

Melody 311

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 311**

Chapter 311: Never Part 3

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Either way, where on earth is Hamano? He's not usually one that's late. After a few more minutes, Kou was about to call him when he feels the chair opposite him clatter.

"Hamano, even for you this—" He stops his sentence mid-way when he saw somebody unexpected.

It was not Hamano Atushi but instead, in the seat opposite sat a fair-skinned girl with red and purple dual-colored eyes. She has sandy blonde hair styled into two half-pigtails which are held up with a yellow heart barrette on the left and a blue star barrette on the right.

"Y—you?"

"It's been a while, Kou-chan."

"Yuko-san!" He exclaimed. Indeed there sat opposite him was none other than his old tutor Sora Yuko.

Not just a tutor, but she was a former second idol. While she no longer enters the idol rankings due to her status, she is still a member of the entertainment industry.

Yuko chuckled. "I am glad to see that you still have the same amount of enthusiasm".

"Yes. But why are you here?"

The caramel-colored-haired girl slides up a document in front of him. That read "TOP Idol Groups Festival. Tokyo Summer Tour"

"I'm here for this. It's something Yumi decided to do on the spur of the moment, though. So were still finalizing the details. But we've already chosen and discussed with the board who will perform." Yuko trails off. "Of course me and Yumi as Double Y, Lune, Rever, Never ending 3, Ultimate Five, STAR and ..." She smiles at him and slides another sheet of paper in front of him.

"If you sign this. Then Quatro light is officially in."

His eyes widened when he saw the document. Did that mean she...?

Yuko chuckles at his reaction. "Honestly, when Yumi first proposed the idea, I instantly thought of you Kou-chan."

"I'm honored. But are we qualified?"

An event that the legendary Takashi Yumi organized will be no normal event. That woman who held the number one spot for so long, a legendary figure in the music industry.

"Of course, otherwise Yumi wouldn't have agreed. Right now, Quatro light really is shining. Your activities on magazines, radio shows, and TV we've seen them all and judged it ourselves. For you guys, this would be a good opportunity too."

Indeed this really would be a good chance for them. Normally he wouldn't hesitate to accept this. But with all that's going on now, would it really be safe.

"I'm honored Yuko-san, but..."

"The security is safe, and even if they're Yakuza, they won't try to bypass a concert that's security isn't police guards but individuals with Asakura gems. Kou-chan, you should know about it, right? The Asakura gem's powers are based on the will and strength of the individual. Yumi is there." Yuko shuts her eyes. "If Yumi is there, you guys don't have to worry."

Takahashi Yumi, huh? Indeed if it is that person, then everything should be fine. Still, he wondered how Yuko-san could trust somebody this much; even without those words, he could see it in her eyes. A strong and unwavering belief

"Yuko-san, did you perhaps ambush Hamano and told him you would come instead? So you can reassure me."

Yuko winked. "Bingo." Good grief, this person also does everything at her own pace. "Besides, your all still students. You should be enjoying your summer instead of dealing with matters like this."

Kou gripped his hand, his gaze darkened. "Recently-"

In the end, he couldn't do anything to help her either. In the end, once again, someone who he knew. Someone who he was close with ended up hurt badly. No getting hurt badly is one thing. But the fact of the matter is that she is no longer here.

Yuko reached over and placed her hand on top. "Yeah, I heard. I stopped by just now. But you have to remain strong Kou-chan. Because the second you falter, that is when those people will take advantage of the situation. I understand it, too; during my younger days, I was the same. I didn't understand the world, I was lost, confused, and I felt completely alone.

Yet there was Yumi, although she was in the same situation as me. No, although her situation was worse. She still remained strong and fought so much to achieve her dreams. She found something that gave her the light and inspired others to do the same. Kou-chan you also have a person like that don't you? No that's wrong. "You all have someone like that."

He recalls the words he said to his kohai before the third selection. That's right, because of Mimi, it was because of her that he could get a true grasp on his dreams again. It was because of her that he became serious about music again.

"All of us have our dreams in this room. Some less clear than others, and yet it is still there. As for my dream? I will say it clearly. I am sure it's the same for the others, too—the dream of truly becoming the number one group. Even if we are number one in the rankings here in Japan, that is not the same everywhere else.

It doesn't change the fact that we're probably still quite unknown in other areas of the world. This is why despite us being on top, it doesn't necessarily mean we're unreachable. Anyone can still take over that position now, and we would be shafted and become less known than before.

It's an unstable position, which is why we undergo harsh training every day. All we think about is music. I understand that's difficult since some of you are regular class students. However, I highly believe that should be an excuse. Mimi is a regular student, and yet she still balances everything perfectly. Her dedication is on level with ours, and so is her conviction. What I am saying is if you guys can't take this seriously, then we will take her from you for good. "

That's right, he said those words with strong conviction then, and he means it, about keeping Sumire as their composer. He wants to see it, that sight with his fellow teammates and Sumire.

Kou sighs, and yet a soft smile made its way onto his face. "Twenty-three-year-olds are on a completely different league than the rest of us, huh?"

"Yes."

Just like Yuko-san trusts Takahashi Yumi, the same went for him towards Ibuki Sumire. Kou paused when he recalled the first time he heard that she was dating Terashima Yuhi. He felt bitter, and yet he felt relieved when he saw that picture. He thought he would never see her smile like that again.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 312**

Chapter 312: Never Part 4

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"So is Takahashi Yumi-san here already?" Kou asked.

"Ah, no, she's flying back from her European tour tomorrow. She should be back by the morning. I haven't seen her in two months, so I have not seen her in a while." Yuko fiddles with the straw of her drink. "It wasn't fair how Ultimate Five got to go with her..."

"Yuko-san yourself, didn't you have an Asian tour and gardening cup? You couldn't have possibly gone."

Yuko pouted. "It's still frustrating, though."

However, Ultimate Five is coming back, huh? My my, this timing isn't good. Especially when they just gained momentum. But then again, he supposed it was high time they returned the ranks to how it should be original.

They became number one because all the senior male idol groups went on to make their international debut. Now that they are all returning, the battle for the top will truly start.

"They still stick to Takahashi-san like glue, huh?"

"Right? You would think with her and Francis having dated for what two-three years now, the other members would focus on their girlfriends instead. But no, they still prioritize Yumi."

Kou chuckles. "Is someone bitter? You're dating that guy now, right. I heard about the engagement to congrats."

"Thanks. But it's still something that won't happen straight away. The two of us don't intend to get married just yet. We still have to spice up the idol world more. I mean, look at Yumi and Francis; they

practically live together and aren't still married yet. There is still time, but getting married while we all still have this youth may be more sensible." Yuko smiled. "Kou-chan, what about you? How is your love life?"

At that comment, he scratched his hair. "Actually about that..." Kou didn't know how to phrase it. But he knew it would be better for him if he explained it to somebody.

After Kou explained the story, he half expected her to go into a serious discussion. But instead, he found the most uncommon expression from her.

The caramel-colored-haired girl stared at him with completely wide eyes. "Ehhhh? The girl you fell in love with is Sumire-chan? Seriously?"

Huh? First name basis. "Yuko-San, you know Mimi?"

"Well yeah. She used to drop by the flower shop all the time. She would always order red cosmos. Oh, and I heard she used to be Yumi's pupil."

