

Melody 301

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 301

Chapter 301: Only One Part 7

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The truth is even though he stayed by her side before, and he did not try to understand her fears and worries. She often said it was enough that he was there, but he felt helpless because he could not do anything whenever she cried. When he saw her break down badly after Tsueno Mamoru died, he felt so helpless for the first time.

His thoughts broke when his phone started ringing. Ran proceeded to ignore it until it started ringing several times, causing him to get looks from other students.

Tsk, what's with this crappy timing?

Ran took his phone out his pocket, and when he saw the caller ID, he almost freezes up.

He walked away from the room slightly and answered the call. "Hello?"

"Did you hear about it? They're tearing down the old concert stage in the outdoor park soon and holding one last rock festival."

He shuts his eyes; of course, he knows about it. After all, the stadium is getting torn down is to build a much larger stage—a grander stage for higher-tier idols.

"I heard."

"So, are you going to join us on stage again?"

Ha? What?

"What are you talking about?" He muttered.

"Huh? I thought Yuki-chan already went to see you."

She did see him, but one on earth does Yuki have to do with this?

"She didn't tell you? That's strange. Anyhow the others were planning on holding a week's worth of performances there. Are you up for it?"

Hold on, and this is too much for him to take in all at once.

"You do know I'm an idol now, right?"

"There is nobody who doesn't know. But I think this still suits you the best. It may be selfish and sound contradictory to you. But you belong on this side of the world. Won't you form a band with us again?"

Form a band with them again? Ran repeated the words in his head, but it did not seem real.

Once the phone call ended, he heard a clattering sound of books and spotted that it belonged to Sumire's friends.

Oikawa Asami is a girl with long dark auburn hair tied in two low pigtails with bangs that frame her face and dark olive eyes. A famous model, someone who could probably compete with his childhood friend if she wanted to.

"You heard?"

Otome seemed taken back. "Uh yeah...was that from your bandmate?"

Ran deeply sighed before he nodded.

She doesn't say anything for a few minutes. Crap, this isn't good. Even though he did not agree or anything like that, in the end, this doesn't sound good. Oikawa doesn't exactly have the best reputation. Although Ran ignored pointless gossip like that, he occasionally paid attention.

After the situation with Sumire, he knew how deadly rumors could be.

"Anyhow, it was just," He stopped mid sentence when he noticed o the auburn colored haired girl was suddenly in front of him.

"Iwsan, you do have pretty eyes."

Huh? What on earth is she talking about?

"Those with eyes like that have already decided.."

Ran turned to look back at the room but only briefly. Terashima extended his hand out and patted Sumires hair.

"Good job, but you were out of tune in the chorus."

"Idiot! You ruined it."

"Don't you want me to be strict?"

One day I want to stand on stage with everybody as equals, what we have now is good, and I like it being with everybody. But I have always felt a distance. I want to be with everybody properly.

So this is what Sumire meant back then. It seems like Terashima can give her something he cannot.

....

Ran decides not to meet with her again for several days. He even ignored her messages and phone calls. He could not get the image of her singing out of his head. He frantically shook his head, and he needed to get a drink and head back inside. He was currently in the middle of a shoot, but he messed up, and the staff told him to have a break.

When Ran reached the vending machine area, he saw somebody familiar. It was Terashima Yuhi, and he was leaning against the wall with the vending machine cigarette in hand. For a moment, Ran thought to walk away but quickly shook his head and walked over.

"Sumire is quite upset because you're giving her the silent treatment," Yuhi commented.

"You know that isn't it." Ran knew that Terashima saw him in the doorway at the end. "You saw me, right?"

"I did."

"That was a first for me seeing her that way, and I am sure the same would go for anybody else who saw that."

To think Sumire could sing that way. Ran knew she was terrific from the beginning, but this was something else entirely.

"Is it that surprising?"

"Yes." Ran admitted. "Sumire has always sung powerful songs. You know she is a very emotional person and has gone through a lot of crap in her childhood. She experienced many painful things, and her heart cries out. So whenever she composes or writes lyrics, a powerful emotion is born."

"Since you understand that, you should also know that it can go both ways. A powerful emotion does not have to be a rock or pop song, and it can be a ballad too. The first time I met her, she sang my songs beautifully in the same way that she did now. So even long before she met me, she could sing this way."

At that comment, Ran almost dropped the drink in his hands, but Terashima caught it. "Your feelings are too transparent."

"Are you directly confronting me?" Ran muttered.

"No need for that. I just can't stand watching any musician be half hearted."

His gaze darkened at those words. "Are you saying I am not serious? What do you know about me?"

Ran felt a sudden burst of anger. How can this guy say such things? This person does not know anything,

"Iwa Ran, who was closest to her last year but never did anything out of consideration because of Tsueno Mamoru, right?"

He shouldn't know anything of what happened, and yet he knows? Terashima already knows everything. That means Tsueno must have told him everything. Ran already felt that it was hopeless from the beginning to be together with Ibuki Sumire. He could not understand her, and he could not do anything for her when she was in pain. Although they got along very well, that was not enough.

But now, what is this feeling of absolute defeat? From the very start, that girl was already Terashima Yuhis, and even Mamoru knew that.

Yuhi sighed deeply. "Listen, I do not intend to show off and confront you all."

"Then your purpose?"

"My purpose is just to tell you this, you and I are alike. Me and your other team members, the guys in Nanairo feather, are the same too. We all like Sumire, but the most important thing for us is not our feelings but hers. Her smile and her songs, as long as we can make her shine, that is all that matters. Iwa

right now, instead of battling with your emotions, can't you tell her through another method without hurting anybody?"

Ran's eyes widened when he heard those words escape Terashima's lips.

To confess all the feelings he felt through music. Right, that was how he managed to cope this entire time. He knew if he told her directly, she would outright reject him, and that would be even more painful for him.

"For you to say that is unfair."

"Yeah, it is, but it is better to hear it from me."

Ran could not argue with that. "Can I borrow her for a bit later?" He should meet with her and explain since she misunderstands the situation.

"You don't have to ask for my permission. Sumire and I are dating, yes, but she is not my possession. She is free to speak to whoever she wants to."

Is this guy an idiot or something? If Terashima refused and restrict Sumire like that, he would get mad, but one thing is evident to him. This guy is different from the rumors.

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 302

Chapter 302: Only one Part 8

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Even though he told Terashima that he would meet with Sumire, he worked until late. By the time he finished working, it was approaching midnight. A deep sigh crossed his lips as he arrived in front of the manor.

