh? This is different than before, since when could she sing this way? Since when could she sing so gently?

"So beautifully.

The mottled path with sunlight and shadows.

Like a forest of dreams lead me into a rainbow mystery."

In the past, whenever Sumire sang, it gave off a powerful emotion matching her strong lyrics. She never sang such gentle melodies like this before.

"A sky full of stars

Hiding all of my secrets

Cicadas are chirping on a summer day.

Singing my hopes for the future.."

It did not take long for Ran to realize why. It is because Terashima is with her isn't it? Since Terashima is by her side right now, he can bring out the best in Sumire because this girl has always loved Terashima.

Ran thought he already knew about this before; he thought he prepared for it. After all, he spent all that time by her side before. How come he didn't realize it?