At that comment, he spilled his coffee on the table. "Mimi is Takahashi-sans pupil?"

Yuko nodded. "Right? Coincidences exist."

Rather he is starting to think that the world is much smaller than he thought it was. To think that Mimi is Takahashi Yumi's former pupil, if that is the case, then it explains it, the same growing aura around her and overwhelming presence.

"She stopped coming to the shop a few years back. I wondered why that was until I saw what happened to her family. It must have been awful for her, and I also have experience with that. But when I tried to call her, her number was no longer in range. Rather I found her phone in the corner, and she purposely left it there though with a note "Sorry Y" from IS. I'm relieved to the extent that she thought about leaving a note for me even if it was an apology." Yuko trailed off. "Things like that can happen, you know? That's why you have to treasure your life and live every day with happiness."

Mimi, so you did something like that. Treasure your life huh," I don't have anything, that's why..." Unknown to Mimi and Senbi that day, he passed by and heard every word of their conversation. She really is foolish.

"Yuko-san, somehow you've matured now."

Yuko grinned. "I'm glad to see that you're finally acknowledging my adult existence."

From: Ibuki Sumire

Kou are you still free?

Save me from this situation.

His sweat fell when he saw the message. Did something happen at Jupiter records? Then again, Sumire and Atsuro are still not on speaking terms.

...

When Kou reached Jupiter records, many staff members were running around distressed. He awkwardly approached the reception area, and surprisingly there was only one receptionist there. She seemed frantic too and quite upset. "Is there a problem?"

"Ah, Maon..Kou?"

"I have a meeting with Sumire."

"Miss Ibuki and Kusaji-san are..."

Kou sweat fell when he saw her on the verge of tears. What on earth are those two doing? Kou asked for directions since the lady seemed like she was in a bad state and navigated through the hallways easily.

It did not take him long to reach the destined room. He knew it was the right place since he could hear a lot of noise. By the time he arrived, something had gone flying past him, and it was a chair.

The person who threw it was none other than the one who called him here.

"You crazy woman!" Atsuro exclaimed. "I am only saying this for your good."

"You're such a hypocrite."

Kou approached the purple-haired man in the corner who was sighing deeply. "So what happened here?"

"It was going well at the start. I managed to persuade Sumire to compose for our group too. But Atsuro went ahead and ruined it. He said something like, and I can sing your songs better than Nanairo feather."

Ah, ah, is this guy stupid? By saying those things, Atsuro is digging his own grave. Besides, Kou knew it was not Nanairo feather Atsuro was cautious about but Arashiyan. Indeed the songs Sumire wrote for Nanairo feather could only shine because that guy was in the center.

"So she started throwing things then?"

"No, he further made it worse by suggesting that he could beat Terashima Yuhi."

This guy is seriously asking for her never to forgive him. Kou speculated what happened between them, but he did not think Sumire would take it this far. So he assumed something else happened.

Kou watched the sight, half amused. Quite some time has passed since he last saw Sumire lose her composure like this. But that is no good for a musician, damaging her hands that much. Besides, isn't that blood?

However, before Kou could step forward, he watched as black hair rushed past him, and he stopped in his tracks.

The person who came rushing over was none other than Terashima. He immediately grabbed Sumire's hand before she could throw the vase.

"Yu-Yuhi?"

"Hey, there, love, what happened to canceling your plans and waiting at the park?" Though Terashima wore a smile on his face, there was a dark aura around him.

Sumire immediately became nervous and looked down. "Uh, well, I figured..."

"Work aside, what is this?" He points to the blood on her hands and the vase he just put down for her.

"Exercise?"

"Brat, you want to lie to me over something like this?"

"But Yuhi, he was insulting you! I can't let that happen."

Yuhi deeply sighed. "I can handle insults, Sumire. I don't want you to do anything like this unless somebody comes at you with murderous intent. Your hands are too precious for this."

Kou noticed that even when he grabbed her hand, he did so lightly. He watched as her face slowly colored.

"Your--only implying strange things."

"Think whatever you want. But please don't get hurt like this again." Yuhi turned to Yamaguchi. "Do you have a medical kit?"

The stunned Ryou nodded and walked over to the cabinet.

Just a few minutes ago, Mimi had a murderous aura around her. But now, there is no trace of it. It seems like he no longer has to worry over her as much as before. There is somebody reliable by her side.

### **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 313**

Chapter 313: Never Part 5

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August 13th - Studio

Dispersing like that after what happened the other day made Kou feel restless. There was something else he wanted to talk to Sumire about. But unfortunately, he has a lot of work to attend to today.

He coincidentally had work in the same building as Yuko-san. Every single person is looking at him now, clearly saying, "wow, Maon Kou knows Sora Yuko". Yuko-san's only been an idol for three years, a shorter time than him, yet she has this much influence.

No, that does not make a difference. Yuko-san was a member of Trio Stars Team S and was a thirty-ninth-generation member. Despite the long period split from when she was an idol as a kid to one as a young adult. She has a strong aura.

Yuko suddenly halts. "Ah."

"Yuko-san, what is it?"

Kou turned to what she was looking at, only to spot a certain brown hair girl alongside EMMA members.

Mimi, wasn't she supposed to be in Jupiter Buildings? Just as he was debating this, though, they were getting closer. He was about to call them over when Yuko grabbed hold of his arm and pulled him towards the pillar.

His sweatdropped, realizing what was going on. "Why do you need to hide?"

"I just want to confirm something."

Confirm?

He watches her gaze land on the members of EMMA. Ah, so that's what it was. He guesses Yuko-san does pay attention to these things.

Kou was curious about it too. However, his gaze hardened on the blue head man who stood dangerously close to Sumire. That shouldn't be allowed.

At that comment, Kou watched as somebody else grabbed hold of her hand. "You will trip Sumire." He said his voice was dangerous, yet his facial expression remained calm.

The owner of that voice was none other than Terashima. How odd for Terashima to be here too. Kou knew that somebody in the idol association board was pulling strings so the two could get no work together.

Sumire must have noticed since she sighs, yet she chuckled. "How unpleasant, jealousy that is."

"Be quiet."

Even if the two do get along very well, as he thought before, there was still something off. After what she said the other day, he immediately understood. Now Tsueno's gone; there's only one other person that can be on her mind. He had heard from the fiance that "She cries herself to sleep." In the end, it'll be that way. Arashiyan, exactly what does he plan to do about this?

.....

Avoiding them could only last so long. That and Yuko-san's staring became way too obvious. Anyhow, once they got to the canteen area, everyone, he does mean everyone turned their way. Saying their full names didn't help conceal them either.

Sumire blinks. "Eh Kou...and Yuko-san?" Sumire loudly exclaimed.

Mimi and her loud voice, quite some time has passed since he heard it.

Well, it's times like this where he's quite relieved since she doesn't seem so guarded.

"Sumire-san, you have to be more cautious around guys! You don't understand their mindset."

On second thoughts, Yuko-san is louder.

Sumire laughed as she looked sideways over at Yuhi. "Aha.. Well, you don't have to worry. This guy is quite safe despite what it looks like."

"Hey, what is that supposed to mean?"

"Exactly that."

Yuhi rolled his eyes and bent down to kiss her lips. "Safe, huh?"

Kou watched as she hit and scolded him, but there seemed to be a nice atmosphere around them.