All the lights were out from the looks of it, meaning the others are not back yet either. He always seems to be the first one back even though they have an equal amount of workload. The only one amongst them who is the busiest is Kou; that guy does not sleep at all. He always returns at dawn and is the first one to vanish.

Ran was about to head inside when he caught a glimpse of movement in the garden.

"Also, let me add, she is always one step ahead."

He recalled Terashima's words and paused. It can't be, can it?

Still, Ran rushed over to the garden. At first glance, he could not see anybody, but he found her after taking a few steps forward. She sat on the stands by the arch—a dazed expression on her face.

"Sumire." Ran called out.

At that comment, she immediately stood up and walked over.

"Uh, I heard you were looking for me."

He watched as a deep frown appeared on her face. "Ran, are you that angry at me? I know I said we would discuss the song then, and instead, I showed you me singing with Yuhi, but I just wanted to get my point across. I wanted to tell you that I was okay now. I didn't think you would get mad at me."

Ran looked at the girl with wide eyes, wait. Is that what she thinks?

"Uh, wait a second-" Ran, however, did not get a chance to interject since she rambled on.

"Besides, it's not like I was showing off or anything. I mean, it isn't easy for me and Yuhi to see each other anymore. I just thought you were worried about me and doing something careless again."

Ran couldn't get a word out, so he waited until she finished.

"Well, you are right about that. I worry about you all the time, but I wasn't mad or anything. I was just confused."

"Confused?"

"You.. you're singing that day was so gentle, and yet I felt the same powerful emotion like your other songs."

Even though she sang that way, it still resonated with him. He could feel the emotions she wanted to convey, the message, the story behind it.

Sumire looked at him with wide eyes.

"So err I wasn't mad, but I just wanted to understand how you could sing that way. After all, you should know better than anybody the issue I had last year."

At some point in his career, he wondered whether he could carry on with music. After his band dissolved, he wandered around and played solo for so long. But then he met Kou, who extended his hand out and asked him to join the group. He somehow agreed due to the flow of the moment, but even then, he had his doubts.

When Quatro light was on the verge of disbanding, too, they all met Sumire, and everything changed. He was confused for so long, the idol him or the band member him? Which one was his real self? What is his real melody? It was this girl who answered those doubts of his with her performance.

Sumire sighed deeply. "Ran, sometimes I think you are an idiot."

Huh? Wait, what- "Why are you insulting.."

"I mean, just listen to yourself for a few seconds. Just because I sang slightly differently does not mean anything has changed. Besides, I sang rock ballad songs in front of the station a lot last year."

"Huh? You what?"

"I thought Masaru-senpai would have told you, but then again, he did joke around saying this was our little secret."

Ran recalled something the golden blonde haired man said, and his eyes twitched annoyed. So this is what Masaru meant by seeing something interesting? Ran thought he was referring to Sumire and Terashima's relationship, but it had something to do with music?

"Was it bad? Did you not like it?"

"No, it just confused me as I said. You're free to sing how you want, but when I thought it through, it upset me."

"Why?"

"Because I do not know that side of you." Ran admitted.

For a moment, nobody spoke, and the only sound anybody could hear was the sound of birds chirping not too far away. He felt his entire body tense up as he waited for her reply. Ran immediately regretted his words and wanted to take them back. Did he not just admit there that he liked her? Although it was indirect, anybody could easily interpret the meaning behind his words.

To his surprise, Sumire started to laugh. Ran looked at her puzzled; that was not what he expected.

"If that's all, then isn't the solution simple Ran?"

"Solution?"

"Just learn about the new me from now on; you can do that, right?"

This girl is also quite clumsy with her words. She indirectly told him just now that it was okay for her to stay by his side.

"Should we work on the song?"

"Actually." Sumire rummaged through her bag and pulled out an envelope. "I already finished it. At the same time, I wanted to write a song based on the current you. All the emotions from last year poured in, and then I realized something. Even if you have changed, you can still adjust to any song I write for you."

Ran's eyes widened when he heard those words. Honestly, this girl surprises him every single time. He opened the envelope and quickly scanned the music. Writing this type of song is like her, and yet it is different now too.

"I got it, just shut up and watch me."

Ran took a deep breath. He only briefly glanced at the music, but he already had lyrics—at least lyrics to match all the emotions from then and the present.

"The curse of my past, these half-assed dirty beats

Change it, change it! This smoldering groove

"Worthless," the words I spit out, for some reason.

They left only emptiness behind.

My true song, shoutin' to the heavens!

(Even if it's clunky, my own personality)

I'll release it, my real true voice!

(Now, let's move forward, our sights on the future!)

The only thing I can't surpass is myself.

It's not bad, is it? This new song

I've found the only one! That which could

Overcome the burden of my entire past,

What rescued me was your love."

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 303

Chapter 303: Sainly teritory Part 1

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Because it keeps getting repainted, it becomes history.

Sylvia Camus Tetsuo always saw life precisely in that manner. The more time goes by and develops, it ends up being covered in something else and thus becomes old. This something will define the past.

In a matter of seconds, things can immediately change, which is why he ensures that when things do change, he can keep up with that change.

Although he is merely the second son of his house, he took it upon himself to keep everything around the house in order, which meant managing the household affairs and funds. But this also included keeping his brothers in line, and he ensured that they maintained the correct manners to not shame the family.

However, because of his family role, others often mistook him as the eldest son causing misunderstandings between him and his elder sibling. But that did not matter to him since he was not close with that man.

He never saw that guy as an older figure type, not even once. That's why he felt the need to conduct himself in this manner. Even though that job was supposed to be his brothers, he cannot rely on him at all.

He disliked the weak, Tetsuo knew many would condemn him for that statement, but he had his values. Those who are weak will only get trampled on.

Tetsuo was well aware that others described him as an arrogant and prideful person who demanded perfection and disliked submitting to those in a weaker position. It did not matter if people scorned his behavior since this was how he decided to survive in this world.

He knew personality-wise he took after his mother. His entire life, he admired her as the ideal role model despite her neglecting her family. But this changed when he discovered her weakness, and he lost any form of respect or affection he had for her. This was the trigger that led to him destroying her and solidifying his position in the family.

His thoughts broke off when he felt the presence of something rather annoying cling onto his arm. "Ne ne Myu-chan, what are you thinking?"

Tetsuo sighed when he spotted a man with maroon colored hair and bright eyes. It was his team member, Maon Kou. Even though he is the eldest out of the four, how come he acts like a mere child? It doesn't make any sense to him at all. But even so, he's the only one who knew of his biggest secret.