They get along as ever, huh? Kou expected this much. But even then, he wondered about that person. Arashiyan is serious about Mimi. Yet he still hasn't done anything about what happened then. While he is over there and stalling, anybody can steal Mimi away.

His thoughts break when Sumire tugs on his shoulder. "Kou, do you have a bit of time?"

"Yeah...."

In the end, they went out onto the back. Kou glanced around; only some members of the staff crew were sitting down on the grey benches and eating.

He watches her lean on the railing as a strong gust of wind blows before them. "Ah, this is nice. What a nice breeze."

"You and he seem to get along better now."

Indeed unlike before when Terashima was in star town briefly, there seems to be a better atmosphere.

"You know jealousy is a monster in disguise."

"You got me." He trails off. "But I've always displayed jealousy before." That's right, unlike his team members, he was the most vocal about his feelings towards her.

"Is that so?"

Being with her like this made him feel at ease. But at the same time, he knew that there must be a reason why she brought him out here.

"The rankings. Everyone is doing well, huh? I'm glad." She chuckles. "I was quite worried for a while what would happen. But it seems like in their own way everyone's working hard."

That look, so that's what it means. Whenever she has that look on her face, she must be thinking of the guys in Nanairo feather. So she misses them after all. It's a given, even though she decided to come with them. It's not like she has truly chosen them.

Kou reached over and patted her hair. "Kou?"

"Even now, your thoughts are all about them. But we don't intend to lose at all."

That's right because he resolved himself already. He was sure that the others shared the same thoughts as him.

Sumire reached over and placed her hand on his face, causing his eyes to widen. "If I don't choose?" She murmurs. "If I don't choose and remain selfish. I wonder what you will all say."



So that's what she was thinking about. The others seem pretty convinced that the person she chooses to be with then will belong to one of the groups. No one has ever considered the fact that she may not end up choosing someone. Even if she does, things may still remain the same way as before.

"Mimi, you would do something like that?"

She laughs lightly. "Who knows. But for sure, choosing has never been my forte. Ru would scold me about that, saying that. Being selfish is fine, but there are certain times where you need to know when to decide. There are times where you can't be selfish. You have to know when those times are." Sumire repeated.

"Ru's words had always influenced a huge part of my heart even long before I got together with him. I always thought that it was strange, but in the end, I accepted it." Sumire closed her eyes. "You know Kou, if possible, I want to keep on living in a dream world. Where everything is still peaceful, where nobody gets hurt, and I can help everyone achieve their dreams, but that was not my original path."

His eyes widened when he heard those words. As he thought, this girl is still the same.

She opened her eyes and stepped back.

"I promised to you that I wouldn't leave you, right? But saying that may have been a bit contradictory for me. There is something left that I still have to do, that's why I am sorry. I have to take it back."

She is the biggest fool he knows, and yet he cannot voice these thoughts out.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 314**

Chapter 314: Never Part 6

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The morning after she had that discussion with Kou, she felt terrible, anxious, and frightened. She woke up feeling sick and nauseous.

Sumire knew what the main cause was, and it was another nightmare that led to this situation.

Others have defined dreams as a figment of one's imaginations; what do others say about nightmares? They say the same thing. It is all made up or depends on the individual's current mood. Nobody, however, would ever guess that it has something to do with an individual's past or physiological/mental state.

Her nightmares came like strange waves. Sometimes she would have them every day and get used to it. But there were times when it would disappear for an extended time and come in short waves. Those short waves, however, were more painful than the everyday ones.

Quite some time has passed since she woke up from a nightmare and felt this terrible. Sumire tossed and turned on the bed, hugging the pillow to her chest. She felt very uncomfortable and did not want to go anywhere. She closed the blinds, but small beams of light still entered the room, and she could hear Atushi opening up the bar downstairs.

Her thoughts broke off when somebody approached the bed, A familiar warmth on her cheek.

"Sumire?" Yuhi asked. "Do you want me to stay home?"

"You have work."

Yuhi shook his head. "You're more important to me."

"I'm supposed to meet Kou, the song.." She mumbled. She does not understand why she has avoided him the last three days.

Yuhi removed his tie and tossed it aside as he laid down beside her. She immediately buried her face in his arms, and she felt his hand on her back.

"Yuhi, you should go."

"No can do. I already told Atushi to leave today, so we will be alone here. When you're up for it, we can go downstairs and eat breakfast."

So that was the sound of Atushi packing up and leaving, huh? Jae said he would go fishing with the other members when he dropped by earlier. Atsuro is doing more tests, so Huan is not around either. She will be alone with Yuhi.

"You're acting so cute."

"Be quiet."

Yuhi brushed his lips against her ear. "I know you're not feeling so good. But you should eat something."

"Yuhi, am I weird?"

"Hmm?"

"I don't want to talk to anyone today, and I don't want to see anybody."

"Yeah, that's fine. You don't have to meet with anyone if you don't want to. But if you get lonely, I am here for you."

Why does this person say the things she wants to hear? Why does he accept everything? In the past, whenever she felt this way, those around her would look disgusted. They would tell her to stop sulking and get over it.

You have nothing to worry about.

Scared? Scared of what?

Her thoughts broke off when she felt Yuhi kiss her eyelids. "Or if you want, we can do something."

"Something?"

"Mm something, but only if you want."

If Yuhi touches her, then maybe all these unpleasant and disgusting feelings will disappear. If the person she loves holds her, will all the pain disappear? They both knew it wouldn't work; that method of coping will not help her.

"I would like to eat. But I don't want to go downstairs." Even if Atushi closed the place up, she knew there were still people who would try to peek through the windows.

"Then let me grab it for you real quick." He sat up and tucked the blanket around her. "It's only a few minutes, but here." Yuhi passed her phone to her. "Talk through this while I go downstairs?"

Sumire didn't know where he found her phone, but she knew it was hers. Yuhi already dialed the number, so all she would have to do is speak through it. He kissed her lips lightly before he eventually left her. The moment Yuhi left, she felt a throbbing pain in her right eye that she could no longer suppress.

While she has accepted having an ability, she still found this single eye transformation thing weird. What activates it? Also, she feels strange whenever she is around Yuhi. The first thing that stands out to her is his blood. The scent of his blood drives her crazy; even though he is not injured, she can smell it.

She hears a voice from her phone. "Still okay?"

"Thirsty."

Yuhi laughed softly. "Yeah, sorry about that. I got hurt earlier, so you probably smelled it when I hugged you."

"You got hurt? When who..." Her voice became frantic. She wanted to get out of bed and rush over, but she still felt lifeless.

"A minor cut when I went out shopping. One of the tins was open."

A deep sigh escaped her lips. "That is careless."

When she hears the sound of a pan, Sumire decides to stay quiet for a while. She does not want to disturb him.

Since that time, she hasn't seen Kou at all. She sighed deeply, maybe saying that was too much. But upon seeing Yuko-San again, she realized that she really couldn't make such promises like that. "Yumi knows about your situation. Do they know how dangerous it is?". When she brushed past Yuko-san, those words were directed at her yes but mainly towards Kou and the others.

The dangers of this, huh? Even so, she lifts the timetable in her hands. Quatro light's schedule I packed as it is. Would they find the time to practice for a concert now? It should be alright, but it may be pushing it a little bit.

She still has to catch up on the work she missed too. Perhaps for a while, she should lay off helping them out. Even if it's her, all of that work would be, but she cannot leave those people.

Did he go back to the apartment? She could text the others to find out, but that would mean talking to somebody else. On days like this, she does not want to speak or be near anybody because she is afraid

of what she will say. She does not want to say anything that will hurt them. But in her current state, it will end up that way.

She no longer wants to hurt somebody with her words.

### **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 315**

Chapter 315: Never Part 7

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

Sumire gave up trying to go to sleep.

At least that was what he could hear from the other end of the phone.

Yuhi was just finishing up the meal when he hears a clattering sound, and a yelp escaped her lips. He chuckled softly. "Clumsy girl."

When he reached the room, he found her crouched in front of the attached room. A knowing ah escaped his lips when he saw her holding one of the scrapbooks in her hands.

Yuhi put the trolley aside and walked over to her.

"Yuhi...you like me."

"Yeah, I always have."

"I see, so I was silly for no reason."

"I wouldn't say that." Yuhi knew that their relationship would fall through. He did not want that.

The moment they get together, he swore never to let her go. That's why it would be bad if they got together then and broke up. He does not want to lose her even for a moment.

"I wonder if I just confessed earlier, then maybe Ru would not have had to die."

At that comment, Yuhi clenched his fist tightly. That's right, a part of him understood already. No matter how well they get along, there is still something wrong. She will always feel guilty about not confessing her feelings. This way, she will never forward properly.

"I can accept that she will always like Tsueno. But, will they be able to have a future like this?"

He should be fine, but his main concern is her. Yuhi wondered if she could do it. Could she bring herself to have a future with him?

At some point, the feelings of guilt will overflow. One day she will wake up and wonder why she is with somebody other than Tsueno. All those feelings of guilt will explode.

He has to get stronger for both of them. Yuhi walked over and pulled her to her feet. He leaned forward and kissed her softly.

"I feel so happy." She mumbled against his lips. "Yuhi."

"That's good. I want you always to feel that way."

After he said those words, he saw the tears in her eyes. "She is in so much pain." Even though she said, she was happy just now. Her heart must be a mess.

"Ssh, don't cry." He trailed off and kissed her forehead, eyelids, nose before he moved towards her lips again.

"Yuhi. Mmm, I--"

"I like you, Sumire. Stay by my side forever."

....

Whenever she leaves his side, he would wake up immediately. But this time, he slept for much longer than usual. Yuhi groggily got up and scanned the room. Not here, but he knew she would not leave. After all, he recalled her expression earlier. She cannot meet with others in that condition of hers.

He slipped on a white shirt from the bedside table drawer before he headed out of the room. A lovely aroma caught his attention, and he increased his footsteps. It did not take long before he arrived at the kitchen.

He was content watching her cook at first, but he got closer and closer to the current situation. He was hugging her tightly.

"It smells good." Yuhi didn't know what he was referring to. Sure the smell of food lured him in, but the main source of his words was her.

Did she put on perfume?

"N--not me." She muttered.

Yuhi, however, didn't listen and continued to search for the scent.

"Yuhi."

"Do you want to do it again? After we eat."

He wants to explore more, but her clothes are in the way.

"Oh." Sumire must have noticed since she seemed to flinch at his touch.

"No?"

Yuhi watched as the tip of her ears turned a gorgeous scarlet red color indicating her face was also the same shade. Oh, she is turning red. "Yes?"

She slowly nodded her head, and he chuckled. Sumire is very cute. Sometimes when she gets like this, he wishes nothing more than for her to live a normal life. Since she came here, he ensured she experienced enough normal moments. But, from now on, things will only continue getting worse for her.

Yuhi continued to caress her hair and hugged her tightly as she continued to cook.

This girl is the one person he will never let anybody else take from him.

It did not take long before she finished cooking. Soon they were both on the couch in the bar area, in front of the TV. Sumire pulled out a book she was reading from the previous day. But Yuhi took it from her hands.

"Uh?"

"Let me read for you."

Sumire laughed softly. "You're too much of a gentleman Yuhi."

"Well, I wouldn't say that so quickly." He slid his hands on her thighs. "I can still do this."

"It feels nice, though."

Yuhi blinked in surprise. "You sure?"

"I am... But it makes me feel nervous."

His eyes widened when he heard those words from her. Well, it's not like he didn't know already. She admitted several times since they started dating that she has weird desires towards him.

"Try to relax, take deep breaths. You trust me not to hurt you, right?"

"I trust you, Yuhi."

"Good girl." Yuhi continued what he was doing before, and small whimpers escaped her lips.

He wants to do something more, but she isn't in a good state right now. He wants to see more of her expression when she is pleased. He is the only one who has seen- Yuhi paused in mid-thought when he realized something.

"Sumire... Sano touched you like this before?"

"Mmmmm. It bothers you?"

"It does you and him..."

"Sumire..."

"There is no more me and him. Yuhi, I'm with you now."

"That's true. I need to stop freaking out when it comes to Nagawa." Yuhi caressed her cheeks, and a content sigh passed her lips.

"Yuhi, is it okay for us to be like this?"

"...well." Yuhi trailed off. "You know how much I like you. Also, even if this is dangerous, those clothes look good on you."

Why does she own such a sexy-looking nightgown? Or maybe this is normal. At that comment, Sumire closed the distance and wrapped her arms around his neck. "Yuhi, are you stupid?"

"Maybe."

"It's hard for me to write Kou's song like this."

"I know."

"It usually takes time for me to get back on my feet when I am this way. That's why I.."

Yuhi's gaze softened. "She is such a clumsy person." But this is one of the many things he loves about her.

"You want me to help you?"

"Yes."

Yuhi understands how important writing music is for Sumire. Normally musicians find it difficult to compose a song with another person. They are worried about superficial things like getting the song stolen or credit for it. They worry about the other person overshadowing their music.

Sumire's reasoning for never working with anyone wasn't those things. She knew she refrained from doing so other people wouldn't see her true self.

"Sumire, you know this is very dangerous." Yuhi was having a hard time keeping his hands off her.

Sumire sighed deeply. "I guess I should stop fooling around. I'll get my stuff from upstairs." She got off him and started to walk off, but Yuhi grabbed her arm.

"The song is important, but I want to fool around a bit more."

Sumire turned around and threw her arms around his neck again. "Then Yuhi-san, next time react faster."

The feelings she has when she writes her songs for those people important to her. Yuhi understood her mindset very well.

"Sumire, I love you a lot."

"I know."

Sometimes, when he holds her and sees such a blank look in her eyes, he wonders what she is thinking. Yuhi isn't surprised when she falls asleep; he scoops her up and lays her down on the couch.

"My precious Sumire, please never leave my side."

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 316**

### Chapter 316: Never Part 8

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

It's already so late. He doubts anyone will be around now. Indeed the moment he arrived at the gate, he noticed the gate locked. Thankfully, he took out the extra keys from his pocket and unlocks it. Being a member of Quatro light has handy privileges like this. However, it's the first time he's had to use them.

The reason why he came here? Well, his father's home. Ever since he left that day, Kou debated whether it was okay to come back. But when he came home and saw that his father was home, he decided to come here.

If that's the case, then -- he ought to hide away in the gardens for a while. That guy never stays long, so instead of getting caught up in his own pace. He ought to hide away for a while. Normally he would hide away in that person's place. But he is away overseas now.