"That ridiculous nickname. Are you not tired of it yet?"

Kou pulls a face, "Eh, you dislike it that much? Then what about Cam-Cam?"

"Absolutely not."

"Then MMA? Ah, that one sounds funny."

His eyes twitched, annoyed. "Even though I said I don't like the first one, you keep adding to it. What makes you think I will like any of the new ones if I disliked the first?"

Whenever it came to this person, Tetsuo lost his calm attitude. Even though he acts like a fool, he owed this person his life. Tetsuo regarded life as more valuable than the average person.

His old teacher told him that royalty had already become extinct by the time he was born due to average people's hunts. That person was normally so composed, but whenever he told that tale, he would tremble in fear. Tetsuo did not think it would happen in his time, but it did.

That was why he owed Maon Kou his life. At first, the maroon colored haired boy didn't need any thanks. In fact, when they first met, he was rather cold and always played it rather cool. Tetsuo was fine with that; in fact, it suited him. Yet even though he said he didn't need any thanks. Kou allowed him to follow him around.

He owed his life to him, and that's why Tetsuo, no matter what the small task, did it all for Kou. That's why he didn't hesitate at all, agreeing with it.

Kou's ridiculous idea of him becoming an idol too. He was well aware that the maroon colored haired boy was already somewhat famous in the entertainment industry then. But as an actor, not an idol. Tetsuo was rather surprised with the change of heart, yet he didn't hesitate to agree.

Perhaps that was a mistake of his; not only does he rarely have time to come home. But when he does, he is scorned by his younger brothers for not taking being an earl seriously. Besides that, the person he respected is long gone now.

He often found himself in silly situations that would make anyone laugh, despite his anger and frustration towards Kou for changing so much. Tetsuo found that every single time he came home and they insulted Kou, he couldn't tolerate it at all.

"Myu-chan, what are you thinking?"

He sighs and flicks the next page of his book. "The past." A vague and uncertain answer, and yet Tetsuo knew Kou would understand.

"Hmm, that's quite deep."

Ah, it's probably why he always ends up defending this person no matter what happens. Kou may have changed a lot, but occasionally, his friend would get the same look in his eyes as he did back then.

Tetsuo said nothing more and quickly left the room. He wanted to clear his thoughts, and Kou's presence did not help him.

Once he was outside, he recalled a conversation he had at the beginning of his final year.

"There is someone there that's quite interesting. Somebody gave me orders to watch over her".

An interesting person, huh? Tetsuo did not ask for a name since he thought he would figure it out right away.

Tetsuo had kept his eyes open for someone like that. But he didn't find any. At least it was someone that fell of his definition of interesting.

When he heard that the person was Ibuki Sumire, it surprised him. To him, she seemed like a normal person, a normal girl with no particular talent or skill that would stand out.

Yes, she was quite the beauty. But her personality didn't exactly fit her image of beauty. Indeed he was horrified to find that she was the lone survivor of the Ibuki family, more so the Princess. But what shocked him the most then was that—when he saw such a look in the girl's eyes.

Somebody of her status should not have that look on her face.

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Chapter 304: Saintly Territory Part 2

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Yes, she shouldn't look like that, nor should she act in such a rash manner. Yet in the end, did he not go along with the flow and attended to her every whim? Though he did not do it as extensively as the others, he still ended up doing so.

His thoughts broke off when he saw some broken tree branches not too far away. It did not look like a natural disaster, but a human-made one; somebody used quite a lot of strength. Tetsuo could only think of one person amongst his acquaintances that could do something like that.

This area is quite secured and has a lot of security too; only those with access can enter these grounds. He knew the others would not randomly invite anybody to without mentioning it. So that would mean that girl is here.

Tetsuo had to admit that he was never actually found alone with the brown hair girl. Maybe it's because Kou always clung to her. But even if they are left alone, there is always awkward silence.

After walking for a few minutes, he indeed found the intruder. But to his surprise, the girl wasn't alone. There was a man with black hair, green stripe kimono. Tetsuo immediately recognized him; is that not Aki? The leader of the underworld top organization Holy Knights? What is he doing here?

"Coming here so suddenly. Why?"

Aki sighed but smiled. "I feel hurt. Why don't you think I came here just to see you?"

"I have heard that excuse before."

"Terashima knows about you and your fiance, huh? Otherwise, he would have at least made a move."

He watches the girl's expression change, but she brushes off her unease with laughter. "Don't be a fool. It's not like what you're thinking; even now, Soujiro is still my fiance."

Tetsuo had to admit he was quite surprised to hear those words. After all, he was one of the only few people who knew the real circumstances behind her engagement to the third Prince. With arranged marriages, one does not have any choice but to marry the other person. Whoever they chose is the person they end up with.

He always believed that he didn't need to bother with romance because of that reason. He will marry the person his parents chose for him; that was why he didn't need it.

As far as romance went for him, there was a girl he was quite interested in that belonged to a noble family—the white hair Hikari attendant Setsura. The girl decided to attend a university in TOKYO so that he would meet up with her.

He has already introduced her to his parents and knew they would hold an engagement party soon. That's right, and he became interested in her because he saw she was the perfect lady type. Since she's everything, a Princess should be. So when she confessed her feelings to him, he saw no reason to reject her.

His thoughts broke once more when the black hair boy pulled her into a hug. "Is that so? It's a shame. There are plenty more people who would be more than honored to have your hand."

Sumire, however, pulled him away and, with weak laughter, shook her head. "Sorry, don't do that. I have somebody waiting for me at home who has sharp senses."

"Then maybe you should go."

At that, Tetsuo found himself walking away; that girl is too much of a mystery to him. But just now, he saw a flash of sadness and pain in her eyes.

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Whenever it concerns Ibuki Sumire, Tetsuo tried to maintain a distance. After all, she frightened him; what he feared was not her strength but her ability to change and influence those around her. He cared for her to a certain extent after last year's events, but he remained slightly detached.

Tetsuo accepts invitations to balls/gatherings whenever he found the time in his busy schedule as an idol. It was all for the sake of maintaining appearances, even though there was no need for such things anymore.

A deep sigh escaped his lips as he finally exited the stifling ballroom. For the last few hours, several people had approached him and would not let him leave. While he usually would not mind, he felt quite tired due to his job before he attended the ball.

Tetsuo approached the balcony area, knowing that nobody would be there. It looked quiet at first glance until he saw a small figure hunched up in a ball in the corner by a vase of roses.

Although it was difficult to see the person's face Tetsuo immediately recognized her. He awkwardly walked over and bent down. "Sumire-san? What are you doing?"