He does have the keys to his house. But he knew that guy dislikes people entering his home when he isn't around. Besides, right now. He wants a quiet place to think.

That place is silent too, but it is in a space that is for many individuals. It wouldn't be good for him to go there by himself.

His thoughts broke off when he spotted a girl with brunette hair perched on the steps. Her keyboard on the side as she scribbled down something on a sheet of music paper.

Kou blinked when he saw who it was.

"Sumire, I haven't seen her since that time." Doesn't it look like she has lost a bit of weight? Her face looks thinner.

When he recalled the words they exchanged the last time, Kou sighed. She pushed him away from helping her. It was the first time she said it directly, so he did not know what to do.

Terashima doesn't seem to be around, so it should be alright. He took a deep breath before he called out to her.

"Good evening, Sumire-chan."

"Kou!"

"I wasn't expecting to run into you here and now. Could it be fate?" Shougo said, pulling out a card. She blinked in confusion, and he made the card disappear and made it reappear on the other one.

"Should I show you something else?"

Sumire rolled her eyes. "You can't fool my eyes. I know how you did the trick just now."

Kou laughed. "As expected from you, Mimi, you're amazing."

She is the only one who can see through him like this.

"But, even I learned something new. Look at your right pocket."

At that comment, Sumire pulled out a mini bouquet. It was small and pocket-sized, but he figured she would like this better than a large bouquet.

When he saw her eyes filled with such life and sparkle, he laughs. She really is interesting.

Kou winked. "It's a secret." He said and took a seat beside her.



He looked at her surroundings; from the looks of it, she has been here for quite a while. This is like her sitting outside to do work instead of being indoors.

He pulled out a notebook and began to flick through it, and he had to work hard too. His schedule had been completely free, but suddenly after the TV case earlier, he was packed with work.

Shin was the one who handled that matter. But it appears as though people liked that he acted calm even though he was upset too. He intentionally left his schedule blank. Even though he had mountains of offers, he didn't respond to them and left them be.

However, after the incident, he decided that it would be best to get himself together. Even if he isn't serious about the upcoming tournament, the current Quatro Light will lose out.

"What is that?"

"Just some work for tomorrow."

"This late?"

"Yeah, I accepted a new job, so I'll be too busy to look it over tomorrow."

"What? But you're already so busy."

She doesn't have the right to lecture him on that, does she?

"Didn't I tell you? I don't mind being busy. That's why I'm available to help discuss the song anytime, too." He said with a bright smile.

He felt a bit bad for avoiding her for so long. They have to work on the song, after all.

"Ah! Because of you, I am in a pinch; exactly what were you thinking?" Sumire half exclaimed.

Now she asks him, and he wonders when she would realize it.

Though he said it during the radio program earlier, she probably didn't hear it until late.

"Hmm? I wonder. Do you want to play a guessing game?"

"I would rather not."

"Eh, that's so cold."

Sumire deeply sighed. "Making an abrupt decision like that. It causes problems for me." She murmurs.

"But Mimi, you know it wasn't abrupt, didn't you?"

Even now, he's able to tell to a certain extent what's on her mind. He supposed that's the only difference between him and the guys in Nanairo feather right now.

"I know, I understand it too why you guys came up with that decision. Nanairo feather is indeed amazing now, and they will continue to grow even more and more from now onwards. I knew they would be fine no matter what and that they would overcome any obstacle. Although they were on the verge of

collapse before and I gave them that talk to encourage them. Even if I didn't, they would have managed."

Indeed Kou knew that to be the case. Even if Sumire didn't say anything, that fight then could have easily been resolved. But she spoke up, perhaps because she feared their connection would vanish even if she didn't.

Sumire continues. "I get it to an extent. That even though I wish for everyone's happiness. A part of me is still drawn solely to them. I can't help but support Nanairo feather because I was with them from the start. It's true that I was your composer first, but I wasn't with you during your debut. How to put it? There are different emotions."

"Then, will you support them?"

"If I do, wouldn't I seem unfair? There's the thing with senpai too, and people would misunderstand. Although the misunderstanding isn't the issue."

She seems to be worrying about it a lot. He did say he wouldn't give her any advice. But regarding this matter, it ought to be okay.

"The connection you have with them, and the one you have with us. I don't think you have to try so hard to separate it too much."

"But.."

"Tell me something, do you separate the friendships you have here and the friends you have back in Star town?"

"I don't need to do that. They are all so dear and important to me. They've all helped me get through this pain."

"Then there you have it, and I don't necessarily think you have to try and distinguish it too much. After all, you told me earlier, how do you like their smiles - when you told me that I understood it, you know?"

Chapter end

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 317**

Chapter 317: Never Part 9

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

He understood it. The reason why the guys in Nanairo feather are so important to her is not because of Ichinose Arashi alone.

"Mimi, your desire to make people happy with your songs is because of Nanairo feather, isn't it?"

"Eh?"

Huh? She didn't realize it?

"The words you said earlier, I don't think you realized. But you said something similar back then, too, that just listening to them sing and seeing their smiles make you happy. That it's all, you need. Doesn't that mean the reason you debuted was because their music inspired you?"

At that comment, she exclaimed. "I see! So that's it!"

His sweat dropped; she didn't know? Quite some time has passed since he has last seen traits of her clumsy personality.

"No wonder. It makes sense now. It feels like I just discovered something amazing! Thank you for helping me figure it out, Kou. When I spoke with Masaru-senpai earlier, I kept thinking about how comfortable I was and how I immediately felt better. I get it now."

"I hope you can write an amazing song for me now."

"That's why I came here. Initially, I planned to just slip it into the mailbox and leave. But, I realized that would do nobody any good." Sumire pulled some paper out of an envelope.

Kou's eyes widened when he received it.

At the top left-hand corner, it said.

Composer: Ibuki Sumire and Terashima Yuhi

"Mimi, this--"

"I haven't been in a good state recently." Sumire sighed deeply. "It feels like all my emotions are going crazy. You know how long it takes me to get back on my feet when I am like this."

"So you asked.."

Kou couldn't believe it. This girl has never asked anybody to help with her composing before. Not even Arashiyama or Daiki. So how did Terashima manage to- an image of the two's interaction appeared in his head. Why should this surprise him?

Even though there is still something wrong with their relationship, he has not seen Mimi this happy in so long.

"Then tomorrow night, invite Terashima to my concert too."

....

Following night - X Stadium -

The lights, the music, and the sound of the crowd. How many times has he seen this scenery already? Yet, there is something different now.

His gaze flickered onto the backdrop that said his song's title; underneath was who composed the song.

He heard many people whispering backstage already. But the reactions from the audience were something else.

Good grief, that couple is a handful. But he is somewhat grateful. Kou took a deep breath before he walked onto the stage and started to sing.

"The glow of the buildings dissolved into the night sky.

As your eyes suddenly welled up with tears

If the appearance of adults must burden us,

There is no way we can conduct ourselves well.

The nightscape's chandelier is so cruel.

It seems to spark a man's true intentions.

For discovering the real me,

What kind of miracle should I give you?

Still unfinished, this dream blossoms

Deep within my heart... Like a shining star

Lighting the love in my dormant heart,

Warmed by the words, "You're fine as you are"

A kiss for your innocent smile." Kou sang.