Sumire mumbled something. "Soujiro said he couldn't attend, so I have to represent him. But so many people started talking to me, so I ran away."

Tetsuo almost forgot how bad she is with dealing with other people since she is very bold most of the time.

"Are you crying? Should I call someone?"

Sumire lifted her face from her arms, and indeed he confirmed her tears. "I ended up tripping on this stupid heel." She pointed to the shoes right beside the vase.

From the looks of it, she just scrapped the vase, but it was enough of an impact to cause an injury. Since she sat down, he could not tell how hurt she was. What can he do? Tetsuo understood one thing about her personality, and she was very stubborn. He saw an example of this many times last year.

"May I see your injury?"

Sumire did not budge an inch.

"I shall remain with you today if you wish; we can even stay out here until the party ends."

Tetsuo did not see any need to return and interact with any more people. He was exhausted, and none of those people would benefit him in any way. Besides, he had a bad feeling about leaving her alone after what she said. It is unlikely for Makoto to leave her alone here, so in other words, somebody is holding the man up from coming here.

It is clear what their intention was, and that is to target this girl.

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Chapter 305: Saintly Territory Part 3

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It seemed that those words did the trick since Sumire lifted her gown slightly so he could see her knee. The blood was still fresh, indicating it only happened not too long ago.

After a few minutes of blinking and looking quite puzzled, he finally asked her. "... What are you doing here?"

"Soujiro said I had to come."

"Sumire-san, normally you would refuse." This was why even though they had the same status, he never bumped into her during these events.

This was the reason why he could comfortably play the role of Sylvia van Tetsuo. Tetsuo is glad that she did not want to return to the ballroom and that he expressed that he would not too. For some reason, he does not want her to see him like that.

He did not want Sumire to see him among those nobles who faked their smiles. He did not want her to see him acting like those vile people.

A deep sigh escaped her lips. "I intended to refuse, but I felt like I was bothering Yuhi, so I ran away."

As he began to tend to the girl's wounds by giving her simple first aid, Tetsuo noticed something. Her skin was unusually hot. His eyes widened when he realized something. "Don't tell me you are sick?"

"Ssssh! What if somebody hears you?"

Tetsuo looked at her dumbfounded. What on earth is she thinking now?

"Even if it is a place like this, Yuhi-san knows a lot of people. What if they overhear and tell him."

So she must have run away the moment Terashima was about to notice. This girl does such stupid things sometimes that he does not know what to think. Then again, how many times did he see this in the past? But back then, that person, Tsueno Mamoru, was always there for her. He would appear just in time.

"Then I shall remain here with you and right afterwards take you home."

Even if she has superhuman strength, she is still sick. What if she ends up feeling worse after fighting?

"That man came to see you did he not?"

She looked up, a bit startled at the sudden shift in conversation. He did not want to continue the previous one. Since it would mean having to comfort her, Tetsuo is not like Ran or Jun; he will not pretend to know how to comfort her. He accepted that he was no good at dealing with the opposite gender.

Tetsuo knew what went on her mind, but he shook his head. "There is no use hiding things."

Sumire fiddled with the cup in her hands. "Yes. He came rushing the second he found out about it—my connection to the enemy leader. Truthfully speaking, Ran to knows about it that's why he's been trying to stop me. But I can't do that. That guy is responsible for the death of my father, responsible for the incident that day."

"Are you certain?"

She looked down. "There is evidence. But somehow.. I don't get a good feeling about it."

"At that time, I thought about it. With the amount of power you had, I doubt you needed to run."

Back then, Ibuki Sumire was not powerless or a pretty marionette-like other thought. While it was small, she gradually built up her power.

"That's right. I didn't have to run away. I could have tried to put out the fire; wells and waters are surrounding the buildings for a reason, you know? But I didn't do that and chose to run away. You know I loved it." She spoke quietly. "Beautiful palaces, roads with elegant bridges. The sky was always clear, and the night full of stars it was like a paradise."

Tetsuo sensed the loneliness in her tone. Despite her praise, he did not see the usual light in her eyes whenever she was excited.

"Sometimes I wish I could just stay there forever. But that was a naive thought."

"Was it because of your desire to see the world?"

"Perhaps. But it doesn't change anything, does it? Nobles Oblige. Even though I had the power to save everyone, I did not help them. In the end, I committed a far greater sin than one could have imagined."

"I wished to protect my homeland without staining my hands with the blood of my enemies, so I escaped and let them follow me."

She looked him straight into his eyes, her eyes stained with tears.

"I am the one responsible for this mess."

Is she crying? She cried earlier due to getting injured, but there was something different about these tears. Tetsuo watched as she groggily got up and immediately lost her balance, but before she could fall, somebody caught her.

"Terashima."

Indeed the one who caught her was none other than Terashima Yuhi. He nodded in his direction and quickly turned to Sumire. "You're sick again, you're so careless."

"I want to hurry up and catch up, Yuhi."

"You don't need to make yourself sick over it." He picked the girl up in his arms, and she immediately wrapped her arms around his neck. "Even though you missed me, you ran away. You're so silly Sumire, what do I do with you?"

Despite the mini scolding, Tetsuo could not miss the affectionate look in his eyes.

"Hold me more."

Yuhi laughed. "Really you..." He trailed off as his gaze met his. "Sylvia, the people inside are looking for you."

Tetsuo sensed an odd atmosphere and knew it was his cue to leave. "Have a good night, Sumire-san and Terashima." With those words, he swiftly left. The last sight he saw was Sumire biting into Terashimas neck, and a scent of blood washed through the air.

He hurried his footsteps when he realized what had happened. This is not the first time he sees it since he often saw that scene before. When Ran could not control his abilities, he did the same with Momoi Futaba. But Tetsuo knew this was different. He felt a pang in his heart. What is this sudden pain?

Tetsuo shook his head. There is no use thinking of such pointless things. The only thing he ought to focus on is how to play his role properly.

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 306

Chapter 306: Saintly Territory Part 4

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

Tetsuo does not see her for a few days.

He naturally assumed that she was recovering from her fever since he seldom saw her at work or another ball. He does not ask about her condition, but he knew that at one point, it grew dire since Ran started to fuss about bringing her food. From what he understood, she was refusing meals.

His eyes widened when he spotted who was at the gate. There stood a girl with long brunette hair wearing a red and white colored sports jacket and a pair of denim-colored shorts.

"Ah, welcome back."

"Sumire-san."

The girl was not alone, but Terashima was with her. He tapped her shoulder. "Hey, remember?"

A deep sigh escaped her lips before she quickly bowed. "I apologize for my behavior the other night."

Her behavior? It took him a moment to understand what she was talking about. Is she apologizing for crying?

"You do not have to apologize."

"That"s what I said to Yuhi, but he told me to come here."

"Didn"t you want to discuss the song too? I figured you would kill two birds with one stone this way."

These two-- Tetsuo observed them. A part of him understood now why Jun liked to observe people. Unless one looks like this, it will be hard to tell. They treat each other as equals, and they care a lot for each other. At a glance, anybody can tell they care, but it is hard to see the amount of love and affection unless one looks properly.

Terashimas phone started to ring. A deep sigh escaped his lips.

"Are you going?"

"Going to sprint to the live conference."

"Idiot! Why didn't you say so sooner? Arrgh, poor Hino will be waiting."

"Hey, don't worry your pretty face about it." Yuhi pinched her cheeks. "On second thoughts, this face isn't that pretty recently, your eyebags look awful, and your complexion isn't good."

"T-that is uncalled for!"

"It's called honesty, right?"

This is the first time he has seen Sumire-san lose a verbal battle. Sure enough, the girl could not argue about that.

Tetsuo watched as a downcast expression appeared on her face. "Will I see you later?"

"I will be home early, at 6, so work hard until then."

Her eyes brightened when Terashima said those words. "Alright! Then I will cook dinner."

"We can do that together, and let's shop for ingredients too."

So Sumire-san can smile like this too? There was a gentle look in her eyes, one he never saw before. After a few more parting words, Terashima hurriedly turned away, yelling at someone on the phone as his figure disappeared into the distance.

"Should we head inside Sumire-san?"

"Okay."

The distance between the gate and the mansion was not a lot, but the walk felt much longer than usual. Tetsuo occasionally caught her glancing over at the rose bushes and her gaze softening as she murmured. "Silly Ran-chan."

So she knows Ran is taking care of the garden? Tetsuo found it unusual that Ran would do something like that, but the other two said it was normal. It seems he is the only one who does not know. A deep sigh escaped his lips.

It did not take them long before they reached the inside of the house. He led her the foyer where he was previously working and cleared the desk.

"So about the other time," Sumire mumbled. "Your right."

So he was right.

He noticed that those lackeys are after the brown-haired girl, so he grew suspicious of her connection with the infamous Yakuza young teen leader. It seems that they weren't merely acquaintances; something happened in the past.

It is something those people who like her will dislike. Ran knows, doesn't he? That explains his odd behavior of sticking to her even more than before. Though he always against being completely open about it before. He doesn't hold back now.

So that's the reason.

The enemy leader, for sure, is someone special to her. She cares about him even though he's causing her the most pain.

He would have asked more, but judging from her expression, she would not say another word on this.

He sighed; it seemed that he would need to pry that information another time. "Your looks can be deceiving," Tetsuo commented. "You say your personality is difficult but other people would see it as plain cruelty."

Sumire does not counter that, so he took this as his cue to continue.

"I don't know what happened in your past, but it's clear as day that you have a connection with that man that is causing headaches for people." He continued.

He watched as her expression shifted and carried on.

"You can't just assume that everything is your fault. It wasn't your choice to destroy your homeland, nor was it your hands that killed your people."

"But..."

"I did not say that to comfort you." Tetsuo made sure to add this. "So do not bother countering my words."

That's right, and he isn't trying to comfort her. There isn't any need to do that. After all, she is very strong, even if he doesn't say this. Even if he didn't say this eventually, she would conclude things. But perhaps a part of him wanted to be part of it.

A deep sigh escaped her lips. "You know Tetsuo-kun, you're very difficult to deal with."

Tetsuo blinked, surprised at her words. "Difficult?"

"Mm, I discussed this with Kou before, but I already knew from the moment I met that you that I would not be able to behave as normal." She trailed off. "You said it yourself that I have a strong and nasty personality that comes across as cruel to others. For me, that is the only way I can survive as a person because I lack the skills to function as a normal human."

"Sumire-san.."

"Tetsuo-kun, have you read Osamu Dazai's no longer human?"

"A little."

"I think I can relate with the protagonist. No matter what I do, I cannot seem to fit in. I can try to force my way into a circle, but even when I laugh and interact with the other people there, I will think to myself, ah, what is the point in this? At some point, my behavior will look un-natural to others, and they will distance themselves from me. Whether or not they will notice, but some will point out that I am not sincere."

Tetsuo did not interrupt and allowed her to speak. Indeed, he often heard those rumors about her. Some people assumed that Sumire-san was looking down on them, and then some thought she simply hated them.

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 307

Chapter 307: Saintry Territory Part 5

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There was a time where he thought the same. He thought that the girl did not want anything to do with them. He thought the teachers forced her to be their composer. The teachers and the agency put a lot of effort into firing their previous composers. So when Ibuki Sumire became Quatro Lights composer, it was clear that they went through all that effort for her.

"Tetsuo-san? Are you okay?"

Tetsuo snaps back to reality and found Sumire looking at him worriedly.

"Yeah..." He managed to say.

"You seemed like you were thinking too seriously," Sumire pointed out. "You were making a strange face too."

"It's nothing." Tetsuo said, trying to brush off the conversation.

"You're lying. You look really pale."

"This is only normal. Anyway, I am tired from practicing. You don't have to mind me." Tetsuo said.

He immediately understood she was upset with his behavior since she grabbed his collar.

"Ow! What are you--" Tetsuo trails off when Sumire laid his head on her lap. "Sleep! You haven't slept enough from practicing too much. I will sing you a lullaby. So relax and sleep."

"Idiot!" Tetsuo muttered. He felt his cheeks grow hot.

Is this not what people call a lap pillow? Tetsuo felt very embarrassed, and he did not think he would end up doing something like this with anyone.

With a gentle look on her face, Sumire starts singing Ave Maria.

Now that he thought about it, she often sang this last year. A church song when he first heard her sing this, he thought it was odd. It's not like she is religious, and yet she sang it so frequently. It took him quite some time to understand why she sang it, and the lyrics suit her very well.

"Ave Maria! Ave Maria! Maiden mild!

Listen to a maiden's prayer!

Thou canst hear though from the wild,

Thou canst save amid despair.

Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,

Though banish'd, outcast and reviled -Maiden! Hear a maiden's prayer; Mother, hear a suppliant child!
Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! Undefined!

The flinty couch we now must share

Shall seem this down of eider piled,

If thy protection hover there.