..

He expected Terashima to be waiting with her. But instead, he only found her there.

"I always thought you were amazing, Mimi. I knew from the start that you would find a way to surprise anyone with your songs. But I never thought that you'd even surprise me."

Who would have thought that she would write a song like that? Is it because of Terashima?

"I told you to write a song that makes people happy because it suits my cheerful persona. Instead, you wrote a song regarding feelings of love. Did you know from the beginning about me too?"

"Well, I suppose."

She was trying to act brave, but Kou could see how nervous she was.

Kou laughed. "Sorta? How did you find out?"

"You're indirectly flirting with me from the start."

Is that how it was?

"Still, you are amazing. Right now, you're in the middle of a slump. However, I am sure that you're already slowly putting all the pieces together what you're missing, what you have to do, and who is the

most important. Like I said before, you don't have to separate it since all of it is important to you. The feelings and emotions you put in your singing, your smiling face is something I've always liked."

He reached over and placed his hat on her head, confusion evident in her eyes. A moment like this is the perfect time for it—the perfect time to say those words.

But if he says it now. Then she will end up having such an expression on her face as she did before. That's something he really does want to prevent as much as possible. However, if he doesn't say it now, then this opportunity will vanish.

"I love you."

To his surprise, Sumire's colored. She seemed oddly flustered.

Why is she so surprised? If she figured it out, isn't it only natural for him to say it? Or maybe she didn't expect him to say it?

Ah gee, then he really didn't have to go ahead and put on some sort of false bravado. Well, he supposed his profiling skills really can still use some work. After all, learning to read her is somewhat of a complex matter. Regardless, the reason he is going through these complications is because it is to do with Sumire.

He winks. "Just kidding."

"I see." Sumire nodded. "You know so much has changed since we first met. It was a real disaster at the start."

His sweatdropped. "Just hearing you mention that is giving me nightmares of that time."

It was a mess. He didn't think the four of them could get along, let alone become a group. Yet from the very start, Kou didn't want to give it up.

Sumire chuckles softly. "It's fine. Experience makes a person after all." She trails off. "Right, it's because of all your experiences together that you're able to shine brightly now. All those experiences shaped who you are now. But that doesn't necessarily mean you have solved all the issues. It is a cycle. You will keep going round and round in circles. But one day in the future, that cycle will stop."

"That's true. I didn't think we could remain a group. It was chaotic, you know? It was chaotic. But without those experiences, we probably wouldn't be as close as we all are now. And the one who knew that it would end up like this is your darling."

It was quite some time ago. But Terashima gave him some advice last year.

"Yuhi did? What did he say?"

Just mentioning Yuhi makes her this happy, eh? He's been far too preoccupied with his matters to even think of intervening in your relationship. But his feelings for her haven't changed. In fact, despite him being busy. Kou knew that his feelings for this girl had gotten a lot stronger.

His feelings are still here. But unlike the others, he isn't going to try and ponder what to do with them.

Just now, he jokingly confessed. But he will not go further than this. He has feelings for her, yes, but he never thought about being with her.

It's not like he is content with just being friends. But it never crossed his mind. To have more than what he has now.

It's never crossed his mind to gain an alternative ending and obtain his form of happiness. After what happened back then, he never thought to obtain happiness.

His thoughts break off when he found Sumire staring at him again. Staring aside....why is she doing it directly in front of him? Is she not aware of the rules regarding personal space?

"Uh, Mimi?"

She doesn't respond and continues staring at him from up close. After ten minutes, she finally pulled back.

"Hmm, I got it. You're hungry, aren't you?"

Huh?

"Ah! I knew it. Of course, you are; you had to do all your jobs alongside Ran-chan. I made too much earlier, so do you want some?" Sumire said, producing a bento box out of her bag.

He didn't get a chance to tell her she was wrong. Since Sumire quickly started setting things out on the benches.

Kou blinked. Well, it won't do any harm in going along with it. Now that she mentions it. He hasn't eaten since earlier, so he probably is hungry.

He looked up at the skies... It's okay for him to enjoy this, just for a little while longer without feeling guilty, is it?

It's okay isn't it? Just a bit of happiness. He won't be selfish and ask for anything more than this. He won't do something like that when she is suffering right now.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 318**

Chapter 318: Everyday

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

The ability to control her strange ability. Lately, she would practice on the river bank not too far from the bar whenever she has time in the morning. But, it is difficult for her to control something she does not understand.

Attending summer classes, initially, Sumire wanted to skip. She still felt very strange and did not want to be around others. But when she heard that Yuhi would come too, she decided to go. She has yet to see him, however.

Her thoughts broke off when somebody placed magazines in front of her.

[Nagawa Sano spotted with his fiance]

[Will they get married this year?]

"So this is why the bastard has been quiet lately." Aika trailed off and sighed. "Honestly, I don't know why this guy even bothers you so much when he has somebody else."

"I won't defend him. But, he is the type of person who can't say no to his family. He may act all arrogant, but only around those outside his elite circle."

It was one of the first things she noticed about him.

His inability to protect her from his family was one of the key factors that destroyed their relationship. She initially put up with all the abuse from them and did whatever they wanted.

But there was a certain line that she would never cross just to please them. Now that she thought about it, Sano doesn't know about what happened behind the scenes. Whenever he left her alone with his family, he didn't know what those people tried to do.

If he knew, would he have tried to protect her?

"Sumire?"

"Uh, yes?"

Aika sighed. "You know you act very strange when I mention that guy. I know you two were in a relationship before, but he hurt you."

"I won't forget that." Sumire nodded at her friend's words. "But, unlike before, I don't think ignoring him will do any good."

Besides, there is something different about that person, and he is no longer the same as before. For some reason, she wants to learn more about him. It was an unusual feeling. Initially, she did not think he had changed, but his actions before she gave birth proved otherwise. Moreover, she heard from the other nurses what happened. She almost died giving birth.

Sano could have chosen to get rid of the child to save her. She knew that he was against the child, and yet he saved them both. That person is very unusual. Could it be he is serious about her?

Aika suddenly sat down beside her, and Sumire realized the class started, so she put the magazines away.

"This class will be graded twenty percent on attendance, forty percent on assignments, and seventy percent on exams."

At that comment, she raised her eyebrows. So the total is over a hundred? As she would expect from a school in Tokyo. Their lessons are in another league. The reason why she decided to take this extra class was because they have flexible lesson hours.

"I don't mind exams, but." Sumire looked towards her friend. "I thought you hated those. Besides, this has nothing to do with fashion."

It was a general studies course regarding business, not that she minded. But she thought Aika would choose something fashion-related. Since she is seriously working on her career now, Sumire wanted to improve on those aspects too.

"My bad content has nothing to do with fashion but in terms of visual."

Sumire watched as a man with short black hair wearing black frames, and a navy blue colored shirt appeared. "This person will be your main teacher for this course."

"Hello my name is Takamura Hayato. I will be the representative for this class. I shall inform you now that while I am your representative, I am still learning this job. But that does not mean I am ignorant. I shall monitor your attendance and assignments carefully. If you have any questions, feel free to ask."

"See, the visual is good here," Aika said.

Sumire sighed deeply. She should have known it was something to do with guys. Her gaze fell on the man at the front. Well, she supposes there is something attractive there. But she is surrounded by too many handsome-looking guys. So he looks normal. Moreover, Yuhi is a lot more handsome.