The murky cavern's heavy air shall breathe of balm if thou hast smiled; Then, Maiden! Hear a maiden's prayer;

Mother, list a suppliant child! Ave Maria!

"Ave Maria! Stainless styled!

Foul demons of the earth and air

From this, their wonted haunt exiled.

Shall flee before thy presence fair.

We bow us to our lot of care

Beneath thy guidance reconciled

Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer

and for a father hear a child! Ave Maria." Sumire sang softly.

"Hey..." Tetsuo said.

"Hmm?"

"Never stop singing, okay?"

Tetsuo does not understand why he said such words. But after what happened after Tsueno's death, he realized how much he missed hearing her singing.

She often sang in the middle of lessons, even if it was limited to simple melodies.

"I don't know what's going on, but okay if you say so," Sumire said happily. Someone that was kind-hearted, someone who played the music that calmed his heart, would only have to be her. Yet as he turned to look at the brunette, he noted her gaze diminish ever so slightly.

Tetsuo pretended not to notice. It would be best if he does not comment on it. There is nothing he can do for her after all. Unlike the other three, there is nothing he can do for this person.

....

Tetsuo felt restless throughout the night, and even when he woke up at his usual time, he still felt odd. It did not help how Ran was making a ruckus causing his already bad headache to increase.

Ever since Ibuki Sumire became Quatro Light's composure, many compared the songs she wrote for those guys and the ones she wrote for them.

Those guys were her first group and their kohai in the agency Nanairo feather.

The buzz around the news of the duo project as well as the tree that appeared in the center of the park is all you can hear of these days. The latter is expected; it truly is a "sensation". However, the former is generating more and more buzz amongst the public than they originally expected it would.

"What the hell is this duo project?" Ran said, slamming his foot on the table. "Even though the president does not create such stuff for us.."

Tetsuo sat down on the stool by the counter, Kou on the couch beside Ran, stood by the window, and looked down at the city.

"Don't worry about it." Tetsuo spoke up.

"I can't take his random anger anymore." He was an early riser, but so was Ran. So unlike the other two, he has heard this anger fit for more than three hours already.

"What's that?" Ran turned to him.

"Nothing will affect our superiority. Do you lack confidence?" Tetsuo challenged.

"What? Of course not."

At that comment, Tetsuo laughed. He sensed the man's hesitation. Ran stood up, clenching his fist. "Bastard!"

Kou also stood up. "Wait, wait. Guys --"

Jun casually intervenes. "At the previous concert, our group Quatro Light was rated higher than Nanairo Feather. But when people complete. It's not just ability that determines the outcome."

Indeed if it were a matter of skills, then those guys would lose. After all, they only have two professional members; their center member is good but is the emotional type. That guy, however, is the closest to Ibuki Sumire, and that is the reason why they were all cautious of the group. Being close to Sumire means creating greater music.

"Our solo songs project isn't enough?" Ran muttered.

"It isn't. I think what the public wants to see now is a group performance; in other words, we should take the president's plan seriously." Kou said with a serious gaze in his eyes.

The president's plan was to get Terashima Yuhi to join their group. When the president proposed it to the idol association board, those people surprisingly agreed. Then again, he knew there were many people dissatisfied with how Terashima went solo with everything and his methods. Terashima

prioritizes making people happy with his singing and satisfying the audience. He does not care about the money. Even when he receives a large sum of money, he donates it.

That man is an unusual one, and yet his actions resemble a certain somebody. Tetsuo thought of Sumire, and her gentle expression as she sang appeared in his head. He could not shake off this odd feeling since then.

It is unlike him to get so affected by her.

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 308

Chapter 308: Saintly Territory Part 6

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

This growing irritation and this strange feeling in his heart he dislikes it.

"I would rather not," Tetsuo said, dissatisfied. "Why do we have to rely on somebody else to heighten their abilities?"

It's true that the one obstacle that has prevented them from reaching the top is Terashima Yuhi. If they join hands with him, there is no doubt that they will become number one. But that is not the future he wants. He does not want to play into the hands of another person. "Besides, is reaching the top worth it?"

Are they not in a good position now? Although he dislikes losing, it does not matter if he loses as an idol. He only agreed to be an idol because of Kou, and he kept it up because his family members said it was good promotion for the family.

It is not like he is particularly attached to this role. "I've had enough of you."

"How unusual for once we," Tetsuo said.

The two of them butted heads with each other. Tetsuo didn't know what it was, but Iwa Ran had a way of irritating him.

"Ugh. On average, there's a problem every three minutes and forty-seven seconds." Jun muttered. "Kou, can't you do something?"

"Then is there nothing in your head but food and rock?" Tetsuo argued.

"And do you ever think of anything but sweets?"

His eyes twitched, annoyed. What is with this guy? "What is wrong with me liking sweets? At the very least, I do not have such barbaric taste."

"Hey, why have you been ignoring them since earlier?" Jun suddenly spoke up.

At that comment, Tetsuo stopped arguing with Ran. Now that he thought about it, it was strange that Kou was not interfering too much even though he is why he has to live with this barbarian.

"This is your fault."

"Yeah. It's your fault, Kou."

Jun nodded. "Yeah. If you hadn't suggested that we live together, this wouldn't have happened."

But even after Jun said those words, Kou did not say a word.

"Why aren't you saying anything?"

Kou, who had his hands clenched in a prayer-like position, suddenly spoke up. "I can't do this anymore."

A harsh tone?

Kou stood up. "Let this be the end."

Although he didn't say anything other than those words, the three of them knew what it meant. They all went their separate ways the second Kou left the apartment.

Ran sat on the couch, and he watched as Jun sat by the counter. Meanwhile, he opens the door when he hears the doorbell, met with brunette and violet orbs and explained the situation to her right away.

"What? Kou did what?" Sumire said stunned

"Didn't I just tell you that? He left." It left a bitter taste in his mouth.

"Eh but. . ."

"He truly is self-centered," Tetsuo commented.

How could he just leave when he is the trigger. It was Kou who invited them all to become a team. It was clear that he would never get along with Iwa Ran, but that did not stop Kou.

"I can't believe he quit when he's the one who suggested it." Ran said.

Jun nodded in agreement. "I did not expect this either."

"Then we should look for him immediately," Sumire said. Tetsuo saw how frantic she looked.

"Leave him be."

"Yeah, there's no need to go looking for him. That guy isn't serious anyway."

Tetsuo had to agree there.

Something similar happened in the past, and that guy returned with a foolish smile on his face. He even had the guts to mention testing them all.

The brunette, however, wasn't convinced at all. Tetsuo felt guilty watching her and quickly added.

"Kou will come back soon. He always does. I know you came all the way here, but we will have to postpone today's meeting.." he turned to face her and apologized. "Sorry."

"Then can you see me out for a moment, Tetsuo-san?"

At that comment, Tetsuo blinked, surprised but nodded. He quickly followed her out of the room. The moment they arrived at the gate, he spotted a familiar black-haired man. "Hey."

"Kou ran off, and I will go and find him."

"Mm, go ahead."

Sumire leaned forward and kissed Terashimas cheek. "Yuhi-san, don't cause problems, okay?"

Yuhi laughed. "Hey, you're the one who said I should give a prep talk."

"Only because I believe in your ability." Sumire turned to him and handed him an envelope.

Tetsuo's eyes widened. "But we haven't even discussed."

"You know, I think you forgot how I write my songs. If you think about it, I have enough information to work with."

How she writes her songs? Now that he thought about it, he does not know the answer to that. They have never had such a discussion, and Tetsuo did not think to ask. But since she managed to write it without his assistance, Tetsuo could guess how.

"Anyhow, I will go." She turned to leave, but he could not miss the odd look in her eyes.

Terashima apologized to him and rushed over. He pulled the girl into his arms, and Tetsuo watched as he patted her back.

"I'll chase Maon too. Sumire, you can go back home."

"No, it's my..."

"You're not in a good state." Yuhi commented.

"Not in a good state?"

"Yuhi..."

"I will be real quick, okay? Could you wait for me in the park nearby? Call Atushi, so somebody is with you."

"I don't have to. Yuhi, come soon."

This is a first seeing her this way. No, hasn't she always been like that since then?

....

When Terashima suggested they go for a run. He didn't think they would run as far as the outskirts. His throat felt sore, his vision gradually blurred.

Eventually, Tetsuo collapsed onto the grass.

"You did well. I thought they said you were the weakest in the group."

"Was this a test of physical endurance?"

Yuhi laughed. "Why would I make you do that?"

Then what was the point in all that running? Tetsuo looked at him with an irritated expression, but Terashima remained smiling. Tetsuo followed him to the railing area. "What was the point in this?"

"I wanted to talk to you a bit since I know, unlike the others, you're not singing of your own free will. But your not a puppet either."

"How do you know that?"

"Somehow, I can tell."

It was a vague and uncertain reply, but it was enough for him. "This person is very unusual."

"It's just a small piece of advice. You don't have to overthink too much regarding music. Whether your forced into this or doing this out of obligation, none of those things matter. Your too sensitive to what others think." Yuhi trailed off. "This is music we are talking about here, and everything will flow naturally whether or not you initiate it."

A deep sigh crossed his lips. "Terashima, you like music, don't you?"

"Yeah. But I love Sumire more."

"How blunt..."

"Also regarding her. You can take your time figuring out how you feel."

"What does that-" Tetsuo paused when he recalled his strangely irritated mood. The running helped him clear his thoughts. But before this, he felt very annoyed.

He took a deep breath and started to sing instead of responding.

"Listen well to this sacred concerto.

In the moonlit night worthy of this party of dreams

Contacting the galaxy's light

This harmony infused with my love

For people to understand each other,

Words alone are worthless.

The signal of these eyes ruthless enough to freeze

And the destiny I believed it would convey.

Looking to even greater heights

There is no lie in this ambition.

A territory far superior to this

"I'll show it to you..." Tetsuo sang.

How strange, since when could he sing like this?

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 309

Chapter 309: Never Part 1

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

Kou didn't mean to run away.

He was going to cope with all the insults or intervene like he usually would. Yes, normally, he would not mind if they shifted their anger towards him. But when he recalled the sight of his kohais gradually getting better and better, it frustrated him. He is the only one not improving.

He suggested the idea for them to live together, just the four of them. Because he truly believes, that's what they need right now. Right now, they do not deserve to pair up with Terashima Yuhi, despite what it looks like in the eyes of their fans. Right now, Yu-Yu is the only one on the level that can be called a legend.

The other three felt so desperate to write eleven new songs and release an album like that because they also know it. The way they are now, it isn't enough; if they remain this way, the guys in Nanairo feather will catch up with them.

Kou saw it with his own eyes. The potential of the two duos and three solo projects brought about their talents and brought about newfound strengths that had yet to blossom. As the way they are now, they cannot help Mimi much or less match Yuyu.

His thoughts broke of spotting brunette-colored hair girl wearing an outfit that consisted of a light purple sleeveless dress with a semi-ruffled skirt and an image of cherry lips on the bottom left—dark purple pumps with a small chunk of gold on the heel. Gem shards are attached to the toe.

There was a table in front of her and several flowers as well as a pot. Oh, is she practicing her flower arrangement? He had heard from Ryou that there's an elite gathering that involved demonstrating the Princess skills. But he didn't think that he would find her earnestly practicing for it.

As they are now, they don't deserve to be called the number one idol group. The ones who should be on the top right now are, without a doubt, EMMA. The flaws they had as individuals have vanished entirely, and as a group, they have come together perfectly. Nanairo feather team spirit is far better than theirs.

"Mimi," Kou called out.

The brunette looked up, "Ah Kou! Practicing?" Kou nodded. "I see. I see that's good. You are working hard! Where are the others? Ah, perhaps you are racing and managed to get ahead of everyone?! That's amazing since Jun-kun is fast."

Kou looked at her awkwardly, and the girl laughed. "I'm joking. I already know since I just came from there."

"Right, you had a meeting." Kou almost forgot about that. "Sorry, I guess in the end you couldn't have it?"

"It's okay, and I sent Yuhi."

This girl is as carefree and mysterious as ever. "Am I disturbing you?"

"No, it's okay."

Kou is grateful that the girl did not engage him in conversation. He just wanted to think and be by himself. The second part he discarded when he saw her. It seems like he still has that bad habit from last year.

Ever since the day Tsueno Mamoru passed, Kou found himself more open about watching Sumire. Though it was something he had long been doing, up until now, he hid it quite well. That's right, and he has watched over her for so long, ever since that time they were kids. It does not seem like she remembers anything about it, though.

Their group that up until that time had been completely undefeatable had been ambushed - in their very own headquarters. There was a spy; someone let them in, and before they could even react. The lights went out, and he heard nothing but screams.

The clustering sounds of weapons and all sorts of voices, there were some familiar and some not. For those people's eyes who couldn't adjust to the dark, it was a complete wipeout. When the lights went back on, it was a complete mess. But for both sides. It seemed as though they were at an advantage. That was until they brought out the hostage.