Her thoughts broke off when she felt his gaze on her, and Sumire blinked surprised. The moment she looked back, however, the man turned away from her.

Was it just her imagination, or did he just look at her?

It was a mere introduction for the class, so it did not take longer than an hour. Aika practically dragged her out of the classroom.

"I tried to flaunt my charms there, but he did not react. What is with this guy? Is he bisexual?"

Her sweatdropped when she heard those words. "Well, maybe your not his type?"

"That's the thing, Im, not interested. But I heard rumors that he didn't even have any reaction to Asami, too, so I wanted to see."

"Not even Asami-san?"

Aika nodded. "There is no way. The only other person who could resist Asami's charms is well Yuhi. But that is because he has only ever loved you, right?"

"Then if we use that logic, maybe he already has somebody he loves deeply."

"Yeah, but still-"

"Miss Ibuki." A voice called out.

Aika and her turned around to spot the man from earlier.

"Ah yes?" Sumire answered when she realized that he called out to her.

"I was wondering what kind of food do you like?"



"Food?" Sumire said, puzzled.

"T-the ones we have in the cafeteria."

"I usually take the A lunch, but the S set looks appealing recently."

At that comment, the man pulled out some meal tickets. "If you like, here."

"Uh." Sumire looked at the yellow-colored tickets. "Thank you?" She did not understand what was going on here. The man merely nodded before rushing away.

Aika, however, exclaimed loudly. "Wait, wait, what? I knew he was staring at you earlier, but what on earth is with this development?"

"Ssh, don't fuss-"

"I merely had too many."

"That's one crappy excuse! Then why didn't you give me any?"

"..."

Sumire watched as he scurried off. But she could not miss his red-stained face. She glanced at the meal tickets. "So it was something like that?" They don't even know each other, though, so isn't it weird?

"I can't believe this. He is interested in you."

"Don't overthink it."

"No, no, that reaction was certainly the reaction of a guy in love. Hey, would you go on a date with him if he asked?"

"Hmmm, well, he is cute, but I prefer a more dangerous look, like my darling."

"Speaking of him, I hear rumors that Yuhi is thinking of joining Quatro Light? Is that true?"

"Mmm, well, he is thinking about it a lot."

"Does that mean you don't see him as much?"

"Uh well, we do have breakfast together." Sumire sensed her friend's sudden change in tone.

Aika's eyes twitched, annoyed. "I bet he leaves really quickly too?"

Her sweat fell when she saw Aika's anger. Uh-oh.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 319**

Chapter 319: You're with me

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

Sumire tried to stop her but Aika marched up to Yuhi's classroom and slammed the doors open. Yuhi was surrounded by people and for a moment she paused to look at him. She has never seen him speak casually with others like this.

"Hey, Yuhi!"

"Wait, Aikchan!"

"What are you doing making time for summer classes but not taking Sumire on a date? Surely you're not that cruel."

"We are always together at home."

"Not those dates, a proper date! Go somewhere nice with her."

Yuhi turned to her. "Is that what you want?"

"Well, I would like to go somewhere with you."

"Then let's go now."

Aika's eyes twitched, annoyed. "You two, did you forget why you're attending extra classes? You both skipped so much."

"Sorry, but now I've seen her, I'm taking her away; thanks for bringing her Aika."

"Geez, stupid couple."

Aika, however, didn't say anymore, and Yuhi dragged her away. The place Yuhi brought her to was the outside stairwell at the end of the corridor. The moment he backed her against the wall, he leaned forward.

"Yuhi-" Her sentence fell short when she saw his face up close. There were dark circles underneath his eyes.

Oh....

"Sorry, we will go on a proper date soon."

He looks so tired. Sumire leaned forward and kissed his lips. "A date?"

"Mm, a date with you."

"More than that, I want you to come home early if you can. I want to spend some time with you."

He looked troubled for a moment but nodded. "Then, shall we go home after this?"

"But I don't want you skipping work." She plays with the buttons of his shirt.

"Skipping is fine since I've worked like a machine lately. Besides, you don't want to continue this?" Yuhi pointed to her fingers.

"I do, but-" Her sentence fell short when Yuhi kissed her.

"No good, I want you now."

"Uh, we didn't come to school to fool around."

"We didn't?"

Geez, this guy. But she supposes it's okay since quite some time has passed since they were like this. Sumire wrapped her arms around his neck and muttered. "Continue Yuhi."

She didn't hear a reply.

Yuhi's touch, lately it feels a bit different. But she doesn't dislike this feeling. Before she could get lost in this feeling, however, Yuhi's phone started ringing. She immediately pulled away, and Yuhi sighed.

"Wait, this won't take long." He kissed her lips lightly. "Don't go anywhere, okay?"

Sumire nodded and watched as he headed back inside. A deep sigh passed her lips once he left. She traced her lips that still burned from his kiss a few seconds ago. She wonders exactly what this odd feeling is.

"That person is weird."

Even though her behaviour and mood are unusual lately, Yuhi does not leave her side. Instead he, her cheeks turned scarlet when she recalled how he kissed her scars this morning. "He must be an idiot."

Why does he accept even the ugliest things about her?

Her thoughts broke off when she heard a clattering sound. "This place is off-limits to students though..." Unless Sumire followed the direction of the sound and discovered a man with blue colored hair leaning against the second set of steps.

"Shin."

Shin turned to her and dropped the cigarette in his hands. "This-"

Sumire rolled her eyes. "All musicians tend to smoke. Besides, EMMA has a punk band image, and it doesn't surprise me."

"It doesn't make it okay, and I'm a teacher."

"It's summer classes. You're not teaching a class today, right?"

"No, but I heard Yuhi was here so."

Sumire stared at him and noticed Shin averting his gaze. "Geez, these two are so bad at hiding things."

"I was just with him, and he just took a call."

"Are you...okay?" Shin awkwardly asked.

"So you know?"

He ran his hands through his hair but nodded. "Yeah, Atsuro prescribed those sleeping pills to you, right?"

"Mmm."

The two of them did not talk too long since the doors opened, revealing Yuhi.

Ah, Yuhi? "Welco-" Her thoughts broke off when he slumped his face on her chest.

Uh..?

Shin sighed deeply. "Well, considering how this guy works like a machine lately, this is normal, no?"

That"s true. "Sorry Shin, but-"

Shin nodded. "I"ll save it for another time." The moment Shin disappeared behind those doors, Yuhi kissed her lips.

"Yuhi-san, maybe we should go to the infirmary. You look pale."

How come she didn"t notice this earlier?

"It"s okay; you"re with me."

"Yuhi."

"Hey, let me kiss you a lot."

..

A few hours later, she was on her way home, still dazed from the events earlier.

The sensation of his lips on hers did not leave for the remains of the day. She found herself unconsciously touching her lips.

She worried and worried about Yuhi the entire time after that. Yet he sent her a text saying be good and wait for him at home. "I wanted to go back together, but I suppose it can"t be helped."

Her thoughts broke off when she saw somebody approaching. At first, she thought it was a merely a fellow student, but the closer he got, the more uneasy she felt. Eventually, she spotted the camera.

A reporter? But why would- Sumire recalled that odd feeling she got a few months back during the festival. Could it be this is the same guy?