Junie, Junie didn't deserve to suffer like that. Kira Junie was the person he saw that time.

The maroon-colored-haired boy regretted it then. He regretted having that fight with him and regretted ignoring those calls. When Kou saw him in such a condition, it was clear they tortured him. He must have tried to run away and called him for help.

Kou didn't know what happened. He charged in and lost complete control and...He doesn't recall it very well. But when he next woke up, Junie was crying in his arms about being okay, and a girl with dark brunette hair stood there with her gland figure. It was a sight that he would always remember.

After all, she gave him quite the punch and lecture. Kou laughed at the thought; even back then, Mimi was quite bold.

What was it she said then?

Sometimes it just takes patience for everything to happen. You won't get respect in just one day, you can't be in love with someone you just met, and you won't be able to forgive yourself in a second. You grow by making mistakes, getting hurt, and learning from your regrets.

It's your doing that makes you who you are. Don't assume; get your facts straight. That is what messes a lot of people up. There is always a reason for everything. As Shakespeare said, everything happens for a reason.

It is like we're all trying to fight for it, trying to get what we want, and it makes us forget the whole reason why we wanted it in the first place. Change for the better; don't change for someone else. Change for yourself. Don't be selfish. Don't limit yourself from doing things just because you don't think you can make it through. Remember — time isn't going to wait for you, so make the best of it.

Getting his facts right, huh? Meaning "accepting just knowing wasn't enough. That's probably why his gaze lands on Sumire, reading a book now, the flower arrangement stuff inside her bag.

That's probably why their relationship ended. Even though he knew a lot about her, he knew everything there was to know about her. There were many things he just couldn't accept.

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 310

Chapter 310: Never Part 2

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

Sometimes you can meet the one person you share your life with, in many ways, whether it be quick or slow, easy or hard. As long as you are confident and strong about it, nothing can stop you from feeling.

Back then, he thought that person would be June. He always thought that no matter what happened, he would always love her. However, when Sumire came around, everything changed. No, maybe back then, it was already obvious.

He is such a sinful person, Junie, even though he said he would wait. He ended up falling for Ibuki Sumire.

"Are you...doing okay?" Kou finally asked.

Since he came here, he avoids asking her this question because he did not want to disturb the balance in her new life.

He asks because months have passed, she parted with Ichinose on the roof. He remembered that day very well since he hid away behind the door and saw what happened. The other two who followed him also saw it. When she got back here, too, he ended up reporting everything to HQ. Even though he didn't trust those guys, they wanted an explanation from start to end of what happened, so he has no choice but to agree.

But no one had asked her, and no one had brought him up in front of her. Kou knew they were trying to be considerate, but he did not believe it did the girl any good.

After all, it was not just Terashima Yuhi that Tsueno Mamoru favored.

If things fall through with Yuhi for whatever strange reason, there will always be that guy.

All he could hear was the sound of flickering pages, and he knew that the girl was still looking down at the book. "What are you talking about?"

Kou flinched when he heard the girl's tone. "Nothing"

When Mimi gets like that, it's best not to say a word. Even so, she hasn't mentioned Ichinose at all, huh? Yet he sees her clutching that necklace in her hands every single day.

Is this what Tsueno Mamoru meant before? When he spoke about setting her up with someone. He had heard the conversation Tsueno had with the caramel-colored-haired girl and couldn't help but be surprised. Setting her up with Terashima, at least that's the impression he got then. However, when he heard him say those other words, Kou understood.

That guy carefully planned things, so even after he is no longer here, Mimi will not be alone.

He was so lost in thought, though, that he didn't when Sumire put her book down and stood up. He did not notice until he felt a pair of familiar arms around him.

"Kou," Sumire spoke softly. "Sorry, I know you're just worried about me. But right now, on that matter, I really don't want to say anything. I feel as though if I say anything I'll truly fall apart and do something rash." She laughed. "I'm supposed to be on probation right now. But it seems like it's difficult. The reason why I can't say it, all these factors aside. I'm still towards Ru...."

At that comment, his eyes widened. It's not like he didn't notice. Unlike the rest of the world, Kou felt something odd about her relationship with Terashima Yuhi. It looks like everything is going well on the outside, but there was something off about it.

At that, he placed his hand on top of hers, "I understand. Mimi, you don't have to worry so much. You'll ruin your cute face."

"Idiot." She muttered.

Before they could exchange any more words, they hear the sound of her phone.

"Oops, I'll be late. I promised to have a small meeting about the upcoming event at Jupiter records lounge with Ryou-kun and Atsuro."

Kou had noticed the sudden change in familiarity between the two. However, he didn't bother with the details. They're all getting their chances, after all.

Surprisingly, Terashima is allowing this. Then again, maybe it's not like that. Terashima isn't allowing this, but this is happening naturally? That guy, however, is up to something.

He separates their hands. The absence of her warmth made him feel strange, but he shook his head. With his usual smile, he sent her off. "Right, have fun."

Sumire smiles. "Yeah, I will be back."

As he watched her retreating figure, though, Kou couldn't help but think how different the situation is now. Usually, if he likes someone, he would be more selfish; he would desperately keep that person to himself. However, with Mimi, he found that he couldn't do that at all. Even now, that's something that will remain a mystery to him.

Kou whipped open his phone. "Hey, it's me. Do you have some time?"

The best way to uncover any mystery regarding Ibuki Sumire is to ask that person who acts like her guardian.

He hears a sigh on the other end of the line.

"You know. That translates to drop whatever you're doing now and head out, isn't it?"

"Glad you got it. See you in that cafe in five minutes."

....

Kou wouldn't exactly call himself a demanding person. But nor could he say out right that he is a fair and righteous person either. After all, no matter what happens, it always seems like he would get his way.

The cafe he arranged to meet Hamano Atushi was on a slope beside a few residential apartments. The black hair boy stayed in one this entire holiday and would go back to Tsukhara for the second semester.

He felt a bit bad about calling him out since he knew how busy the boy was, dealing with student council work even when he was here in Tokyo.

The president role, huh? Come to think of it originally, that role was for him. He held quite the attachment to the academy, so he understood where Arashiyan was coming from. But he already decided to walk another path.

Even if Mimi didn't come along, he already had thoughts about breaking into the international market. One day, one day, that dream. No, it is within grasp already.

Contrary to what the media say, they are the ones who need to persuade Terashima Yuhi to join them. What is Terashima thinking? He heard from the others about the advice he keeps giving them. Why would he help them out to this extent?