"Now, Miss Ibuki, isn"t that rude? You"re an idol, right? You should pose for the camera."

Despite the darkness of the tunnel, Sumire saw the dangerous look in his eyes. She felt goosebumps all over her skin. What is with this person?

Sumire turned to walk away, but he grabbed her wrist, causing her to turn around.

"What is this? Even though I"m your fan."

"What...what do you need?" Sumire managed to say.

"Just answer a few questions. What is the relationship between you and Nagawa Sano?"

"My ex-boyfriend." Sumire knew it was futile lying. The media must have noticed Sano"s odd behavior towards her now. It is best to admit this early on before they find out.

"Then what about Kusaji Atsuro? Did he not frequent your place?"

"As a doctor."

The reporter asked many questions; not once did he loosen his grip on her arm. "I have enough strength to push him away. But that is what he wants." If she pushed him away, there would be a violent media report about her. She cannot allow these people to know about her connection to the underworld.

"Lastly, how did you kill him?"

Her eyes widened when she heard that question. The reporter phrased it vaguely and yet Sumire understood. He was aiming for this from the start.

She felt her body turn cold. "Kill..." That's right, it was her fault after all.

Since she came to Tokyo, seldom anybody has mentioned it since they did not have enough facts. But she knew that reporters back home would never let this topic go. This is why she wanted to hide away from the public eye, why she wanted to give up her dreams. She does not want to feel that pain again.

She does not want people to say she killed him.

"I...it wasn't me."

"But didn't he want to go to the concert separately? Yet you made him take you. Isn't that suspicious? He even took your car that day."

"..."

"Ibuki-san, I'm not asking as a reporter but as a member of the general public. The police ruled this as an accident, but many do not think so. The criminal investigations department believes you had a hand in his death, and many clues point that you did it deliberately."

"Why?"

"Why? Indeed why. Did he not treat you very well?"

"Ki, I love you."

"Your too precious, so let me handle everything."

He did; he treated her so well.

"Is it because you were in a relationship with Kusaji Atsuro, too, and you wanted to break up with him?"

Eh?

"There were rumors about you two sleeping around." Shin's words echoed in her head, and she clenched her fist. So it was about this?

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 320**

Chapter 320: The truly rotten person is me

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Sumire does not understand where these rumors came from, but she knew nothing would come out of denying it.

This person has already chosen to believe that. Nothing she says will convince him. Even if she were to present the facts right in front of him, the situation would remain the same. Humans are stubborn creatures like that. Once they choose to believe in something, they will firmly do so, and nothing, not even the truth, will sway them.

He already thinks she killed Ru.

If they think that way, this person and all the others may maybe she ought to accept it. There is no use in saying anything back; not only will it be futile, the truth she indirectly killed him. It was because of her that he lost his life because she made the wrong decisions.

If she wasn't so wishy-washy, then none of this would have happened.

She lied to her heart and lied to those precious to her, and that is why she lost the one person who cared the most for her.

The truth was she already knew from the very start. Even if she ran away, she could never escape from the reporters from Mamoru's memory. No matter where she goes, she will remember him. Her sin will not vanish. It was because of her that he got in the car that day.

This reporter and the general public who think it is her fault are not wrong. Even though they said such nasty comments, even though this person has such a hostile look in his eyes, all of it is her fault, and she deserves everything coming to her.

All the pain and misfortune she suffered the last few months, she deserves every one of it.

"Did you truly think you could run away and escape everything? Don't make me laugh. You cannot change a person's core nature."

Yes, that is right.

"Since it happened once, it will happen again."

That's true, and there is no reassurance that she will not cause problems for others again.

"The truly rotten person is me."

The one who deserves to go to hell is her. Mamoru aside, how many other people did she hurt with her words and actions? How many emotional outbursts did she have that hurt another person? Some of them were so petty and unnecessary.

Even now, she cannot forget the disappointed look on their faces.

The people were supposed to remain by her side due to blood ties, but even they gave up on her.

A person like her should not exist in this beautiful and yet cruel world.

She destroys the very balance of humanity.

"Can't say anything, can you? Good, just stay quiet. I have chased you long enough. You're coming to the police station with me right now. Admit your sins. You don't have to submit evidence, and there are already plenty of people who want the law to punish you."

A person like her should not be here.

She will only continue to dirty this world, and she ought to disappear-- her thoughts broke off when a flash of black hair appeared before her.

"Ouch!" The reporter yelped in pain as he let her wrist go.

Her eyes widened when she realized who it was. Yuhi had stepped between her and the reporter and twisted the man's arm.

"Terashima!!" He hissed. "How can you defend her? You already know what she has done."

"I love her, it's only normal for me to protect the woman I love."

"Hahaha. Love? This girl is a monster, even before this incident. I had no idea how terrifying her past was. How can somebody like this fool you? Somebody like this will only bring more misfortune. We have to lock her away before she causes anymore acci--"

When Yuhi's fist landed on the man's face Sumire's eyes widened. In the next second, Yuhi was punching the man repeatedly. After he finished punching, he stepped on the man's leg. She hears a large crunching sound, and screams fill the area.

"Y--yui?! Wait, stop." Her voice trembled at the sight before her.

What is he doing? He doesn't have to do this for her.

"Stop?" There was a dangerous look in his eyes, and she flinched.

"You want me to stop?"

"If you keep that up, he is going to.."

"He will die." Even she could tell that Yuhi was not in a good state. The dangerous look in his eyes, and if her eyes were not playing tricks on her, there was a black-like flame aura wrapped around him.

"His ability?" She never inquired about it before, but now she had to know so he could stop.

"Let him die." His tone was lifeless, and she bit her lip.

"It's okay. I deserve it. I deserve it all, Yuhi. It was my fault, so please."

"Don't hurt somebody."

"Don't protect me like this." She doesn't deserve his love and protection. Sumire knew he was doing this because he loves her; he just said it without hesitating. This man will do anything for her. Since she came to Tokyo, Terashima Yuhi gave her so much, and yet it hurts. It hurts so much, every time he smiles and treats her with so much affection.

It's painful, living a life without Ru and even the path she chose to move forward. Loving Yuhi is painful. She loves him so much to the point that she is afraid, afraid that one day he will leave her.

It is painful; her chest hurts. It feels like water is swallowing her up. She can't breathe.

Sumire tugs on his shirt and tries to take deep breaths. But each time, she felt the pain worsen.

"Sumire? What's wrong?" Yuhi finally noticed something was wrong since he moved his foot from the reporter. He turned to her with a worried look in his eyes, and she weakly extended her hand out.

"Yuhi, save me." She managed to say.

Save her. She can't take it anymore.

"Sumire, it will be alright. It'll be alright. You don't have to be so afraid."

"I'm dying, I'm going to die. ."

This pain is unbearable, and it hurts so much. It felt like she could no longer breathe. What is this? Is this the end at last?

"She should die already." The reporter laughed. A burst of maniac laughter passed his lips as he struggled to get up.

Yuhi raised his free hand, and a large wave of black flames emerged from his hand. In that split second, using the flames, he bound the reporter against the wall. His screams muffled by a makeshift flame-like cloth across his mouth.

"You won't die. I won't let you die." Yuhi mumbled.

He lightly pinches her nose so the air could come in before his lips were on hers.

It hurts so much to live every day.

"I can't do this anymore." Please, it hurts so much.